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The Music School, North Street - 5pm

Reading Plainsong - a Highway Code

Mary Berry was a pupil of Nadia Boulanger in Paris and studied with Thurston Dart at Cambridge. Her doctoral thesis was followed by a period of research into plainsong performance styles from the 10th to the 20th centuries. She became Fellow and Director of Studies in Music at Newnham College, Cambridge, and in 1975 founded the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge. Most recently the Schola's professional singers, the Cantors, have recorded a special programme in Rome to mark the 1400th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxon world.

Sponsored by The Royal College of Organists



Oundle School Chapel - 7.45pm

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge

Directed by Christopher Robinson CVO

Organ Students: Peter Davis (soloist); Iain Farrington

The Programme

Magnificat (O che vezzosa aurora) Orlando de Lassus (1532-1594)
Lassus composed at least 100 Magnificats, over 60 Masses and several hundred motets for the chapel of the Dukes of Bavaria, where he worked for 38 years until his death. This *Magnificat* is one of 25 which he wrote using the 'parody' technique, and dates from the last 11 years of his life, for it is based on a perky little 6-part madrigal, *O che vezzosa aurora*, which Orlando Vecchi had published in 1583.

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542 J S Bach (1685-1750)

Although this *Fantasia and Fugue* were linked in the mid-18th century, neither movement survives in autograph, and Bach may not have seen them as a pair. The *Fantasia*, in which gentle counterpoint contrasts with highly flamboyant passages,



probably dates from about 1729; Bach may have played it with the *Fugue* when he auditioned as organist at Hamburg's Jakobikirche that year. The *Fugue* recalls a Dutch song which was published in 1700. Today music students adorn it with doggerel verse about Oundle's most celebrated musical son, Ebenezer Prout: born in 1835 at The Old Manse in West Street, he wrote a celebrated treatise on fugue writing, and re-orchestrated Handel's *Messiah* for Victorian taste.

Geistliches Lied

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Denn er hat seinen Engeln

Psalm 22: Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen? Op 78 No 3

Like most of Mendelssohn's church music these three pieces date from the 1840s, but while *Denn er hat seinen Engeln* is familiar today as the double quartet from the first part of *Elijah*, the popularity of most of his sacred choral works declined sharply in the early 20th century. *Geistliches Lied (Holy Song)*, was completed in 1840, and like *Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen* is little known today.

Interval

Salve regina

Poulenc (1899-1963)

Although well known during the 1920s as a member of *Les Six*, an iconoclastic group of young composers, Poulenc later suffered a period of uncertainty and found new direction only after the death of a friend in a motor accident prompted his return to Catholicism. After this, church music played an important part in his work; alongside large-scale works like the *Gloria* are more intimate pieces such as this 1941 setting of the Marian Antiphon, *Salve Regina*.

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op 11

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

The young Fauré was a boarding student at the *Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse* in Paris from the age of nine; when he was twenty he won the school's composition prize for the *Cantique de Jean Racine*. This success came as a surprise, for the rules required choral works to be accompanied, not by organ alone, but by an instrumental ensemble, and over forty years were to pass before he succumbed to the temptation of an orchestration. Dedicated to César Franck, the *Cantique* was Fauré's first lasting success.

Prelude & Fugue in G minor, Op 7 No 3 Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

One of the most famous organists of his day, Dupré wrote the three *Preludes and Fugues Op 7* in 1912 when he was studying composition with Widor, and dedicated each to the memory of an organist. The *Prelude* of No 3, which is dedicated to Joseph Boulnois, organist at St Louis d'Antin, is a brilliant *perpetuum mobile* of *ppp* semiquavers over a long-breathed pedal melody which is subsequently quoted in the gigue-like *Fugue*.

Messe Solennelle

Jean Langlais (1907-1991)

From the age of two Langlais was a resident student at the National Institute for the Blind in Paris, but in 1917 he moved on to the Paris Conservatoire where he took organ lessons with Dupré. In 1934 he studied composition with Dukas, and from 1945 until 1987 was organist at St Clotilde, Paris, where his illustrious forebears included Tournemire and Franck, and he earned a worldwide reputation for his improvisations. Langlais' work includes over 300 pieces for organ and a large number of choral works, including 14 settings of the Mass. The *Messe Solennelle* is clearly a tribute to Widor and Vierne, both of whom had composed masses for the same unusual combination of choir and two organs. Its exciting choral writing and dramatic use of the organs combine with passages of hushed intensity to produce one of his most memorable works.

The Performers

St John's is one of the most ancient of the Cambridge colleges and has had a choir since 1511. Now one of the most famous choirs in the world, it performs regularly in Europe and America.

Peter Davis and Iain Farrington, Senior and Junior Organ Students at the College, are both former students at the Oundle Summer School.

Christopher Robinson CVO took up his position as organist and director of music at St John's in 1991, prior to which he had been organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor for 17 years. He also directs the Oxford Bach Choir and since 1964 has been conductor of the City of Birmingham Choir.

Film at the Festival

Great Hall (H4), Oundle School - 10.15pm SHINE

This poignant film tells the story of pianist David Helfgott, a child prodigy in small-town Australia who was bullied by his overbearing father. Helfgott came to London as a young man to study at the Royal College of Music, but suffered prolonged mental illness and returned to Australia a broken man. Noah Taylor deservedly won an Oscar for Best Actor, and Helfgott's own playing on the soundtrack (notably of Rachmaninov's 3rd Piano Concerto) enhances this compelling film.

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The Festival Club is open today 10am to midnight
Bar Hours: 12.30pm to 2pm; 6.30pm to 11.30pm

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

The Royal College of Organists (RCO) is the longest established organisation of its kind, with a growing membership of several thousand professional and amateur organists both in Britain and overseas.

Since its foundation in 1864, the RCO has maintained the highest musical standards, offering its own organ performance examinations for the internationally recognised Associate (ARCO) and Fellowship (FRCO) diplomas as well as diplomas in organ teaching and choral training.

The College is based in the historical setting of the Wren-designed St Andrew's Church in Holborn. Today, members can play

on the fine organ originally designed by Handel and recently restored, in the same place where Daniel Purcell and John Stanley served as parish organists.

Also based at St Andrew's is the College's extensive library of music, books, journals and recordings on disc, tape and CD. Recently computerised, this will soon offer members worldwide electronic access to one of the most comprehensive collections of organ music in existence.

Other benefits to members include scholarships and grants, masterclasses, regular publications, a wide range of regional events and overseas tours and professional advice on a variety of subjects. The RCO

also offers a range of activities designed specifically for its junior membership of 8 to 18 year olds.

Membership of the RCO is open to anyone with an interest in the organ, whether as a professional musician or keen enthusiast. Music schools and societies are also welcome as corporate members.

For further information about the RCO and membership, please contact:

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