



Wotton
CONCERT
SERIES

WOTTON CONCERT SERIES

St Mary the Virgin
Wotton-under-Edge

Saturday 30 November 2024, 7.30pm

Francis Poulenc
Concerto for Organ Strings and Timpani

Maurice Duruflé
Requiem

Richard Gowers – Organ
Catherine Wyn-Rogers – Mezzo-soprano
Conrad Chatterton – Baritone
Choir of St George's Hanover Square
Bristol Ensemble leader – Roger Huckle
Ben Hoffnung – Conductor



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WELCOME

A very warm welcome to the second concert of the re-launched Wotton Concert Series (WCS). Tonight's concert features 20th Century masterpieces by two exceptional French composers, Francis Poulenc and Maurice Duruflé, and a surprise piece to launch the concert.

We welcome virtuoso organist Richard Gowers as our soloist in Poulenc's compelling Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani, to be performed on St Mary's magnificent baroque organ. We are also delighted to welcome the choir of St George's, Hanover Square, with soloists Catherine Wyn-Rogers and Conrad Chatterton, and the Bristol Ensemble, all of whom join us for Duruflé's mesmeric Requiem. A heartfelt thank you to all our performers.

Thank you too to my fellow trustees - Ben Hoffnung, Edward Harford and Roger Wyn-Jones - for all their hard work enabling us to re-launch WCS, and to our Friends and many other supporters and concert-goers without whose invaluable contributions our concert programme would not be possible. We operate with a small team in an increasingly crowded and competitive field, and if any of you would (or know of anyone who would or might) like to help out in some way, whether as an additional trustee or as a volunteer helping at concerts, or in some other way, please don't hesitate to let me know.

We very much hope that you will enjoy this evening's concert, and that we will see you again at the future concerts we are already planning for March, June and November next year.

Rod Marlow - Chair, Wotton Concert Series



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FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Concerto for Organ, Timpani, and Strings in G minor

Composed 1934-1938. First performance: December 16 1938, Paris

The young Francis Poulenc fitted perfectly in the atmosphere of post-war Paris. He drew freely upon the music and spirit of its music halls and theaters for inspiration, and the city openly embraced the witty and irreverent humor of his compositions. As a founding member of *Les nouveaux jeunes* (an informal group of young composers which would, with Jean Cocteau as mentor, evolve into the influential *Les Six*), he was at the very center of Parisian artistic society. Upon the premiere of his light-hearted and cleverly constructed Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, Poulenc could justifiably brag to a friend, “I am really entering my great period.”

After the success of this concerto, Winnaretta Singer, Princesse Edmond de Polignac, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune and the patron who had commissioned the work, asked Francis Poulenc to write her a piece for organ and small orchestra that she could perform at one of the many musical soirées she hosted at her mansion. However, the playful amusement that she was expecting didn't materialize.

In 1936, the death of his friend Pierre-Octave Ferroud left Poulenc in a deep depression, and he went on a pilgrimage to the Black Virgin of Rocamadour. This journey led him to rediscover his Christian faith and had a profound effect on Polignac's organ piece. Poulenc immersed himself in an extensive study of church music, focusing particularly on the works of J.S. Bach and Dieterich Buxtehude, influences which are readily apparent in the new piece.

The Concerto for Organ, Timpani, and Strings showcases a side of Poulenc's personality that had rarely surfaced in prior works. The wit and humour are still present, to be sure, but there is a sincerity that sets it apart. The piece makes use of a small orchestra to allow it to be performed in the princess' music room, and the organ part was composed with her Cavaillé-Coll organ in mind. Poulenc, who had never written for organ, was assisted with technical issues by the great French organist and composer Maurice Duruflé, who also performed the concerto on both its private and public premieres.

