



SHERBORNE ABBEY festival

27th April – 4th May 2023
sherborneabbeyfestival.org

Sponsored by

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Doors will open 30 minutes before performances.

Tickets

Tickets are available online at:
ticketsource.co.uk/sherborneabbeyfestival
 or by telephone on **0333 666 3366**
 or scan the QR code:



Patrons' prices including discount are calculated online. Patrons' discounts are not applicable for Dinner and Opera. Under-18s tickets attract a 50% discount.

Become a Patron

Why not become a Festival Patron? With seven levels to choose from, starting from just £25 for an annual Bronze membership through to our new Pearl, Ruby and Diamond Patron levels, help us to continue to attract world-class artists to Sherborne Abbey, as well as support local music initiatives and youth music-making. Enjoy advanced booking, discounts (rates according to level) and invitations to exclusive events! Visit sherborneabbeyfestival.org/patrons.

The Festival is run on behalf of Sherborne Abbey Parochial Church Council (PCC), Registered Charity No.1130082, to support its charitable activities in the field of music.



Welcome to Sherborne Abbey Festival 2023! Some of you have been supporting us since our first programme in 2000: to you we are humbly grateful, as we are to those who have joined us in more recent years and to new followers.

The 2023 season is a real treat. The Sixteen and Harry Christophers return after many years, internationally celebrated cellist Steven Isserlis makes his Festival debut and clarinettist Julian Bliss returns with friends – a stunning wind ensemble. If that's not enough, this year's solo artists include internationally renowned pianist John Lenehan, in recital to celebrate the new Yamaha grand piano gifted to Sherborne Abbey by the Festival, and the wonderful jazz vocalist Gabrielle Ducombe! And once more we also celebrate a wealth of talent across our local schools and community, including the Festival Chorus and our own Sherborne Abbey Choir, who present their first Festival concert.

There is a special souvenir programme this season too: do buy one – it really will help us to ensure that our multi-award-winning Sherborne Abbey Festival, which is run entirely by volunteers, remains one of the most prestigious and anticipated events in the south-west.

A special thanks to the *Sherborne Times* for their support this year.

We look forward to seeing you!

Best wishes,
John Baker
Chairman/Artistic Director

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SHERBORNE
CASTLE & GARDENS



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 and **Sherborne Castle Estates**.



Photo: ©Len Copland

Between Heaven and Earth

Sherborne Festival Chorus

Get set to be blown away with the return of the Sherborne Festival Chorus! The centrepiece of the programme is Haydn's mighty *Harmoniemesse* – music that finds this 18th-century musical rockstar at his most dramatic and, with its joyful choruses, his most exuberant! Brahms's moving *Song of Destiny* opens the evening. A setting of German Romantic poetry that explores a life in heaven against a stormy, fateful existence on earth. But

Chameleon Arts Orchestra
Conductor **Paul Ellis**

Thursday 27th April, 7.30pm
Tickets: £35, £30, £15, £10
Sherborne Abbey

Brahms *Schicksalslied* (Song of Destiny), op.54
Haydn Mass in B flat, *Harmoniemesse*, Hob.XXII:14
Schubert Symphony no. 8 ('Unfinished'), D.759

for Brahms, a mood of hope prevails – music for now just as much as then. Schubert's much-loved 'Unfinished' Symphony closes this opening night. In failing health, Schubert abandoned this work after two movements, giving it to a friend who filed it away in a cupboard. It came to light more than 30 years later, long after his death. With its captivating mysterious opening theme and its unforgettable melodies, thank heaven it survived!

Sherborne School Chamber Ensembles

Friday 28th April, 1.30pm
Free entry
Sherborne Abbey

A piano trio, a string quartet and a 'Scholars' Brass Ensemble' are joined by talented soloists from Sherborne School in the glorious surroundings of Sherborne Abbey. This lunchtime recital is part of a weekly platform for solo

performances and small ensembles drawn from all year groups that ordinarily takes place in Cheap Street Church every Friday of the school year. Perfect before or after a light lunch!



