

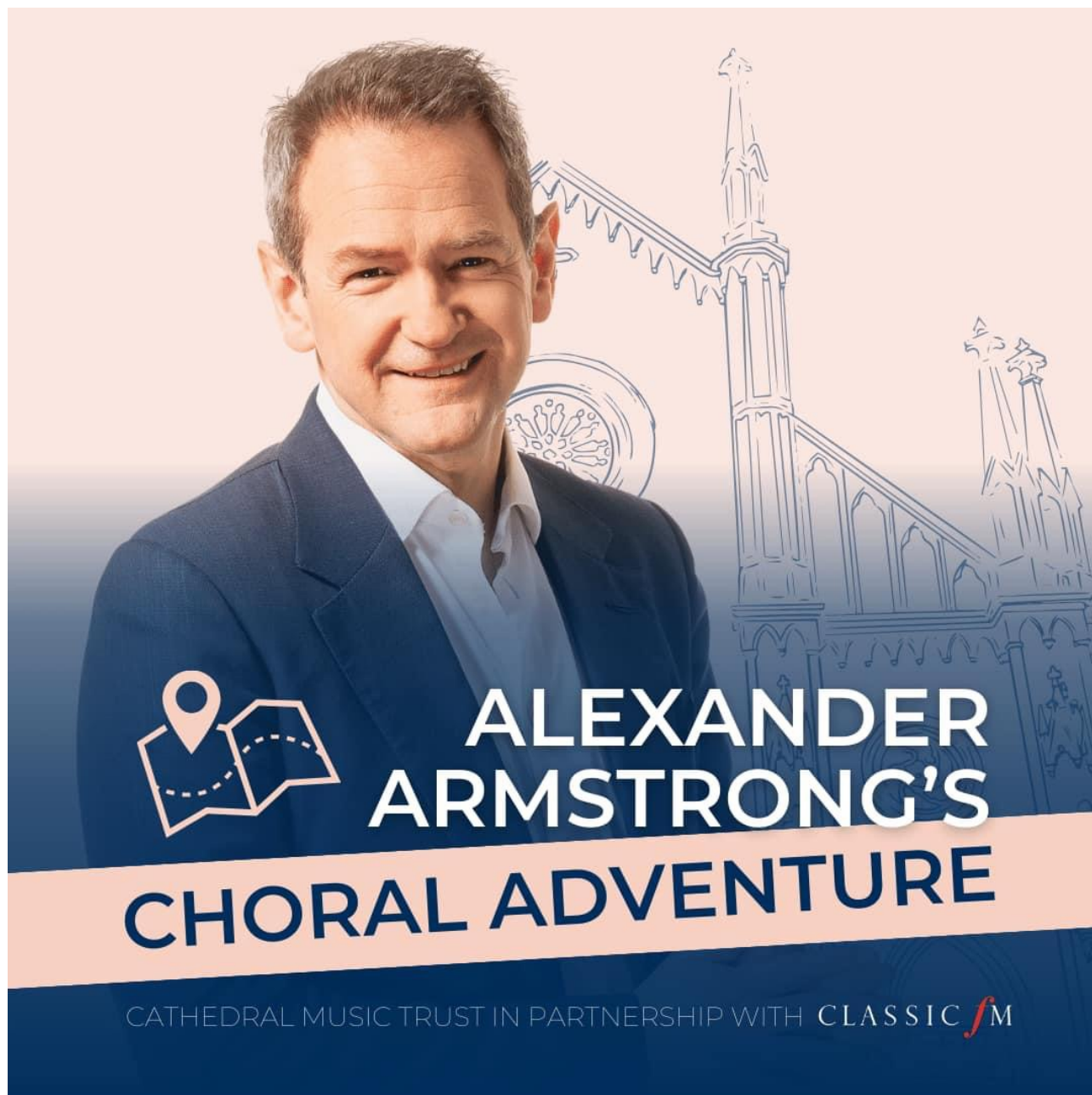
Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Alexander Armstrong’s
Choral Adventure**

February 22, 2024

Image of the day



Alexander Armstrong's Choral Adventure

The well known media personality Alexander Armstrong is a former cathedral chorister. Recently he visited several cathedrals and their choirs as he made his way from Edinburgh to Westminster. Alexander was an

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Ambassador for Cathedral Music. Today in CNI we retrace his journey.

