



Hope Metropolitan Concerts

Saturday 24 October 2026

The Great Hall, Cornerstone Building, Liverpool Hope
University Creative Campus

Handel Plus

Handel (arr. Wicken) *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*

Jim Cooke Missa Brevis

INTERVAL

Handel (arr. Stone) *Water Music* Suite

Harriet Blaney-Green *Idyll*

Handel (arr. Wicken) *Zadok the Priest*

Handel (arr. Wicken) *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*

Handel composed this instrumental sinfonia in 1748 as the opening movement of Act III of his oratorio *Solomon* but today it is more often heard as a stand-alone work. The title 'The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' is not Handel's but was probably suggested by Sir Thomas Beecham. It is something of a misnomer as, in the oratorio, the music suggests preparations for the entry of the Queen of Sheba rather than her actual arrival. The piece was played during the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games in 2012 and at the coronation service of King Charles III in 2023. It is one of Handel's most popular works and features two oboes.

Jim Cooke: Missa Brevis

Missa Brevis dates from 2017 and is based on a practical liturgical setting of the mass composed in 1986 for a local church, along with previously unused sketches. The forces are mixed choir, woodwind quintet and strings, with harp (or piano) often serving as a contemporary continuo. There is much use of canonic imitation, diminution and augmentation of melodic material. The usual four movements of a missa brevis – Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei – are expanded to include a setting of *The Lord's Prayer* placed where it would be in the order of service

Musing on the fact that the Agnus Dei, Lamb of God, was a Christian metaphor based on the Paschal Lamb slaughtered for the feast of the Passover (at the end of April) in the Hebrew Torah, there arose a spring to summer progression to the piece. The opening chords are voiced as in a passage from Frank Bridge's 'Enter Spring' and there is a hint of summer by another composer in the Agnus Dei along with a rustic evocation by solo fiddle.

(J.C.)

Jim Cooke was born in 1959 in Sheffield but has lived in the West Lancashire area since the age of 10. He was awarded the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Diploma in Composition in 1979, and at that time began studying arranging with John Harper (guitarist and arranger with Atarah's Band) and composition with the St Helens-based composer David Forshaw.

Whilst at college he formed a concert orchestra and also conducted the college wind band for a time. Since the early 1980s he has conducted several choirs in the Liverpool and Manchester areas and been musical director for many amateur operatic productions, whilst also being a member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir since 1988. He previously played trombone with Ormskirk Music Society until being appointed conductor in 1992. He is active as a freelance composer, arranger and musician.

Handel (arr. Stone) *Water Music* Suite

In July 1717 King George I floated down the River Thames on a royal barge whilst a second barge carrying around 50 musicians gave the first performance of Handel's *Water Music*. The music is festive and draws on popular dance forms of

the period. In today's concert we will perform four movements: a Minuet, Bourrée, Gigue and Alla Hornpipe.

Harriet Blaney-Green *Idyll*

Idyll was commissioned by Hope Metropolitan Concerts and first performed in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral in May 2023. The work is scored for the wind players in the orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and 2 horns. Blaney-Green took into consideration the remarkably resonant acoustic of the Cathedral when composing the piece. Lightly scored pastoral passages and hunting motifs, where the instrumentalists work in pairs, are structured with occasional pauses that allow the sound to clear.

Harriet Blaney-Green is a composer and organist. She won a Music Scholarship to St Edward's College and recently completed a MA in Composition at Liverpool Hope University where she was supervised by Stephen Davismoon. Harriet is blind and composes using a Braille pad and specialist engraving software.

Handel (arr. Wicken) *Zadok the Priest*

The words of Zadok the Priest have been sung at every coronation since that of King Edgar in 973AD and Handel's setting has been sung at every one since 1727. The anthem uses remarkably simple means to create an opening instrumental section that builds a strong sense of expectation which is marvellously fulfilled by the entry of the voices, brass and timpani.