

Programme – First Half

Christ Church URC Marlow, Sunday 15th October

Ein' feste Burg – Chorale (Waltham Madrigals)

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)
(from Psalm 46)

1517 and all that (Martin Ashford)

The birds and the bees (choir)

Sweet Suffolk owl

Thomas Vautour (c1570 - c1630)

Il bianco e dolce cigno

Jacques Arcadelt (c1507 - 1568)

Die Nachtigal

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Lerchengesang

F. Mendelssohn

Sweet honey-sucking bees

John Wilbye (1574 - 1638)

Chorale preludes (Christine Wells, organ)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Wachet auf! (Wake, awake, for night is flying)

Christum wir sollen loben schon (The mystical adoration)

Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein (Rejoice now, all ye Christians)

Prelude and fugue in G minor (organ)

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637 - 1707)

Joy and melancholy (choir)

Quick quick away dispatch – No haste but good

Michael East (1580 - 1648)

Drop, drop, slow tears

Orlando Gibbons (1583 - 1625)

Sing we at pleasure

Thomas Weelkes (1576 - 1623)

Sleep fleshly birth

Robert Ramsey (died 1644)

+++++ INTERVAL – refreshments downstairs +++++

Programme – Second Half

Love and dancing (choir)

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| A little pretty bonny lass | John Farmer (1570 - c1601) |
| Four arms, two necks, one wreathing | Thomas Weelkes (1576 - 1623) |
| Fyer, fyer! | Thomas Morley (1557/8 - 1602) |
| Though Amaryllis dance in green | William Byrd (1539/40 - 1623) |
| Oyez! Has any found a lad? | Thomas Tomkins (1572 - 1656) |

Chorale preludes (organ)

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|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Ein' feste Burg (A safe stronghold) | Johann Pachelbel (1653 - 1706) |
| Herzlich tut mich verlangen (My heart is filled with longing) | Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau or Zachow (1663 - 1712) |

Tocatta and fugue BWV 538 – The Dorian (organ) J.S. Bach

A safe stronghold (all – audience to join in!) Martin Luther, trans. Thomas Carlyle

Verse 1 – all; Verse 2 – choir only; Verses 3/4 – all

Christine Wells (organ) entered the Royal Academy of Music at age sixteen principally to study cello with Douglas Cameron. After two years of not practising the piano as a second instrument she switched to the organ. Such was her enthusiasm for this instrument that she soon gained the ARCO and FRCO diplomas as well as diplomas in cello. After leaving the Academy she continued organ studies with Harold Darke at St Michael's Cornhill and took an external B Mus. degree at Durham University. She is a Past President of the Berkshire Organists' Association and has given many organ recitals in the area. She is Director of Music in the Hambleden Valley Group of Churches.

Waltham Madrigals is a small group of singers based at Waltham St Lawrence who focus on the rich repertoire of English madrigals from the late 16th and early 17th centuries. For variety they also include material composed right up to modern times, including e.g. Lennon & McCartney...

They rehearse twice a month on 2nd and 4th Sundays at 5.30pm, and perform whenever they get an opportunity! They welcome enquiries from singers with strong independent voices and moderate to good sight-reading ability. Numbers are limited but for further details contact **Simon Shaw** on 07717 472974 or simon@walthamadrighals.org.uk.

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott (a mighty fortress is our God) is one of the best known hymns of Martin Luther, who wrote the words and composed the melody sometime between 1527 and 1529. The words are a paraphrase of Psalm 46. It has been described as the "Battle hymn of the Reformation".

The birds and the bees

Sweet Suffolk owl appeared in 1619 in Vautour's 'Songs of divers Ayres and Natures, of five and six parts: Apt for Vyols and Voyces'. The composer was in the employ of Sir George Villiers, later Duke of Buckingham, and this is his best-known work.

Jacques Arcadelt was born probably in Flanders but brought up in France, and became hugely popular both there and in Italy. *Il bianco e dolce cigno* (swan) is the most famous of his several hundred madrigals, with words by Marquis Alfonso d'Avalos.

Mendelssohn wrote *die Nachtigal* (the nightingale) at the age of just 12, in 1821, while the Song of the Lark (*Lerchengesang*) was published in his Opus 48 in 1840.

John Wilbye came from Norfolk and his fame rests on just 66 songs, notable for the "serious" style and his settings of some of the best contemporary poets. *Sweet honey-sucking bees* appeared in 1609.

Bach chorale preludes

A chorale is a hymn in the Lutheran manner, normally with the melody in the soprano and three harmony parts. Bach often used chorales as the basis for his cantatas, but he also wrote many chorale preludes, pieces generally for organ designed to be played immediately before the congregational singing of the hymn. A chorale prelude includes the melody of the chorale, with added counterpoint.

