

*I*NVITATIONE presents: Music for Advent and Christmas

Sunday 4th December 2016, 7.30

in the Church of St. Nicholas, North Newbald

Proceeds to the Church Restoration Fund and Christian Aid



Programme

T.-L. de Victoria: O magnum mysterium

G. P. da Palestrina: O magnum mysterium

J. S. Bach: 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme' BWV 140 (mvts. I & VII)

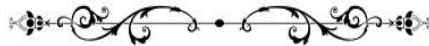
J. S. Bach: 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland' BWV 61

F. Poulenc: O magnum mysterium

M. J. Lauridsen: O magnum mysterium

M.-A. Charpentier: Messe de Minuit, H.9

H. Berlioz, arr. S. Wheeldon: The Shepherds' Farewell



J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

Wachet auf, BWV 140 – movements I and VII

The cantata 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme' was written for performance on the 27th Sunday after Trinity, the last Sunday in the church year. This particular feast, however, is a rare occurrence, only happening when Easter has been early. While Bach was at Leipzig, the 27th Sunday after Trinity only occurred twice, in 1731 and again in 1742. In fact, evidence suggests that Bach wrote the cantata in 1731. This year, 2016, there have been 26 Sundays after Trinity, so the 27th just misses out on an appearance; by selecting BWV 140 and BWV 61 to perform today, we mark the end of one liturgical year and the beginning of the new one. The famous chorale 'Wachet auf', together with 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' (which appears in the last chorus of BWV 61) was written, as were so many, by the pastor Philipp Nicolai, on his recovery from an outbreak of plague which he had believed would kill him.

Today we are performing the first and last movements of the cantata, which set the texts of the first and third verses of the original chorale. The first movement is a chorale fantasia, an extended chorus which uses the original chorale melody as a cantus firmus in the sopranos, the other parts weaving intricate counterpoint under and around it in the traditional German style. In the instrumental introduction, the strings and woodwind play antiphonally. The original instrumentation includes a *taille*, or tenor oboe; today this part is being played on a clarinet, with no apology – Bach himself, ever the practical musician, often made use of whatever instruments he had to hand. Similarly, our use of a contemporary keyboard rather than the church organ is for the eminently practical reason of tuning.

The last movement of the cantata is homophonic, promoting a unity of choir, clergy and congregation in their shared belief in the glory of God.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61

Chorus: *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*

Recitative, Aria (soloist - Angus Champion): *Der Heiland ist gekommen ~ Komm, Jesu, komm*

Recitative (soloist - Edward Lock): *Siehe, siehe! Ich stehe vor der Tür*

Aria (soloist - Claire Holdich): *Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze*

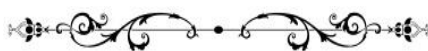
Chorus: *Amen! Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone*

The cantata BWV 61 dates from 1714, Bach's first year as Kapellmeister in the Weimar court. The cantata was written for the first Sunday of Advent, the start of the liturgical year, when we look forward to the arrival of the infant Jesus. The prescribed readings for that Sunday were "Now is our salvation nearer" (Romans 13:11–14), and the entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–9). Erdmann Neumeister compiled the words, taking Martin Luther's chorale text and melody of 1524 for the opening chorus, and the closing lines of Philipp Nicolai's 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' of 1599 for the last. In the solo sections, verses from the Bible, including the Book of Revelation, create a parallel between Jesus's entry into the world, and his promise to return and enter the heart of every Christian.

Bach drew attention to the beginning of the liturgical year again by performing this work in his new position as *Thomaskantor*, director of music of the main churches of Leipzig, on 28th November, 1723. In 1724, he composed a second cantata on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, known as BWV 62.

The instrumentation of this cantata is notable: rather than having first and second violins, Bach uses first and second violas, which could be a nod to the French style, according to the Bach scholar Christoph Wolff. It has provided us with some fun and games, as we have had to rearranged our more usual forces to cope!

