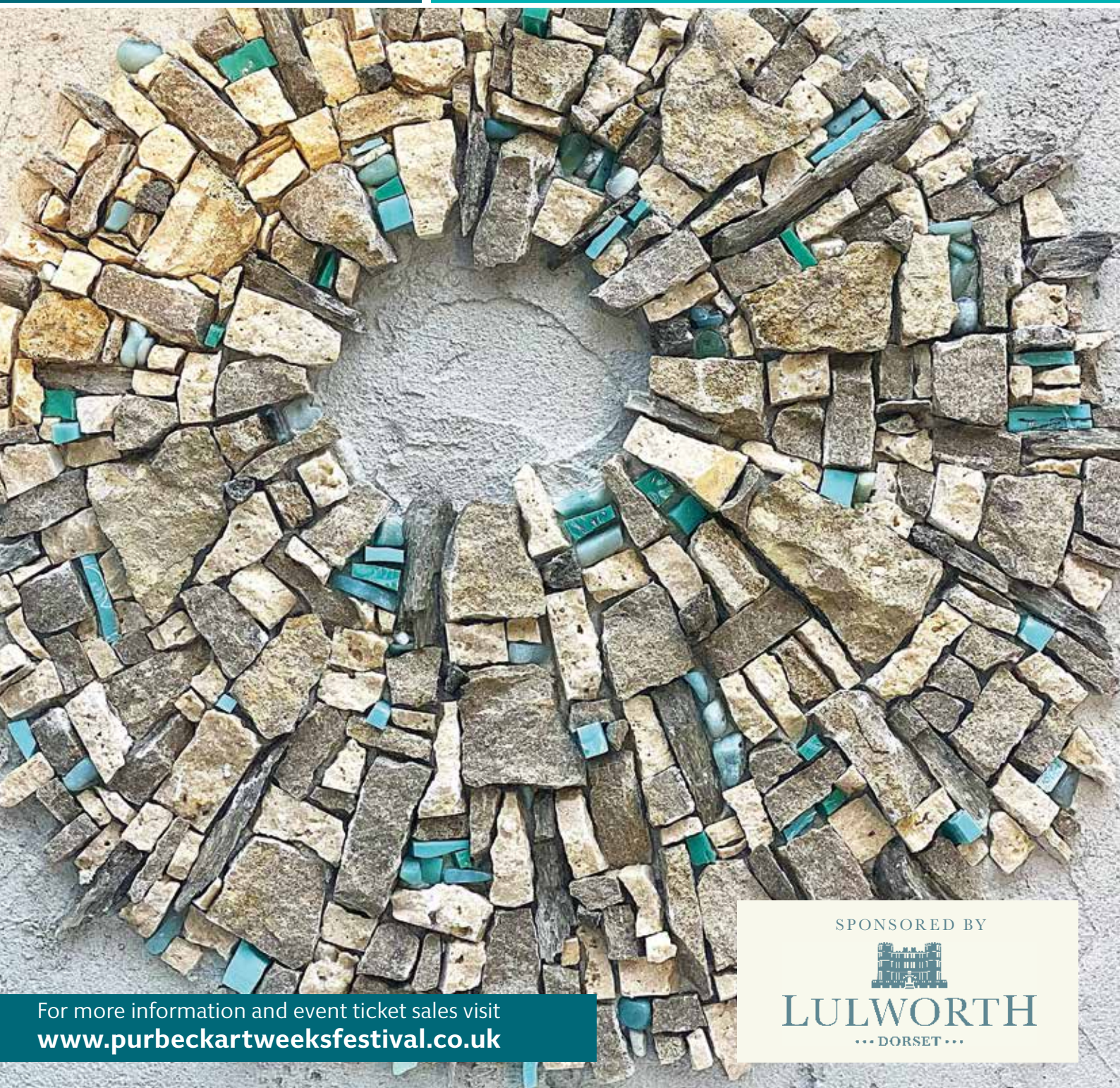


PAW
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23 MAY – 7 JUNE 2026



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We gratefully acknowledge support from the following, including several who prefer to remain anonymous:

Thank you also to all the local businesses who have advertised with us.



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THANKS TO OUR TRUSTEES, PAW TEAM AND VOLUNTEERS

We value all who are members of our charitable company and especially those who serve as our Trustees, sit on our various working groups and/or help out on the day. We rely on volunteers and remain rooted in our local communities. If you would like to help us in any way, please do get in contact with our volunteers at any of our events. We are a community-based organisation serving people in Purbeck.

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We would like to thank all the schools and funders across Purbeck for their involvement in the workshops we run – giving our young people the chance to benefit from the experience of our artists who lead these workshops (see P.61).

We also partner with the charity Purbeck Youth Music (PYM), which incorporates the Purbeck Instrument Loan Scheme (PILS), and aims to inspire and encourage more young people to make music
www.purbeckyouthmusic.org

Welcome to PAW Festival 2026

This year's programme celebrates artistic dialogue: between past and present, music and art, local landscapes and global traditions. Across two weeks, we have put together an exciting and varied programme of world-class performances in beautiful spaces, from medieval churches and dramatic rural settings to large-scale multimedia events.

We open by welcoming back I Fagiolini for their 40th anniversary programme *We're not dead yet*, singing a selection of their favourite pieces from the 15th century to today. Our second concert celebrates PAW as an integrated art and music festival in a unique collaboration between Parnassus Ensemble, an early music collective of brilliant young instrumentalists and singers from across Europe, and the artist Jérémie Queyras. Together they explore the music of Pachelbel, Kuhnau and JS Bach – combining live performance of music and art.

Our mini-festival weekend journeys from medieval music to a world premiere. *CHALK*, with Grace Newcombe and her trio, fuses classical, medieval and folk soundworlds to celebrate the South West in song – performed at Sandy Hill Arts with its spectacular backdrop of medieval Corfe Castle. On Saturday, Lizzie Ball and Miloš Milivojević explore the fascinating creative relationship between Coco Chanel and Igor Stravinsky before we welcome back festival favourites, Fieri Consort, to explore Renaissance ideas of female beauty as shaped by women themselves. Our late evening concert features festival regular Toby Carr launching his latest album of solo lute music, *Softest Thunder*, spanning hundreds of years from the Renaissance through Erik Satie's dreamlike dances to the world premiere of Laura Snowden's *Blue*. The weekend closes with an intimate concert of medieval song with Grace Newcombe and Elizabeth Sommers in the medieval church of St Peter's in Church Knowle.

Hannah Ely *Music Director* | Emma Ormond *Trustee & Events Coordinator*



Purbeck Art Weeks on Purbeck Sounds

Purbeck Art Weeks has partnered with Purbeck Sounds to bring you artist interviews, behind the scenes talks and the latest on Purbeck Art Weeks. Tune in to Purbeck Sounds at 12.00 every day of Purbeck Art Weeks for our dedicated PAW show. www.purbecksounds.com. You can listen online on your computer, phone, Alexa or Smart TV. Simply type in www.purbecksounds.com in your search engine or say to Alexa, enable Purbeck Sounds, then say play Purbeck Sounds.

Purbeck Art Weeks Poetry Show

Purbeck Art Weeks are joining the Words to Inspire Poetry Show on Purbeck Sounds for a special themed poetry show which will highlight the theme of Purbeck Art Weeks 2026, the Nightingale. To participate in this Purbeck Art Weeks Poetry Experience tune in on Friday 5th June at 13.00 on www.purbecksounds.com



The Whispering Dome, on our final weekend, is an award-winning concert-adventure following a single nightingale's epic migration from the UK to The Gambia. Blending early and contemporary music from Europe and Africa with spectacular video footage, the performance traces his journey through the musical traditions of the lands he flies over, weaving together ancient love songs, pilgrim's tales, birdsong and newly commissioned works. We are delighted to welcome musicians from Morocco and West Africa, whose artistry and musical traditions bring vibrant new colours and perspectives to this unique international collaboration. Seven professional musicians are joined by Purbeck Arts Choir and children from Stoborough and Swanage primary schools for parts of the performance.

We close the festival with a glorious celebration of the Baroque: highlights from Handel's oratorios performed by internationally renowned tenor, Guy Cutting alongside a trio of outstanding specialists on period instruments – a fittingly joyful and virtuosic finale.

This programme also includes an illustrated talk by art historian, Dr Gill Clarke on leading artists who were resident or visiting Purbeck between 1900 – 1950, a children's workshop with local favourite, Nick Jubber, a medieval singing workshop with noted medievalist Grace Newcombe, and our annual open mic poetry event.

We could not offer this tremendous range of events at affordable prices without the support of our Festival Friends, business and individual sponsors, Dorset County Council, Trusts and Foundations. We are deeply grateful to them all and look forward to welcoming you to the festival.



We are delighted to support Purbeck Art Weeks, a festival that celebrates creativity, nurtures local talent and brings communities together through a shared love of art and landscape.



MAP KEY

- A Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham
- B Kingston Country Courtyard, Kingston
- C Wareham Family Hub, Wareham
- D Sandy Hill, Corfe Castle
- E United Reformed Church, Wareham
- F St Peter's Church, Church Knowle
- G Royal British Legion, Swanage
- H Mowlem Theatre, Swanage
- I St James's Church, Kingston
- J Emmanuel Baptist Church, Swanage

Illustrated map by Tony Kerins | www.tonykerins.com

EVENTS PAW MAP

Look out for our
FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Buy a mini-festival pass for £85 and gain entry to all five concerts over the weekend (Friday 29th – Sunday 31st May) saving £11!

PAW 2027 Festival Dates
29 May – 13 June

Tickets can be purchased from the Concerts & Events section of our website: www.purbeckartweeksfestival.co.uk

Follow Purbeck Art Weeks on social media
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Our winner for the cover of this year's programme and brochure is Anne Easterbrooke. Congratulations Anne!

