

Little Missenden Festival 2026



2nd-11th October

The 66th Little Missenden Festival

Welcome to the brochure for the 66th Little Missenden Festival where you'll find details of all our events this year. Our intention, as it's been every year since 1960, is to present you with an eclectic menu – the familiar certainly, but also the new and the rarely-performed, which should both challenge and broaden our musical horizons. We hope you'll be able to join us for as many of these concerts and other events as possible, most of which will be held in the atmospheric surroundings – and superlative acoustic – of Little Missenden Church.

We start as we mean to go on with a brand-new song cycle commissioned by the Festival – *Still I Think Alive* – by the exciting young composer **Emma-Ruth Richards** and performed by internationally-acclaimed soprano **Jennifer France** and pianist **Lana Bode**. Their programme also contains a rich variety of songs by other composers, including the Mendelssohns and the Schumanns. The next day there's an illustrated lecture previewing the forthcoming exhibition of **van Eyck** portraits at the National Gallery; then an evening of top quality jazz from the exciting young **Emily Masser/Alex Clarke Quintet**. We round off our first weekend with a piano recital by **Clare Hammond** of pieces ranging from the Romantic to the contemporary. Clare is a firm favourite of the Festival and the emotional impact and virtuosity of her pianism is second to none.

After the weekend, we start again with string quartets by Haydn and Nielsen played by current BBC New Generation Artists the **Kleio Quartet**, in a programme also including an intriguing new piece by **Mark-Anthony Turnage** which features the exotic sounds of temple bells alongside the strings of the quartet. We then progress to a very different sound world when pianist **Kate Ryder** performs the complete *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano by John Cage. Forget the myth of Cage as an abrasive avant-garde composer – this seminal work is an enchanting, softly-coloured masterpiece, meditative and calming. A wonderful and rare experience in surroundings for which it's ideally suited.



In a complete change of mood the following day we'll find ourselves in the company of the folk super-group **Lady Maisery** combining the individual talents of **Hannah James**, **Hazel Askew** and **Rowan Rheingans** to create a blend of harmonic perfection.

Our final weekend takes us on journeys across land and through time. First, around the British and Irish Isles in a choral concert by **St Martin's Voices**, one of our leading young vocal groups. Choral cycles by Vaughan Williams, Britten and Tippett, along with more recent folk-inspired settings, are complemented by evocative poetry read by **Zeb Soanes** who, as announcer and actor, will need no introduction. And then we have the first of two days featuring the music of JS Bach. On Saturday we'll hear all six of his genre-defining *Suites for Solo Cello* played by three cellists in three different styles – from baroque through current performance practice to a unique modern interpretation using a rare Norwegian Hardanger cello. All three cellists will also discuss their differing approaches to both the instrument and to the music. Then, on the final afternoon of our main Festival, ensemble **In Echo** are joined by author **Horatio Clare**. Together they'll recreate Bach's legendary walk in 1705 to meet his much-revered older contemporary Dietrich Buxtehude by means both of narrative and of music from the composer's own time.

But that's still not all - our Christmas concert in early December will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Britten's death. All-female choir **Aurora Nova** with **Gabriella Dell'Olio** (harp) will perform his much-loved *Ceremony of Carols* along with seasonal music by composers from Palestrina to the present day. And we'll also be giving a first outing to a new carol, specially commissioned by the Festival, from the multi-talented composer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange.

We do hope you enjoy reading the rest of this brochure and we look forward to welcoming you to the Festival in October.

Buying tickets

Information on how to buy tickets online or by telephone can be found at the end of the brochure, along with a postal booking form.

More information about the Festival

Further information about this year's programme and the Festival in general can be found on our website **www.little-missenden.org**

Little Missenden Festival Executive Committee

Chair: Dick Ware

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

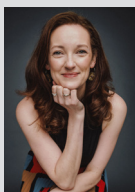
'Still I Think Alive'