Day 1 – Edinburgh



**ALEXANDER
ARMSTRONG'S
CHORAL ADVENTURE
EDINBURGH**

St Mary's Cathedral
Choral Evensong for
Candlemas, 3.30pm

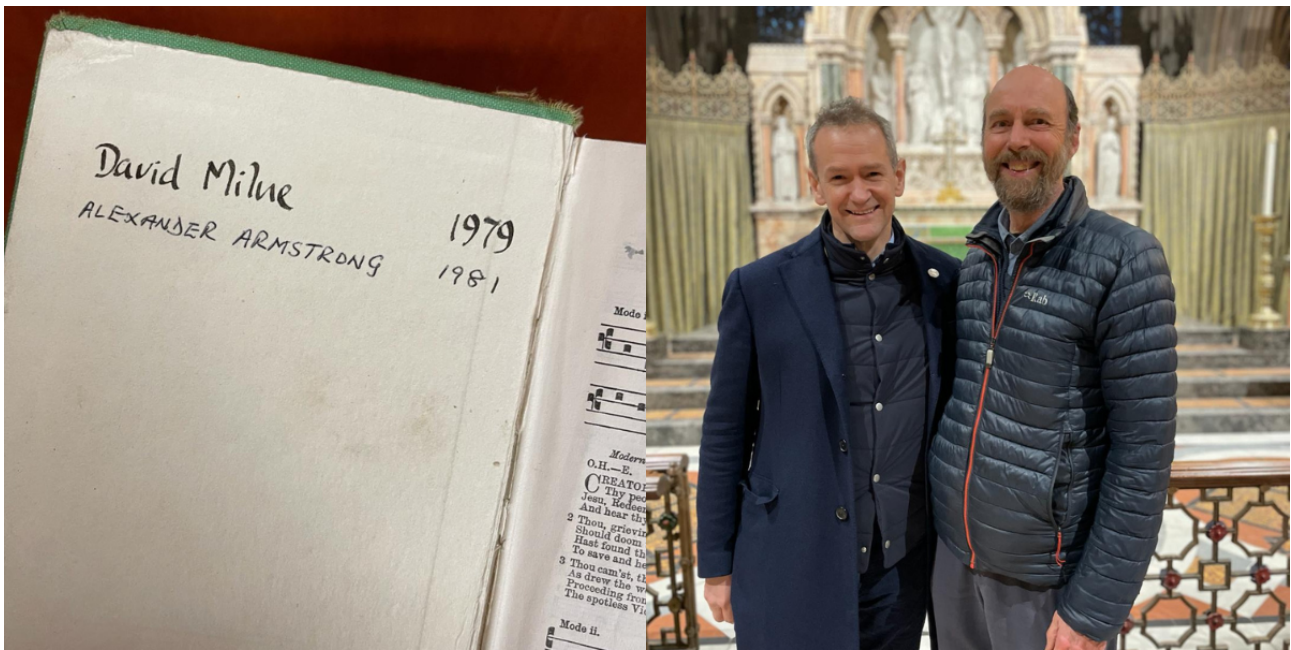
Music List

Townhill Lo, God is here
Matthew Martin Responses
Psalm 139; Hymns 54, 56
Bevan Magnificat Octavi Toni
Holst Nunc dimittis
Cecilia McDowall The Presence
Dupré Lumen ad revelationem



CATHEDRAL
MUSIC TRUST

Day 1 was at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh and a trip down memory lane for our Ambassador Alexander Armstrong, back where it all began. It was a fabulous service of Choral Evensong for Candlemas, featuring a Cecilia McDowall anthem inspired by 'The Presence', a painting hanging in the cathedral.



All was prepared, we just needed the trains to run smoothly (on a Sunday...) – and by some miracle, we arrived in good time to hear the Choir of St Mary's Cathedral singing a glorious service of Evensong for Candlemas in Edinburgh. This was particularly special for our Ambassador, Alexander Armstrong, whose own chorister journey began at the Scottish capital's mother church. Ahead of the service, we took in 'The Presence', (Photo above) a painting that has hung in the North Aisle since Alexander was a choirboy. It's a striking piece, as is the music by Cecilia McDowall that the

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choir sang as an anthem during Evensong. The contemporary composer's work was inspired by this very artwork – dedicated to the cathedral's Master of Music, Duncan Ferguson, who conducted music by Townhill, Bevan, Holst and Matthew Martin. Imogen Morgan – organist at St Mary's and Future Leader for the Trust – sent us on our way with a foot-stomping rendition of Dupré's *Lumen ad revelationem*.

