



THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL
of
EARLY MUSIC

2021 FESTIVAL REVIEW

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10-13 November 2021, Blackheath

Gill Graham Artistic Director

Chris Butler Festival Director

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To promote the arts for public benefit, in particular music, and to advance public education and appreciation of music in London by providing an annual music festival in Blackheath, London and/or other music events and/or educational outreach programmes.

TRUSTEES

Caro Barnfield

Chris Butler

Tony Millyard

Susannah Simons

All photography by Anna McCarthy

LIFEM registered as a CIO on 28th July 2020. Charity no: 1190603

INTRODUCTION



CHRIS BUTLER, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

After the trials and tribulations of 2020 it was both a pleasure and a relief to welcome exhibitors, performers and visitors in person to Blackheath for our 2021 festival. Those who came were rewarded with a stunning programme of events and a real celebration of all things early music. As a festival we are continually evolving and our innovations in 2021 included the filming and streaming of all four evening concerts on Marquee TV, an eve of festival opening concert, complete with a world premiere by Errollyn Wallen, a second world premiere by Toby Young at our exhibitors' reception, our inaugural festival evensong led by the Reverend Sandy Christie of St Michael & All Angels, and all-event Festival Passes which were snapped up by eager enthusiasts.

Many of these innovations will be repeated in 2022 as we strive to find the perfect festival formula. This year's LIFEM (9-12 November 2022) is in the advanced planning stage and a full schedule will be announced on 28th April. I can already promise you a spectacular event this year, but in the meantime I hope you enjoy reading this review and rekindling fond memories of LIFEM21.



“Enchantment, engagement and swagger.”

Flora Willson, The Guardian

BACKGROUND

The London International Festival of Early Music is one of the largest early music festivals in the world. The festival began in 1973 at the Royal College of Music and is now based in Blackheath. The annual festival brings together an exhibition of early music makers, publishers and societies, as well as live concerts from leading artists, performers' platforms and annual competitions for young players – all attracting a network of vibrant artists, early music enthusiasts and dedicated supporters.

Following the need to produce the festival online in 2020, in November 2021 we took the decision to reinstate the physical festival and welcomed attendees to Blackheath from 10-13 November. Having discovered a new global audience as a result of our 2020 virtual festival, we wanted to ensure that this new audience could still be involved, and therefore recorded all performances, and filmed the four evening concerts. A media partnership with Marquee TV allows these events to be watched by viewers around the world.



“Given the dark times we are living through because of the climate emergency, the pandemic and global political sabre-rattling, music has a unique ability to raise our consciousness to a higher plane and, as Congreve put it so neatly, soothe a savage breast. LIFEM has brilliantly captured that ability which in turns allows the rest of us to reinvigorate our spiritual resources before having to reconnect with some of the world’s grimmer realities. And that makes the festival not only a pleasure but also a need.”

Miles Hedley, The Greenwich Visitor

AN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR’S EYE VIEW

GILL GRAHAM

One of the many gratifying things for me as Artistic Director of LIFEM is the chance to collaborate with exceptional artists, some familiar, some new, and the 2021 Festival was no exception. In a welcome return to live music making in the church of St Michael & All Angels, enthusiastic audiences enjoyed world-class performances.

I have known viol player Liam Byrne for many years, often for his collaborations with contemporary composers and his site-specific performances such as those at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery. When I approached him for a programme that celebrated the music of 17th-century Versailles, he responded with *The Badinage – an exchange of pleasantries*, a collaboration with lute and theorbo player Jonas Nordberg, exploring the historical relationship between viol player Marin Marais and lutenist Robert de Visée. That idea became our opening concert, with a guest appearance by world-renowned soprano Lucy Crowe in two songs by the French composer Michel Lambert; music that was new to me – another lovely aspect of my role. Not just new to me but new to everyone, *Angel Waters* by Errollyn Wallen was specially commissioned by LIFEM for Liam and Jonas who played it beautifully – not once, but twice!

At lunchtime the next day, Liam gave an entertaining and informative solo recital entitled *Lessons for the Lyra Viol*, an instrument often described as a bowed lute, and in demonstrating its flexibility, not to mention a multitude of tunings, Liam interspersed selections from Ferrabosco’s 1609 collection of lyra viol lessons with some anonymous gems from unpublished manuscript sources, and works by William Lawes, Daniel Farrant and others.