Programme designed by Louise Leffler
07753 197323 | www.louiseleffler.com

Purbeck Art Weeks Festival | www.purbeckartweeksfestival.co.uk
Company number: 7420934 Charity number: 1140350
Registered Office: 23 South Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 2QR

FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Saturday 23rd May 6pm The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham WE'RE NOT DEAD YET: I Fagiolini Tickets: £27, £2 students, £21.60 concession	06
Sunday 24th May 6pm The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham 3IN1: A TRIADIC REFLECTION: Parnassus Ensemble with Artist Jérémie Queyras Tickets: £25, £2 students, £20 concession	08
Tuesday 26th May 7pm The Barn, Kingston Country Courtyard, West St, Kingston CREATIVE RELATIONSHIPS: ARTISTS IN PURBECK 1900-1950 Illustrated talk by Dr Gill Clarke Tickets: £12, £2 students, £9.60 concession	12
Wednesday 27th May 10.30-11.30am Wareham Family Hub, Worgret Road ADVENTURES WITH FLYING BEASTIES: CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP with Nick Jubber Tickets: £5 per child (aged 4-8 years)	13
Friday 29th May 7pm Sandy Hill, Sandy Hill Lane, Corfe Castle, Wareham CHALK – SONGS FOR THE SOUTH WEST: Grace Newcombe, Liane Sadler, Colin Heller Tickets: £18, £2 students, £14.40 concession	14
Saturday 30th May 11am-1pm United Reformed Church, Wareham MEDIEVAL SINGING WORKSHOP: with Grace Newcombe Tickets: £10, £2 students, £8 concession	16
Saturday 30th May 2pm United Reformed Church, Wareham A MUSICAL PORTRAIT OF COCO CHANEL AND IGOR STRAVINSKY: Lizzie Ball (violin, vocals) and Miloš Milivojević (accordion) Tickets: £18, £2 students, £14.40 concession	16
Saturday 30th May 6pm The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham FREEING THE MUZE: Fieri Consort Tickets: £25, £2 students, £20 concession	18
Saturday 30th May 8.30pm The Priory Church of Lady St Mary, Wareham SOFTTEST THUNDER: Toby Carr (lute) Tickets: £15, £2 students, £12 concession	22
Sunday 31st May 3pm St Peter's Church, Church Knowle, Wareham ALYSOUN: Grace Newcombe (voice), Elizabeth Sommers (fiddles, voice) Tickets: £20, £2 students, £16 concession	24
Monday 1st June 7.30pm Royal British Legion, Swanage PURBECK POETS PERFORMING: an open mic poetry evening FREE	26
Friday 5th June 6pm Mowlem Theatre, Swanage THE WHISPERING DOME Tickets: £20, £10 family ticket, £2 students	27
Saturday 6th June 6pm St James's Church, West Street, Kingston, Wareham WAFT HER, ANGELS, THROUGH THE SKIES: Handel arias with Guy Cutting Tickets: £25, £2 students, £20 concession	29
Monday 30th June 7pm Emmanuel Baptist Church, 160 Victoria Avenue, Swanage PURBECK YOUTH MUSIC SUMMER CONCERT Admission FREE retiring collection	30

20% discount for those in receipt of government support



WE'RE NOT DEAD YET – I FAGIOLINI AT 40

I FAGIOLINI

Saturday 23rd May | 6pm
The Priory Church of Lady St Mary,
Wareham, BH20 4ND
Tickets: £27, students £2, concession £21.60

EVENT VENUE

This concert is supported by Richard and Sandra Brown
and by Harbour View Crematorium



THE PERFORMERS

Robert Hollingworth - Director
Anna Crookes, Amy Wood - sopranos
Martha McLorinan, Tania Murphy - mezzo-sopranos
Matthew Long, Jacob Ewens - tenors
Sam Gilliat - baritone
Frederick Long - bass

“a performance packed with riches...
the shivery thrill of being totally
immersed.” The Times

I Fagiolini is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2026/27 with *We're Not Dead Yet*, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* (including a new recording), Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*! The group's innovative work is now as much online as it is live, including collaborative cross-art projects on stages around the world, *Stop The Chord* and multi award-winning music videos with Polyphonic Films: search: *Goosed!* and *The Stag Hunt*. The group's YouTube series, *SingTheScore*, combines serious analysis with off-the-wall humour, while *Choral Chihuahua*, presented by Robert Hollingworth, Nicholas Mulroy and Eamonn Dougan, is the top UK choral podcast and is now in its twelfth season.

I Fagiolini's large-scale recording projects include world premieres of Striggio's *Mass in 40 Parts*, Viadana's *Vespers*, works by the Gabrielis, and now three albums of Benevoli's colossal Baroque multi-choir masses. Consort premieres include Byrd, Tomkins, Croce, Striggio, Françaix, Milhaud and Joanna Marsh. I Fagiolini is an Associate Ensemble at the University of York.

www.ifagiolini.com

THE PROGRAMME

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)
Alma Redemptoris Mater

John Wilbye (1574-1638)
Cruel behold
Sweet honey-sucking bees

Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)
Noel adieu

Ludwig Senfl (c.1490-1543)
Das Gläut zu Speyer

Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605)
Daspuo che stabilao

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)
Sfogava con le stelle
Ah dolente partita
Anima mia, perdona

Interval - 20 minutes
Drinks available, toilets in hall (through arch opposite west door)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
The summer is coming

Howard Skempton (b.1947)
Two pewits

Adrian Williams (b.1956)
Sweetest Love

Joanna Marsh (1970)
Batter my heart
Geocentric

Daniel Jean Yves Lesur (1908-2002)
La voix du bien-aimé
Le jardin clos

Leo Ferré (1916-93)
Chanson d'automne

PROGRAMME NOTES

After 40 years, I'm often surprised, when talking to people about I Fagiolini, how many misconceptions there are about our world, so here are a few thoughts on that.

There are a lot of British professional vocal ensembles about: it's something that we're very good at. Just three of them are full-time salaried: BBC Singers, Voces8 and the King's Singers. All the rest of us are generating as much work as we can, booking our singers before they're busy with something else. This is in a financial climate where promoters have less money each year and there are fewer promoters about. So we're busy trying to raise funds to make up the shortfall, aware that Arts Councils have less money every year and spend it in ways that most of the time don't reflect how we operate. (Most of us get no public funding at all.)

Despite this, *We're Not Dead Yet* and I Fagiolini's particular idée fixe over nearly 40 years has been to try to help audiences understand something of the repertoire we sing, as opposed to just enjoying the noise it makes. This is tricky because I think everyone enjoys best a piece they already know, whereas we perform a lot of music that isn't well known. Sometimes of course the music speaks for itself but if you add a foreign language, the difference of at least 400 years and wildly different social context to earlier music, you have barriers to overcome!

Sometimes that has meant staging a piece, such as our production *The Full Monteverdi* (2004-7, Director John La Bouchardière). Six couples, each made up of a singer and non-speaking actor, were placed among the audience (in the setting of a restaurant) and poured their hearts out as, one by one, each singer was 'left' by their actor. The music they were singing was for five voices so the ensemble aspect was incredibly challenging - but had to look effortless. What the audience came away with was a perfect match of the emotion in the music with what they were seeing and feeling close up without actually needing to know what the words meant. (And no, it wasn't 'like the singing waiters, then?')

I've particularly enjoyed staging 16th-century commedia dell'arte. You get a short taste of that tonight in a movement from Vecchi's comedy *L'Amfiparnaso*. We've looked at Leonardo through music that was not from his time - but seemed to be aiming at doing the same thing. We've invested heavily in filming music that has a strong visual element (search 'I Fagiolini Stag Hunt' or 'Goosed!') and we've produced world premiere recordings of music that wouldn't otherwise have seen the light of day - from multi-choir 17th-century Benevoli to the first ever recordings of Tomkins, Croce, Byrd and more - but always with a careful look at whether they really justified being brought down off that dusty shelf. This is to say nothing of *SingTheScore* on YouTube (www.ifagiolini.com/singthescore) or our podcast, *Choral Chihuahua*, which is still here after 100 episodes.

How do we sum all that up in a single evening? We're without acrobats or masks tonight so have simply focussed on the quality of the music, some of the very best repertoire we've sung and that seems to get better and better every time we come back to it.

Robert Hollingworth

PAW
EVENTS



To book for one of our Concerts scan here...
www.purbeckartweeksfestival.co.uk/events/buytickets



3IN1: A TRIADIC REFLECTION

PARNASSUS ENSEMBLE

WITH ARTIST JÉRÉMIE QUEYRAS

Sunday 24th May | 6pm

The Priory Church of Lady St Mary,
Wareham, BH20 4ND

Tickets: £25, students £2, concession £20

EVENT VENUE

This concert is supported by the Friends of Purbeck Art Weeks Festival, the Continuo Foundation and the John Booth Charitable Foundation



Parnassus Ensemble is a flexible early music collective bringing together some of Europe's finest young historically informed musicians. The group takes its name from Johann Joseph Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725), a seminal treatise on counterpoint revered by composers such as J.S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn.

Founded in 2022 by Oscar Holch, Xenia Gogu, and Victor García García, the ensemble grew out of collaborations on leading young artist programmes across the UK and Europe and was established with the aim of creating a dynamic network where early music practitioners can exchange ideas, share research, and contribute to the ongoing evolution of historically informed performance. Central to their artistic approach is a commitment to inhabiting the performative mindset of musicians of the past, while embracing the diverse musical personalities of its members.

The ensemble made its debut at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, in March 2022. Later that year, in August, they were selected for the International Young Artist's Platform at the Laus Polyphoniae Festival at AMUZ in Antwerp. They have also appeared twice at Festival Impulso on La Palma (Canary Islands), a socially driven chamber music festival dedicated to bringing music to underserved communities. In May 2026, they make their UK festival debut at Purbeck Art Weeks Festival with an interdisciplinary project supported by the Continuo Foundation and the John Booth Charitable Foundation.

Continued on page 10

THE PERFORMERS

Sam Cobb - soprano

Lorna Price - alto

Jonathan Hanley - tenor

Filippo Turkheimer - bass

Oscar Holch - conductor

Jérémie Queyras - visual artist

Parnassus Ensemble:

Xenia Gogu, Edi Kotler - violins

Anne Sophie van Riel, Ana Dunne Sequi - violas

Victor García García - * cello

Gabrielle Basilico - * double bass

Xiaowen Shang - * organ

*continuo

THE PROGRAMME

A Triadic reflection on three cantata settings of Martin Luther's hymn, *Christ lag in Todes Banden* through music, visual art and literature.