Day 2 – Newcastle



No Monday morning blues as Alexander presented his weekday Classic FM show, featuring in his playlist - God So



Loved The World from St Mary's yet-to-be-released Stainer disc on Delphian. A quick bite to eat in Newcastle Cathedral's refectory before meeting just a few of the many people who make music happen in the north-eastern powerhouse. With the Bishop of Newcastle, Helen-Ann, joining the Dean for the service, it was bound to be a memorable affair. Alexander read the first lesson for the congregation to reflect on, whilst the massed choirs treated us to a diverse range of music by composers past and present – beginning with Kris Thomsett's spell-binding setting of Ubi Caritas before moving back in time to Howells

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and his 'Coll Reg', where Assistant Organist, Kris, and the organ came into their own; and the choir so evidently enjoyed singing Bob Chilcott's anthem, Be thou my vision.



As we hot-footed it back to the station to catch southbound trains, we noted how the team at Newcastle – clergy and musicians alike - has created something really special with its ethos of 'radical welcome' and a renewed singing model.

Day 3 – York



Day 3 began with Newcastle's recent recording of Vaughan Williams's *The Bird's Song*, transmitting across the radio waves to the homes of Classic FM listeners around the country. It's hard not to catch your breath when entering the hallowed confines of York Minster. A most remarkable feat of architecture, and even more breathtaking once filled with the sumptuous sounds of its renowned choir and the 'Grand Organ' – built by Harrison & Harrison in 2020. The Minster's Precentor, Victoria Johnson, alongside choristers, Vicars Choral, and both the Assistant and Director of Music spoke with Alexander about the choir and traditions of York's jewel in the crown (we're of course biased), before moving seamlessly into the stalls for a pre-Evensong rehearsal. We were able to sit back in the Quire as we allowed a sublime feast of music and prayer to wash over us – a double bill of Tomkins alongside the second rendition of Matthew Martin's *Preces & Responses* of the tour. Before making our way further south, we were given an exclusive demonstration of the organ by maestro Ben Morris – with Alexander snapped

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pulling the ‘final stop’ of the day before heading into the night.

Day 4 – Cambridge



Classic FM’s track of the day on Wednesday was one of Byrd’s many motets, *Justorum animae*, sung with characteristic attention to the meaning of the text. We couldn’t visit Cambridge without linking up with Alexander’s fellow Ambassador, Anna Lapwood MBE – Director of Music at Pembroke College and Artist in Residence at the Royal Albert Hall. It was clear from the outset that Anna’s enthusiasm for choral and organ music is infectious – with both her Girls’ and Chapel Choir hanging on her every word. An additional treat was the display from guest organist Wayne Marshall OBE, putting the Chapel’s organ through its paces, with his jazz influences shining through. A highlight of day four was experiencing the Girls’ Choir singing the Responses they wrote under Anna’s direction – it was so telling that they were invested in every phrase, every

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suspension. We also heard an introit by former choir member Lucy Walker – her O Sing floating along the chapel’s rafters. With it being 100 years since the death of iconic composer Charles Villiers Stanford, the choir performed his Canticles in A – and Alexander could not resist joining them for such a stonking bass part. The Choir of Pembroke College has an impressive recording collection, and Beach’s Peace I leave with you did not disappoint when it was broadcast on Classic FM the next morning.

Day 5 – London



Walking into Westminster’s catholic cathedral, you can’t help but be transported to a European City – perhaps the Basilica in Rome or Paris’s Notre Dame.

This vast trove of ornate art and sculpture was the perfect setting for our final choral services of the Choral Adventure. Vespers in the Lady Chapel was sung by just five Lay

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Clerks, providing an escape from the busyness of the everyday (and this tour!) As the sounds of Palestrina's Missa brevis travelled from the Apse down to the eagerly awaiting congregation, we marvelled at how brilliant, remarkable and rare this tradition really is. Before we parted ways one final time, Choristers could not wait to meet the voice of Hey Duggee, parents were excited to see the host of Pointless in the flesh, whilst grandparents remembered fondly Alexander's Armstrong and Miller days. There's nothing quite like a group of choristers queuing up with their chant books and pencils, grinning at the prospect of our ambassador's signature inscribed on the inside cover.

