

VOCES CANTABILES

Ronald Corp, Conductor
Christian Immler, Baritone
James Sherlock, Organ

8pm Oundle School Chapel

<i>Hail Gladdening Light</i>	Charles Wood (1866-1926)
<i>Magnificat</i>	René Clausen (b.1953)
Organ:	
<i>Toccata Primi Toni</i>	Einar Sark (b.1921)
<i>O Nata Lux</i>	Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)
<i>Five Mystical Songs:</i>	R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
<i>Easter</i>	
<i>I got me flowers</i>	
<i>Love bade me welcome</i>	
<i>The call</i>	
<i>Antiphon</i>	
<i>God be in my Head</i>	Ronald Corp (b.1951)
<i>Miserere Mei</i>	Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)

Interval

<i>Give unto the Lord</i>	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
<i>Faire is the Heaven</i>	William Henry Harris (1883-1973)
<i>The Silver Swan</i>	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
<i>My Bonny Lass She Smileth</i>	Thomas Morley (1557-1602)
<i>Draw On, Sweet Night</i>	John Wilbye (1574-1638)
<i>Nunc Dimittis</i>	Gustav Holst (1874-1934)
<i>Sing Nightingale</i>	Samuel Rathbone (b.1986)
<i>(Commissioned Work; words by Michael Warren)</i>	
<i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i>	Benjamin Britten (1913-1977)



Choral singing has a prominent place in the music making of Scandinavian countries, and of course is a major part of music making in this country. Our concert celebrates those two strands of musical activity.

The composition of choral music in Britain goes back to medieval times but reached a peak of excellence in Tudor and Elizabethan times. It is music from the latter period that you can hear tonight – music by madrigal composers Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Morley and John Wilbye. The influence of these composers is felt in later British music, notably in the works of Holst and Vaughan Williams. Both these 20th century composers studied the music of the Elizabethan madrigalists and found a way of imitating their approach to counterpoint and harmony in a ‘modern’ way. Holst’s ‘*Nunc Dimittis*’ reminds us of an early Anglican Elizabethan anthem, and Vaughan Williams’s ‘*Five Mystical Songs*’ often recall the simplicity of a Dowland lute song, dressed in more ‘romantic’ harmony.

By the 19th century the church anthem had become an established part of choral evensong; composers such as Charles Wood, William Harris and Edward Elgar provided very effective and sometimes elaborate pieces for such services. In fact Elgar’s anthem was written not for evensong but for the Festival of the Sons of Clergy – a service which took place in St Paul’s Cathedral on 30 April 1914.

Benjamin Britten’s anthem ‘*Rejoice in the Lamb*’, or Festival Cantata, is a much larger piece and was written for the 50th anniversary of the consecration of St. Matthew’s Church in Northampton. It was commissioned by the former Vicar, the Very Reverend Walter Hussey, and first performed on September 21, 1943. The words are from a poem entitled ‘*Jubilate Agno*’ by the eccentric 18th century poet Christopher Smart.

Music making in Scandinavia is flourishing, and choral music has a prominent place. Choirs attain high standards of excellence and music is part of every child’s education. While some of the modern music emerging from Scandinavia is ‘difficult’ and extrovert, the music performed tonight is calmer and written in a straightforward musical idiom. Morten Lauridsen and René Clausen are two composers who have made a name for themselves in their own countries and are now achieving international recognition. Danish composer Einar Sark was also a concert pianist and organist. Written in 1951, his ‘*Toccata Primi Toni*’ is a piece of Danish neo-classical bacon which positively spits in the pan!

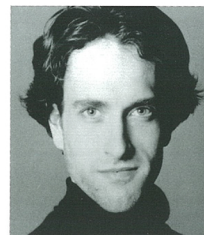
The concert also includes music from Italy - the ‘*Miserere*’ by Allegri, written for performance in the Sistine Chapel in the 17th century, and now one of the most popular pieces of that period in the choral repertory. It was the last of twelve *Miserere* settings composed and chanted at the service since 1514, and the most popular. At some point it became forbidden to transcribe the music; writing it down or performing it elsewhere would be punished by excommunication. Although there was a handful of supposed transcriptions in various royal courts in Europe, none of them ever succeeded in capturing the beauty of the ‘*Miserere*’ as performed annually in the Sistine Chapel. According to the popular story, the twelve year-old Mozart was visiting Rome when he heard the piece during the service. Later that day, he wrote it down entirely from memory. Some time during his travels, he ran into the British historian Dr Charles Burney, who obtained the piece from him and took it to London, where it was published. The ban was lifted, and Allegri’s ‘*Miserere*’ is one of the most popular choral works now performed.

Two new pieces feature in tonight’s programme – ‘*Sing Nightingale*’ to words by Michael Warren, composed by Samuel Rathbone which was commissioned by Voces Cantabiles for tonight’s world premiere performance, and ‘*God be in my head*’ from a set of part-songs by the conductor, Ronald Corp.



Ronald Corp began conducting full-time in 1988 when he founded the New London Orchestra, which has a reputation for innovative programmes. Ronald Corp has breathed new life into a wealth of little known music from the late 19th and 20th centuries, as well as commissioning many works.

His engagements have included concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Leipzig Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Bournemouth Sinfonietta. He works regularly with the BBC Singers and at the Promenade Concerts where last year he conducted the New London Orchestra at the ‘Junior Prom’.



Christian Immler began his musical education as a treble in the *Tölzer Knabenchor* where he recorded Bach Cantatas and the B Minor Mass with Harmoncourt and Parrot, later studying at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he won the 1998 Schubert Prize. In November 2001 Christian won 1st prize in the International Nadia and Lili

Boulanger Competition in Paris. Recent performances have included his Proms debut with William Christie and *Les Arts Florissants*, and St Matthew Passion with Daniel Harding and the *Kammerphilharmonie*, Bremen.

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