Victimae paschali laudes

attributed to Wipo of Burgundy (990-1050)

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Christ lag in Todesbanden P 60

Versus 1 Christ lag in Todesbanden (Chorus)

Versus 2 Den Tod niemand zwingen konnt (Duet)

Versus 3 Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn (Aria)

Versus 4 Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg (Duet)

Versus 5 Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm (Chorus)

Versus 6 So feiern wir das hohe Fest (Duet)

Versus 7 Wir essen und leben wohl (Chorus)

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722)

Christ lag in Todes-Banden

Sonata

Christ lag in Todes Banden (Canto)

Alleluia, es ist Victoria (Chorus)

Aria: Versus 1 Wir leben nun mit Jesu Christ (Canto)

Ritornello

Versus 2 Er ist das rechte Osterlamm (Tenore)

Ritornello

Versus 3 Den hat schon Christus vor der Welt (Basso)

Ritornello

So feiern wir das hohe Fest (Chorus)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Christ lag in Todes Banden BWV 4

Sinfonia

Versus 1 Christ lag in Todes Banden (Chorus)

Versus 2 Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt (Duet)

Versus 3 Jesus Christus, Gottes Son (Aria)

Versus 4 Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg (Chorus)

Versus 5 Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm (Aria)

Versus 6 So feiern wir das hohe Fest (Duet)

Versus 7 Wir essen und wir leben woh' (Choral)

PROGRAMME NOTES

"3 in 1", is an interdisciplinary collaboration between Parnassus and the artist Jérémie Queyras in a performance of three cantatas, all based on Martin Luther's hymn *Christ lag in Todes Banden* by Pachelbel, Kuhnau and J.S. Bach – each accompanied by literary and visual artistic responses.

This performance offers an immersive experience for both performers and audience, exploring the hymn's evolution from its 11th-century plainchant origins. The concert begins with an improvisation on the chant, leading seamlessly into the first of the three cantatas, and culminating in Bach's dramatic and epoch-defining setting.

Selected poetry will be presented, offering contemporary reflections on themes found in the hymn's seven verses. Alongside the music and text, Queyras will create a visual landscape in real time, painting on three large canvases to form a dynamic theatrical backdrop. The fusion of music, art, and literature provides a multi-faceted experience, inviting audiences to engage with the timeless messages and emotional depth of the works – while also offering multiple points of access for those less familiar with this repertoire.

J.S. Bach's relationship with both Pachelbel and Kuhnau runs deep. Pachelbel had close pedagogical connections with Bach's family and taught Johann Christoph Bach, J.S. Bach's uncle and early mentor. It is thought that Bach composed his setting of *Christ lag in Todes Banden* around 1707, possibly in response to Pachelbel's death in 1706, and perhaps as an audition piece for a more prestigious post in Mühlhausen. In this early work, Bach writes in the 17th-century *Choralkonzert* style (choral concerto), distinct from his later cantatas which incorporate da capo aria and recitative. Here, Bach takes the baton from earlier masters, yet reaches new emotional and dramatic heights. Although he later dismissed this older style as "music that no longer seems to please our ears," Bach revisited and revised the work in 1724 during his tenure at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, where Kuhnau had served as his predecessor (1701-1722).

All three cantatas draw on Luther's chorale melody and depict Christ's triumph over death. Pachelbel and Bach adhere closely to the original text and retain the chorale melody throughout their settings, while Kuhnau diverges more freely, interweaving Luther's text with additional sources. The melody itself is closely related to *Victimae paschali laudes*, an 11th-century Easter sequence attributed to Wipo of Burgundy. Luther adapted the melody and set a text in the vernacular to strengthen the communal nature of Lutheran worship. These melodies and texts would have been widely recognisable to German Protestant congregations and, through the settings of Pachelbel, Kuhnau and Bach, would have evoked a deeply emotional and immediate response.

The origins of the music stem from the 11th century and were reimagined by Bach, Kuhnau and Pachelbel in service of their communities. By incorporating diverse artistic forms, we seek to highlight the enduring relevance and emotional power of these works for contemporary audiences. We are delighted to present this project to the PAW Festival community – an ideal space for such a dialogue between music and art.



Jérémie Queyras is a French, German, Canadian artist engages in practices from oil painting to performance art, inspired by poetry and music. He has exhibited in London, Paris, New York, Shanghai, Barcelona, and Vienna.

Surrounded by musicians growing up, he was drawn to the intersection of painting and music, leading to various collaborative performances. In 2021, he won first prize in the Goodmesh Competition collaborating with violinist Charlotte Spruit. In 2023, he was awarded a Master of Fine Art in Transdisciplinary New Media at Paris College of Art. He graduated from the Art Academy London in 2019.



British-German musician **Oscar Holch** leads a diverse career as a chamber musician, orchestral player and conductor, performing on both modern and historical instruments. As a conductor, he has led the BBC SSO and worked as an assistant with ensembles including Camerata Salzburg and the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestras. He has collaborated with Sir John Eliot Gardiner on a European tour of Bach's *Mass in B minor* (2023), and with Dinis Sousa on a Beethoven symphonic cycle in Paris and London (2024). He has received guidance and inspiration from Philippe Herreweghe, Rüdiger Bohn and Joshua Weilerstein.



Sam Cobb is a British soprano, currently studying for a master's degree in Early Music Vocal Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, having previously studied at Royal Holloway and the University of Birmingham. Recent solo performances include Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with John Eliot Gardiner and the Constellation Choir & Orchestra. An experienced ensemble singer, Sam has performed with the Springhead Constellation Choir, the Choir of the Age of Enlightenment, the Monteverdi Choir, and The Sixteen. Sam is also a founding member of Echo Vocal Ensemble.



Mezzo-soprano **Lorna Price** began her musical journey as a chorister at Llandaff Cathedral, where early encounters with Bach inspired both her singing and her study of German. She later read French and German at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, before joining the Monteverdi Choir as an Apprentice. She now performs as both a soloist and ensemble singer across the UK and Europe, working with groups including the Monteverdi Choir, Pygmalion and Jupiter Ensemble. Her choral home in London is the Chapel Choir of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Lorna particularly enjoys repertoire of the French and German baroque, and especially likes to work on her memorisation while gardening.



Jonathan Hanley is a British tenor, at home as both a soloist and ensemble singer. He studied at the University of York and was a member of the Genesis Sixteen and the Monteverdi Choir Apprenticeship Programme. He has appeared as a soloist internationally with ensembles including the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists under Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Dinis Sousa, as well as groups such as Concerto Copenhagen and the Gabrieli Consort. Jonathan is a member of Stile Antico and performs regularly with leading vocal ensembles including The Tallis Scholars, Vox Luminis and the Constellation Choir. He also enjoys recital work, recently performing in Luxembourg with pianist Gavin Roberts.



British-Italian baritone **Filippo Turkheimer** will appear as Nettuno in Francesca Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero* at the Buxton International Festival with Vache Baroque. He recently toured Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with Lautten Compagnie Berlin. Concert engagements in 2025/26 include Handel's *Messiah* with Instruments of Time & Truth, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Germany and Austria, and a collaboration with Le Nuove Musiche. He has worked with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and performs regularly with ensembles including Utopia under Teodor Currentzis. He is an active Lied recitalist, collaborating with Jocelyn Freeman and Pauliina Tukiainen, including in last year's Gustav Mahler Academy.

LOVE IT LOCAL PRESENTS PURBECK GUITAR FESTIVAL

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CREATIVE RELATIONSHIPS: ARTISTS IN PURBECK 1900-1950 ILLUSTRATED TALK BY DR GILL CLARKE

GUEST CURATOR RUSSELL-COTES ART GALLERY & MUSEUM, BOURNEMOUTH



Tuesday 26th May | 7pm
The Barn, Kingston Country
Courtyard,
Kingston, BN20 5LR
Tickets: £12, students £2,
concession £9.60
Parking available

EVENT VENUE B

Mark Gertler (1891-1939)
Near Swanage, 1916
Oil on board
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester
(Kearley Bequest, through Art
Fund 1989)
Photo (c) Pallant House Gallery

Photograph of Dr Gill Clarke
courtesy of Veronica Gardiner.

Curator and art historian **Gill Clarke** will talk about leading artists who were resident or visiting Purbeck between 1900-1950, giving us a fascinating insight into the area's rich artistic heritage. Painting holidays were popular with Slade School of Art tutors including Philip Wilson Steer and Henry Tonks who encouraged students to visit. Paul Nash painted some of his best-known work in Swanage where he met Eileen Agar.

Bloomsbury Group members Vanessa Bell and Roger Fry holidayed in Studland and Mark Gertler visited his patron's Swanage home. A small artistic community developed around Corfe Castle. Francis Newbery, Head of Glasgow School of Art retired there and was visited by Charles Rennie MacIntosh amongst others and let New Zealand modernist artist Frances Hodgkins use his studio. Further, portrait painter George Spencer Watson and his wife Hilda, a dancer and mime artist, and daughter Mary lived nearby in Dunshay Manor. All were inspired by Purbeck's distinctive scenery, and their creative relationships led to work that crossed artistic boundaries.

Dr Gill Clarke MBE is a writer, curator and former academic. She has published widely on twentieth century British Art.



KINGSTON COUNTRY
COURTYARD

Special 20% discounted dinner offered to pre-booked ticket holders at the Sawmill Restaurant (01929 481066) in Kingston Country Courtyard. Space limited so essential to book your meal in good time either before or after the talk, quote **PAW** when booking your table. **Bar also available.**

WORKSHOP

ADVENTURES WITH FLYING BEASTIES **CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP** (AGED 4-8YRS) WITH NICK JUBBER

Wednesday 27th May | 10.30-11.30 am

Wareham Family Hub, Worgret Road, Wareham, BH20 4PH
Tickets: £5 per child (aged 4-8 yrs),
parents welcome to sit in.

EVENT VENUE C

Calling all children who've ever dreamed of flying through the sky – on the back of a dragon, or a giant bird called a roc (which is so big, it's said it can carry an elephant in its talons), or the most beautiful bird in all fairy tales – the legendary firebird. In this interactive event, author Nicholas Jubber will guide the children through tales of flying beasts – and together we'll create our own new ones. This should be a great opportunity for kids to express their wild imaginations and learn a little about how to channel them into storytelling.

We're delighted that local award-winning writer **Nicholas Jubber** is back again with more monsters and magic!