Fanny Mendelssohn	<i>There be none of Beauty's Daughters</i>
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Suleika op34 no4</i>
Libby Larsen	<i>Jane Seymour (from Try Me Good King)</i>
	<i>Marriage...Divorce (from Me [Brenda Ueland])</i>
	<i>When I am an Old Woman</i>
Rebecca Clarke	<i>Infant Joy</i>
	<i>One That Is Ever Kind</i>
Amy Beach	<i>In the Twilight</i>
	<i>Cradle Song of the Lonely Mother</i>
	(piano solo)
Kaija Saariaho	<i>Sua katselen (from Leino Songs)</i>
Judith Weir	<i>Breasts!! Song of the Innocent Wild Child</i>
	<i>The Mothership: When a Good Mother Sails From This World</i>
Diana Burrell	<i>Love Song</i>
Robert Schumann	<i>Er, der Herrlichste von allen (from Frauenliebe und -leben)</i>
Clara Schumann	<i>Die stille Lotosblume</i>
Emma-Ruth Richards	<i>'Still I Think Alive'</i>
	<i>(Festival commission and premiere)</i>

Jennifer France *soprano* **Lana Bode** *piano*

The Festival's delighted this year to be able to commission a new 20-minute song cycle by the young British composer Emma-Ruth Richards, *Still I Think Alive*. The five songs explore modern motherhood in many of its contradictions, moving (as she puts it) 'between moments of wonder, exhaustion, joy, overwhelm and absurdity'.

The many and various songs in the remainder of the programme together constitute a wonderful musical summary of the changes in both society's and women's own attitudes towards what it means to be a woman.



©Pablo Strong Photography

A previous Emerging Artist at Scottish Opera, **Jennifer France** was winner of the 2018 Critics' Circle Emerging Talent Award and was described by *WhatsOnStage* as 'the living jewel in opera's crown'. This year she returns to the Royal Opera House as First Niece in *Peter Grimes* and to Garsington as Cecily Cardew in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Lana Bode is an American-British pianist, educator and artist-producer.

Born in 1985, **Emma-Ruth Richards'** deeply expressive and highly charged music has been championed by many ensembles and soloists in the UK and internationally and described as "simply beautiful" by *Opera North*, *Bachtrack*.

askonasholt.com/artist/jennifer-france lanabode.com
emmaruthrichards.com

Van Eyck: The Portraits



©National Gallery

This November the National Gallery will host the first ever exhibition dedicated to the portraits of **Jan van Eyck** (1390-1441). Providing an unprecedented opportunity to see all his surviving independent portraits reunited together for the first time, the exhibition will explore the painter's remarkable achievements and contribution to the genre. Portraiture as we know it today emerged suddenly under van Eyck's brush in the 1430s. In contrast to earlier images

of kings, rulers and nobles which often bore little resemblance to their subjects, van Eyck produced minutely observed likenesses of individuals, pulsating with life and capturing every detail of their features. His works also document a transitional moment in who might sit for a portrait. No longer the preserve of the elite, van Eyck painted merchants, craftsmen and family members.

This lecture will discuss van Eyck's life and work and introduce the extraordinary achievements he made in painting. It will cover his innovations in the genre of portraiture, what is known about the people who sat for him, and the manner in which he so brilliantly captured their likenesses.

Nicholas Flory is the David Scrase Project Curator at the National Gallery, working on the upcoming van Eyck exhibition. He was previously the Gallery's Simon Sainsbury Curatorial Fellow for Paintings before 1600, during which time he was involved with the redisplay of the Gallery's collection for its bicentenary and worked on the exhibition *Siena: The Rise of Painting 1300-1350*. He received his PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art in 2022, where he also taught as an Associate Lecturer.

Little Missenden Village Hall

Tickets £12 unreserved

Why not join the Friends of the Festival?

The Friends' financial support allows us to offer the very highest quality in our programming; to be more adventurous; and to commission new works. Friends get priority booking and advance information about forthcoming events.

Go to www.little-missenden.org for more information

The Emily Masser/Alex Clarke Quintet

Emily Masser *vocals* **Alex Clarke** *alto saxophone*
Graham Harvey *piano* **James Owston** *bass* **Steve Brown** *drums*

The **Emily Masser/Alex Clarke Quintet** features two of the brightest young talents to have emerged on the British jazz scene in recent years. Since discovering their mutual love for bebop, they've joined forces to perform fiery, straight-ahead jazz alongside some of the UK's top musicians.

The Quintet delivers fresh, innovative arrangements of standards with a contemporary edge, while remaining grounded in the swing tradition. Quickly gaining recognition among fellow musicians and audiences alike, they've appeared at numerous major UK jazz clubs and festivals including Pizza Express Soho, the Swanage Jazz Festival and the Buxton International Festival.