Lucy Crowe, Elizabeth Kenny and Laurence Cummings formed the formidable trio that wowed audiences for our third concert. A breathtakingly sung *Lament* from Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, alongside arias by Handel and Rameau, showed Lucy on searing, captivating form. Stepping outside their roles as accompanists, Laurence and Liz played instrumental music by composer and harpsichord players François Couperin and Charles Dieupart, and lutenist Robert De Visée.

Ensembles Hesperii and Pro Victoria, joint winners of the LIFEM Young Ensemble Competition in 2020, returned to the festival for their winners’ recitals. I have enjoyed getting to know these burgeoning performers over the past years and was thrilled to hear them back in Blackheath. From music by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, the child prodigy at the court of Louis XIV, to the exuberant *Sound the Trumpet* by Purcell, these two final concerts were indeed a highlight.

Festival Evensong, a new addition to LIFEM this year, was beautifully directed by Andrew Watts. It provided the opportunity to give thanks for the privilege of making music at a time when nations around the world are being silenced. Thank you, Reverend Sandy Christie, Marion Friend and the team at St Michael’s for welcoming us so warmly.

Thanks also to Chris Butler, Ann Barkway, Alfie Buckley and the LIFEM team; Exec Producer for TV Ben Weston, Ian Russell and Glenn Barton at Sparkly Light, and Jonas Persson our sound engineer who captured the concerts beautifully for Marquee TV. A huge thank you to YOU, funders, friends, audiences, performers, and viewers from afar!

Finally, a memory that, for me at least, sums up LIFEM 2021. After a whistle-stop tour of the exhibition at Blackheath Halls, I returned to the church, surprised to hear a male and female voice singing a very upbeat tune, to some dazzling harpsichord playing. It was Lucy and Laurence (in fine voice as well as keyboard!) rehearsing their encore for that evening – from Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*, the duet *Happy We*. I couldn’t have put it better myself!



AIMS & OBJECTIVES



WE AIM TO...

- 1 **deliver a varied festival programme** which incorporates a range of early music events and concerts.
- 2 **provide a platform** for world-class early music performers and emerging young performers to showcase their performances to a global audience.
- 3 **attract an international audience**, both physically and virtually, from diverse backgrounds, to participate in festival events.
- 4 **support promising young early music performers** and ensembles from across the world.
- 5 **promote early music instrument makers** and provide opportunities for them to exhibit their products and share their expertise with festival attendees.
- 6 **form new partnerships** with local and international organisations, individuals and sponsors, to widely promote LIFEM.
- 7 build relationships with relevant publication journalists to **increase LIFEM's press coverage** to promote the festival to wider audiences and affirm its position within the wider early music community.
- 8 build a sustainable programme of **education and outreach work** to support LIFEM and its community.
- 9 **utilise social media** platforms to direct people to the festival and to grow LIFEM's social media network and public engagement, to build awareness of LIFEM.
- 10 **provide paid opportunities** for professional artists and makers, students and young people, and to support local venues through festival activity.

THE PROGRAMME

CONCERTS ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH

WEDNESDAY 10TH NOV, 7PM

Liam Byrne (viola da gamba)

Jonas Nordberg (lute)

with special guest **Lucy Crowe**

Le Badinage – An Exchange of Pleasantries: Music of 17th-century France

THURSDAY 11TH NOV, 7.30PM

Lucy Crowe (soprano)

Laurence Cummings (harpsichord)

Elizabeth Kenny (theorbo & archlute)

A programme of music from key composers of the 17th century in England and France, including Couperin, Purcell, Handel and Rameau

FRIDAY 12TH NOV, 7.30PM

ENSEMBLE PRO VICTORIA

Toby Ward (artistic director)

Fiona Fraser (soprano)

Elisabeth Paul , Rebecca Leggett (mean)

Oscar Golden-Lee (tenor)

Humphrey Thompson, Piers Kennedy (baritone/bass)

Richard Gowers (chamber organ)

Rachel Kay (cello)

I Was Glad: vocal music of the English Baroque

FESTIVAL EVENSONG

SATURDAY 13TH NOV, 3PM

Andrew Watts (music director) and the **Festival Choir**

Gavin Roberts (organist)

Sandy Christie (vicar of St Michael & All Angels)

Thomas Tomkins Canticles: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis 5th service

SATURDAY 13TH NOV, 6PM

ENSEMBLE HESPERI

Mary-Jannet Leith (recorders)

Magdalena Loth-Hill (baroque violin)

Florence Petit (baroque cello)

Thomas Allery (harpsichord)

Battle of the Kings: Chamber Music from the Courts of Louis XIV and Charles II

“The audience was enchanted – and no wonder. Crowe knows how to work a room.”

