

OUNDLÉ SCHOOL CHAPEL Wednesday 17 July at 7.45 *This concert
will be recorded
by BBC Radio 3*
CHOIR OF CHRIST CHURCH OXFORD
FRANCIS GRIER Director TIM BYRAM-WIGFIELD Organ

Three Verse Anthems HENRY PURCELL
(1659 – 1695)

Purcell wrote his church anthems mainly for the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, picking up the threads of the English Church Music tradition which had been halted by the Commonwealth ban on Church music between 1640 and 1660. His early anthems are an anachronism, being unaccompanied and polyphonic "Full" anthems as written by early seventeenth century composers. Pre-Commonwealth composers had actually experimented with a new type of anthem, the "Verse" anthem, for one or more solo voices accompanied by an organ or group of viols. The majority of Purcell's anthems are of this type, with an increased amount of homophony enabling a more faithful reflection of the text. Through Humfrey and Blow, Purcell was influenced by the declamatory vocal style of contemporary Italian opera, yet, despite this 'secular' quality, his anthems still retain an appropriate dignity.

Antiphonies WILLIAM MATHIAS
(b 1934)

This organ work was composed in 1982 and first performed in May of that year by John Scott at Dewi Sant Church in Cardiff. The piece is based on two musical ideas, "L'Homme armé" and the plainsong "Vexilla Regis". Mathias' long practice in writing effective organ music is again displayed in this particular work which combines skilfully the two strongly contrasted elements of plainsong and bravura passage work. Treated as opposing characters, after a series of dramatic-antiphonal confrontations, these merge into a satisfyingly mutual compatibility.

Rejoice in the Lamb BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913 – 1976)

This Festival Cantata was commissioned to commemorate, in 1943, the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of the Church of St. Matthew, Northampton. For the text, Britten took passages from "Rejoice in the Lamb", a strange eighteenth century poem written in a madhouse by Christopher Smart. The Work is a canticle of general praise, in which all "nations and languages" and "every creature in which is the breath of life" (including the poet's cat, Jeoffrey) unite in praising God.

INTERVAL

Refreshments available in the Festival Club. After the concert, wine and fruit juice available in the Yarrow Gallery, where there is an exhibition by three artists.

Salvator Mundi THOMAS TALLIS
Videte Miraculum (1505 – 1585)

These two choral pieces exemplify the pure and simple textures of sixteenth century polyphony, each phrase being set to a new musical idea. "Videte

Miraculum" is a Marian responsory with solo and choral sections alternating. The Cantus Firmus plainsong is heard in semibreves in the tenor part, and the polyphonic texture is therefore harmonically controlled. Tallis's music, although more simple and less sensuous than that of his pupil and younger contemporary, Byrd, was much admired by Byrd. On Tallis's death in 1585, a fact that seems to have been forgotten is this the year of the tercentenaries, Byrd remarked "Tallis is dead and music is dead".

Sonata No 5 in D FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809 – 1847)

Chorale
Andante con moto
Allegro Maestoso

Komm, Jesu, Komm J.S. BACH
Lobet den Herrn (1685 – 1750)

In Bach's time motets were generally written as service introits and for special occasions. Bach usually wrote his motets for burials: "Komm, Jesu, Komm" was composed for a memorial service in 1730. It is for double choir in the German choral tradition and falls into sections: the opening slow sarabande is linked by a fast fugal passage to an antiphonal dance in compound time. The motet ends with a Chorale. This motet is an exception in that it has a poetic text rather than the more usual biblical type. The authenticity of "Lobet den Herrn" has been questioned as it is the only one of the set to have a written-out continuo part. It is a fugue with a central homophonic section, and the motet ends with a fugue on 'Alleluia'.

Francis Grier

Francis Grier was educated as a chorister at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, a music scholar at Eton College, and organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge. He is equally at home with the piano and organ, having studied the former with Joseph Cooper, Fanny Waterman and Bernard Roberts and the latter with Gillian Weir. On leaving King's he became Assistant Organist to Simon Preston at Christ Church, Oxford and succeeded him as Organist and Director of Music in May 1981 at the age of only 25. As pianist, organist or harpsichordist, he has performed in Sweden, Germany, France, Belgium and the USA. He has played in many English festivals, including Harrogate, St. Albans, Aldeburgh and the Proms.

Tim Byram-Wigfield

Having been a chorister at Kings College, Cambridge, Tim won a music scholarship at Oundle School which he left in 1981. He has been organ scholar at Christ Church, Oxford for the past three years and has just been appointed as Sub-organist at Winchester Cathedral.