

The music

With 11th November only a few short weeks away, this evening’s programme explores the theme of Remembrance. **Ensemble Pro Victoria** presents a programme of unaccompanied vocal music spanning several centuries from the Renaissance to the present day. The sequence will encompass music of sorrow and consolation, of recollection, reflection and peace. It will include a motet by a predecessor of **Victoria** and a recent commission by the ensemble itself. At its core is the profoundly moving *Requiem* of **Tomás Luis de Victoria**, the pre-eminent composer of Renaissance Spain. The programme will include the following music.

Cristóbal de Morales	<i>Circumdederunt me</i>
Simon Beattie	<i>A Remembrance</i>
Ronald Edward Perrin	<i>It is Finished</i>
Haldane Campbell Stewart	<i>The Lilies of the Field</i>
Piers Connor Kennedy	<i>The Ending of the Day</i>
Douglas Guest	<i>For the Fallen</i>

INTERVAL	
Tomás Luis de Victoria	<i>Requiem 1605 (Officium Defunctorum)</i>

Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553) *Circumdederunt me*

Morales was born in Seville and held various musical posts in Spain and in Rome. Much-respected in his time, his works were widely distributed in Europe and the New World and he is now considered to be the most influential Spanish composer before Victoria. This short motet sets a verse from *Psalms 114* which was chanted at the *Vespers for the Dead*. The text could scarcely be darker but Morales’ music, in contrast, provides heartfelt comfort and healing.

Simon Beattie *A Remembrance* (2017)

Simon Beattie pursues a number of different occupations including bookseller, translator, composer and poet. This tribute to a local man, killed in action, combines both poet and composer.

Simon writes: “Sydney James Lacey was the son of Harry and Laura Lacey, of 22 Gladstone Road, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. The 1911 census finds him working as a cowman on a farm. He must have emigrated in the interim, because in July 1915 he enlisted, aged 22, at Blackboy Hill, Western Australia, as a private with the 32nd Battalion of

the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). On 19th November 1915, along with over 1300 other soldiers, he set sail from Adelaide for Egypt where they arrived a month later. On 17th June 1916 they moved on to France to join the British Expeditionary Force.

Sydney died on 19th July 1916, aged 24, one of about 5000 soldiers of the AIF to perish in the Battle of Fromelles, Australia’s first engagement on the Western Front and known as ‘the worst 24 hours in Australia’s entire history’. The exact location of Sydney’s body is unknown, but he is commemorated at the VC Corner of the Australian Cemetery and Memorial just outside the village of Fromelles, and on Chesham war memorial”.

Ronald Edward Perrin (1931-1997) *It is Finished*

Following an organ scholarship at Christ Church, Oxford, and National Service, **Perrin**’s first appointment was as Assistant Organist at Leeds Parish Church. He then moved to York Minster as assistant to Francis Jackson. In 1966 he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Ripon Cathedral, where he remained for almost 30 years until his retirement in 1994. His many compositions for the Church include three major settings of the Anglican Communion Service.

It is Finished takes its text from *The Unutterable Beauty*, a collection of poems by WWI Anglican priest and poet Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy (1883-1929). Known as Woodbine Willie for giving Woodbine cigarettes to injured and dying soldiers, his texts reflect the brutality of man in The Great War, and yet his unyielding faith in God.

Perrin’s setting is most often used as an Easter hymn and its use was sustained by the choral foundation at Leeds Parish Church, close to which Kennedy was born and schooled.

Haldane Campbell Stewart (1868-1942) *The Lilies of the Field*

Haldane Campbell Stewart is unique in having a (lengthy but unsuccessful) first-class cricket career for Kent while also directing the music at Lancing College and later Magdalen College School (MCS). This hymn owes its text to R Kennard Davis, former headmaster of MCS, and relates the Lilies of the Field to our lives, as in *Matthew 6*.

Piers Connor Kennedy *The Ending of the Day* (2018)

The Ending of the Day is a setting of another poem from *The Unutterable Beauty*. The Ensemble’s composer-in-residence and low bass (and soon to be King’s Singer), **Piers Connor**

Kennedy (no relation that we know of!), wrote it in Australia during a residency at St George’s, Perth.

Douglas Guest (1916-1996) *For the Fallen*

Following a spell as organ scholar at King’s College Cambridge and active service in WWII, **Douglas Guest** held a number of important cathedral posts including Organist of Salisbury Cathedral and Organist and Master of the Choristers at Worcester Cathedral. His final post was as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey.

Setting a verse from Laurence Binyon’s legendary text, Guest’s glorious miniature, *For the Fallen*, has established itself as one of the foremost Remembrance pieces, best known by its first line ‘They shall grow not old’. It was first performed in 1971 at the Westminster Abbey Remembrance Day Service.

Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611) - *Officium Defunctorum* (*Requiem*)

Lesson: Taedet animam meam ~ Introit: Requiem aeternam ~ Kyrie ~ Gradual: Requiem aeternam ~ Offertory: Domine, Jesu Christe ~ Sanctus & Benedictus ~ Agnus Dei ~ Communion: Lux aeterna ~ Motet: Versa est in luctum ~ Responsory: Libera me, Domine

The *Requiem* was first published in 1605 having been written for the funeral in 1603 of the Dowager Empress Maria, daughter of the Emperor Charles V and sister of King Philip II of Spain. Maria had been living in monastic retreat for over 20 years before her death and **Victoria** had been her chaplain (and Director of Music) for most of that time. For this performance, Ensemble Pro Victoria has returned to the original notation to help shape an interpretation in the way Victoria might have expected as an expression of his own deeply-held faith.

Rarely performed until comparatively recent years, Victoria’s *Requiem* is now recognized as one of the crowning masterpieces of golden age Spanish music and our ancient church should provide the perfect intimate environment for this most human of settings – “For many, it represents what Renaissance polyphony is, what it sounds and feels like, and how expressive it can be.” *Greg Skidmore*

Notes by Toby Ward and Martin Cunningham

The artists

Fiona Fraser *soprano* **Maddy Morris** *soprano*
Elisabeth Paul *mezzo-soprano* **James Micklethwaite**
tenor **Daniel Tate** *baritone* **Piers Connor Kennedy**
bass **Toby Ward** *director*

Ensemble Pro Victoria is established as one of the Britain's finest young early music ensembles (*Early Music Review*). Founded at Cambridge University in 2015 by Humphrey Thompson (baritone, early music editor) and Toby Ward (artistic director), the ensemble put down roots in the rich tradition of combined historical research and high-level performance, in partnership with their academic adviser, professor Magnus Williamson (Newcastle University).

Ensemble Pro Victoria was awarded joint-first prize in the London International Festival of Early Music Young Ensemble Competition 2020, catapulting them to recognition and subsequent signing with Scotland's Gramophone award-winning classical label, *Delphian Records*. Their first professional album, '*Robert Fayrfax, Music for Tudor Kings and Queens*' was released in 2021, exactly 500 years after Robert Fayrfax's death. It was critically acclaimed, with reviews in *Gramophone* magazine, *Early Music Review* and on *Radio 3's Early Music Show* with the great accolade of five stars and the front cover feature of *Choir and Organ* magazine. Their second album with *Delphian Records*, '*Tudor Music Afterlives*', released in 2022 follows the posthumous traces and remains of great Catholic music after the Reformation.

The ensemble made a celebrated *Radio 3* debut in 2021 with a reconstruction of *Vespers* as Fayrfax would have heard it in 1521, broadcast live from the chapel of Hampton Court Palace, and repeated on the day of Fayrfax's quincentenary.

Concerts have included *Vocal Music of the English Baroque* at the London International Early Music Festival, *Fayrfax and his Tudor contemporaries* at the Cambridge Early Music Festival and New College, Oxford, and Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* at St John's, Holland Park. The group has expanded forces with instruments a number of times previously to perform Arvo Pärt's *Passio* and Bach's *St John Passion* in St Mary's, Bourne St, Belgravia, and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*/Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* in King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

Visit www.little-missenden.org

Festival Patron: David Matthews

Grateful acknowledgements

We thank all those who have helped with the Festival or supported us financially and in other ways. Special thanks to the funding bodies, sponsors and supporters listed below, without whose generous help there would be no Festival.



The Hinrichsen Foundation

The Friends of the Little Missenden Festival

Little Missenden Parish Council

Little Missenden Parochial Church Council

Great Missenden, Little Missenden, and Hyde Heath

Schools PTAs

The Michael Cox Fund

Laurette Read

Bluepepper Designs

The Festival Volunteers

Piano: **Fazioli 228** from **Jaques Samuel**

Tuner: **Jim Denton**

Flowers: **Rosemary Ladd**

Next year's Festival

The 2025 Little Missenden Festival will run from Friday 3rd to Sunday 12th October.

Festival website little-missenden.org

- See the full **2024 Festival Programme**
- **Book Tickets** (or phone 0333 666 3366)
- Be added to our **Mailing List** for next year's brochure
- Find out about the **Friends** or **Sponsorship**

Booking Information

- Email: tickets@little-missenden.org
- Phone: 01494 958148 between 11am and 8pm

General Information

- Email: contact@little-missenden.org

Little Missenden Festival Executive Committee

Chair: Dick Ware

Committee: Angela Bishop, Polly Buston, Martin Cunningham, John Glasson, Beth Neill, Liz Wager, Dick Wells, Rachel Wilcox

Programme Notes

ENSEMBLE PRO VICTORIA

In Memoriam



8pm, Saturday October 12th, 2024
Little Missenden Church

64th Little Missenden Festival