A finalist in the 2025 Musician's Company Tina May Jazz Award, **Emily Masser's** breakthrough came with the release of her recent album *Songs With My Father*. It's been met with glowing reviews and critical acclaim and praised for Emily's "pin-sharp singing, sparkling scat, and polished vocalese" (*UK Jazz Views*). She presents her arrangements and vocals with a freshness and maturity that have quickly established her as a "new star of British Jazz" and "a burning talent" in the words of *London Jazz News*.



©cjepegphotography

emilymasser.co.uk



©Gareth Howell

Alex Clarke was a finalist in the BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year 2020, winner of the Rising Star category in the 2019 British Jazz Awards and three-time Parliamentary Jazz Awards nominee. Rooted in the bebop tradition, she's recognised as one of the most in-demand saxophonists on the British jazz scene. "A creative force for good" (*Jazzwise*)

alexclarkejazz.co.uk

Clare Hammond

Frédéric Chopin

Barcarolle op60

Grazyna Bacewicz

Sonatina (1955)

Sergei Rachmaninov

Études-Tableaux op33

Leoš Janáček

In the Mists

Co-created by participants at HMP Featherstone with Michael Betteridge –
'Shattered Freedom, Shards of Hope'

George Gershwin/Earl Wild *Three Virtuoso Études after Gershwin*

Igor Stravinsky (arr. Agosti) *The Firebird Suite*

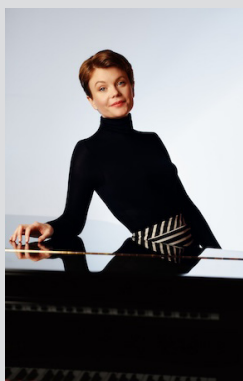
Clare Hammond *piano*

Written only three years before his death, Chopin's *opus 60 Barcarolle* begins Clare Hammond's intriguingly varied programme, illustrating the piano's transition from Romanticism into modern times. In the *Barcarolle*, Chopin deliberately means us to hear the Venetian gondolier's song. By contrast, Rachmaninov is at pains to leave any interpretation of the individual pieces in his *Études-Tableaux* first to performer and then to listener – we're introduced to impressionism in musical form. Likewise, the title of Janáček's *In the Mists* might seem to be an explicit guide to the listener, but what we hear and see in it remains very much up to us.

Arriving in the modern era, the strong jazz-influenced rhythms of Earl Wild's *Virtuoso Études* – versions of some of Gershwin's most well-loved songs – need (and will get) all the performer's strength, dexterity and technical ability; while the virtuosic transcriptions of movements from *The Firebird* – exciting enough in their original orchestral form – are arguably even more so when played by Clare on the piano.

Acclaimed as a "pianist of extraordinary gifts" (*Gramophone*) and "immense power" (*The Times*), **Clare Hammond** is recognised for her imaginative playing, visionary programming, and communicative performance style.

In recent years, community engagement has formed an increasingly important part of Clare's work, and one direct result of this will be heard in a piece co-created by participants at HMP Featherstone. Clare will say a few words about this and her prison programme in general before she plays it.



©Philip Gatward

clarehammond.com

This recital is sponsored by Rosemary Pearce in memory of her late husband Frank.

Kleio Quartet

Franz Joseph Haydn
Mark-Anthony Turnage
Carl Nielsen

String Quartet op74 no1 in C major
Laura
String Quartet no1 in G minor

Yume Fujise, Katherine Yoon *violin* **Jaren Ziegler** *viola*
Gerard Flotats *cello*

Having spent the previous two years in London, Haydn was back home in Vienna in 1793, where he wrote six string quartets – three each in his *op71* and *op74* sets. Hardly surprisingly, they reflect the novel experience of having heard his latest works performed in large public spaces to hugely appreciative audiences. One result? His quartets now became more expansive and outward-facing. *Op74 no1* is a prime example of the change. It's a bright and airy piece, lively and joyful in equal measure, with a highly lyrical third-movement *trio* and an almost orchestral-sounding *finale*.

Laura was premiered late last year by the Kleio Quartet. In what must be unique scoring, they accompany themselves on Japanese temple bells to create an unforgettable sonic landscape, which the performers themselves describe as 'spellbindingly beautiful'.

