

WINCHESTER CAMERATA

Leader: David Blunt
Conductor: Andrew Moore

St Peter's Church, Jewry Street, Winchester
SO23 8RY
Sunday 8th March 2026

Centenary Concert in support of Trinity Winchester

The first half of this evening's concert presents a sort of musical 'montage' reflecting the variety of seasons, liturgical celebrations, spiritual themes, joys and sadnesses that happen within a church – not just in the physical building but within the church that is a living spiritual community.

Air from the Water Music George Frederic Handel (1685 – 1759)

Water has an important place in the life of the church – used, as it is, in the sacrament of baptism which confers Christian character and participation in the life of the church. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of water flowing from a new temple becoming ever deeper as it passes through barren land, bringing transformation and new life. Handel wrote his orchestral suite *Water Music* in 1717 for a grand royal procession of George I on the Thames, the great river which itself begins as a small trickle in Gloucestershire. While most of the movements of the suite are dances of one form or another, the Air stands out for its more reflective character.

Church Sonata No. 11 (K. 274) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Scripture has an important place in the life of the Church, and the Liturgy of the Word forms an important part of the Mass. During his time as court musician to the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, Mozart wrote some seventeen *Sonate da Chiesa* for liturgical use. These one-movement pieces were also known as Epistle Sonatas, for they were to be played between the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel.

Ave Verum Corpus William Byrd (1540 – 1623)

William Byrd remained a Catholic despite the constant threat not just to his livelihood, but to his life. Although he enjoyed prestige and honour as a composer for Queen Elizabeth's Chapel Royal, he continued to write Latin masses and motets to be sung in secret liturgies. Among these motets was *Ave Verum Corpus*. The text, which dates from the 13th or 14th centuries, is a meditation on the Body of Christ – the body born of the Virgin Mary and sacrificed on the Cross. It was written for the feast of Corpus Christi, which celebrates the belief in the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. The celebration of the Eucharist is central to the life of the Church. It is performed here in an arrangement for string orchestra.

Ave, verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine: vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine: cuius latus perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine: esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine. O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae. Miserere mei. Amen.

Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary, having truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind, from whose pierced side water and blood flowed: Be for us a sweet foretaste in the trial of death! O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus, O Jesus, son of Mary, have mercy on me. Amen.

Sinfonia al S. Sepolchro Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Antonio Vivaldi is best known for his lively and virtuosic concertos (most notably *The Four Seasons*). The Sinfonia in B minor, subtitled *Al Santo Sepolchro* (to the Holy Sepulchre) – composed about 1730 for performance on Good Friday or Holy Saturday – is by contrast a solemn and profound reflection on the suffering and death of Christ. A sombre adagio, and a fugal allegro are both characterised by dissonant harmonies.

Ascension Day Overture Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

Bach was a truly prolific composer. He was required to write a new cantata for pretty much every week of the Church's liturgical year, but for the greater feasts of Christmas, Easter and Ascension, he wrote larger scale Oratorios. His *Himmelfahrts-Oratorium* was first performed at Leipzig on Ascension Day 1740. The Overture is not, as would normally have been the case, an instrumental piece but a chorus: 'Praise God in his Kingdom'. This arrangement for strings hopefully captures the joyous nature of the piece and of the feast that it celebrates.

Meditation on Veni Creator Spiritus Andrew Moore (b. 1954)

Following close on the heels of the Ascension is the Feast of Pentecost, which marks the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. This Meditation on the plainsong hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come, Creator Spirit) was written in 1996 when Andrew Moore was briefly working in Rome. It is scored for solo violin, originally with organ accompaniment but here arranged for string accompaniment, played this evening by David Blunt.

Wedding Day at Troldhaugen Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Many weddings, and perhaps their anniversaries, will have joyfully been celebrated here in St Peter's over the last hundred years. Grieg wrote this positively cheerful piece for his wife in 1896, to celebrate their silver wedding. The piece opens with a lively dance-like section reflecting, perhaps, a public celebration. This is followed by a more intimate and lyrical interlude representing the private devotion of the married couple, before a return to the original festive material. It was originally written for piano, then orchestrated by the composer and performed here in an arrangement for strings.

Hymne à la Vierge (Op. 24) Pierre Villette (1926 – 1998)

This parish is dedicated to St Peter and the Winchester Martyrs, but in this church of St Peter's there is also a Lady Chapel that has not only a fine stained-glass depiction of the Winchester Martyrs, but also a fine statue of the Virgin Mary. *Hymne à la Vierge* honours the place of the Virgin Mary in Catholic spirituality. It was composed by Pierre Villette setting words by Roland Bouhéret (1930 – 1995). Villette was a chorister at Rouen Cathedral before studying at the Paris Conservatoire under Maurice Duruflé. He was also influenced by Fauré, Debussy and Poulenc. He wrote a wide range of music but his output included much church music. He is perhaps best known for this Hymn to the Virgin, arranged here for strings. A simple melodic line is accompanied by some luscious harmonic textures.

Ô toute belle Vierge Marie, Votre âme trouve en Dieu le parfait amour Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce comme une fiancée Parée de ses bijoux. Alléluia, alléluia. Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur, Car tu as pris soin de moi, Car tu m'as enveloppée du voile de l'innocence, Car tu m'as faite avant le jour, Car tu m'as fait précéder le jaillissement des sources. Vous êtes née avant les collines Ô sagesse de Dieu, porte du Salut Heureux celui qui marche dans vos traces Qui apprête son cœur a la voix de vos conseils. Avant les astres vous étiez présente Mère du Créateur au profond du ciel. Quand Dieu fixait les limites du monde Vous partagiez son cœur étant à l'œuvre avec lui.