Wareham Family Hub
01929 552 934
office@pyct.org.uk
pyct.co.uk
BH20 4PH

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The Sea

Artwork by Annie Lovelass

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'In the Spirit of PAW' A curated exhibition of Purbeck Artists showing at the National Trust Castle View Welcome Centre.
Monday 1 June – Sunday 7 June | 10am – 16.30pm daily



CHALK: SONGS FOR THE SOUTH WEST

GRACE NEWCOMBE *WITH* LIANE SADLER & COLIN HELLER

Friday 29th May | 7pm
Sandy Hill, Sandy Hill Lane,
Corfe Castle, Wareham
BH20 5JF
Tickets: £18, £2 students,
£14.40 concession

EVENT VENUE 



Grace Newcombe is a singer and instrumentalist originally from Wiltshire but now settled in Basel, Switzerland. Grace records and performs internationally with Early Music formations including Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Leones, Le Miroir de Musique, Dragma, and Ensemble Peregrina. A collaborative CD release with ensembles Dragma and Peregrina currently holds the title ‘Early Music Recording of the Year’ in the Gramophone Classical Music Awards (2025). Her career as a medieval singer has led her to become a faculty member at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. As a songwriter, Grace enjoys mixing elements of folk, classical, and medieval repertoires. Her first folk-classic album, *The Ragged Wood*, is awaiting release later this year.

Liane Sadler uses her voice and historical flutes to explore the distinct yet overlapping spheres of early, contemporary, and traditional music. She performs across Europe with her own groups Hourglass and Sadler&Conrad as well as others - she is a core member of Renaissance consort Phaedrus, baroque ensemble pseudonym, and jazz quartet Aminth, and appears regularly with orchestras such as the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Orkester Nord, and Weimar Baroque. Liane has completed several Masters degrees at the University of the Arts Berlin and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in studies ranging from Mediaeval to Romantic flutes, alongside following her curiosity for traditional English music.

A multi-instrumentalist specialising in traditional and early music, **Colin Heller** graduated from the CNSMD in Lyon in Baroque violin, and from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

in historical improvisation. Self-taught on various bowed and plucked string instruments, he is one of France’s leading experts on the nyckelharpa, and is the only French musician to play the kontrabasharpa and the silverbasharpa (nyckelharpas from the 18th and 19th centuries). He collaborates with ensembles such as The Curious Bards, Amarillis, Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien, Le Caravansérail, Le Concert Spirituel, the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, and traditional musicians including Patrick Vaillant, Françoise Atlan, Moneim Adwan, Baltazar Montanaro and Manu Théron.

THE PROGRAMME

All songs arranged by Grace Newcombe, 2025. Final arrangements are the result of collaboration with Colin Heller and Liane Sadler, who also contribute improvised instrumental passages to several songs.

Buttermilk

For J, and all the others

Lay

Green Man

The Hare of Bratton Hill

Clarendon Mill

Oakmoss

Down Cottage

The Raven King

PROGRAMME NOTE

CHALK is a celebration of the South-West countryside, although not of our human relationship with it. Each lyric fosters some connection to Wiltshire: its chalk streams, its folk lyrics and lore, its woodland, its Downs, its wildlife, its Green Men, its barrows.

This is not intended to be imitation folk music, but it could perhaps be dubbed folk adjacent, or folk inspired. The project began with my reading of folk lyrics collected in Wiltshire by Alfred Williams (1877–1930) for which no melody had been preserved. I set about writing new tunes for a few: *A-begging buttermilk I will go*, *In Sheffield Park*, and *Down in the Lowlands*. Wanting to add a modern expansion to Wiltshire’s relatively small traditional song collection, I also wrote alternative ‘sister’ lyrics to the originals, which might be relatable to people in the South West today: *Buttermilk*, *Green Man*, and *Oakmoss*. Each new lyric maintains some connection to the original, and a nod to a Wiltshire location. *Buttermilk* takes us on a mental health walk to watch a mackerel sky above the Fovant Downs; *Green Man* was written for ‘Britain’s best Green Man’ in Sutton Benger; and *Oakmoss* takes us (in the style of the related medieval *Corpus Christi* carol and folk lyric *Down in yon forest*) to Grovely Wood, where a human character attempts to dominate the wild, but will never truly own it.

The irony of our love of the countryside paired with our morbid usage of it is a recurrent theme in CHALK. *The Hare of Bratton Hill* mocks the fact that in Wiltshire – known for its famous symbol of human recognition of the living land and its seasons, Stonehenge – illegal and gratuitously cruel bloodsports such as fox hunting and hare coursing still happen. I suspect many of us know somebody who kills animals for fun; I also suspect that they make the loudest claims of a deep connection with the countryside, and are unironically fond of their charming fox, hare, and pheasant tea-towel collection.

By contrast, *For J*, and all the others, *Down Cottage* and *Buttermilk* are judgement-free reflections on our unintentionally being at odds with our natural habitat. Wiltshire has a strong military history; in *For J*, superimposed on the calming landscape of Salisbury Plain are the signs and sounds of military training, war memorials, and unvisited tombstones. *Down Cottage* and *Buttermilk* are to some extent a commentary on modern life and our increasingly fragile connection with the outdoors. My sister and I did not realise how fortunate we were to be made to play outside, our cottage and the small village of Fovant having no mod-cons. Today, it is increasingly difficult for parents to offer their children the gift of green boredom. *Buttermilk* is the adult answer to *Down Cottage*; many of us feel mentally paralysed by urban environments and screen-based work or recreation. Why, then, is our solution all too often to layer further stimulation – podcasts, reels, and other online content which we consume with little attention, but a ravenous impatience for the next – over a mind already screaming for green boredom?

Of the three remaining songs, *Lay* and *Clarendon Mill* represent nothing more complex than a love of chalk streams and local wildlife. *Lay* is a song of appreciation for and solidarity with the blackbird, which has taken a severe hit in the South; and *Clarendon Mill* describes my own impression that, despite the world being full of jaw-dropping natural landscapes, there is nothing quite like the wildlife you grow up with (even if, as in my case, many of the days are rainy and many of the birds are brown). And no modern

Wiltshire song set would be complete without a mention of the fantastic Anglo-Saxon gold and garnet raven head unearthed in Wiltshire by metal detectorists in 2025; *The Raven King* had to feature. I feel a little guilty that his backstory isn’t a happier one, but perhaps we could all benefit from being more content with ourselves, and not succumbing to the mindset of wanting more, more, the most.

These songs are for you as well as for the countryside. If one of them inspires you to take out your own headphones and instead pick up a book on local folklore, or visit a local nature reserve, or listen to your local blackbird, know that I am cheering you on.

Dr Grace Newcombe, Basel, April 2026



“Honestly magic, and a beautiful tribute to childhood in the South West, a special experience”.

Buy a mini-festival pass for £85 and gain entry to all five concerts over the weekend (Friday 29th – Sunday 31st May) saving £11!

WORKSHOP

MEDIEVAL SINGING WORKSHOP

WITH GRACE NEWCOMBE

Saturday 30th May | 11am– 1pm
United Reformed Church, Church Street, Wareham, BH20 4HH
Tickets: £10, students £2, £8 concession

EVENT VENUE 

Following Friday’s fusion of folk and medieval sound worlds, and ahead of her recital of medieval song, **Grace Newcombe** invites singers to step inside the soundscape themselves. This immersive workshop explores the luminous textures of 15th-century polyphony alongside 13th-century Middle English song. Open to confident singers and the curious alike, it’s a rare chance to experience medieval repertoire with one of today’s leading specialists and her instrumental colleagues.

Please book your ticket via the website and then either complete the online form at www.purbeckartweeksfestival.co.uk/events/ or email Hannah Ely at hannah@purbeckartweeks.co.uk to let us know your voice type and a brief description of your singing and musical background (e.g. any choirs you sing with or your usual kind of repertoire). Sightreading ability is not a requirement and music will be shared in advance.



A MUSICAL PORTRAIT OF COCO CHANEL AND IGOR STRAVINSKY

LIZZIE BALL (VIOLIN, VOCALS) AND MILOŠ MILIVOJEVIĆ (ACCORDION)

Saturday 30th May | 2pm
United Reformed Church, Church Street,
Wareham, BH20 4HH
Tickets: £18, students £2,
£14.40 concession

EVENT VENUE 

“She set the place on fire with her solo performance”

San Francisco Chronicle

“Milivojevic’s artistry on the humble button accordion took the breath away”

The Independent

Lizzie Ball is a violinist, vocalist, producer, and founder of Classical Kicks. A Cambridge graduate and Royal College of Music alumna, she has performed internationally for over two decades. She has an Honorary Masters from the University of Derby for innovative contributions to music and was named one of the UK’s most inspirational females in a list of 50 outstanding UK women making an impact, run by The Daily Mail.

Classical Kicks has staged eclectic collaborations at Ronnie Scott’s and beyond, featuring everything from string quartets to rappers. In addition to her creative productions, Lizzie has been a featured soloist with Jeff Beck (US arena tour), Brian Wilson, and Grammy-award winning choir New York Polyphony. She was concertmaster of Nigel Kennedy’s Orchestra of Life for eight years, including BBC Proms appearances.

Lizzie has led workshops worldwide and is Creative Co-Director of Ronnie’s Scott’s Classical and Co-Artistic Director of Petworth Festival.

Award-winning accordionist **Miloš Milivojević** studied in Serbia before gaining a full scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, where he became the first accordionist to win the



THE PROGRAMME

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Firebird (1910)

Excerpt from The Firebird Theme

Louiguy (1916–1991) / Jacques Larue (1906–1961) / Édith Piaf (1915–1963)

La Vie en rose (1945)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Firebird (1910)

Prelude and Ronde des princesses

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Pièce en forme de Habanera (1907)

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Suite Italienne (1920, from Pulcinella)

Introduction

Serenata

Aria

Viktor Vlasov (1933–2009)

Gulag

II. Foot Stage

III. Blatny (criminals)

V. Pahan and Shestroyka

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

El Salón México (1936, arr. James Pearson)

Richard Galliano (b. 1950)

Tango pour Claude

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Firebird (1910)

Finale

RAM Club Prize and received the Derek Butler London Prize at Wigmore Hall. He has premiered numerous works and performed widely across the UK and internationally. Recent highlights include appearances with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall for Classic FM and with the BBC Concert Orchestra at Wembley Arena. This season, he collaborates with leading ensembles including the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Opera North.

Miloš has performed Piazzolla’s *Double Concerto* with guitarist Craig Ogden and premiered Jonathan Dove’s *Northern Lights* in London. An Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM), he is also an external examiner for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and records on Nimbus. He is an official artist and exclusively performs on Pignini Accordions.

PROGRAMME NOTES

The relationship between Coco Chanel and Igor Stravinsky is one that is discussed as a constant source of fascination by historians, music and fashion experts, and more. The context of early 20th-century Paris within which both artists lived, is regarded as one of the most exciting periods of creative output in the European artistic world.