Nielsen wrote four string quartets, all of them early works before he'd developed the more personal and idiosyncratic style we see for example in his later symphonies. Although these are now far better known than they were a few years' ago, the same can't be said of his quartets. This neglect is our loss – the *G minor Quartet* is a glorious work, wearing its late-Romantic clothes with great aplomb. Moving easily between vigorous interplay among the strings, chorale-like stillness and full-blooded lyricism, it certainly gives us every incentive to explore the other three.



©Ting-Ru Lai

First Prize and Commission Prize winners at the 2023 Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition, the **Kleio Quartet** are rapidly emerging as one of the most exciting young string quartets on the international stage. The ensemble was formed at the Seiji Ozawa International Chamber Academy and has since performed in many leading venues across Europe. They're part of the

BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme and served as the Resident Quartet at the Royal Northern College of Music's String Quartet Studio in 2025.

kleioquartet.com

Kate Ryder

John Cage *Sonatas and Interludes*

Kate Ryder *prepared piano*

For once, the use of the much over-used word 'seminal' is fully justified when applied to John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*. Performed as a complete set, the work's 16 sonatas and 4 interludes stand as a milestone in the history of postwar piano music. They're very rarely heard live in the UK in their entirety and we're therefore delighted to welcome Kate Ryder to perform them for us.

The work was described at the time of its composition (1946-1948) as an exercise in spiritual meditation – 'a texture of sounds designed to set silence as a jewel' – and the very special setting provided by Little Missenden Church, which is full of its own ancient memories, could hardly be bettered as a place to facilitate this. In the work, Cage was searching for a music whose universality was Eastern as well as Western, and the creation of music 'to sober and quiet the mind, making it susceptible to divine influences'.

To achieve this, he reinvented the piano. By carefully inserting small objects – screws, bolts, pieces of plastic, rubber erasers – between and under the strings, muting them and affecting their resonance, the prepared piano becomes an instrument of lyrical percussion; and hearing a piano properly prepared is one of the most evocative experiences in music.

Kate Ryder's wide-ranging experience as a pianist encompasses solo work, improvisation and collaborations with leading performers and ensembles in dance, electronics and theatre, where she has established herself as a versatile and original performer and has had many works created for her by composers in the UK and abroad.

She was appointed Creativeworks Entrepreneur in Residence at Kingston University in 2014 and has a particular interest in working with unusual keyboard instruments.



©Sophie DiMartino

Once the performance is over, Kate will be very happy to show interested audience members exactly how she's gone about preparing her piano and to answer any questions. During this period the bar will be open (the cost of the ticket will include a free drink).

kateryder.co.uk

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Michael Cox

Lady Maisery

Hannah James vocals, piano accordion, clogs, foot percussion

Hazel Askew vocals, melodeon, concertina, harp, bells

Rowan Rheingans vocals, fiddle, banjo

"A Lady Maisery show always feels like a celebration; a celebration of harmony singing, of friendship and of female solidarity." (Gavin McNamara, *Bristol Beacon*)

The combined vocal and multi-instrumental talents of Rowan Rheingans, Hazel Askew and Hannah James make up the uniquely captivating band **Lady Maisery**, which has for well over a decade inspired audiences throughout the UK and Europe.

As individuals they are three multi-award-winning artists. As Lady Maisery their miraculous vocal blend creates a single union, carrying stories of sisterhood, human struggle, the joy of living and the vitality of song with the "freshest possible take on traditional



music" (*Folk Radio UK*). Their long-standing effervescent collaboration has been described as "adventurous and beautiful" (Mark Radcliffe, *Radio 2*), "exquisite and thrilling" (*The Guardian*), and with "a generosity of spirit and *joie de vivre* that seems to emanate from every minute of their recorded output as well as from their exuberant live shows" (*Folk Radio UK*).

Their fifth studio album 'Tender' was released at the end of 2022 to wide-reaching enthusiasm. It explores the power in vulnerability, the tenderness of collective wounds and the strength in kindness, and was described as "a beguiling blend of ancient and modern" (*The Times*) and "both nurturing and raw, a sensitive response to the times we are living in" (*Daily Info*). Having entered the Official Indie Album Charts at number 18 and the Official Indie Album Breakers Chart at number 3 (rare accolades for British folk), it then went on to spend a whole year in the Official Folk Chart Top 40.