O most beautiful Virgin Mary, Your soul finds perfect love in God. He clothes you in the mantle of Grace like a bride Adorned with her jewels. Alleluia, alleluia. I will sing your praise, Lord, For you have taken care of me, For you have enveloped me in the veil of innocence, For you created me before the dawn, For you made me before the gushing forth of springs. You were born before the hills, O wisdom of God, gateway to Salvation. Blessed is he who walks in your footsteps, Who prepares his heart to the voice of your counsel. Before the stars, you were present, Mother of the Creator in the depths of heaven. When God set the limits of the world, You shared his heart, working with him.

Prelude to Te Deum (1690) Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643 – 1704)

A church is where people come together to give praise to God and we end the first half of this evening's concert with a piece that does precisely that: the traditional Latin hymn *Te Deum* (*Thee God we Praise*). The complete hymn is rather long and it is wrongly thought that our English word 'tedium' is connected! ('Tedium' actually comes from the Latin 'taedium' which means boredom or weariness.) A native of Paris, Marc-Antoine Charpentier was a prominent (if not dominant) and prolific composer at the time of Louis XIV. He wrote several *Te Deums* and amongst them is this one from 1690 which was re-discovered only in 1953, since when its Prelude – instantly recognisable – has become Charpentier's most famous piece.

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Four Seasonal Sketches Andrew Moore (b. 1954)

1. *Autumn* 2. *Winter* 3. *Spring* 4. *Summer*

The *Four Seasonal Sketches* by conductor Andrew Moore, completed in 2018, draw on modal influences and English pastoralism. *Autumn* is characterised by a stillness and perhaps a wistfulness for what has passed. A more optimistic middle section gives way to a return to the autumnal sentiment. *Winter* is the longest of the sketches, perhaps a reflection of how winter sometimes feels. A sombre, somewhat ponderous opening is followed by a lively middle section – a brisk walk on a cold day perhaps. *Spring* is an optimistic and joyful waltz. *Summer*'s still and sultry opening contrasts with a vigorous section incorporating contrapuntal elements and harmonic mood changes, and closes with a return to the opening sense of tranquillity.

Simple Symphony Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

1. *Boisterous Bourree* 2. *Playful Pizzicato* 3. *Sentimental Saraband* 4. *Frolicsome Finale*

This year sees the fiftieth anniversary of Britten's death, but he was only a twenty-year old student when he wrote about this work: "This *Simple Symphony* is entirely based on material from works which the composer wrote between the ages of nine and twelve. Although the development of these themes is in many places quite new, there are large stretches of the work which are taken bodily from the early pieces." The youth of the composer, and the titles of the four movements, might suggest something of the lightweight, but there is a stature here as Britten demonstrates his skill in taking the ordinary or simple and making of it something fresh and of enduring interest.

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Trinity Winchester is a Winchester-based charity which addresses the effects of homelessness and vulnerability through specialist practical and emotional support, and proactive prevention, empowering positive change. It helps people who are vulnerable to the effects of homelessness, addiction, physical and mental ill health, poverty, social isolation and domestic abuse. It offers solutions, hope, choice and control. From humble beginnings, Trinity has grown into a respected and skilful organisation helping people to improve their lives. It provides vital practical and emotional support to over 640 people each year who are experiencing the effects of homelessness or vulnerability. Its dedicated Women's Service sees over 150 women each year, supporting them to make positive change to their lives and in many cases break free from the damaging cycle of domestic abuse. Trinity Winchester is supported by the parish of St Peter's and the Winchester Martyrs and is one of the Mayor of Winchester's chosen charities for this year.

The **Winchester Camerata** is a string orchestra founded by Louise Woods in 2011 with conductor Andrew Moore and leader David Blunt, to offer the opportunity for experienced local players to explore some of the extensive string repertoire – over 100 different pieces so far. The list of composers spans Bartok, Elgar, Grieg, Holst, Shostakovitch, Tchaikovsky and Vaughan-Williams, and some lesser-known such as Amy Beach, Lily Boulanger, Jean Francaix and Nino Rota. The Camerata's twice-yearly concerts have become a noted feature of the Winchester music calendar. It has worked with distinguished soloists, as well as providing an opportunity for younger performers starting out in their careers. It has performed at both the Winchester Festival and the Winchester Chamber Music Festival. With its entirely voluntary structure and funded only by ticket sales, the Camerata has happily been able to support a range of local charities.

Andrew Moore studied orchestral conducting, violin and organ at the Royal Academy of Music. He is a composer and an arranger, perhaps best known for his liturgical and organ music. Fr Andrew has long been associated with St Peter's, first arriving in 1996 as assistant priest to Bishop Peter Doyle and then resident for many years while supplying in the Diocese and serving as a school chaplain.

The Winchester Camerata

Violin 1

David Blunt*
Kathryn Rickard
Claire Swinstead
Lucy Higgs
Claire Mitchell
Darren Beard

Violas

Helen Tucker*
Jane Andrews
Louise Woods
Robin Lewis
Libby Merriman

Bass

Colin New

Violin 2

Rose Milford*
Sonja Nagle
Nadine Farris
Catherine Grierson
Catherine Gough
Ursula Payne

Cellos

Robin Chave*
Fiona Turnbull
Catherine Mitchell
Cordelia Dyer
Angie Janssen
Christopher Higgs

* section leader

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