Following on from Lizzie’s fascinating and acclaimed audio-visual production on the life of Frida Kahlo in 2018, Lizzie presents the next chapter in the series, a concert which explores this captivating part of musical fashion history. Together with virtuoso accordionist Miloš Milivojevic, they will perform music including arrangements by the composer himself of *The Firebird* ballet and *Suite Italienne*, whilst discussing the influence of Chanel, Stravinsky and other contemporaries of the vibrant Parisian Left Bank artistic scene of the early-mid 20th century.



FREEING THE MUSE FIERI CONSORT

Saturday 30th May | 6pm
The Priory Church of Lady St Mary,
Wareham, BH20 4ND
Tickets: £25, £2 students, £20 concession

EVENT VENUE

*This concert is supported by the Friends
of Purbeck Art Weeks Festival*

THE PERFORMERS

Anne-Kathryn Olsen, Hannah Ely - sopranos
Luthien Brackett - mezzo-soprano
Thomas Kelly, Christopher Fitzgerald-
Lombard - tenors
Ben Rowarth - bass
Toby Carr - lutes
Harry Buckoke - viola da gamba

With no conductor dividing singers from the audience, **Fieri** crafts immersive and inventive performances that dive deep into the rich world of 16th- and 17th-century vocal music. Sometimes a cappella, sometimes accompanied by early instruments, their interpretations reflect the collective expertise and passion of the group for this incredible repertoire.

What does *Fieri* mean? As a group of nine singers based in London and Brussels, they met many years ago training on the Genesis Sixteen scheme run by Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. Here is where their motivation to sing consort music was born – the ‘genesis’! – and so **Fieri** came into being, meaning ‘to become’. It has become a vehicle to explore their collective musical interests. Steered by artistic director Hannah Ely, **Fieri** aims to constantly develop as singers and researchers, continuing to ‘become’ relevant musicians in this lively early music world.

www.fiericonsort.co.uk

Special thanks go to Martin Morell for his edition of Paolo Virchi’s two madrigals, *Se’l Sol* and *Segu’arinascer* – see his website for further transcriptions of Italian madrigals, MIDI files and English translations into English.

We are very grateful to the research and insights of Professor Laurie Stras for the reconstruction of Ignegneri’s *Hor che’l ciel e la terra*.

THE PROGRAMME

Maddalena Casulana (c.1544–c.1590)
Il primo libro di madrigali a cinque voci (1583)
Aura che mormorando al bosco
Così non senti mai novo furore (2a)
Io d’odorate frondi e di bei fiori (3a)
Se vedrem poi destarsi lieta e bella (4a)
Paolo Virchi (1551-1610)
Il primo libro di madrigali a cinque voci (1584)
SeGU’A RINAscer L’AURA

Luzzasco Luzzaschi (1545-1607)
Terzo libro di madrigali a cinque voci (1582)
Da l’odorate spoglie
Giaches de Wert (1535-1596)
Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (1558)
Cara la vita mia
Orazio Bassani (1550-1615)
Cara la vita mia (diminutions on Giaches de Wert’s madrigal)

Casulana (1583)
Caro dolce mio Amore
Tu sei Clitia il sol mio
Vittoria Aleotti (c1575–after 1620)
Ghirlanda de madrigali a quattro voci (1593)
Hor che la vaga aurora

Marc’Antonio Ingegneri (1535-1592)
Il secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (1572)
Hor che’l ciel e la terra e’l vento tace
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)
De floridi virtuosì, il secondo libro de madrigali à cinque voci (1585)
Eran le vostre lagrime
Cipriano de Rore (1515/6-1565)
Libro primo di madrigali a quattro voci (1551) with diminutions by Giovanni Bassano (1558-1617)
Non è ch’il duol mi scemi

Casulana (1583)
Dolci e vaghi augelletti
Giaches de Wert
Il settimo libro di madrigali a cinque voci (1581)
Vaghi boschetti di soave



By Sylvain lasco - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

Interval

Virchi (1584)
Se ’l sol guardo e le stelle
Luzzascho Luzzaschi (1545-1607)
12 Madrigali per cantare e sonare (1601)
O dolcezze amarissime d’amore
Non sa che sia dolore
Occhi del pianto

Casulana (1583)
Bella d’Amor guerriera
Perchè al viso d’Amor portava insegna
Francesca Caccini (1587-1640)
La Liberazione di Ruggiero (1625)
Sirena’s Aria

Casulana (1583)
Ovunque volgi il piede
E se cio sia godrassi per noi (2a)

“Their glowing sound enhances performances of sheer delight.”

— Choir & Organ Magazine

Buy a mini-festival pass for £85 and gain entry to all five concerts over the weekend (Friday 29th – Sunday 31st May) saving £11!

**OPEN DAILY
10.00 to 5.00**

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ENTRY**

Set in a beautiful rural location, Rollington Barn is the hub of the PAW Festival (Saturday 23 May – Sunday 7 June) and hosts an eclectic exhibition showcasing a fantastic range of creative talent. Paintings and prints rub shoulders with ceramics, photography, 3D works and greetings cards.

Rollington Barn provides a taste of what can be discovered by visiting our Open Studios, many of which provide a unique opportunity to meet our artists. It is an excellent place to start planning your art trail. On the barn door, a large PAW map will help you find your way around the Open Studios and concerts and talks venues.

Love Cake's courtyard café offers a selection of delicious homemade cakes, light lunches, hot and cold drinks. Adjacent to the café, is our **Pop-Up Studio** where PAW artists will be conducting demonstrations, workshops and talks about their work every day from 11am – 3.30pm. See the timetable below.

PAW collective exhibition at ROLLINGTON BARN

**Rollington Farm, Studland Road,
Corfe Castle BH20 5JG**

T: 0757 080 5603

Flags and signs on the main road indicating the farm drive.

Ample parking on the drive leading to the barn.

Unisex/disabled toilets on site. 

Directions:

From Corfe Castle: take the B3351 to Studland: first farm on right.

From the ferry: through Studland, follow signs to Corfe Castle: 4 miles.

/// cooks.topping.shepherds

Love Cake's pop-up courtyard café offers a selection of tempting homemade cakes, delicious light lunches as well as hot and cold drinks. Opening hours are 10.00am – 5.00pm.



PAW collective POP-UP STUDIO AT ROLLINGTON BARN

Saturday 23 May	Abstract painter	Cathy Malcolm
Sunday 24 May	Ceramicist	Deborah Clarke
Monday 25 May	Potter	Jo Harkness
Tuesday 26 May	Fused glass artist	Gillian Appleton
Wednesday 27 May	Floral stylist	Dorset Dried Flowers
Thursday 28 May	Mixed media artist	Jennifer Ellis
Friday 29 May	Pen and ink artist	Pia Elliot
Saturday 30 May	Potter	Jo Harkness
Sunday 31 June	Painting Workshop	Studio South
Monday 1 June	Botanical artist	Toni Dade
Tuesday 2 June	Felt/printmaking	Linda Courtney
Wednesday 3 June	Fused glass artist	Gillian Appleton
Thursday 4 June	Abstract painter	Cathy Malcolm
Friday 5 June	Mosaic artist	Kitty Hartnell
Saturday 6 June	Artist	Julie Hixson
Sunday 7 June	Ceramic artist/ printmaker	Emma-Louise Grinsted

For more information pick up a copy of our PAW brochure or check out our website:
www.purbeckartweeksfestival.co.uk



The PYA Byre

Don't miss the PYA show at Rollington Barn (across the courtyard in the Byre)
This year's theme is 'Birds'



PURBECK YOUNG ARTISTS
OPEN DAILY 10am to 5pm FREE ENTRY

PROGRAMME NOTES

'Stand to face me, beloved, and open out the grace of your eyes'

'These things now for my companions I shall sing beautifully'
Sappho

Inspired by the trailblazer of antiquity, Sappho (c.630-c.570 BCE), who wrote and sang of female love and beauty, 16th-century musicians such as Raphaella Aleotti, Maddalena Casulana and Francesca Caccini carved out their own territory as creators.

The 16th-century saw a growing fascination with ornament, associated with femininity. Treatises debated both physical and musical embellishment and the nature of beauty itself; whether it lay in nature or artifice. In seeking to recreate nature, artists inevitably create artifice – beauty refined by human skill.

In 16th-century madrigals, beauty is everywhere; in the *luci* and *lampi* of shining eyes, in golden hair stirred by a gentle aura, in roses and sunlight - all emblems of Petrarchan poetry. Though women were often the subjects of this language of beauty, the creators were not men alone. More than a hundred women poets have been identified in the *cinquecento*, including Gaspara Stampa, Vittoria Colonna, and Veronica Gambara, writing about beauty, love, and virtue in voices distinctly their own.

The Ferrarese court became renowned in the 1580s for the remarkable ensemble known as the *Concerto delle Donne* – Laura Peverara, Anna Guarini and Livia d'Arco – alongside Tarquinia Molza, whose virtuosity transformed the style of the madrigal. Through mastery of ornamentation, female singers rose to become celebrated *virtuose*. Their dazzling performances drew composers from across Italy eager to hear the new fashion.

Ferrara also fostered women's intellectual participation: the poet Orsina Cavaletta for example, published poetry and appeared in a philosophical dialogue by Torquato Tasso, *La Cavaletta*, in which she insists: *"let us not leave out music, which is sweetness itself, and practically the soul of poetry"*. Though imagined by Tasso, her presence in the dialogue reflects her real position at court and how poetry and music were not created in isolation, but developed within this interconnected artistic community.

Women's musical brilliance was not confined to the court: convents also became centres of remarkable artistic and intellectual cultivation. Raphaella (Vittoria) Aleotti entered the San Vito convent in Ferrara due to her musical promise. There she developed her musical talents as singer, composer and instrumentalist, soon becoming *maestra* of an ensemble of twenty-three musicians and publishing both secular and sacred music.

Maddalena Casulana, the first woman to publish music under her own name, opens the programme. Through her setting of a text deeply embedded in Petrarchan language, calling on the breeze to calm love's flame, Casulana becomes a musical interpreter of beauty, elaborating on its imagery of golden hair and solar radiance. She vocalises what, in Petrarchan poetry, had been the silent beloved – Laura.

The Ferrarese singers inspired composers such as Virchi, Giaches de Wert and Luzzaschi to write madrigals that showcased their extraordinary virtuosity. Virchi attributes the success of his music *"not so much to my skill as to the sweetness of voice of those illustrious*

ladies who sang them, and who enhance so much...this music, beyond what I could achieve..."