As well as earlier material, we're also expecting the programme to include songs from the band's recently-released double CD 'Wakefire', described by them as a 'Summer album'.

ladymaisery.com

St Martin's Voices and Zeb Soanes

A journey around the British and Irish Isles

Henry Purcell	<i>Fairest Isle</i>
Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>Five English Folk Songs</i> - <i>The dark-eyed sailor</i> - <i>The springtime of the year</i> - <i>Just as the tide was flowing</i> - <i>The lover's ghost</i> - <i>Wassail song</i>
James MacMillan	<i>The Gallant Weaver</i>
Kristina Arakelyan	<i>My true love is parted from me</i>
Michael Tippett	<i>Four Songs from the British Isles</i> - <i>Early one morning</i> - <i>Lilliburlero</i> - <i>Poortith cauld</i> - <i>Gwenllian</i>
Gordon Jacob (arr.)	<i>The ash grove</i>
Benjamin Britten	<i>Five Flower Songs</i> - <i>To daffodils</i> - <i>The succession of the four sweet months</i> - <i>Marsh flowers</i> - <i>The evening primrose</i> - <i>The ballad of green broom</i>
Sarah Quartel	<i>The parting glass</i>
Kerry Andrew	<i>All things are quite silent</i>
Cecilia McDowall	<i>How sour sweet music is from</i> <i>'When time is broke'</i>
Grayston Ives (arr.)	<i>All through the night</i>
Gustav Holst (arr.)	<i>I love my love</i>
Sarah Rimkus	<i>Charlie is my darling</i>

Between the musical items, Zeb Soanes will be reading poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson, Alexander Pope, John Clare, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, WH Auden, William Blake and Christina Rossetti

Anchored by choral cycles from three quintessentially British composers of the last century, the programme takes us round the British Isles on a kaleidoscopic musical and poetic journey. An evening reminding ourselves of our islands' musical heritage will be an evocative one. Centuries-old folk tunes and favourite pieces of verse we've held within us since childhood can't fail to bring back to life half-remembered stories, together with the thoughts and feelings that went with them at the time. But those elements from the past that survive and pass the test of time become – as the pieces in the programme from living composers attest – very much part of the present as well.



Described as "almost miraculously polished" (*Gramophone*), **St Martin's Voices** is one of the UK's leading vocal ensembles, renowned for its musical versatility and clarity of sound. The choir sings for regular concerts and special events at its home in London's St Martin-in-the-Fields, performing repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to new commissions from British composers. They appear regularly at concert venues across the UK and are often featured in broadcasts on *BBC Radios 3 and 4* and *Classic FM*.

After many years as an announcer at the BBC, including as the voice of *The Shipping Forecast*, **Zeb Soanes** joined *Classic FM* in 2022 and his nightly show *Relaxing Evenings* regularly attracts over a million listeners. He was appointed Chancellor of the University of Suffolk last year and is currently on stage in the one-man show *Two Halves of Guinness* about his hero Sir Alec Guinness, marking the 25th anniversary of the celebrated actor's death.



©Charlie Carter

stmartinsvoices.com

zebsoanes.com

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported the Festival – financially, or in so many other ways. Special thanks to those listed below, without whose generous help there would be no Festival.

The Hinrichsen Foundation

RVW Trust

The Friends of Little Missenden Festival

Little Missenden Parochial Church Council

Little Missenden Parish Council

Rayners, Penn

Hamptons International Estate Agents

Great Missenden, Little Missenden, and Hyde Heath Schools PTAs

The Michael Cox Fund

Laurette Read

Bluepepper Designs

Jaques Samuel Pianos

The Festival Volunteers



Our work in Schools

We are very proud of the work we've been doing in local schools for many years now. As an adjunct to the Festival proper we run music workshops with pupils from Hyde Heath and Little Missenden Infant Schools, and Great Missenden Combined School. The vast majority of the funding for this programme comes from the Festival's own resources.

Led by a highly-experienced and inspirational animateur, and with the aid of professional musicians, the children learn to develop their musical ideas and help compose original songs, which are then performed to parents at a combined concert. As well as enormously enjoying the opportunity to use their creative skills, the children also gain confidence and improve their concentration, communication and literacy.