Photo: ©Len Copland

Sherborne School Swing Band

Sherborne School Swing Band

Director **James Henderson**

Friday 28th April, 5pm
Free entry
Big School Room

The event for all things swing! Since September, this ever-popular band, spanning all year groups, has been working on the perfect blend between the classic tunes of the '30s and '40s and the more contemporary writing that you would hope to hear in some of the most famous jazz venues. Featuring soloists and vocalists from across the band, this is the true staple of Sherborne School's recitals in the Abbey Festival!



Photo: ©Josie Surges, Mills



An Immortal Legacy

The Sixteen

Sheppard, Tallis, Byrd, Morley, Gibbons,
Britten, Tippett, James MacMillan

Conductor **Harry Christophers**

Friday 28th April, 7.30pm
Tickets: £37, £30, £20, £10
Sherborne Abbey

This world-famous choir return to Sherborne Abbey with a sublime programme of sacred and secular choral music by some of the most celebrated composers of the English Renaissance and of our own age. Tallis, Byrd and their Elizabethan contemporaries forever speak to us across time through their extraordinary musical legacy. Twentieth-century masters Tippett and

Britten were deeply inspired by the craft, power and beauty of their music. By contrast the Catholic faith lies at the heart of the inspiration that drives contemporary composer James MacMillan, just as it did for his Renaissance, and privately Catholic, musical ancestors, who had to navigate the religious turmoils of their day to survive. A truly uplifting evening from a very special ensemble.

Sherborne School Chamber Choir

Director **James Henderson**

Saturday 29th April, 11 am
Free entry
Sherborne Abbey



Get your morning off to a great start with this delightful programme from Sherborne School's outstanding chamber choir. Close harmony arrangements of well-known classics from the

shows rub shoulders with some more contemporary numbers, plus a Barbershop group, consisting almost entirely of ex-cathedral choristers, sings humorous and light-hearted songs.

Wessex Strings

Conductor **Adam Laughton**
Leader **Shoko Middleton**

Saturday 29th April, 1.30pm
Free entry
Cheap Street Church



A gorgeous lunchtime programme from Wessex Strings, featuring songs and dances from across Europe. One of Purcell's most loved operas, *The Fairy Queen*, shimmers with rich orchestral passages, showcased in a selection of movements. Grieg's lyricism shines through in two richly scored melodies for string orchestra, based on traditional Norwegian songs. Frank Bridge, a contemporary of Stanford and Elgar, is represented by his rarely heard *Valse Intermezzo*. Extracts from two of Puccini's best-loved operas, *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème*, form the second half, with Holst's ever popular *St Paul's Suite* providing a thrilling close.



Northumbrian Impressions Elliott Park*, Calathea Quartet, Chris Evans

Saturday 29th April, 4pm
Tickets: £10
St Aldhelm and the Sacred Heart

For something a little different, tune in to the world of Northumbrian smallpipes. This unique instrument is long established on the folk scene thanks to the likes of Kathryn Tickell but increasingly has captured the imaginations of classical composers. Join composer and conductor Elliott Park, the Calathea Quartet and guest soloist piper Chris Evans in taking a wilder look at the pastoral tradition of Britain and Ireland through an intriguing programme of contemporary work.

*Sherborne Abbey Festival is delighted to have awarded Elliott Park a grant towards his studies as a postgraduate composition scholar at the Royal Academy of Music.

Services Festal Eucharist/ Choral Evensong Choral Matins*

Sunday 30th April, 9.30am, 6pm,
Sherborne Abbey; Castleton Church, 11.15am*

Join the weekly Eucharist in the Abbey for a liturgical performance of Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* with motets by Tallis and Byrd. For the Festival, the Abbey Choir is joined in Choral Evensong by Sherborne School Chamber Choir for Howells's superb canticles the *St Paul's Service* and Stanford's mighty *For lo, I raise up that bitter and hasty nation*. Mid morning at Castleton, join The Beckett Consort for Matins.

Gryphon School Choir and Orchestra

Head of Music **Valdon Mizen**

Sunday 30th April, 1pm
Free entry
Sherborne Abbey

Get set for tales of smuggling, young romance, treachery and shipwreck. Gryphon School presents the world premiere of choruses and solos from *Moonfleet* – a new musical theatre work based on J. Meade Faulkner's classic dashing tale set on the Dorset coast, involving students from across the whole school!