Flora Willson, The Guardian

PERFORMERS' PLATFORMS

The Performers' Platforms provide groups of young players the opportunity to showcase their talents to the early music community. This year, we were delighted to welcome three groups of young performers and ensembles from prestigious institutions across the UK, whose 45-minute programmes of early music were scheduled for each day of the festival, and performed to physical audiences. (Sadly, the Purcell School was unable to participate as scheduled.)

Performers:

Royal College of Music,
Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Chetham's School of Music

SOLO RECORDER COMPETITION

FRIDAY 12TH NOV, ST MARGARET'S CHURCH

A partnership between LIFEM, SRP and Moeck

Finalists: **Martin Bernstein, Inés Pina Pérez, Charlotte Schneider, Daniel Scott**

Judges: Anna Stegmann, Jan van Hoecke, Emily White

The competition included recitals from each of the four finalists, performed to a live audience. Prestigious judges Anna Stegmann, Jan van Hoecke and Emily White selected Charlotte Schneider as the overall winner. As well as a cash prize, Charlotte will also perform at LIFEM 2022.



MAKERS' EXHIBITION

GREAT HALL, BLACKHEATH HALLS

Our vibrant marketplace attracts instruments makers from around the globe. Located in the beautiful Great Hall at Blackheath Halls, we host shops, publishers, record companies, societies and forums across three full days of the festival.

Instruments on display included recorders, flutes, crumhorns, shawms, rackets, lutes, viols, violins, sackbuts, trumpets, rebecs harps, bagpipes, hurdy-gurdies and keyboard instruments.

In 2021 we welcomed 38 exhibitors from the UK, The Netherlands, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland, Japan and the USA.

WORKSHOPS, TALKS & DEMOS

LIFEM 2021 played host to a series of events, all carefully curated to provide a varied programme for festival attendees. 11 events took place in the Recital Room at Blackheath Halls, all included as part of the festival day ticket or pass. Sessions included:

Anna Stegmann: 'The Divine Blend' recorder workshop

Hands on Harps: makers' demonstration, Morwenna Louttit-Vermaat

Francesca Clements: compare and contrast recorders

Q&A from Festival Director **Chris Butler** and Artistic Director **Gill Graham**

Bizzi baroque cello: makers' demonstration, Tatty Theo and Guido Bizzi

Stephen Robinson Spinets: makers' demonstration, Rosemary and Laura Robinson

Bizzi classical string quartet: makers' demonstration, Gainsborough Quartet and Guido Bizzi

Von huene workshop: makers' demonstration, Martin Bernstein and Guillaume Beaulieu

Music Room Workshop: makers' demonstration, Dr Penelope Cave

Talk & recital: Eunju Lee and Harry Buckoke



COMPLETE DIARY OF EVENTS

GENERAL NOTES

Doors open 30 mins before published start time.
Bar will be open before evening concerts, and during the interval.

WEDNESDAY 10TH NOV

CONCERT 7PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Le Badinage – An Exchange of Pleasantries: Music of 17th-century France

Liam Byrne (viola da gamba)

Jonas Nordberg (lute)

Lucy Crowe (soprano)

WORLD PREMIERE “Angel Waters” by **Errollyn Wallen**

Tickets £20, www.lifem.org

THURSDAY 11TH NOV

10AM - 5PM Great Hall, Blackheath

EXHIBITION

WORKSHOP 10.30AM - 12PM

St Michael & All Angels Church Hall

The Divine Blend with **Anna Stegmann**

Recorder workshop on mixing as part of a group. Suitable for players who are comfortable reading music.

Tickets £15, www.lifem.org (limited spaces)

MAKER'S DEMO 11AM Recital Room

Hands on Harps with **Morwenna Louttit-Vermaat**

Three harps to demo, and a new concept in learning: the Rainbow Harp. Come and have a go!

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

MAKER'S DEMO 12.30PM Recital Room

Recorder woods with **Francesca Clements**

Explore a selection of instruments of different woods.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins.

CONCERT 12PM St Michael & All Angels Church

Lessons for the Lyra Viol: Liam Byrne

Music to include Ferrabosco, Lawes and Farrant

Tickets £15, www.lifem.org, 1 hour

TALK 2PM Recital Room

Opening Discussion and Q&A

Gill Graham Artistic Director

Chris Butler Festival Direct

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM 2PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Purcell School

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins*

MAKER'S DEMO 3.30PM Recital Room

Compare recorders with **Francesca Clements**

Contrast sounds of recorders from different makers.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins.