At a time when musical education in most schools has suffered such severe cutbacks, the Festival is more than ever convinced of the value of the programme. Nurturing performers and audiences for the future is vital if the many benefits we all gain from listening to and participating in musical activities are not to be lost. Otherwise, festivals such as ours may well become things of the past.

Bach Suites for Solo Cello

(Events 9, 10, 11(a) and 11(b))

For those buying tickets for all three events 9, 11(a) and 11(b), discounted bundle prices of £55, £39 and £19 will apply. The Red Lion is also offering a 2-course meal for audience members for £17.50 at 6pm. Please book directly with the pub (01494 862876) and say that you are Festival-goers.

It's thought that Bach's six *Cello Suites* were written when he was employed at the court in Köthen in the 1720s, around the same time as the *Brandenburg Concertos* and the *Violin Sonatas and Partitas*. But there's no single definitive manuscript of the *Suites* and one theory to account for the discrepancies in the very few manuscript scores that are extant is that Bach continued to work on them, and that there may never in fact have been a 'final' version. There are therefore uncertainties about dates but also – more importantly – about interpretation. Other questions include the player for whom he might have written them (perhaps himself – although there's only limited evidence he played cello – or for another at the Köthen court) and even the actual instrument he wrote for.

But perhaps the most striking thing of all is that they were largely forgotten and unplayed until about a century after Bach's death, when the first published edition emerged. And they only really entered the public domain with Casals' 1930s recordings, by which time detailed knowledge of early 18th-century performance practice in Germany (and indeed elsewhere) had largely dissipated. So assumptions made today about this music have to remain just that – assumptions – and presenting the *Suites* in three versions therefore seemed to us a useful way of relating to the strange history of these timeless masterpieces – not timeless in an abstract sense but rather that they've carried a number of both practical and historical possibilities with them ever since they entered the repertoire.

Saturday 10th October, 3:15pm

Event 9

1. The Baroque Cello

Johann Sebastian Bach

Suite no4 in E flat major BWV1010

Suite no5 in C minor BWV1011

Suite no6 in D major BWV1012

Alex Rolton *baroque cello*

Alex Rolton has been with the Philharmonia Orchestra since 2018 and plays an 18th-century English cello. He'll be switching to a piccolo cello (played on the lap or round the chest) for the *D major Suite*, which is scored for five strings rather than the normal four.



Little Missenden Church

Tickets £30, £22, £12

Saturday 10th October, 5:00-5:45pm
This event is free

Event 10

2. Playing the cello through the centuries

A conversation among the four cellists playing for us this afternoon and evening on how stylistic practice has evolved from Bach's time to our own. The session will be chaired by Ed McKeon and will be open to questions from the audience.

Saturday 10th October, 7:30pm

Event 11a

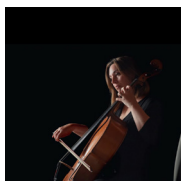
*one ticket covers entry to both Events 11(a) and 11(b)

3. Through Silence to Sound

Johann Sebastian Bach
Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Suite no2 in D minor BWV1008
Solo Suite for Cello

Kate Kennedy, Cara Berridge *cello*



Through Silence to Sound weaves together words by author and broadcaster **Kate Kennedy**, Bach's *Second Cello Suite*, and specially composed music by Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Based on Kate's internationally acclaimed book *Cello – A Journey Through Silence to Sound* (2024), the performance is a love song to the cello.

It celebrates and investigates a player's intense and personal relationship to their instrument in ways which are moving, whimsical and beautiful, as it tells us four stories from the book.

Saturday 10th October, 8:45pm

Event 11b

*one ticket covers entry to both Events 11(a) and 11(b)

4. The Nordic Cello

Johann Sebastian Bach

Suite no1 in G major BWV1007
Suite no3 in C major BWV1009

Tanja Orning *Hardanger cello*



©Juliane Schutz

Tanja Orning is one of Norway's leading contemporary cellists, teaching cello and performance at the Norwegian Academy of Music. She'll perform Bach's *First and Third Suites* on a rare Hardanger cello, only invented as such recently but closely related to the Hardanger fiddle that was first heard around Bach's own time. Tanja's cello adds five lower strings that pick up the sympathetic resonance of the four

bowed strings – just as Bach's music resonates sympathetically in our own times.