This work is written as a single movement divided internally into seven contrasting sections—a structural feature owing a debt to the organ fantasies of Buxtehude. The opening organ figure channels the Gothic grandeur of Bach's toccatas and alternates with haunting orchestral chords over an insistent timpani pulse. The subsequent

Allegro giocoso reminds us that our clever Francis is still behind this music, but this is a more subdued and sincere composer than the impish prankster from whom the work was originally commissioned. In the *Andante* that follows, we encounter a gorgeous melody of heartfelt lyricism. The composer proceeds to alternate moods between quick intensity and slower introspection until the initial material returns and, exhausted, settles into calm meditation. A transcendent viola melody rises from within the pulsing orchestra, joining the organ as it sits quietly with its thoughts before one final grand statement.

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RICHARD GOWERS



Richard Gowers is Conductor Designate of the London Handel Orchestra and Choir of the 21st Century, and Director of Music at St George's Hanover Square, Handel's church in London. As an organist, highlights of his 2024-2025 season include soloist debuts at the Berlin Philharmonie in a recital alongside the Brass of the Berlin Philharmonic; at the Musikverein in Vienna with trumpeter Matilda Lloyd; and as soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra at Lotte Concert Hall (Seoul), Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Symphony Hall (Osaka) and Oriental Arts Centre (Shanghai). Last season he gave his directing debut with the Academy of Ancient Music at the Monreale Festival of Sacred Music in Sicily, as well as his debut at the London

Handel Festival, directing Bach's St John Passion. Further solo appearances to date include performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia, and the Ulster Orchestra, and recitals at Toulouse Les Orgues, Westminster Abbey, Washington National Cathedral, Nikolaikirche, Leipzig, St. Eustache, Paris, and King's College, Cambridge.

His critically acclaimed recording of Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* was named a Gramophone 'Editor's Choice', described in the magazine as "tremendously

focused and intensely cerebral playing...[conveying] the fundamental musicality of the work". He has frequently appeared live on BBC Radio 3, as well as on Radio 4, Classic FM, and BBC Television.

As a pianist he specialises in song repertoire and chamber music. In 2017-19 he held a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Michael Dussek and Joseph Middleton and won prizes for song accompaniment and chamber music. He was awarded the Schubert Institute UK Prize at the 2019 Leeds Lieder Festival, and has appeared at Wigmore Hall, Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival and Oxford Lieder Festival and with singers such as Mary Bevan, Ashley Riches, Kieran Carrel and Helen Charlston.

Gowers was a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, where he sang the notorious 'Once in Royal David's City' solo at the 2007 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, broadcast live on BBC Radio 4. He became a prizewinning Fellow of the Royal College of Organists aged 17, and subsequently spent a year at the Mendelssohn Conservatoire in Leipzig with a Nicholas Danby Trust bursary, before returning to King's as Organ Scholar and graduating with a starred first in Music. He is currently studying for a Konzert Examen degree in Stuttgart with Nathan Laube. Richard Gowers is based in London, where he combines performing with teaching at Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music. He was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in 2024.

INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES

MAURICE DURUFLÉ (1902-1986)

Requiem

Maurice Duruflé was born at Louviers on 11 January 1902. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire (1919-1922) with Paul Dukas (composition) and with Tournemire and Vierne (organ). From 1919 to 1929 he was assistant organist at Sainte Clotilde and in 1930 was appointed organist of Saint Etienne-du-Mont, Paris, where he remained for over 50 years.

In all this time he published only fourteen works, composition being for him a slow, laborious process involving constant revision and impeccable craftsmanship.

Unlike his contemporary and friend Olivier Messiaen, Duruflé made no attempt to create new forms or to experiment with a new musical language but looked back to plainsong for his inspiration and to a previous generation of French composers – Franck, Debussy, Ravel, Fauré and Dukas – for his models.

The Requiem, his largest and most important work, was the result of a commission from Duruflé's publishers to compose a suite of organ pieces based on plainsong themes from the Mass for the Dead. On the death of his father, it became, in extended form, a Requiem, which was first performed in 1947. Duruflé himself made three different orchestrations: one for full orchestra (with optional organ), one with solo organ, and the version which we are to hear tonight for small orchestra.