Photo: ©Len Copland

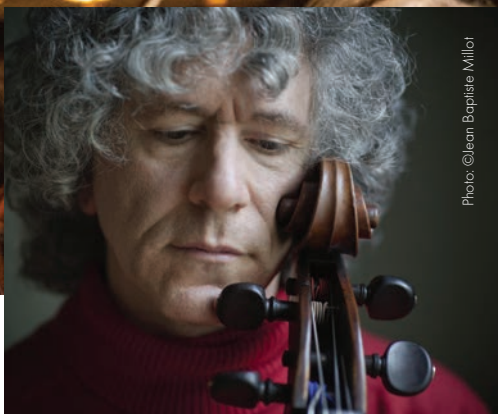


Photo: ©Jean Baptiste Millot

Steven Isserlis and Iuventus Chamber Orchestra

Conductor **Thomas Hull**
Leader **Ruth Rogers**

Steven Isserlis (cello)
Ruth Rogers (violin)

Saturday 29th April, 7.30pm

Tickets: £35, £30, £15, £10

Sherborne Abbey

Mendelssohn: Overture,
Die Schöne Melusine, op. 32

Saint-Saëns: Cello Concerto no. 2, op. 119

Saint-Saëns: Introduction and
Rondo Capriccioso, op. 28

Mendelssohn: Symphony no.4, 'Italian', op. 90

Be prepared to be swept off your feet in this programme of music by Saint-Saëns and Mendelssohn featuring one of the world's great cellists Steven Isserlis and leader of the superb Iuventus Chamber Orchestra, Ruth Rogers, who we are thrilled to welcome back. Saint-Saëns' Second Cello Concerto is utterly captivating: in just two movements, a deeply lyrical, virtuosic and passionate work to lose yourself in – and especially so in the hands of the wonderful Steven Isserlis. By contrast Saint-Saëns' *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* is one of the great showpieces of the virtuoso violinist's repertory – dazzling, charming, irresistible! Bookending the soloists is Mendelssohn. His lovely overture 'The Fair Melusine' opens the evening, and what more truly uplifting work to close and send you out into the night with music in your heart: Mendelssohn's 'Italian' Symphony. It is, he said, the 'happiest piece I have ever written'. What more can we say?



Sherborne Town Band

Sunday 30th April, 3.30pm

Tickets: £10

Gransden Hall at The Merritt Centre

The sound of a brass band is unique: that warm astringency of brass in song evoking, somehow, the spirit of a community coming together. Sherborne Town Band has a long and proud history stretching back more than 60 years, with relatives of its founding 'Old Boys' among its current members. The Band has repeatedly achieved regional awards in the National Brass Band Championships too. But more than this, with the next generation in safe hands through its Youth Band (which is supported by the Festival), and performances throughout the year, like Sherborne's Abbey and schools the Band is set to continue to stand at the heart of the musical community. Its outings are much anticipated; its Festival appearances are special occasions.



Photo: © Tatiana Gorilovsky

Gabrielle Ducomble

Sunday 30th April, 7.30pm

Tickets: £15

**Gransden Hall at
The Merritt Centre**

Gabrielle Ducomble (vocals)

Nicolas Meier (guitar)

Richard Jones (violin)

Ben Hazleton (bass)

The irresistible voice of Gabrielle Ducomble comes to Sherborne Abbey Festival. This Belgian-born jazz vocalist and composer is renowned for her pure, powerful and supremely elegant voice. Her Parisian jazz and tango arrangements present a fresh, contemporary take on iconic songs by the likes of Piaf, Piazzolla, Legrand and Brel and she has performed at many leading London venues and across the UK on tour to great acclaim. Her latest album, *Across the Bridge*, features 12 original songs in English and her native French, drawing on her love of jazz, chansons, tango, latin rhythm and new-age, and themes of nature, art, social justice and ideology. Now based in France, this is an unmissable opportunity to catch live this very special artist, with her band including guitar virtuoso Nicolas Meier.

Family Workshop Drum Runners

Monday 1st May, 10.30am

**Tickets: FREE (advanced booking
only; limited to 40 places)**

Abbey Green



Get into the world of rhythm and rhyme with Rhythmologist Paul Midgley. Discover how to make a drum from a bike wheel and play in your own DIY junk band. Drum Runners' junk drumming workshop is unique, fun and suitable for all ages and abilities!