Bach's Salt Road

Bach's long walk to meet Buxtehude

Johann Sebastian Bach	<i>Mit fried und freud ich fahr dahin</i> BWV616 <i>Fantasia & fugue BWV904</i> <i>An wasserflüssen Babylon BWV653b</i>
Heinrich Isaac	<i>Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen</i>
Paul Lutkeman	<i>Fantasia on Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen</i>
Dietrich Buxtehude	<i>Chaconne in E minor</i> <i>Mit fried und freud counterpoint/ resolution</i>
Heinrich Schütz	<i>Fahr dahin zu Jesu Christ</i>
William Brade	<i>Der Satyrn Tanz/Pilligrienen Tanz</i>
Johann Sommer	<i>Chanson</i> <i>Paduan and Galliard</i> <i>'White Gold'</i>
Silas Wollston	<i>Sonata in A major (solo violin)</i>
Nathanael Schnittelbach	<i>In Gottes namen fahren wir</i>
Thomas Stoltzer	<i>Keyboard solo</i>
Anon	<i>Mit fried und freud ich fahr dahin</i>
Johann Walter	<i>Ade mit leid</i>

In Echo: Gawain Glenton cornetto, direction **Bojan Čičić** violin
Rachel Byrt viola **Emily White** sackbut, violin **Bill Hunt** violone
Silas Wollston organ **Narrator: Horatio Clare**

Bach walked the ancient Salt Road between Lüneburg and Lübeck on his way to meet Buxtehude in 1705 and the music of these two towns is celebrated here in an evocative fusion of music and poetry, and of journeys real and imagined.

Bach was only 20 and at the start of his career when he made the pilgrimage but the four months he spent in the master's company ensured the continuation of the Protestant baroque music tradition begun in the previous century. The other composers in the programme form part of that tradition and their music would have been in the young composer's head while he walked.



©Ash Mills/Michael Vogt/Ensemble in Echo

ensemble also commissions and performs new music for old instruments.

Established and directed by cornetto player Gawain Glenton, **In Echo** is a diverse ensemble that explores the rich repertoires of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Specialising in Renaissance and Baroque music, the

inecho.co.uk

A Marian Christmas in Hymns and Carols

Benjamin Britten

A Ceremony of Carols

Sweet was the song

In the Bleak Midwinter

Franz Biebl

Ave Maria

Maurice Duruflé

Tota pulchra es

Giovanni da Palestrina

Alma Redemptoris Mater

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

The Christmas Rose (Festival commission)

Patrick Hadley

I sing of a maiden

Cecilia McDowall

Ave Maria

Francisco Guerrero

Virgo prudentissima

Kerensa Briggs

Coventry Carol

Gustav Holst

Ave Maria

Aurora Nova: Patrick Craig *conductor* **Sapphire Armitage,**
Lisa Beckley, Nicola Corbishley, Rachel Elliott, Rebecca Outram
soprano **Amy Blythe, Anna Crookes, Carris Jones,**
Caroline Trevor *alto* **Gabriella Dell'Olio** *harp*

Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* – the main work in this programme – rejoices in the coming of Christmas and especially the Virgin Mary's centrality within the Nativity story. Her essential role had been celebrated by composers for many centuries even before the intense focus on it in medieval devotion, which Britten's use of texts from the Middle Ages reflects. And the tradition shows no signs of going away, as today's composers enjoy making fruitful use of such long-established and familiar language.

As part of the programme we're very pleased to have been able to commission a new carol by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. The rose is a long-established symbol for Mary and the hope that the birth of Jesus brought to the world is mirrored by the certainty of new birth again in nature through the words of Joanna's great-grandfather's poem.

Aurora Nova was founded by Patrick Craig in 1996 and their individual voices make up the top lines of many of this country's outstanding choral groups including the Tallis Scholars, The Sixteen, the Gabrieli Consort, the Kings Consort and the BBC Singers. The year after their foundation, the ensemble became the first all-female professional choir to lead Sunday services at St Paul's Cathedral and they have led many more services since then in a repertoire encompassing a vast array of sacred music. The group has always championed new music and has commissioned a dozen new works, including pieces by Dobrinka Tabakova, Elizabeth Winters, Philip Cooke, Katherine Dienes, Bill Ives and Joanna Marsh.



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