The opening chorus is in the style of a French overture, during which the French king would arrive in ceremony; in this cantata, Bach is marking the arrival of a different sort of king. Later, in recitative, Bach paints with pizzicato strings the scene of Christ knocking on the door to our hearts. Ever uplifting, full of beauty and genuinely felt, Bach's music continues to convey the awe and humility of his own Christian faith, and perfectly encapsulates the essence of the Advent season.



O magnum mysterium

*O magnum mysterium, et admirabile
sacramentum, ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum, jacentem in praesepio!
Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia.*

O great mystery, and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was
worthy of bearing Christ the Lord.
Alleluia.

This text is taken from the responsories for Christmas Day, and has been set to music many, many times over the centuries. The emphasis is on seeing, on witnessing the miracle. The music of each composer is an attempt to convey the wonder and awe felt by the shepherds as they worship the newborn Christ-child.

Today we sing some of our favourite settings, by T. L. de Victoria (1549–1611), composed in 1572; F. Poulenc (1899–1963), from his *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël* 1952; M. J. Lauridsen (born 1943), composed in 1994; and G. P. da Palestrina (c. 1525–1594), composed in 1569 and published in the collection of motets known as the *Liber Primus Motetorum*.

Palestrina adds the following text in the second part of his longer setting:

*Quem vidistis pastores? Dicite, annunciate
nobis quis apparuit?
Natum vidimus et chorus angelorum
collaudantes Dominum.
Alleluia.*

Whom have you seen, shepherds? Speak,
tell us who has appeared?
We have seen the newborn child, and a
chorus of angels praising God.
Alleluia.

M.-A. Charpentier (1643 – 1704)

Messe de Minuit, H.9

I KYRIE

Kyrie eleison: *Joseph est bien marié*
Christe eleison: *Or, nous dites Marie*
Kyrie eleison: *Une jeune pucelle*

II GLORIA

Et in terra pax hominibus
Laudamus te: *Tous les bourgeois de Châtre*
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus: *Ou s'en vont ces
gais bergers*

III CREDO

Patrem omnipotentem
Deum de Deo: *Vous qui désirez sans fin*
Crucifixus: *Voici le jour solennel, de Noël*
Et in Spiritum sanctum: *A la venue de Noël*

IV SANCTUS: O Dieu, que n'étais-je en vie

V AGNUS DEI: A minuit fut fait un réveil

Marc-Antoine Charpentier was born in Paris, educated by the Jesuits, and destined for the law. In 1667, he went to Rome to study composition with Giacomo Carissimi, where he developed a taste for the drama of opera and oratorio. He was keen to utilise his new skills on his return to Paris. Whilst sacred music was flourishing in Italy, strict Catholic guidelines in France focused on the liturgy. The Italian style, which was becoming increasingly popular in secular French composition, was frowned upon in a sacred context, and this, combined with Louis XIV's total disinterest in masses set to music, meant that court composers largely stopped composing them. Charpentier's regret in not attaining a royal position was somewhat counterbalanced by being able to indulge his dramatic instincts in his church compositions, and he remains the outstanding composer of stylish and forward-looking French church music in an otherwise austere period for that genre. His prodigious amount of sacred music includes eleven masses for choir and orchestra, of which the *Messe de Minuit* is the most popular. It was probably written around 1690 for the Jesuit church of Saint-Louis in Paris, where Charpentier was *Maître de Musique*.

The *Messe de Minuit* is an excellent example of a parody mass, in which already existing musical material is overtly reused and incorporated into a new work. It combines art music and Italianate contrapuntal techniques with simple homophonic settings of French tunes of profane origin, using, as it does, Christmas folk melodies dating back to the Middle Ages (the relevant titles are included in the overview of the mass given above.) According to custom, Christmas folk songs or carols, known as *Noëls*, were sung in France at Midnight Mass. *Noëls* became popular in the 16th century, partly due to their extreme simplicity, dance-like nature and bucolic texts. In France it was more usual to play, rather than sing, these melodies, and organ versions and even complex instrumental arrangements were commonplace. Charpentier himself made some lovely arrangements (H.531 and H.534), which indeed *Invitatione* has performed in previous Christmas concerts. In today's performance we include his arrangement of *Or nous dites Marie* following the sung *Christe*.