Drawing an
extraordinary
breadth of sounds
– from the most
delicate to the most cavernous – and with
fiendish fingerwork and chordal grandeur,
an organist's recital can leave you breathless
with awe as much as the sacred space itself.

Organ Recital Matthew Owens

Monday 1st May, 1.30pm

Tickets: £15

Sherborne Abbey

delicate to the most cavernous – and with
fiendish fingerwork and chordal grandeur,
an organist's recital can leave you breathless
with awe as much as the sacred space itself.
Matthew Owens is an acclaimed organist
who has held posts at Edinburgh, Wells and
Belfast cathedrals and is also a conductor
and educator. His recital comprises music by
some of the greatest organist-composers of
all time – J.S. Bach, Pachelbel, Mendelssohn
and Widor, alongside pieces by the
renowned Victorian organist Edmund
Thomas Chipp, and Owens himself.

Leweston School Chamber Ensembles



Monday 1st May, 4pm
Free entry
St Aldhelm and the Sacred Heart

An afternoon treat for those who fancy a little taste of everything! Leweston School's senior ensembles include their Baroque Ensemble, Flute Group, Recorder Consort and Jazz Band in this wide-ranging programme – We Are the Music Makers – spanning 400 years of musical imagination.



Sherborne Girls Madrigal Society

Director **Mark Cracknell**

Tuesday 2nd May, 1.30pm
Free entry
Sherborne Abbey

Join Sherborne Girls Madrigal Society for a lunchtime concert to lift the spirit. This talented chamber choir, comprising 21 female voices, will give a varied programme of choral music from some of the world's most renowned composers, from Bach to Lauridsen, sung *a cappella* or accompanied by organ or piano.

Byrd 400

Sherborne Abbey Choir

Byrd, Handel, Elgar



Director **James Henderson**
Peter Bray (organ)

Monday 1st May, 7.30pm
Tickets: £12, £10, £8, £6
Sherborne Abbey

2023 is a special year in the choral realm, being the 400th anniversary of the death of William Byrd (1539/40–1623) – favourite of Elizabeth I and one of the greatest composers of the English Renaissance. To celebrate, Sherborne Abbey Choir sings his Mass for four voices alongside well-known motets, including his beautiful Ave verum corpus and the lively Haec Dies. And, of course, there is a double celebration to be had, with the Coronation imminent! With Handel's rousing *Zadok the Priest*, the Hallelujah chorus from his *Messiah* and some resplendent organ music by Elgar to complete the evening, this superb patriotic programme, in one of England's most beautiful historic spaces, promises to linger long in the memory.



Sherborne Girls Chamber Ensembles

Tuesday 2nd May, 4.30pm
Free entry
Gransden Hall
at The Merrit Centre

Sherborne Girls' chamber musicians are something special. Their short programme of piano trios and quartets in the school's beautiful Gransden Hall features works by Haydn and Richard Rodney Bennett, among others. Perfect for an afternoon break.



Leweston Schola Cantorum

Director **Rachel Milestone**

Wednesday 3rd May, 1pm
Free entry
Sherborne Abbey

Musically re-fuel over lunch with Leweston School's senior choir and Music Scholar soloists. Their joyful programme is an eclectic mix of choral arrangements, from favourite popular songs including 'Seasons of Love' from the musical *Rent* to settings of traditional words of faith by such contemporary composers as Bob Chilcott, Dan Forrest and Karl Jenkins, including *Laudemus Te* from Jenkins's *Gloria*.



Julian Bliss and Friends

Tuesday 2nd May, 7.30pm
Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10
Sherborne Abbey

Beethoven *Rondino* in E-flat major, WoO 25
Mozart *Serenade* for Winds no. 11, K.375
Beethoven *Symphony* no. 7, op. 92

Julian Bliss is one of the world's finest clarinetists, excelling as a concerto soloist, chamber musician, recitalist, jazz artist and masterclass leader. Following a tremendous reception at last year's Festival as a soloist, he returns with friends – some of the UK's finest wind players – to perform Beethoven's dramatic *Symphony* no. 7 as you've never heard it before: in a demanding and thrilling arrangement for nine wind instrumentalists! The programme opens with Beethoven's *Rondino*, an early piece full of trademark Beethoven character and subtly, followed by Mozart's jubilant and virtuosic *Serenade* no. 11. A Festival treat!