CONCERT 7.30PM St Michael & All Angels Church

Vocal & instrumental music from the Chapels Royal

Music to include Couperin, Purcell, Handel & Rameau

Lucy Crowe (soprano)

Laurence Cummings (harpsichord*)

Elizabeth Kenny (theorbo & archlute)

Tickets £20, www.lifem.org

FRIDAY 12TH NOV

10AM - 5PM Blackheath

EXHIBITION

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM 12PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Royal College of Music

Music to include Byrd, Tallis & Handel

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

MAKER'S DEMO 12.30PM Recital Room

Baroque cello by Bizzi with **Tatty Theo**

Tatty, founder of The Brook Street Band, will be accompanied by maker Guido Bizzi.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

MAKER'S DEMO 2PM Recital Room

Stephen Robinson spinets

with **Rosemary Robinson** (spinet)

and **Laura Robinson** (viola & recorders)

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

RECORDER COMPETITION 2 - 5PM

St Margaret's Church

SRP/Moock Solo Recorder Comp Final

Adjudicators: **Anna Stegmann**, **Jan van Hoecke**, **Emily White**

Finalists: **Martin Bernstein**, **Charlotte Schneider**, **Inés Pina Pérez**, **Daniel Scott**

FREE, but reserve tickets: www.lifem.org*

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM 3PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Guildhall School of Music and Drama

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins*

MAKER'S DEMO 3.30PM Recital Room

Liuteria Bizzi - classical string quartet

with the **Gainsborough Quartet**

Works by Haydn, Schubert & Prokofiev, interspersed with context and detail from maker Guido Bizzi.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

CONCERT 7.30PM St Michael & All Angels Church

I Was Glad: vocal music of the English Baroque

Ensemble Pro Victoria

Joint winners, Young Ensemble Competition 2020*

Tickets £15, www.lifem.org

*keyboard instruments supplied and/or tuned by Andrew Wooderson and Bexley Harpsichords Ltd. andrew.wooderson@btinternet.com 07971 239217

SATURDAY 13TH NOV

10AM - 5PM Blackheath

EXHIBITION

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM 12PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Chetham's School of Music

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins*

MAKER'S DEMO 12.30PM Recital Room

Von Huene workshop

with **Martin Bernstein** & **Guillaume Beaulieu**

Explore the collection of Patrick von Huene's recorders with lively, improvisatory music – from John Dowland to Jean Rameau, tenor to soprano.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

MAKER'S DEMO 2PM Recital Room

Music Room Workshop: Early keyboard instruments with **Dr Penelope Cave**

Penelope will demonstrate domestic Georgian Pianism on a small square piano attributed to Charles Trute circa 1780 (London piano maker c. 1777-1790 when he emigrated to Philadelphia). To include a selection of compositions by Giordani, Clementi and Dussek.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

CONCERT 3PM St Michael & All Angels Church

Festival Evensong

Andrew Watts Music Director

The Festival Choir

Sandy Christie vicar of St Michael & All Angels

FREE, but reserve tickets: www.lifem.org*

MAKER'S DEMO 3.30PM Recital Room

Talk & recital

Presenter: **Eunju Lee**

Performer: **Harry Buckoke**

Introducing the sound and playability of a bass viola da gamba in festooned shape with traditional English soundboard method: stave joints. The demonstrated viol, made by Eunju Lee, is inspired by English maker John Rose from the 16th century.

FREE with exhibition ticket, 45 mins

CONCERT 6PM

St Michael & All Angels Church

Battle of the Kings: Chamber Music from the Courts of Louis XIV and Charles II

Ensemble Hesperis –

Joint winners, Young Ensemble Competition 2020*

Tickets £15, www.lifem.org*

OUTCOMES

This year we returned to a physical festival in Blackheath, and were delighted to welcome back live audiences, performers and makers. Filming the evening concerts also allowed the festival to be enjoyed by early music lovers around the world.