Orsina Cavaletta's poem *Da l'odorate spoglie* inspired composers including Luzzaschi. Dedicated to the singer Laura Peverara, the poem urges her to take up the harp and perform *Cara la vita mia*. Virtuoso viol player Orazio Bassani transformed the same material into elaborate *viola bastarda* diminutions. Together these works reveal a growing fascination with ornament, raising a Renaissance question: does embellishment mean greater beauty, or greater artifice?

Tarquinia Molza was one of the most accomplished viola da gamba players of her day. Renowned for improvised counterpoint and virtuosic ornamentation, she became the subject of many madrigals and even turned her hand to poetry herself, such as *Eran le vostre lagrime*, set by master of polyphony, Palestrina.

Ingegneri's madrigal praising Molza quotes Petrarch's *Hor ch'el ciel*, inspired by her celebrated solo performance. Whether she improvised the madrigal or ornamented an existing composition is unknown, but the cantus partbook is sadly lost. Thanks to Professor Laurie Stras, we perform a modern reconstruction. We demonstrate this solo performance practice through Giovanni Bassano's diminutions on a madrigal by Cipriano de Rore, in which the poet beholds a female gaze so powerful it turns fire to ice, comparing her to Dante's Beatrice – a symbol of spiritual female beauty.

The closest surviving musical examples of this golden decade are Luzzaschi's *madrigali* (1601) recording the ornamentation style heard by privileged court audiences. Each voice shares an equal role in ornamenting while the others leave space for particularly virtuosic passages.

Although the exciting artistic developments in Ferrara came to an abrupt end due to political changes after the death of Alfonso II, its influence rippled outwards. At the Medici court in Florence, elite women performed in court spectacles. Francesca Caccini was born into this environment in 1587 where her musical potential was nurtured, leading to a prolific output of virtuosic sacred and secular music.

For millennia, women have shaped the art of improvised song. From the *hetaerae* of ancient Greece, to the Occitan *trobairitz* and the Venetian *cortegiane oneste*, women cultivated extemporisation long before compositions were preserved in manuscripts. Renaissance court culture continued this tradition of *sprezzatura* – as described in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528), both men and women were expected to improvise rhetoric and respond wittily in verse. Improvisation is, after all, a form of composition. This programme widens the focus from celebrating composers alone to recognising the wider constellation of virtuosic female creators whose voices and artistry lie at the heart of this music.

'Someone will remember us, I say, even in another time'
Sappho

Notes by Hannah Ely

SOFTTEST THUNDER (ALBUM LAUNCH)

TOBY CARR, SOLO LUTE

Saturday 30th May | 8.30pm
The Priory Church of Lady St Mary,
Wareham, BH20 4ND
Tickets: £15, £2 students, £12 concession

EVENT VENUE

*This concert is supported by
John and Sabine Fairhall*

‘Toby Carr made the delicate lute harmonies gleam like rain drops on a spider’s web.’

Rachel Halliburton, The Arts Desk



Matthew Johnson

Lutenist and guitarist **Toby Carr** is known as a versatile and engaging artist, working with some of the finest musicians in the business.

Having studied at Trinity Laban and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, he is now in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and continuo player, his playing has been described as ‘sensuous and vivid’ (The Guardian), ‘Eloquent’ (BBC Music Magazine) and ‘Mesmerising’ (Opera Today).

Toby has performed with most of the principal period instrument ensembles in the UK and beyond, as well as with many symphony orchestras, opera companies and ballet companies. Notable recordings include *De Pasión Mortal* with Nicholas Mulroy and Elizabeth Kenny (Linn), *Drop not, mine eyes* with Alexander Chance (Linn) and *Battle Cry* with Helen Charlston (Delphian), winner of both BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone Awards in 2023.

Toby is a professor at the Guildhall school of Music & Drama, working across the strings and historical performance departments. He is delighted to share his passion for chamber music and collaboration with the next generation of musicians.

THE PROGRAMME

- Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)**
Sarabande
- Robert Ballard (c.1572-1650)**
Diverses Piesces Mises sur le Luth (1614)
Grand Ballet de S. Germain, premier chant
Ballet des Princes, second, quatriesme & neufiesme chant
Troisiesme & Quatriesme Branle
- Erik Satie (1866-1925)**
Trois Gnossiennes (1893)
Premiere Gnossienne

- Robert Johnson (1583-1633)**
The M.L Lutebook
Allmayne ‘the Prince’s’
Allmayne ‘hit it and take it’
- Daniel Bacheler (1572-1619)**
The lutebook of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury
En me revenant
- John Dowland (1563-1626)**
A musicall banquet (1610)
Viscount Lisle’s Galliard
- Erik Satie**
Trois Gnossiennes (1893)
Deuxieme Gnossienne
- Henry Purcell (1659-1695)**
Incidental music from ‘The Virtuous Wife’
Slow Air

- Robert Johnson**
The lutebook of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury
Pavan
- Laura Snowden (b.1989)**
Blue (WORLD PREMIERE)
- John Dowland**
Wickhambrook lute manuscript
Tarleton’s Resurrection

- Robert Ballard**
Premier livre de luth (1611)
Ballet & Huitiesme Courante
- Erik Satie**
Trois Gymnopedies (1888)
Premiere Gymnopedie
- (Ennemond?) Gaultier**
The lutebook of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury
Courante ‘Son Adieu’

- Philip Rosseter (1567/8-1623)**
Matthew Holmes lute book
Prelude & Galliard
- John Eccles (1668-1735)**
Incidental music from ‘The Mad Lover’
Aire

PROGRAMME NOTES

‘An Englishman has acquired a beautiful old large Bologna lute for me from France (...) the best I have ever played. In its belly is housed the softest thunder one can hear. I cannot describe it better.’
– Constantijn Huygens, 1648

For hundreds of years the lute was among the most important instruments in European musical culture; a vast repertoire is there to be discovered and enjoyed by anyone with the inclination and the time. It feels natural to me to explore, alongside this treasure trove, new music written for the lute, and also to find ways of ‘bridging the gap’ by transcribing and arranging music from other instruments. I have grouped pieces together in ways that cut across stylistic and historical divides, creating unique patterns and shapes in sound.

400 years ago an era, or two, ended. James I of England died in March 1625 and, in February 1626 John Dowland, master lutenist of the English Renaissance, followed the king to the grave. Along with William Byrd, Dowland is the most feted of all composers of this ‘golden age’, and both his songs and his instrumental music remain enduringly popular. The names of Robert Johnson, Daniel Bacheler and Philip Rosseter are today some distance more obscure than that of John Dowland, but their best work bears any comparison, showing the variety in lute music of that time.

Just as Johnson, Bacheler and Rosseter can languish in the shadow of their more famous contemporaries, John Eccles comes between the towering figures of Henry Purcell and Georg Friedrich Handel in English musical history. His *Aire* is a ground bass of the most

charming and beguiling kind, and is now one of Eccles’ most well-known and often-performed works. Purcell’s *Slow Air*, while not quite a ground, has a similar sense of inevitability, and makes use of harmonies which in their simplicity speak to us in a wonderfully direct manner. I first encountered both of these works in chamber music settings but couldn’t resist making my own solo versions.

The work of Erik Satie and Francis Poulenc lies within a tradition of ‘neo-classicism,’ although like any such label it is apt only up to a point. By pairing them with the work of Robert Ballard, these works find a context which renders the familiar delightfully strange, and the unknown pleasingly familiar. Courtly dancing was the height of sophisticated entertainment in France at the time, and the dances in Ballard’s lute publications likely record, at least in part, music already heard in these ceremonial entertainments in a variety of forms.

The lute I am playing is a beautiful 10-course Renaissance lute made for me in 2023 by Jiří Čepelák. This programme has been crafted specifically for this instrument, including the world premiere, *Blue*, by Laura Snowden. Written to complement the older repertoire, *Blue* is an exploration of a heightened emotional state of longing, familiar from 17th-century music but here expressed in 21st-century musical language. Playing a quiet instrument, you get a vivid sense of just how loud the world can be. So, what place is there for the lute in the 21st century? This programme is an attempt at an answer. I have put together something which I hope can speak as a coherent whole, weaving threads and making connections across time. Above all I want to relish the sound of this instrument, its ‘softest thunder.’

Toby Carr



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ALYSOUN: SONGS FROM THE PEOPLE OF THIRTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

GRACE NEWCOMBE AND ELIZABETH SOMMERS



Sunday 1st June | 3pm
St Peter's Church, Church Knowle,
Wareham, BH20 5NF
Tickets: £20, students £2,
£16 concession

EVENT VENUE

THE PERFORMERS

Grace Newcombe - voice
Elizabeth Sommers - fiddle, voice

A MAP
SHOWING OUR
EVENT LOCATIONS
CAN BE FOUND
ON PAGE 4

“Newcombe’s voice has many admirers” Gramophone 2025

Grace Newcombe is a singer and instrumentalist specialised in medieval music. Grace records and performs internationally with Early Music formations including Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Leones, Le Miroir de Musique, Dagma, and Ensemble Peregrina. A collaborative CD release with ensembles Dagma and Peregrina currently holds the title ‘Early Music Recording of the Year’ in the Gramophone Classical Music Awards (2025). Her career as a medieval singer has led her to become a faculty member at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. As a songwriter, Grace enjoys mixing elements of folk, classical, and medieval repertoires. *The Ragged Wood*, a folk-classic album recorded together with Elizabeth Sommers, is awaiting release later this year.

In search of a thorough education in early music, **Elizabeth Sommers** came to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis at the age of eighteen, where she studied medieval fiddle, baroque violin, and historical improvisation. She performs with such ensembles as Per-SONAT, Profeti della Quinta, the fine hand, La Capriola, Rubens Rosa, and in Basel’s ReRenaissance concert series. With soprano Karin Weston, she is a founding member of the duo memor, which was awarded first prize at the Utrecht Early Music Festival’s International Van Wassenauer Competition in the summer of 2023. Elizabeth’s musical interests are wide-ranging; she is an enthusiastic player of traditional music, performs often for Contra and English Country dances, and enjoys writing original tunes in various folk styles.

PROGRAMME NOTE

There is not much surviving of what we might today call the ‘folk music’ of high-medieval Britain; sadly, those who daily filled homes, marketplaces, and local public houses with music were also those without any means or need to write it down. Before the later fourteenth century promoted Middle English to a language of artistic value (heard of Geoffrey Chaucer, anyone?), lyrics and melodies thrived in working class culture through oral tradition alone.