There are some similarities between this and Fauré's Requiem in the choice of text, as well as in the allocation of movements between the soloist and the choir. However, as the composer explained in his programme notes: *"This Requiem is not an ethereal work which sings of detachment from earthly worries. It reflects, in the immutable form of the Christian prayer, the agony of man faced with the mystery of his ultimate end. It is often dramatic, or filled with resignation, or hope or terror, just as the words of the Scripture themselves, which are used in the liturgy. It tends to translate human feelings before their terrifying, unexplainable or consoling destiny"*.

I. Introit

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion:
et tibi redetur
votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.
Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
Thou art praised, O God, in Zion
and unto Thee shall the vow be
performed in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer;
unto Thee shall all flesh come.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

II. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

III. Domine Jesu Christe

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium
fidelium defunctorum
de poenis inferni,
et de profundo lacu.

Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum.
Sed signifer sanctus Michael
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam,
quam olim Abrahae promisisti
et semine eius.

Hostias et preces tibi Domine
laudis offerimus.
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
Fac eas, Domine, de morte
transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti
et semini eius.

IV. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

V. Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu, Domine,
dona eis requiem,
requiem sempiternam.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the souls of all the
faithful departed
from the pains of hell,
and from the deep pit.

Deliver them from the lion's mouth,
that hell may not swallow them up;
may they not fall into darkness.
But may the holy standard-bearer,
Michael, lead them into the holy light;
as once Thou didst promise
to Abraham and his seed.

Sacrifices and prayers to Thee,
O Lord, we offer with praises.
Receive them on behalf of those souls
whom we commemorate this day.
Grant them, O Lord, to
pass from death into life;
As once Thou didst promise
to Abraham and his seed.

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He that cometh in the Name
of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful Lord Jesu,
grant them rest,
eternal rest.

VI. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem,
requiem sempiternam.

Lamb of God, that takest away
the sins of the world,
grant them rest,
eternal rest.

VII. Lux Aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine :
Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis,
quia pius es.

May eternal light shine upon them, O Lord,
with Thy saints for ever,
for Thou art merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
For Thou art merciful.

VIII. Libera Me

Libera me Domine, de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda:
Quando coeli movendi
sunt et terra:
Dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,
dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.
Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.

Dies illa, dies irae,
calamitatis et miseriae,
dies magna, et amara valde.

Dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death,
in that awful day:
When the heavens and the
earth shall be moved:
When Thou shalt come to judge the world
by fire.

I tremble, and I fear
the judgement and the wrath to come.
When the heavens and the earth shall be
moved:

That day, day of wrath,
of disaster and misery,
that great and exceeding bitter day.
When Thou shalt come to judge the world
by fire.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death,
in that awful day:

Libera me Domine, de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda:
Quando coeli movendi
sunt et terra:
Dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.

VIII. In Paradisum

In Paradisum deducant te Angeli:
In tuo adventu
suscipiant te Martyres,
Et perducant te
in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus angelorum te suscipiat,
Et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
Aeternam habeas requiem.

When the heavens and the
earth shall be moved:
When Thou shalt come to judge the world
by fire.

May the angels lead you into Paradise:
May your arrival
be greeted by the Martyrs,
And may they guide you
into the holy city, Jerusalem.
May the choir of angels receive you,
And with Lazarus, who once was poor,
May you have eternal rest.

CATHERINE WYN-ROGERS



Catherine Wyn-Rogers, one of our most sought-after artists, has performed with many major orchestras and opera companies, both here and abroad, and at festivals such as Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Munich, Three Choirs and The BBC Proms - including two First Nights and the 1995 Last Night. Amongst the many distinguished conductors she has worked with are Sir Andrew Davis, Zubin Metha, Sir David Willcocks, Daniel Barenboim, Semyon Bychkov, Sir Colin Davis, Bernard Haitink, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Antonio Pappano, Harry Christophers, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Mark Elder and Trevor Pinnock.

