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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) arr. Wolfgang Sebastian Meyer (1936-1966) Fantasie in F minor K594 (1790)

Adagio ~ Allegro ~ Adagio

Mozart was commissioned to write this work as ‘Funeral Musique’ to be played on a mechanical clock organ at the mausoleum of the recently-deceased Field Marshal Ernst Gideon von Laudon. When the clock struck the hour, the music would be played, a new piece every week. In fact, it soon became the case that Mozart’s works were the only ones played (he eventually wrote three altogether).

The *Fantasie* is more substantial than one might expect. Beginning with solemn chords over a rising bass line, it moves quite soon into the heart of the work – an exultant and jubilant *Allegro*, with repeated peals of celebration. The *Adagio* then returns mysteriously, and the appropriate funereal but reflective tone is re-established.

Cecilia McDowall (b1951) *Subject to the weather* (2010)

In the composer’s own words: “I have used the well known hymn tune, ‘Aurelia: The Church’s One Foundation’, written by Samuel Wesley’s son, S.S. Wesley, to underpin the structure of the quintet.

The work opens with the hymn tune’s first phrase stated by the horn, accompanied by an outline of ‘The Blackbird’ [a traditional Welsh folk song]. This is followed by a lively motif derived from the opening of the folksong. The first section of the quintet is a sort of perpetuum mobile (which seems about right for farming

life) and the little motif is shared between the players, with the flute presenting ‘out of time’ fragments of the song. The flute solo, blackbird-like, leads from the bustling of the first section to the meditative second and final section. Here the folksong appears complete, woven through the solemn under-structure of the hymn. The title, *Subject to the weather*, is a quotation from Johnny Arkwright, landowner, magistrate and supporter of the labourers’ movement; Arkwright, speaking of farming, said: ‘No other industry is to the same extent subject to the weather.’”

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) *Wind Quintet op43* (1922)

1 *Allegro ben moderato* ~ 2 *Menuet* ~ 3 *Praeludium – Theme with Variations*

Nielsen wrote his *Wind Quintet* for five friends, with each part made to suit the temperament of the individual player. He’d also intended to write a concerto for each of the same players, but only lived to complete those for flute and clarinet. The irascible nature of the clarinettist, for example, might be strongly suggested in the *Quintet*, but it’s confirmed by the instrument’s fierce characterisation in the later *Clarinet Concerto*.

The *Quintet*’s opening *Allegro* starts with a familiar Nielsenesque welcome from the bassoon, soon joined by the others enjoying a great deal of vigorous chirping. The horn then sounds a second theme, developed between various interruptions in several ways, before a final peroration brings us back to the opening bars. The second movement follows – a stately *Menuet* led by the clarinet, with a central trio begun and developed by the oboe.

The core of the work, however, is the **final movement** *Prelude, Theme and Variations*. After a rather grim and discordant prelude, there follows a set of 11 variations bookended with the hymn tune – first time plain and simple; formal and emphatic at the close. The tune is based on one of Nielsen’s own spiritual songs, ‘Mine Jesu, make my heart to love thee’, and the variations themselves are, well, various. Some for solo instruments, others for all five. Some quiet and reflective, others brash and vigorous. But all are showpieces for Nielsen’s wonderfully idiosyncratic humour.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) *Summer Music op31* (1956)

The piece is in a single movement and although it was Barber’s only composition for wind instruments, it’s nevertheless become a staple of wind quintet repertoire. As in the Nielsen, each instrument is under the spotlight at some stage. In Barber’s own words, “It’s supposed to be *evocative* of summer – summer meaning languid, not killing mosquitoes.”

The introduction, marked “slow and indolent,” evokes a bluesy atmosphere, redolent of Gershwin, but also quick glimpses of

Stravinsky in the occasional harsh but playful dissonance. After the oboe spins a long, gentle theme, a more agitated section ensues, in which the individual instruments chatter among themselves in ascending solo flourishes. The overall form is palindromic, the same backwards as forwards, with the bluesy opening returning at the close, and mixed with short echoes of previous sections.