We do have one cloudy window into that musical world, however. Britain’s growing Franciscan movement created a need for religious media accessible to all, and not only to those who could understand Latin mumbled from thirty feet over the heads of other confused community members. Clerics were tasked with collecting and re-purposing popular vernacular songs from the different echelons of society. Their written-down workings are our window.

The songs in this programme which have surviving original melodies are likely to have been preserved for this purpose. As far as the texts are concerned, although our programme includes a variety of lyric genres – from heart-wrenching crucifixion scenes to secular texts akin to nursery-rhymes – the central theme of the written arts in medieval times was love, as it is today. In *Quia amore langueo*, Christ takes centre stage as a handsome, chivalrous lover-knight who fights valiantly for the protection of his betrothed (the human soul) and, brushing off his bloody injuries, cannot wait to take her to bed. If that didn’t encourage a few medieval damsels (and clerics) to submit to Christ, I’m not sure what would.

The most numerous surviving Middle English love lyrics, however, describe a lady: her unsurpassed beauty, her grace and kindness, her noble rank. Although the poet deems himself unworthy of reciprocated love, he appeals to her to take pity on him. Unlike the ‘Christ the lover-knight’ imagery, these lyrics often describe a love so pure that it seems devotional rather than romantic. Many such lyrics appear to be in praise of Mary, but the lines could become blurred. Educated clerics occupied a societal space in which they were generally expected to shun immoral behaviours. It is largely within

this space that we meet the lady Alysoun. With varied spellings, she shape-shifts in character, flitting between representations of devotional and romantic love for a woman. The Alysoun featured in our opening piece is the noble subject of courtly love; but other lyrics, not performed today, show the extremes of her duality. In one, she is found in a compromising situation with a badly-behaved cleric who sings “*Kyrie eleyson... Kyrie, so kyrie, with aleyson*”. Another song in praise of the Virgin Mary, with explicitly devotional Latin and French texts, has a note written at the top of the folio: ‘A song for our Lady, based on the song “Aaliz” (‘Alice’). To the male cleric community, Alysoun serves as a poetic outlet for their multi-faceted, often unattainable love for women. She is the robed lady far above their station who will not grant them a second glance. She is the young beauty at the dance, naïve and unaware that her heart will be broken. She is the Virgin Mary, at once noble, beautiful, and mothering, the best of all women.

Middle English is a language capable of bruising the heart in several places at once with few words. To list my favourite lyric quotations here would require another programme booklet, so I will limit myself to one. The poet opens *When þe nyhtegale singes* with the image of a woodland growing green in spring. Later, he is so lovesick that he is ‘growing pale all over’; but he uses the word ‘green’ again, a common adjective for a sickly countenance in Middle English. In describing himself as growing green, he sums up the wonderful duality of both Middle English and being in love: he is in the same moment suffering greatly, and sprouting with spring greenery all over.

When þe nyhtegale singes þe wodes waxen grene.

When the nightingale sings, the woodland grows green.

So muchel y þenke upon þe þat al y waxe grene.

I think of you so often that I grow all green.

Dr Grace Newcombe, Basel, April 2026

THE PROGRAMME

Alysoun
Music: Grace Newcombe

Foweles in þe frith

When þe nyhtegale singes
Music: Grace Newcombe

Quia amore langueo
Music: Grace Newcombe

Worldes blis ne last

Ar ne kuthe ich sorghe non

Stond wel moder under rode

Blessed beo thu lavedi
Music: Grace Newcombe

Maiden in the mor lay
arr. Grace Newcombe

Wepying haveth min wonges wet
Music: Grace Newcombe

Lenten ys come
Music: Grace Newcombe

Als i me rode this endre dai

Music: (‘Mirie it is’)
arr. Grace Newcombe

Mirie it is while sumer ilast







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PURBECK POETS PERFORMING

Monday 2nd June | 7.30pm
Royal British Legion,
150 High Street, Swanage, BH19 2PA
An open event



EVENT VENUE

Come for 3 Pees at The Legion
And a welcome that's hearty and warming
No, not for 3 Pees in the loo -
This is Purbeck Poets Performing !

A friendly open mic poetry night.

The evening will be hosted by local poet, **Martin Hobdell**, and will include poets from the regular monthly open mic sessions as well as outside poets. All are welcome. If you would like to perform, please contact Martin to book a slot in advance or turn up early on the night - first come first served. Martin Hobdell: martinhobdell24@gmail.com.



ARTISTS' OPEN STUDIOS

Visiting artists' studios is a wonderful way to enjoy the range of art produced across the Isle of Purbeck. We have painters, printmakers, photographers, sculptors, metal workers, ceramicists, wood workers, jewellers, textile artists and much more, for you to explore. Our artists are looking forward to welcoming you!



THE WHISPERING DOME

Friday 5th June | 6pm
Mowlem Theatre, Shore Road,
Swanage, BH19 1DD
Tickets: £20, £10 family ticket, £2 student
Tickets available from the Mowlem
themowlem.com

EVENT VENUE

THE PERFORMERS

Rebecca Askew - voice
Jeremy Avis - voice, project lead
Timothy Dickinson - voice
Hannah Ely - voice
Simo Lagnawi - voice, guembri
Sam Stadlen - viol, videographer
Suntou Susso - voice, kora

Purbeck Arts Choir
John Watkins - director
Students from Stoborough and Swanage
Primary Schools

Supported by:



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THE PROGRAMME

Anonymous 13th Century (arr. J.Avis)
Brid on a Brere
Performers: Jeremy Avis (voice) and Sam Stadlen (viol)

Jeremy Avis (b.1968)
Worms
*Performers: Children from Stoborough and Swanage primary schools
Jeremy Avis (harpsichord) and Sam Stadlen (viol)*

Music : Jeremy Avis
Lyrics: Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi (C20th Tunisian poet: translated from Arabic)
Oh Traveller!
Purbeck Arts Choir

Anon. late 13th century
Dei Testis (from the Lewes Breviary)
Purbeck Arts Choir

Thomas Ravenscroft (1588-1635)
We be three poor mariners
Jeremy Avis, Rebecca Askew, Hannah Ely, Timothy Dickinson

Clément Janequin (c.1485-1558)
Chant des oiseaux
Jeremy Avis, Rebecca Askew, Hannah Ely, Timothy Dickinson

Anon.
Dindirrin (Languedoc, France late 15th century)
Purbeck Arts Choir

Anon.
La grande chanson (Traditional 17th-century pilgrimage song)
Purbeck Arts Choir

Damião de Góis
Surge propra amica mea
Text: Song of Songs 2:10-14
Jeremy Avis, Rebecca Askew, Hannah Ely, Timothy Dickinson

Jeremy Avis / Rebecca Askew / Sura Susso
Two Weeks
Jeremy Avis, Rebecca Askew, Hannah Ely, Timothy Dickinson, Sam Stadlen, Suntou Susso, Purbeck Arts Choir.

PROGRAMME NOTES

The Whispering Dome invites us into a space where songs travel across great distances – where a whisper may be heard far beyond its source, carried on unseen currents. In this imagined dome of sound, we follow our nightingales on their epic migration from northern Europe to West Africa and back, tracing not only a geographical journey but also a shared human inheritance of song.

As the nightingale crosses seas, deserts, and cultures, so too does music. From medieval pilgrims’ songs of Europe to the devotional ecstasies of North African Gnawa, from the storytelling traditions of Ladino to the living art of West African griots, voices echo across time, reshaping and remembering. These are not separate traditions, but resonant strands of a continuous human impulse: to sing, to tell, to belong.

At the heart of *The Whispering Dome* lies a simple and ancient truth – that human song and birdsong are not so distant from one another. The nightingale’s voice has long haunted the imagination of poets and musicians, its patterns mirrored in our own melodic instincts. In this performance, we are invited to listen as if from within that shared ancestry: to hear human voices as part of a wider ecology of sound, where song precedes language and transcends borders.

Our journey unfolds not as a fixed narrative but as a living, breathing landscape to be experienced. Improvisation plays a central role, reflecting the oral traditions that sustain so many of the musics encountered along this route. Even within the notated remnants of early European repertoire, we glimpse traces of improvisatory practice – ornamentation, variation, and the fluid transmission of melody across generations. Likewise, in Ladino song and West African griot performance, music lives through retelling, through adaptation, through the presence and inspiration of the performer in the moment.

The result is a sonic pilgrimage – one that invites the listener not simply to observe, but to travel. As the nightingales journey southward, we are carried with her: across landscapes of memory and imagination, across centuries of exchange and encounter. Voices rise and fall like migrating flocks; instruments shimmer like shifting light on water.

We invite you to allow yourself to be borne aloft on this current of sound – to listen as though in flight, as though suspended between earth and sky. In the *Whispering Dome*, distance collapses, and what is far away becomes intimately close. Here, song is both map and vessel: a means of passage, a record of where we have been, and a reminder of the deep connections that bind us across time, culture, and our living world.

Audience members described feeling as if they were “flying with the birds themselves across time and space”

Interval

Anon.

Galleas (Ladino traditional songs)
Jeremy Avis and Sam Stadlen

Anon. arr. Avis / Sykes

A pasar por Casablanca (Ladino traditional songs)
Jeremy Avis and Sam Stadlen

Traditional (arr. Lagnawi)

Chalaba
Soudaniman a Yu
Shabakuru
Simo Lagnawi (voice and gimbri)

Traditional (arr. Lagnawi)

Eh-Lehla
Bambarra
Simo Lagnawi (voice and gimbri), Children of Stoborough and Swanage Primary Schools.
Conductor: Rebecca Askew

Traditional (arr. Suntou Susso)

Saliya
Jula Jekereh
Miniyamba

Traditional (arr. Susso)

Bamba Bojang
Zebele Sewa
Suntou Susso, Jeremy Avis, Children of Stoborough and Swanage Primary Schools
Conductor: Rebecca Askew

Jeremy Avis / Simo Lagnawi

The Return
All performers



WAPT HER, ANGELS, THROUGH THE SKIES:
HANDEL ARIAS WITH GUY CUTTING

Saturday 6th June | 6pm
St James’s Church, West Street, Kingston,
Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5L
Tickets: £25, students £2, £20 concession

EVENT VENUE ⓘ

This concert is supported by an anonymous donor

Guy Cutting - tenor
Sophia Prodanova - violin
Olwen Foulkes - recorders
Nathaniel Mander - harpsichord

British tenor **Guy Cutting** has established himself as a sought-after interpreter of Bach and other masters of the Baroque. He has collaborated with many of the foremost practitioners of period performance, including Philippe Herreweghe, Masaaki Suzuki, John Butt, John Eliot Gardiner, Marcus Creed and Jos van Veldhoven, as well as a new generation of conductors and directors such as Jonathan Cohen, Laurence Cummings, Richard Egarr, Leonardo García Alarcón, Dinis Sousa and Hans-Christoph Rademann.

