

**840 / NLCC**

**NEW MUSIC FOR CHOIR**

**21/03/26**

Alex Nikiporenko

***Living Water***

Howard Skempton

***Rainbow Canons***

Lara Agar

***Goodbye, Lavender Bag***

Erik Satie (arr. Louise Drewett)

***Three chorales after Satie***

Andrew Hamilton

***Everything is Ridiculous***

## **INTERVAL**

Morton Feldman

***Christian Wolff in Cambridge***

Andy Ingamells

***Song (in) Books***

Francesca Fargion

***we will not be singing***

## **Alex Nikiporenko – *Living Water* (2026)**

The text for *Living Water* comes from the Gnostic *Gospel of the Egyptians*, an esoteric work from the early centuries of Christianity, preserved in the 4th-century Nag Hammadi manuscripts discovered in Egypt in 1945. Rather than telling a story, the text presents a visionary sequence of divine names and incantations, including passages consisting entirely of repeated vowels. Unlike traditional Christianity, Gnosticism often focuses on themes of illusion and enlightenment rather than sin and repentance. Condemned as heretical, most Gnostic writings were lost or destroyed. The piece imagines an alternative history of Christian hymnody in which this tradition survived.

**[alexnikiporenko.com](http://alexnikiporenko.com)**

## **Howard Skempton – *Rainbow Canons* (2007)**

*The Rainbow* and *They Say the Sea is Loveless* are two of D. H. Lawrence's *Last Poems*. These two settings were composed in 2007 for EXAUDI for a CD recording, but they proved too demanding within the tight schedule of a recording session. They remained unheard until 2024 when the second setting was arranged for instrumental ensemble, for a birthday concert in Folkestone for the composer, John Woolrich. Louise Drewett was involved in this concert and became interested in performing the vocal settings. She has edited and processed the original score to make it more manageable for a larger group of voices.

**[skempton.info](http://skempton.info)**

## **Lara Agar – *Goodbye, Lavender Bag* (2026)**

This song is about release. Using fragments of a text by Sarah Teale, it was written in the opening months of 2026.

**[laraagar.com](http://laraagar.com)**

## **Erik Satie (arr. Louise Drewett) – *Three chorales after Satie* (2026)**

Satie wrote very little choral music, so I have been keen to arrange some of his piano pieces for choir. This 840 concert became the perfect setting. These three short movements are simple translations, modified for the voices with light personal framing. The first is the *Choral hypocrite* from a suite for violin and piano, and the last, the *Choral inappétissant* is the opening of the *Sports et Divertissements* set for solo piano. Both date from 1914. They show Satie's satire of the chorale form, contorting the expected lines and harmony into something unique and relatively challenging to sing. The middle movement is an arrangement of *Ogive no. 2*, published 1889, previously arranged in an electronic track by William Orbit in 1999 (though labelled *Ogive no. 1*). An 'ogive' is a curve like those in the interior neo-gothic arches of Stone Nest. This shape is reflected in the piece's melodic contours.

[louisedrewett.com](http://louisedrewett.com)

## **Andrew Hamilton – *Everything is Ridiculous* (2009)**

"Everything is ridiculous when one thinks of death" ("Es ist alles lächerlich, wenn man an den Tod denkt") is what the author Thomas Bernhard said when he was awarded an Austrian national prize in 1968. For the last five years his writing has been a major influence on my own work and this piece was an opportunity to set a small fragment as a strange type of thank you for his help. The actual music began life as a short chorale I wrote on St. Patrick's Day 2008 and have used in other works since then. In this new version for choir the chorale is revealed one chord at a time systematically but the rhythm is always being manipulated so that it ends up as a machine that is constantly being destroyed by human intervention. The work was commissioned by the Arts Council of Ireland and the Cork International Choral Festival in 2009.

[andyfhamilton.com](http://andyfhamilton.com)

## **Morton Feldman – *Christian Wolff in Cambridge* (1963)**

Written in 1963, *Christian Wolff in Cambridge* belongs to Morton Feldman's early exploration of quiet, slowly shifting harmonic fields. The piece reflects his close friendship with fellow composer Christian Wolff, part of the New York School circle around John Cage, whose shared aim was to create music independent of established traditions. Built from sustained sonorities of flexible duration, the work invites performers and listeners into a state of heightened attention, where subtle changes take on unusual weight. This performance marks the year of Feldman's centenary.

## **Andy Ingamells – *Song (in) Books* (2022)**

When I read novels I often encounter lyrics within the story, printed in italics. An example might be like this from *Animal Farm*:

In its place Minimus, the poet, had composed another song which began:

*Animal Farm, Animal Farm,*

*Never through me shalt thou come to harm!*

and this was sung every Sunday morning with the hoisting of the flag.

However, there is never any music to go with these songs. So I make up little melodies sub-vocally, although they don't sound like traditional melodies at all and rarely fit with the imagined sound world of the story. *Song (in) Books* is an attempt to bring this process to life with the help of the NLCC.

**[andyingamells.com](http://andyingamells.com)**

## **Francesca Fargion – *we will not be singing* (2026)**

is not about singing

it is also not about not singing

it is not about being here or not being there

it is not about choirs

it is not about Brahms

or opera choruses that sing about things happening

or not happening

it is not about the negative

or what might be there instead

not about repeating

losing threads of meaning

not returning to beginnings

not returning to endings

**[francescafargion.co.uk](http://francescafargion.co.uk)**

# PERFORMERS

## **New London Chamber Choir**

Founded in 1981 by James Wood, the New London Chamber Choir performs uncompromisingly avant-garde music of all periods and has a unique record of commissioning and premiering new works for mixed chorus. NLCC has enjoyed close working relationships with composers including Jonathan Harvey, Mauricio Kagel, György Kurtág, György Ligeti, Toru Takemitsu, and Iannis Xenakis – several of whom have written works especially for it. Since 2024, the choir have performed annually at the Royal Academy of Music, premiering new works by student composers. In the past year, the choir have also performed Feldman's Rothko Chapel with LPO at St John's Waterloo, and Ligeti's Requiem with the Orchestra de Paris in the Philharmonie de Paris, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen.

[nlcc.org.uk](http://nlcc.org.uk)

## **Jess Hoskins – conductor**

Jess Hoskins is a London-based conductor working across contemporary, operatic and orchestral repertoire. They have conducted and assisted ensembles including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, and Royal Academy Opera, and have led performances of numerous works by living composers. Jess graduated with distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, where they were awarded the Academy's Commendation for Excellence. Alongside their conducting work, Jess is the founder of *The Orchestral Dance Music Experiment*, a project combining electronic dance music with live instrumentals.

[jesshoskins.co.uk](http://jesshoskins.co.uk)



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for hosting our concert.



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[eightforty.co.uk](http://eightforty.co.uk)