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Reg. Charity No. 228089

Sunday 18th July

Festival Eucharist

10.30am

St Mary's Church, Fotheringhay

Preacher

**The Revd Katharine Rumens,
Rector of St Giles'
Cripplegate, the Church
in the Barbican**

Celebrant

**The Revd Brian Rogers,
Vicar of Fotheringhay
directed by**

Festival Choir

**James Lloyd Thomas
Western Wynde Mass
John Taverner (c.1490-1545)
O sacrum convivium!
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)**

Music:

John Taverner is regarded as the most important English composer of his day. He was also an organist. Born in Boston, Lincolnshire, he was a chorister, later choirmaster, in a church in Tattershall in the early 1520s, and in 1526 became the first choirmaster at Cardinal's College, Oxford (now Christ Church, Oxford) in 1526. He left there in 1530 having been briefly imprisoned for heresy in 1528 after becoming involved in a Lutheran scandal. He was subsequently a lay clerk at the parish church of St. Botolph in Boston.

Western Wynde is perhaps the best-known of all Taverner's masses, partly for the ingenuity and clarity of its structure, but more especially for its tunefulness. The melody on which Taverner based his mass is of unknown provenance. It is clearly a secular tune which enjoyed some popularity but which does not occur in any of the few surviving sources of the early sixteenth century. There is a song whose text begins 'Westron wynde when wyll thow blow' in a manuscript in the British Library, and although its tune bears some similarities to Taverner's, these might easily be no more than the common stylistic mannerisms of the period.

Western Wynde may be the earliest mass composed in England to be based on a secular melody, although the practice had been common on the continent since the time of Dufay. The use of popular tunes in sacred music was advocated by Luther, and this, coupled with some internal stylistic factors, has led to the suggestion that the Mass belongs to Taverner's Oxford years when he came into contact with advocates of the 'new learning'. On the other hand, part of the *Agnus Dei* occurs in keyboard format in a manuscript which may date from as early as 1520, and which seems to have some association with Court circles. If the Mass does date from early in Taverner's career, its progressive style and originality of design are even more remarkable.

The melody occurs nine times in each of the four movements (the *Sanctus-Benedictus* being a formal entity). Heard first in the top voice it subsequently moves to the contratenor or bass, while broadly similar changes of scoring and metre occur in

each movement. The result is one of the most closely unified of all English cyclic masses. As was customary in England the *Kyrie* was not set, probably because its text would vary according to the feast or season. Taverner also left out part of the *Credo* text, from *Et in Spiritum sanctum* to *in remissionem peccatorum* - again a peculiarly English practice which has never been satisfactorily explained, although Hugh Benham has suggested that such omissions arise from the early fifteenth-century practice of 'telescoping' or overlapping phrases of text, such portions then being abbreviated or even cut out entirely by subsequent copyists.

The magical Communion motet by Messiaen dates from 1937 and is the only liturgical piece that he composed for a choir. In its hypnotic sweetness it is typical of all his Communion music, from the early 'Le Banquet céleste' to 'Communion Prayers' of his final work; its 'mystical' F sharp major tonality relates it not only to 'Le Banquet' but also to several of the slower sections of the 'Vingt regards' for piano. As Messiaen wrote of one of these, the music "emerges from the silence like the colours coming out of the night ...".

Sunday 18th July

Young Organists Platform Concert

2.30pm

Oundle School Chapel

Many of those attending concerts are unaware that there is a nucleus to the Festival in the form of a Summer School for Young Organists. Talented students aged 14 - 25 congregate in Oundle or in Cambridge, where this year two of the courses are run, to study with the celebrated organists who come to teach and give recitals; over the past twenty years more than a thousand students have benefited from their expertise and enthusiasm.

This afternoon's concert gives many of the students a chance to display their talents. A complete list of students is given on page 44.

Sponsors **Martin and Ann Llowarch
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A SPECIAL ORGAN EVENT NOVEMBER 2004

**Wednesday November 24th at 7.30pm
NATIONAL YOUNG ORGANIST RECITAL
Attended by Olivier Latry**

**Thursday November 25th at 10.00-1.00pm
NATIONAL YOUNG ORGANIST MASTER CLASS
With Olivier Latry**

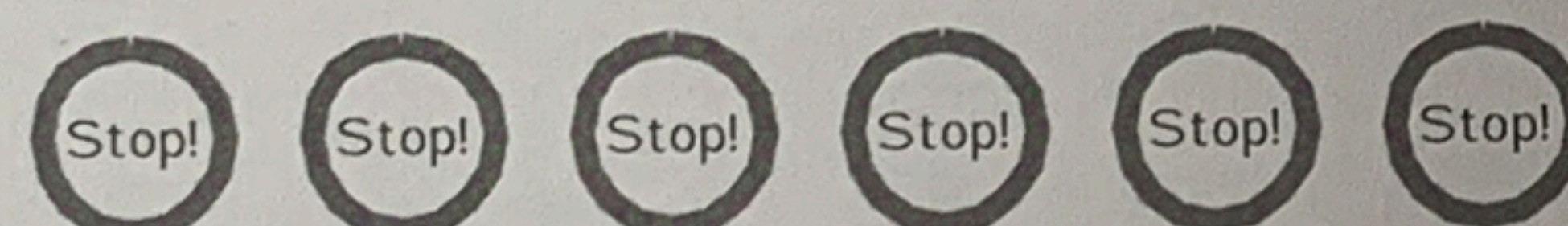
**Friday November 26th at 7.30pm
CELEBRITY ORGAN RECITAL
Olivier Latry**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Application forms for the two *Young Organist Events* are available from Kay McDowell, Chapter office, Garth House, The Precinct, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1SX

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