Catherine has had a lifelong association with, and love of, choral music as chorister, soloist and supporter. In her school days she was a member of the Derbyshire singers of which she is now Hon. President. Whilst at college she was a member of the college choir and Bach Choir; both under the direction of Sir David Willcocks who was a valued mentor. In her early professional life Catherine was an ad hoc member of the BBC Singers: fellow members were conductor Harry Christophers and composer Judith Bingham.

Catherine has a special association with The Sixteen and Harry Christophers and is on several of their recordings; most notably their critically acclaimed 'Messiah'.

Concert highlights in the most recent seasons include Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius' with Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin Staatskapelle - which was recorded for Decca - a tour with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Andrew Davis in China, concerts and recordings with the Handel & Haydn Society of Boston, appearances at the Enescu Festival in Romania, performances of the Messiah with The Sixteen and Harry Christophers, concert performances and a recording of Britten's 'Peter Grimes' with the Bergen Philharmonic conducted by Edward Gardener in Bergen, Oslo and London. This recording has been critically acclaimed and won the 2021 Gramophone Awards Opera Recording and the prestigious 'Recording of the Year' award.

Catherine has been a regular guest of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and The Bavarian State Opera, she has appeared extensively on the world opera stage with companies including La Scala Milan, The Metropolitan Opera of New York, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English National Opera, Teatro Real of Madrid, Paris Opera, Nederlandse Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Most recently a major project has been the role of 'Auntie' in Deborah Warner's production of Britten's 'Peter Grimes' at the Teatro Real, Madrid; Covent Garden, London; Opera de Paris and has just repeated the role at Rome Opera in October of this year. Last season Catherine had a great success as Queen of the Fairies in Iolanthe for English National Opera - her first flying role!

As a recitalist Catherine has appeared at many major venues and festivals, especially the Wigmore Hall in London, with pianists including Roger Vignoles, Malcolm Martineau, Chris Glynn, Joe Middleton, Graham Johnson and Julius Drake and with Chamber Groups such as the Nash Ensemble.

Catherine Studied at the Royal College of Music and later with Diane Forlano. She is herself a member of the vocal faculty at the Royal Academy of Music and was made a Hon RAM in 2018.

CONRAD CHATTERTON



Conrad Chatterton is an English Baritone currently studying for an Advanced Diploma (Opera) at the Royal Academy of Music (RAO) under the tutelage of Mark Wildman, Ingrid Surgenor and Chris Hopkins. He earned a Master of Music degree with Distinction from the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) under the guidance of Matthew Best and holds an M.A. (Hons) in Geography from the University of Aberdeen.

Conrad has performed roles such as ‘Sir John Falstaff’ in *Sir John in Love* (BYO), ‘Mr. Gedge’ in *Albert Herring* (RAO), ‘Johnny’ in *Comedy on the Bridge* (RAO), ‘Edmund Bertram’ in *Mansfield Park* (RNCM), ‘Gianni Schicchi’ in *Gianni Schicchi* (Random

Opera Company), and ‘Der Haushofmeister’ and ‘Ein Lakai’ in *Ariadne auf Naxos – Prologue* (RNCM), amongst others.

Recent engagements include covering the role of ‘Kromow’ in *The Merry Widow* and ‘Curio’ in *Giulio Cesare* at Glyndebourne’s 2024 Summer Festival, where he was also part of the Chorus. Additionally, Conrad was part of the Glyndebourne Festival 2023 Chorus, performing in *Don Giovanni*, *L’elisir d’amore*, *Semele*, and *The Rake’s Progress*. Further Chorus work includes Grange Park Opera where he performed in *Otello*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *La Gioconda*, and *The Excursions of Mr. Broucek*.

Conrad also performs a diverse range of oratorio and concert repertoire, including Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Brahms’ *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Rossini’s *Petite Messe Solennelle*, and Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, among other notable pieces.

He is very kindly supported by the Fernside Award throughout his time at the Royal Academy of Music.