Photo ©Kairopo Kikkas

Piano Music
and all that Jazz

John Lenahan

Thursday 4th May, 3.30pm
Tickets: £15
Sherborne Abbey

John Lenahan is one of the most versatile and admired pianists on the classical scene today, with more than 70 albums to his credit reflecting an enormous variety of genres and styles. He has worked with some of the leading instrumentalists of our time and is a *Gramophone* Award-winning soloist in his own right, appearing with orchestras including the LSO, RPO and LPO. As a composer and orchestrator, too, he has worked with such recording artists as Tasmin Little, Leonidas Kavakos, Yuja Wang, Nigel Kennedy, Joseph Calleja and Nicola Benedetti. For the Festival, John Lenahan showcases the Abbey's new Yamaha grand piano (gifted by the Festival) in a mouth-watering recital programme that will put it through its paces. Look forward to music by Bach, Schubert and Chopin, Ukrainian composers Valentin Silvestrov and Nikolai Kapustin, and jazz giants Fats Waller, Duke Ellington and Bill Evans!



Dinner and Opera

Wednesday 3rd May, 6.45pm
Thursday 4th May, 6.45pm
Tickets: £70 per head
The Plume of Feathers

Lynsey Docherty (soprano)
Anthony Flaum (tenor)
Stuart Pendred (bass-baritone)
Caroline D'Cruz (piano)

Enjoy a gastronomic and musical journey at the historic The Plume of Feathers, with soprano Lynsey Docherty and friends, accompanied by regular pianist Caroline d'Cruz. Be welcomed with a drink followed by a delicious three-course menu, designed especially for this event, and be fabulously entertained with a wealth of opera classics and West End showstoppers. The Festival's final opera nights are renowned for beautiful music delivered with panache and humour as the singers interact with the audience in this truly unique, up-close, dinner-and-concert experience.

Guests will be seated at shared tables unless booking a party for six or more. Once you have purchased tickets, please advise The Plume of Feathers directly if you have any special dietary requirements. (Patrons' discounts do not apply.)

Thursday 27th April

Sherborne Festival Chorus	7.30pm	Sherborne Abbey
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Friday 28th April

Sherborne School Chamber Ensembles*	1.30pm	Sherborne Abbey
Sherborne School Swing Band*	5pm	Big School Room
The Sixteen	7.30pm	Sherborne Abbey

Saturday 29th April

Sherborne School Chamber Choir*	11am	Sherborne Abbey
Wessex Strings*	1.30pm	Cheap Street Church
Elliott Park, Calathea Quartet, Chris Evans	4pm	St Aldhelm and the Sacred Heart
Steven Isserlis (cello), Ruth Rogers (violin) and Iuventus Orchestra	7.30pm	Sherborne Abbey

Sunday 30th April

Service: Festal Eucharist*	9.30am	Sherborne Abbey
Service: Choral Matins*	11.15am	Castleton Church
Gryphon School Orchestra*	1pm	Sherborne Abbey
Sherborne Town Band	3.30pm	Gransden Hall at The Merritt Centre
Service: Choral Evensong*	6pm	Sherborne Abbey
Gabrielle Ducombe	7.30pm	Gransden Hall at The Merritt Centre

Monday 1st May

Drum Runners: Family Workshop**	10.30am	Sherborne Abbey Green
Matthew Owens (organ)	1.30pm	Sherborne Abbey
Leweston School Chamber Ensembles*	4pm	St Aldhelm and the Sacred Heart
Sherborne Abbey Choir	7.30pm	Sherborne Abbey

Tuesday 2nd May

Sherborne Girls Madrigal Society*	1.30pm	Sherborne Abbey
Sherborne Girls Chamber Ensembles*	4.30pm	Gransden Hall at The Merritt Centre
Julian Bliss and Friends	7.30pm	Sherborne Abbey

Wednesday 3rd May

Leweston Schola Cantorum*	1pm	Sherborne Abbey
Dinner and Opera	6.45pm	The Plume of Feathers

Thursday 4th May

John Lenehan (piano)	3.30pm	Sherborne Abbey
Dinner and Opera	6.45pm	The Plume of Feathers



* Free entry

** Tickets free (limited spaces; advance booking required)