- 1 Over the four days of the festival, we hosted **23 different events**. Five concerts with world-renowned artists; three Performers' Platforms; 11 workshops and demonstration recitals; the SRP/Moeck Solo Recorder Competition; and 40 exhibitors.
- 2 We commissioned Belize-born composer **Errollyn Wallen** to write a piece for viol player Liam Byrne and lutenist Jonas Nordberg, which was premiered to high acclaim at the opening concert of the festival. We also commissioned composer **Toby Young** to write a fanfare for renaissance collective PIVA, which was performed at the Exhibitors' drinks reception on the first day of the exhibition.
- 3 **Filming the evening concerts** allowed us to welcome an international audience from all continents, through our partnership with Marquee TV. This digital platform helped us to maintain our status as an inclusive and wide-ranging festival of early music.
- 4 We supported exceptionally-skilled young performers from three institutions in the UK through our **Performers' Platform**.
- 5 The exhibition, taking place over three days in the Great Hall at Blackheath Halls, hosted a total of **40 exhibitors from eight different countries**, showcasing their work to hundreds of visitors daily.
- 6 We gave **instrument-making students** from West Dean College the opportunity to exhibit alongside experienced and professional makers, giving them access to their piers.
- 7 We employed a team of musicians and students, based in or near Blackheath, to help with the running of the festival, providing **employment for local people**.
- 8 We continued our **media partnership with Marquee TV**, which hosted the festival concerts on its arts and culture streaming platform.
- 9 We developed our **social media networks** this year and gained a significant number of new followers across all of our social media channels.
- 10 We launched a **LIFEM Friends scheme**, allowing our supporters to engage with our work more closely, and to help us secure vital funds to continue our charitable work.

“The LIFEM team managed to stage an event that was as wonderful as any put on during the festival’s association with Blackheath Halls and the nearby church of St Michael & All Angels.”

Miles Hedley, The Greenwich Visitor

LIFEM 2022 IN NUMBERS

Total
visitors
1,500+

Countries
represented

12

23

Events
over four days

Artists

104

2

New
commissions

**Young
performers**

35

40

Exhibitors

Social Media

(1st April to 30th November 2021)

162,400

Impressions on Twitter



44%

Increase in followers

26,000

Total reach on Facebook



27%

Increase in followers

2,235

Total reach on Instagram



155%

Increase in followers

TESTIMONIALS



“Above all, though, Angel Waters showed Byrne and Nordberg at their best – revelling together in the piece’s graciousness and swagger, its generous sense of musical space.”

Flora Willson, The Guardian

“Commentari III by Dorothee Hahne is a complex piece involving two recorders, headphones, a mobile phone and a wide range of techniques, including vocalising and a refrain for two recorders, the whole played with impressive aplomb by Charlotte Schneider.”

Andrew Benson-Wilson, Early Music Reviews

“It’s hard to sum up this year’s festival in a sentence if only because all the superlatives have already been applied to the individual artists who helped make it such a resounding success. But given the dark times we are living through because of the climate emergency, the pandemic and global political sabre-rattling, music has a unique ability to raise our consciousness to a higher plane and, as Congreve put it so neatly, soothe a savage breast. LIFEM has brilliantly captured that ability which in turn allows the rest of us to reinvigorate our spiritual resources before having to reconnect with some of the world’s grimmer realities. And that makes the festival not only a pleasure, but also a need.”

Miles Hedley, The Greenwich Visitor



“Enchantment,
engagement and
swagger.”

Flora Willson, *The Guardian*

“Thank you so much from all in our team for such a superb day on Friday. A very special and memorable day of music making, and made even more special by the transformation from last year’s efforts behind closed doors to this year’s festival. Huge admiration for what you are collectively doing with LIFEM.”

Toby Ward, Artistic Director, Ensemble Pro Victoria

“It was honestly such a great experience and was so much fun to be a part of, and to be able to meet such wonderful people and experience such wonderful music. I absolutely loved being in a place where my love of early music and early music history was understood and reciprocated, and did not sound like nonsensical rambling!”

Zachary Catalan, student visitor, North Dakota

“The arrangements of 17th-century French music would have been enough on their own to earn the recital a five-star review. But it was elevated into the musical stratosphere with the first-ever performance of a new work by acclaimed composer and Trinity Laban professor Errollyn Wallen. Angel Waters, written specifically for Byrne and Nordberg to premiere at the festival, was a tour de force of huge tonal and emotional shifts.”

Miles Hedley, *The Greenwich Visitor*

“Thank you for a great day and congratulations on an impressively constructed festival.”

Young performer

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KEY PEOPLE & THANKS

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Chris Butler

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Gill Graham

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Ann Barkway

PRODUCER

Alfie Buckley

SOUND ENGINEER

Jonas Persson

FILMING

Sparkly Light Productions
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OPERATIONS MANAGER

Megan Storer

SENIOR STEWARD

Imogen Retey

STEWARDS

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Polyphony Arts

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Gemma Okell & Hannah Benton

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