Guy’s engagements have included performances with leading period ensembles, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (notably his BBC Proms debut in Bach’s *Mass in B minor*), the Academy of Ancient Music, Collegium Vocale Gent, The Dunedin Consort, Gli Angeli Genève, the Orchestra of the 18th Century, the Irish Baroque Orchestra, De Nederlandse Bachvereniging and Capella Mediterranea. He has also appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestra Svizzera Italiana, Bergen Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Britten Sinfonia and the English Chamber Orchestra.

As a recitalist, Guy has performed Schubert with Kristian Bezuidenhout and explored English song with George Ireland at the Crete Senesi Festival, where he returns in 2026. His discography includes recordings of Scarlatti, Bach, Handel, Charpentier, Couperin, Mozart, Stravinsky and Gabriel Jackson. Guy will release his debut album of English song in 2027.

“Guy Cutting ... with warm mellifluous tone and impressive dynamic range...Small wonder that he is in demand for his skills and insights in baroque performance.”

Edinburgh Music Review, 2022

Bulgarian violinist **Sophia Prodanova** is equally at home performing as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, and improviser. She is in demand for principal positions with leading ensembles in the UK and Europe including Ensemble Pygmalion, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The English Concert, Vache Baroque, Benedetti Baroque Orchestra, and Dunedin Consort, among others.

Between 2020–2022 Sophia was a New Ensemblist with Arcangelo leading to concerts at the BBC Proms, Barbican Hall, and Wigmore Hall, including her solo debut there, as well as CD recordings. Recently, Sophia gave the Bulgarian premiere performance of Panufnik’s Violin Concerto with the Sofia Soloists Chamber Orchestra.

Sophia studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and graduated with Distinction from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Sophia was awarded third prize at the International Bach Competition in Leipzig (2022). She is a Jumpstart Jr Foundation artist and plays on a 1596 Brothers Amati violin from their Sparrey Collection.

Olwen Foulkes is a recorder player, curator and educator with a love of 18th-century chamber music. In 2019 Olwen founded Ensemble Augelletti who were selected as the BBC New Generation Baroque Ensemble (2023–5) and City Music Foundation Artists (2024–6) and who captivated Purbeck audiences last year. She has released multiple solo CDs, plays with period instrument ensembles including the Academy of Ancient Music, Dunedin Consort and London Handel Players,

and has performed in contemporary projects with Royal Opera House, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Olwen was a Britten Pears Arts ‘Future Leader’ in 2024 and was selected to join the REMarkable European Early Music network in 2025. She is completing a PhD on the early 18th-century London music scene at the Royal Academy of Music where she is also an Undergraduate Academic Studies teacher. She is a Curator at Handel Hendrix House and was appointed as Co-Artistic Director of Brighton Early Music Festival alongside her colleague Hannah Ely in 2024.

Nathaniel Mander is a British harpsichordist known for his refined interpretations of early music. He has received several awards, including first prize at the Early Keyboard Ensemble Competition at Fenton House and the Broadwood Harpsichord Competition, as well as the Harold Samuel Bach Prize from the Royal Academy. He held the Linda Hill Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music for two consecutive years.

His performances have taken him across Europe, the US, and South America. Recent highlights include a private performance for Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, in the lavish George IV rooms at Windsor Castle and a sold-out recital of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* at the Valletta Baroque Festival in Malta.

Nathaniel’s discography includes *The 18th-Century French Salon* and a critically praised recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, which received top marks from the Dutch specialist Classical music magazine, *Luister*. He also premiered and recorded a harpsichord concerto composed for him by Barry Mills with the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra.

www.nathanielmander.com

THE PROGRAMME

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Overture from *Il Pastor Fido* HWV8

Descend kind pity

Dread the fruits of Christian folly
from *Theodora* HWV68

Sonata in F major HWV369
Larghetto - Allegro - Siciliana - Allegro

While Kedron’s brook to Jordan’s stream
from *Joshua* HWV64

The princes applaud with a furious joy
from *Alexander’s Feast* HWV75

Waft her, angels, through the sky
from *Jephtha* HWV70

Interval

Overture from *Acis and Galatea* HWV49

Keyboard Suite in G minor HWV432
Passacaglia

Where shall I seek the charming fair?
Love in her eyes sits playing
from *Acis and Galatea* HWV49

Trio Sonata in B minor op.2 no.1
Andante - Allegro - Largo - Allegro

Consider, fond shepherd
Love sounds the alarm
from *Acis and Galatea* HWV49

PROGRAMME NOTES

This programme traces a vivid arc through the dramatic world of Handel’s operas and oratorios, moving from solemn pleas for compassion and divine guidance to the exuberant passions of pastoral love. We begin in the realm of sacred oratorio, where characters Septimius, Joshua, and Jephtha reveal their inner convictions through music of striking emotional clarity, whether urging mercy, pausing in prayer before battle, or entrusting a beloved daughter to heaven. We then turn to the lighter, more intimate landscape of *Acis and Galatea*, where youthful desire, fervent admiration, gentle counsel, and fiery resolve unfold in a sequence of arias that showcase Handel’s gift for shaping character through expressive melody and colour. Together, these works offer a rich portrait of human feeling, underpinned by Handel’s unfailing sensitivity to text and drama.

The overture to *Il Pastor Fido* unfolds across six movements, giving it the scale and character of a compact orchestral suite rather than a conventional opera prelude. Handel blends a stately French-style opening with a sequence of lively dance movements – allemande, courante, and other graceful forms – creating a bright, sprightly pastoral atmosphere. Its clear textures, rhythmic lift, and elegant phrasing set the Arcadian scene with youthful charm and stylistic variety.

Our first aria of the evening, *Descend, kind pity*, comes from *Theodora*. We hear the soldier Septimius express his plea for universal compassion through a gently flowing melodic style, using its serene lines to convey his desire for mercy and humane understanding in the face of Roman cruelty.

Dread the fruits of Christian folly, which follows, is Septimius’s sharp-edged warning to the Christians, where he chastises them for what he sees as their self-destructive refusal to honour Roman religious law, urging them to recognise that their stubborn devotion is leading them toward chains, danger, and death rather than the *life and liberty* they claim to value.

Handel’s *Sonata in F major* is one of his most elegant chamber works, full of poised lyricism and effortless melodic charm. Its opening movement unfolds with a graceful, vocal-style line, while the later movements bring a mix of gentle pastoral warmth and lightly dancing energy. Together, the sonata offers a compact but beautifully crafted showcase of Handel’s gift for expressive melody and refined instrumental conversation.

Following the sonata, *While Kedron’s Brook to Jordan’s stream* from *Joshua* is a prayer-like, contemplative aria in which Joshua reflects on the solemn weight of his mission to lead the Israelites to the promised land. Handel underscores this with restrained orchestral writing – gentle lines, steady pacing, and a quietly noble melodic shape that together evoke the calm, reflective mood of a leader pausing in prayer before decisive action.

We finish this half with one of Handel’s most beautiful tenor arias, *Waft her, angel, through the skies* from *Jephtha*. Here, Jephtha prays for the safe passage of his daughter, Iphis, when he believes he must sacrifice her to fulfil a vow. The aria’s gentle, ascending melodic lines and luminous, lightly scored accompaniment mirror his mixture of grief, tenderness, and desperate hope as he entrusts her to the care of heaven.

The second half of the programme is centred around Handel’s much-loved *Acis and Galatea*, and its overture offers a graceful, pastoral gateway into the drama. Its poised, lyrical opening hints at Galatea’s serenity, while the lighter, more quick-footed writing suggests Acis’s youthful ardour and the rustic energy of the shepherds. Subtler harmonic shadows foreshadow the darker presence of Polyphemus, giving this compact overture a quietly theatrical sense of the characters and emotions soon to unfold.

Handel’s *Passacaglia*, which now follows, comes from the very end of his most dramatic suite in the great collection of harpsichord pieces published in 1720. One of his most admired solo showpieces, this work, in the rich key of G minor, makes use of the flexibility of a repeated harmonic sequence. In itself, it is an alluring sequence which Handel, on each repetition, intensifies and elaborates into a work of resolute majesty.

We now return to *Acis and Galatea* with Acis’ opening aria *Where shall I seek the charming fair?*. Here, the shepherd begins his eager, love-struck search for Galatea, calling upon the spirits of the landscape to guide him to her. Handel’s music captures his bright, restless longing through its buoyant, dotted rhythms and lightly animated melodic writing, painting Acis as a young shepherd overflowing with hopeful desire.

Staying in this oratorio, we move into the aria *Love in her eyes sits playing*, Acis’ joyful celebration of Galatea’s beauty, as he imagines love itself shining through her eyes and animating her every gesture. Handel reinforces this sense of radiant admiration with graceful, arching melodic lines, light, dancing rhythms, and transparent orchestral writing that gives the aria an effortless charm, perfectly matching Acis’s youthful infatuation.

We move now to another orchestral work, Handel’s *Trio Sonata in B minor*. This is one of the most expressive and introspective works in his Op. 2 collection, opening with a richly woven contrapuntal movement that immediately establishes its sombre, contemplative tone. Across the sonata, Handel balances intricate dialogue between the upper parts with moments of lyrical warmth and rhythmic vitality, creating a work that feels both intimate and beautifully crafted in its design.

Our final two arias come once again from *Acis and Galatea*. *Consider, fond shepherd* is sung by Acis’ friend, Damon, who acts as the voice of calm reason and gently advises Acis not to let jealousy cloud his judgement, reminding him that love thrives on trust rather than suspicion. Handel reinforces Damon’s role as the sensible counsellor through smooth, lightly flowing melodic writing and a soothing, pastoral accompaniment, giving the music an easy, reassuring warmth that mirrors Damon’s steady, good-natured guidance.

We close with *Love sounds the alarm*, Acis’ most fiery aria, where he rouses himself and his fellow shepherds to defend their love and freedom, declaring that love itself calls them to action. The music amplifies this martial, impassioned resolve through vigorous dotted rhythms, trumpet-like vocal writing, and a driving, energetic accompaniment that mimics the urgency of a call to arms.

Guy Cutting

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