

# CANTEMUS

**Conductor: Ian Westley**

**Flautist: Diana Adams**

**Organ: Mary Westley**

## *Songs of the Blessed Virgin*

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2002  
At the Church of St John the Evangelist  
Newbury**

## *Programme*

Psalm 100 (Jauchzet dem Herrn)	Heinrich Schütz
Hymn to the Virgin	Benjamin Britten
The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation <i>(Soloist: Sheenagh Dermic)</i>	Henry Purcell
Ave Maris Stella	Edvard Grieg
Salve Regina	Francis Poulenc
Hymne à la Vierge	Pierre Villette
Allegro Morceau de Concours	CPE Bach Fauré
Pater Noster	Giuseppe Verdi

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## *Interval\**

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O God the King of Glory	Henry Purcell
Allegretto Syrinx	CPE Bach Debussy
Missa Brevis Kyrie Gloria Credo Sanctus Benedictus <i>(Trio: Leanne Russell, Heather Sims, Jonathan Cox)</i> Agnus Dei I <i>(Quartet: Angela Ham, Bridget Procter, David Ramsbottom, Andrew Blake)</i> Agnus Dei II	G.P. da Palestrina

\* There will be an interval of 15 minutes. Refreshments are available in the Church Hall.

## *Programme Notes*

**Heinrich Schütz** (1585-1672) was probably the greatest German composer of his century. Born in a small town near Leipzig he first studied at Kassel before going to Venice to learn from the great master Giovanni Gabrieli. After Gabrieli's death he returned to Germany. In 1617 he took up a position at the Dresden court. With the exception of a few brief interludes, Schütz spent the rest of his long life in or around Dresden in charge of music at the court. The *Psalms 100* comes from his first collection, the 'Psalmen Davids' of 1619.

**Benjamin Britten** (1913-76) wrote *A Hymn to the Virgin* during a period of confinement in his school sanatorium in 1930, when he was 17. He revised the piece in 1934, giving a harder and more characteristic edge to some of the harmonies. The text is a modernized version of a poem based on a thirteenth century manuscript.

**Edvard Grieg** (1843-1907) was born and lived most of his life near the North Sea port of Bergen. *Ave Maris Stella* is one of the few sacred songs that he wrote. The piece portrays the Virgin Mary as a star, guiding mortal souls across the ocean of life.

The death of a friend in 1936 turned **Francis Poulenc's** (1899-1963) thoughts towards the composition of sacred music, which was for him a new genre. *Salve Regina* was written in 1941 along with *Exultate Deo*. Archaic models influenced both pieces, *Exultate Deo* by Palestrina and *Salve Regina* by Gregorian chant. However both pieces are spiced by Poulenc's distinctive harmonic language.

**Pierre Villette's** (1926-1998) life in music was divided between composition, teaching and musical administration. Until 1990 he was director of the Darius Milhaud Conservatoire in Aix-en-Provence. Like his older contemporary Duruflé, his compositional output is small but fastidiously grafted, with a variety of choral music amongst it. *Hymne à la Vierge* (1954) is one of a set of seven unaccompanied motets, clearly related to the sound-world of Poulenc, yet with a melodic charm and harmonic piquancy all its own.

**Giuseppe Verdi's** (1813-1901) sacred choral output was small; it reflects much of the boldness and finesse of his finest choruses. *Pater Noster* is based on the text of Dante's Lord's Prayer. It was composed in 1880 and was given its première at a benefit concert at La Scala.

**Henry Purcell** (1659-1695) was one of the greatest composers of the Baroque period and one of the greatest of all English composers. His earliest surviving works date from 1680 but they already show a complete command of the craft of composition combining elements of the French and Italian baroque and traditional English musical forms. They include the fantasias and sonatas for strings and keyboard. In time Purcell became increasingly in demand as a composer, and his theatre music in particular made his name familiar to many who knew nothing of his church music or the odes and welcome songs he wrote for the court.

**G.P. da Palestrina** (1525-1594) lived and worked around Rome. During his life he wrote seven books of masses, six of motets and sundry volumes of liturgical music and madrigals. *Missa Brevis* comes from his Third Book of Masses published in 1570, and may well have been a favourite as the book was reprinted in 1590 and 1620. This may be due to its genial melody, modern tonality and suitable liturgical length which has kept it a favourite ever since.

**Cantemus** was formed in 1999 and is a mixed voice chamber choir based in Newbury. The group draws its members from a wide geographical area with its singers coming from as far afield as Reading, Marlborough and Wantage. In its short existence the group has built up an extensive repertoire of music from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Ian Westley** studied music at Reading University where he specialised in piano and organ. He pursues a career as an instrumental and singing teacher as well as acting as an accompanist and répétiteur. He conducts the Erleigh Cantors and is director of music at St Peter's, Caversham.

**Diana Adams** studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with Trevor Wye, Kate Hill and Clare Southworth. After completing a PGCE in secondary music she freelanced with Manchester Camerata, Northern Ballet Theatre and English National Ballet. In 1993 she moved to Reading to teach full time for the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust.

**Mary Westley** graduated in music from Reading University and now combines a career as a school music teacher, church organist, local politician and mother of four children.

<b>Cantemus</b>	Sopranos	Sheenagh Dernie Alison Jestico Angela Ham Edwina Northam Leanne Russell	Altos	Bridget Procter Georgina Seaman Heather Sims
	Tenors	Jonathan Cox David Ramsbottom	Basses	Mike Ananin Andrew Blake Ian Haslam

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The Choir has limited vacancies in some voices and welcomes applications from singers of an appropriate standard. If you are interested or would like to know about forthcoming Cantemus concerts then please telephone Ian Haslam on 01635 820379 or e-mail [cantemus.newbury@ntlworld.com](mailto:cantemus.newbury@ntlworld.com)

#### **Future Concerts**

14<sup>th</sup> December 2002 – St Joseph's Community Centre, Newbury – a programme of Christmas music and readings under the direction of Robert Ascott. (This is a ticket-only event due to limited capacity in the Community hall. Tickets are available from Ian Haslam)

5<sup>th</sup> April 2003 – Methodist Church, Newbury – a programme of Baroque music and Bach Cantatas under the direction of Richard Gwilt.

The Choir is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies, which represents and supports amateur vocal, instrumental and promoting societies throughout the UK.