Charpentier weaves together the quite different idioms of the secular folk melodies and his newly composed sections, such as the "Et in terra pax" and "Et incarnatus est", successfully preventing the potential showiness of the Italian style from compromising the immediacy and charm of the simple folk tunes. The result is an attractive, accessible and uplifting work, full of variety, which is provided by the alternation between smaller and larger vocal and instrumental groups. There is a particularly significant alternation between voices and instruments in the Kyrie, which calls, for example, for groups of three renditions of each of the three acclamations of Kyrie, Christe and Kyrie eleison, in line with the three-part form which characterises much early music intended for the praise of God. The Agnus Dei similarly presents a vocal rendition nestling between two instrumental sections. It is interesting that some of the organ interludes are directed by manuscript instructions but not written out. Perhaps the *Noëls* were so well known that any organist would be able to supply them.

Along with other French  contemporaries, Charpentier lived

in the shadow of Jean-Baptiste Lully, who virtually controlled music in Paris, and little of Charpentier's output was published in his lifetime. However, his ability to combine successfully the Italian and French styles, and to mesh the secular with the liturgical, mean that his legacy has lasted, and influenced subsequent composers, including Couperin.

The Chamber Orchestra of *INVITATIONE*

Violin	Alan Deighton	Lesley Finlayson	Julie Jenkins	
	Matthew Tickias	Andrew Ward-Campbell	Simon Whitfield	
Viola	Penny Cook	Madeleine Cross	Julie Jenkins	Amy Parkin
Cello	Patricia Ringrose	Sue Sidwell	Alison Wise	
Flute	Kate Lutley	Margaret Pearson	Oboe Martin Lutley	Alice Rose
Alto Clarinet		Ian Franklin	Horn Miho Fletcher	

The Choir and Chamber Choir of *INVITATIONE*

Tony Ashbridge	Jane Bowes	Rachel Collins	Emma Dawber	Susan Finn
Diana Halsey	John Hammond		Claire Holdich	Edward Lock
Elizabeth Mathieson	Joseph Mathieson		Mary Mead	Kathleen Nield
Patrick Plunkett	Diana Pocock		Peter Pocock	Rachel Poyser
Ian Reid	Alice Rose		Janice Summers	Anna Tebbet
Clare Todd	Kevin Wheeldon		Sue Wheeldon	Nick Wise

Invitatione was established in 2011 by a group of local musicians and music teachers. We aim to provide high quality live music in local venues, to create enjoyable and varied performing experiences for our players and singers, and to promote a life-long love of music and music making. Our members have ranged from those as young as 11 to those in their retirement; this mix of ages enables the youngest and the least experienced of our group to enjoy the support of others and to tackle challenging repertoire with confidence.

We have performed large and small scale concerts in churches in Hull, Beverley and Driffield, raising money for charities and good causes. Highlights include a concert for Amnesty International which raised over £2,000 (January 2012); the semi-staged *Messiah* performed in Holy Trinity Church, Hull (Easter 2012); a collaboration with East Riding Theatre using the words of, and music inspired by, Shakespeare (June 2013); and thrilling performances in Beverley Minster of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony (2013), his Tenth Symphony (2015), Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* (2014), the Requiems of Brahms and Mozart, and Dvorak's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies (2016).

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Hessle, for allowing us the free use of their premises for rehearsals; to Mervyn King for designing our publicity; and to Kevin Nield, Barry Sidwell, Debbie Read and Stuart Grant for assisting with tickets and stewarding at our events.

Forthcoming *Invitatione* events

- December 10th, 2016, 1.00 pm: music for Christmas, in St. Vincent's Catholic Church, Hull
- February 3rd 2017, 7.30 pm: Baroque and Classical chamber and vocal music at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Hessle
- March 4th 2017, 7.30 pm: the final symphonies of Mozart and Haydn, plus vocal music by the two composers, in Beverley Minster
- May 20th 2017, 7.30 pm: programme of Twentieth Century music, including Kurt Weill's *Suite from The Threepenny Opera* and Poulenc's *Organ Concerto*, in Beverley Minster

Please visit our Facebook page for further details about *Invitatione* and all our events