BENEDICT HOFFNUNG ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Ben enjoys a rich and diverse international career as a timpanist, a percussionist and more recently as a choral director and conductor. As a player he has worked extensively with all the major symphony and chamber orchestras in London, visiting the major music festivals of the world, including Salzburg, Edinburgh, Berlin, and Aix-en-Provence. He has toured Europe, Russia, Japan, China, Australia, and the United States.

As an acknowledged expert in the performance of baroque and classical music Ben's experience of the wider symphonic repertoire is also broad and far reaching. He is timpanist with the London Mozart Players and with the Academy of Ancient Music. He regularly plays, records and tours with The London Symphony Orchestra and is Professor of Baroque and Classical Timpani Studies at the Royal Academy of Music. As a conductor he has worked with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the London Mozart Players, the English Chamber Orchestra and Instruments of Time and Truth.

Ben founded the Wotton Concert Series which is now commencing its eleventh season.



BRISTOL ENSEMBLE – THE ORCHESTRA FOR THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Since its foundation in 1994, by violinist and Chief Executive Roger Huckle, the Bristol Ensemble has been at the forefront of musical life in Bristol and the Southwest.

Versatility is one of Bristol Ensemble's greatest attributes. Bristol Ensemble is a collective of specialists that collaborate to provide the highest calibre of performance for a wide range of audiences.

From the music of the 17th century, performed on original instruments, through to contemporary composition and experimental music, the ensemble has a busy schedule of concerts in Bristol and the West of England, in addition to its regular concert series in Henleaze and Nailsworth. It is also the resident orchestra with If Opera in Bradford-on-Avon. Over the past quarter of a century, Bristol Ensemble has presented countless world-class performances and has collaborated with many of the finest international performers.

Equally at home in the recording studio as well as the concert hall, Bristol Ensemble has had a long-standing relationship with the BBC Natural History Unit, providing numerous soundtracks such as the David Attenborough series *Life in Cold Blood*, along with countless commercial engagements. Recent recordings include music for award-winning productions such as Aardman Animations *Star Wars Vision (I Am Your Mother)*, Channel 4's *Any Human Heart*, and the 2021 Aardman Animation film *Robin Robin*.

Bristol Ensemble is committed to its charitable work within Bristol and the wider community. It regularly works with local charities presenting fundraising concerts and events, and its Preludes Music team works tirelessly delivering musical opportunities to more than 3000 children each year.



CHOIR OF ST GEORGE'S HANOVER SQUARE

St George's Hanover Square is the parish church of Mayfair in central London. The professional choir, conducted by only its twelfth Director of Music in three centuries, sings a full Mass setting and communion motet every Sunday at the morning Eucharist. Repertoire ranges from the 16th century to the present day. As G.F. Handel's church, St George's hosts the annual London Handel Festival, for which the choir forms the nucleus of the chorus for regular performances of Messiah in December and the Bach Passions sung liturgically on Good Friday. In March-April 2025 the church celebrates its 300th anniversary, which will be marked by a performance of Handel's Dettingen Te Deum, as well as Choral Evensong broadcast by BBC Radio 3. Members of the choir also sing regularly with the UK's finest professional choirs, including the Monteverdi Choir, BBC Singers and Tallis Scholars.

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 Madeline Smith

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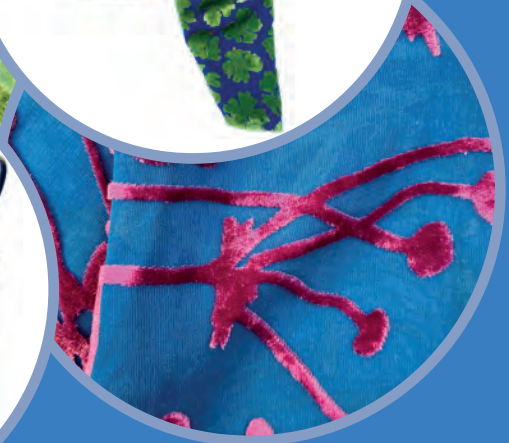
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