John Tavener (1944-2013) *Little Missenden Calm* (1984)

Little Missenden Calm was one of four pieces comprising *Little Missenden Festival Variations* composed to celebrate our 25th birthday. Tavener described his contribution as “a magic square taken from the notes of ‘Little Missenden’. The music is still, but geometric – a little ‘ikon’ for Little Missenden.”

Percy Grainger (1882-1961) *Lisbon* (1937)

Lisbon is the first and shortest of the six pieces that make up Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy*. It’s a simple folk song tune, following a young sailor as he leaves his love and departs for Lisbon. About halfway through, another Grainger composition – *The Duke of Marlborough Fanfare* – attempts to break through the constant repetitions of the main tune, but sadly fails in the attempt.

Amy Beach (1867-1944) *Pastorale op151* (1941)

Amy Beach’s career began as a pianist. Her husband, however, didn’t approve of her performing in public (or even tutoring) and she therefore turned increasingly to composition, quite soon becoming one of America’s leading composers (of either sex). The op151 *Pastorale* was one of her last works and the only one she wrote for wind quintet. The title says it all, as we’re led by the flautist into a timeless bucolic world where it’s easy to imagine ourselves gently swaying in a hammock all day.

Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006) *Three Shanties op4* (1943)

Allegro con brio ~ *Allegretto semplice* ~ *Allegro vivace*

The three short movements in this work offer a playful take on well known sea shanties, while also highlighting Arnold’s incredible talent for making quality music. They’re certainly not as simple as they might seem.

The drunken sailor in the first movement is brilliantly portrayed in various stages of intoxication. He chases his pigtails, develops hiccoughs, finds himself in a state of remorse on the shores of South America, dancing the tango to a minor key. Eventually, however, he pulls himself together and reports for duty.

'Boney was a warrior' heads the contrasting second movement, with a horn solo immediately setting a more relaxed scene. The melody is slowly passed around the ensemble as all five instruments take their chance to shine.

The last shanty's based on 'Johnny come down to Hilo' and is bursting with humour and boisterousness. Not one of the instruments manages to get through the whole melody before being interrupted by another butting in, while the quick changes and variations on the melody keep the excitement and humour going throughout.

Notes by Dick Ware

The artists

Kathryn Thomas *flute* **Owen Dennis** *oboe* **Katherine Spencer** *clarinet* **Richard Bayliss** *horn* **Helen Storey** *bassoon*

Former BBC New Generation Artists, the **Galliard Ensemble** is one of Britain's leading chamber groups, with repertoire ranging from Mozart and Beethoven to Berio and Birtwistle. Founded in 1993, the ensemble has performed in many of the world's leading venues and festivals, including Wigmore Hall, South Bank Centre, Bridgewater Hall, Sage Gateshead and at the BBC Proms. They've also performed in Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland and Slovenia and they frequently broadcast on *BBC Radio 3* and around the World.

The Galliards are known for their virtuosic, entertaining and distinctive performance style and their recordings have been widely praised – the *Sunday Times*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone*, and *BBC Radio 3* all having selected one of their CDs as "outstanding" or as Critics' Choice.

They've also worked closely with many leading contemporary composers, including György Ligeti. Their performance at the BBC Proms of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's quintet *Five Distances* led to their award-winning CD of Birtwistle's chamber music for winds. Their latest recording, 'From the Beginning', came out in 2023 to mark their 30th anniversary.

The Galliard Ensemble is passionate about bringing music to a diverse audience, realising the positive impact that it can have on learning and personal development. Their educational work ranges from concerts for children to masterclasses at leading conservatoires and universities such as the Royal Northern College of Music, University of Cardiff, Trinity Laban, and at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

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The 2026 Little Missenden Festival will run from Friday 2nd to Sunday 12th October.

Festival Website little-missenden.org

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- Email: contact@little-missenden.org

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Committee: Angela Bishop, Polly Buston, Martin Cunningham, John Glasson, Beth Neill, Liz Wager, Dick Wells, Rachel Wilcox



Programme Notes

THE GALLIARD ENSEMBLE



8pm, Friday October 10th, 2025
Little Missenden Church

65th Little Missenden Festival