Wachet auf (Awake!) was derived from his cantata 140 and written during his Leipzig years (1723-50). *Christum wir sollen loben schon* is an earlier work from his time as organist in Weimar, circa 1713, as is *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein* which survives in two different versions. The basis is one of the earliest Lutheran hymn tunes, written by Martin Luther himself in 1523 and published in his first hymnal the following year.

Dieterich Buxtehude was born in Denmark but moved to Lübeck in Germany. The young JS Bach famously walked over 400 kilometres to Lübeck in order to hear him play, staying for some three months. Among Buxtehude's works are around 40 chorale settings and 19 organ preludes.

Joy and melancholy

Michael East was choirmaster at Lichfield Cathedral and one of the most published composers of his era. The haste in the paired madrigals, *Quick quick away dispatch* and *No haste but good, is to get married!*

Drop, drop, slow tears is a devotional reflection, sung at Passiontide but not specific to that season. What we have today was contrived by Vaughan Williams who joined a poignant text by the Jacobean poet and clergyman Phineas Fletcher to an Orlando Gibbons hymn from 1623.

Thomas Weelkes' *Sing we at pleasure* dates from 1598 and is a type of madrigal known as a ballett, with dance-like rhythm and plenty of fa-la-las. Weelkes was largely responsible for introducing this form from Italy to England.

Robert Ramsey was born in Scotland, possibly to a family of court musicians who followed James VI to England. *Sleep fleshly birth* is thought to be a tribute to Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, who died in 1612.

Love & dancing

A little pretty bonny lass speaks for itself: "I swore I would, yet still she said I should not / Do what I would, and yet for all I could not".

So too does the next madrigal by Thomas Weelkes: "*Four arms, two necks, one wreathing, Two pair of lips, one breathing*".

Thomas Morley published *Fyer, fyer* in 1595 in 'Balletts to Five Voyces, Book 1'. Morley was the first of the great English madrigalists, many of his songs being "borrowed" from the Italian without acknowledgement. He also wrote one of the first textbooks on composition.

William Byrd can be considered a great among English composers, becoming a gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1572 and, jointly with Tallis, enjoying for a while a monopoly on the printing of music. Morley was one of his pupils. Byrd is better known for his motets and other church music than for madrigals; *Though Amaryllis dance In green* appeared in a songbook that he published under the title 'Psalms, Sonnets and Songs of Sadness and Pietie' (1588).

Oyez! Has any found a lad? by Thomas Tomkins is based on the jargon of the town crier. Tomkins himself came from St David's in Wales and is regarded as the last great British writer for the virginals, an early keyboard instrument. He was another of Byrd's pupils and, like him, was appointed to the Chapel Royal. He lived to see the Civil War, when his house in Worcester was badly damaged by a cannonball.

Johann Pachelbel is known today to a broad public largely for one piece, his Canon in D, but he was a hugely important composer of the South German organ tradition and a major contributor to developing the art of chorale preludes and fugues. He lived for some time in Eisenach and Erfurt where he knew the Bach family, before returning to his native city of Nuremberg. Christine Wells will play Pachelbel's reworking of Luther's famous chorale.

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau/Zachow was born in Leipzig and became organist in Halle. He is best remembered as Handel's first music teacher, teaching him to play the violin, organ, harpsichord and oboe, as well as counterpoint. In his lifetime he was criticised by some for the elaborateness of his music. *Herzlich tut mich verlangen nach einem sel'gen End* (I do desire dearly a blessed end) is a prayer for a good death written during an outbreak of the plague, and was also arranged by Pachelbel, Bach and (much later) Brahms.

Tocatta and fugue BWV 538 – The Dorian.

Written in Bach's so-called Weimar period, the nickname Dorian is used to distinguish this mighty work from the better-known BWV 565, both being in D minor. The nickname refers to the fact that the piece is written without a key signature – a notation that is uncommon today and leads one to assume the Dorian mode.

The toccata opens with a semiquaver motif that continues almost uninterrupted to the end. The fugue, also in D minor, is long and complex, and involves a rather archaic-sounding subject which prominently features syncopations and three upward leaps of a perfect fourth. The strict contrapuntal development is only broken in the final four bars, when a few massive chords bring the piece to a close.

We end our concert where we began – with *Ein' feste Burg*, which has been translated into English at least seventy times, starting with Myles Coverdale in 1539. The audience is invited to join in singing the version by Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881): **A safe stronghold our God is still.**