Courtesy of The Cathedral Music Trust

<https://www.cathedralmusictrust.org.uk/about>



News

Confirmation and a centenary goal at Salters Grange



On Sunday at St Aidan's Salters Grange there was a packed Church for the service of Confirmation and after which the congregation enjoyed a buffet lunch.

At this Hilbert Willis, the eldest parishioner and stalwart of Loughgall Football Club, was presented with a birthday cake marking the remarkable milestone or 100 years. The cake

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was even adorned with a replica of the main man himself. A memory for the confirmed young people



Rededication of historic St Matthew's Church in Irishtown

The beautiful and historic St Matthew's Church in Irishtown was at the centre of celebrations yesterday (Sunday February 18) as the church was rededicated and reconsecrated after extensive renovation work.

Archbishop Michael Jackson officiated at the rededication which was attended by a large congregation of parishioners, representatives of the wider community and friends of the parish. People involved in the refurbishment work were

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joined by a large number of ecumenical guests and clergy from nearby parishes.

St Matthew's closed on May 7 2023 and services took place in the general purpose room of St Matthew's National School. They were also generously accommodated by the nearby Star of the Sea Parish. A huge range of work was carried out in the intervening months including rewiring, upgrading the plumbing and heating, restoring plasterwork and the stained glass windows. The interior has been repainted and the pews striped back to their original colour so that the inside of the church now looks bright and warm.

More at - <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2024/02/19/historic-st-matthews-irishtown-restored>



Calling all Crocheters and Knitters

Termoneeny Parish (Knockloughrim) is organising a special Poppy Festival later in November 2024, and they need lots of knitted and crocheted poppies made.

Please get in touch if you can help them - you don't have to be a

22 FEBRUARY HAPPY FOUNDER'S DAY²⁰²⁴



Lord Robert Stephenson Smyth
Baden-Powell of Gilwell (22
février 1857, Paddington, Londres,
Royaume-Uni - 8 janvier 1941 Nyeri,
Kenya) est un militaire britannique,
fondateur du scoutisme.

BP DAY



Facebook | Scout Today

parishioner to get involved! If you would like to help and need the pattern, please contact Rev Philip on 07850345156

New Archdeacon of Cashel, Ferns, Waterford and Lismore

The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory the Right Reverend Adrian Wilkinson has announced that, following the resignation of the Venerable Bob Gray

from his role as archdeacon on health grounds, he has appointed the Revd Alec Purser as the next Archdeacon of Cashel, Ferns, Waterford and Lismore.

The Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory has two archdeacons and Archdeacon Purser will be working with Archdeacon Mark Hayden who is Archdeacon of Ossory and Leighlin.

Bishop Wilkinson said: 'I am delighted that Alec Purser has accepted my invitation to take on this additional responsibility. He is a highly regarded priest who has experience of both the non-stipendiary and the full-time stipendiary ministry. The bishop and archdeacons work closely together, and I know Alec will bring many valuable gifts, insights, and abilities to his new role'.

Archdeacon Purser was ordained in 2010 into the Non-Stipendiary Ministry and was based in The Abbeyleix & Killermogh Union of Parishes. In 2014 he moved to Stradbally Union of Parishes and transferred to full time ministry in 2020 and is now priest-in-charge of Stradbally Union and Portlaoise, The Rock with Ballyfin. Coming to ministry, he has journeyed the less direct route, spending his earlier life as farmer, greenkeeper and landscaper and still has that love for everything to do with farming. Alec is married to Gillian and has two children, Emma and Sam.

Archdeacon Purser said: 'I am truly honoured by Bishop Wilkinson to be asked to take on this role as Archdeacon, remembering those whose footsteps I follow. I look forward to this new role and the next chapter in ministry.'

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While Archdeacon Purser's appointment takes immediate effect, he will be licensed and installed at a special service after Easter. The details of this will be published shortly.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Christian Aid Ireland Supporter Conference

"Pushing back against the inhumanity of poverty."

Osai Ojigbo Christian Aid's
Director of Policy
& Public Campaigns

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Carnmoney Presbyterian Church

Saturday 9 March 2024

10am - 1.30pm

***lunch provided**

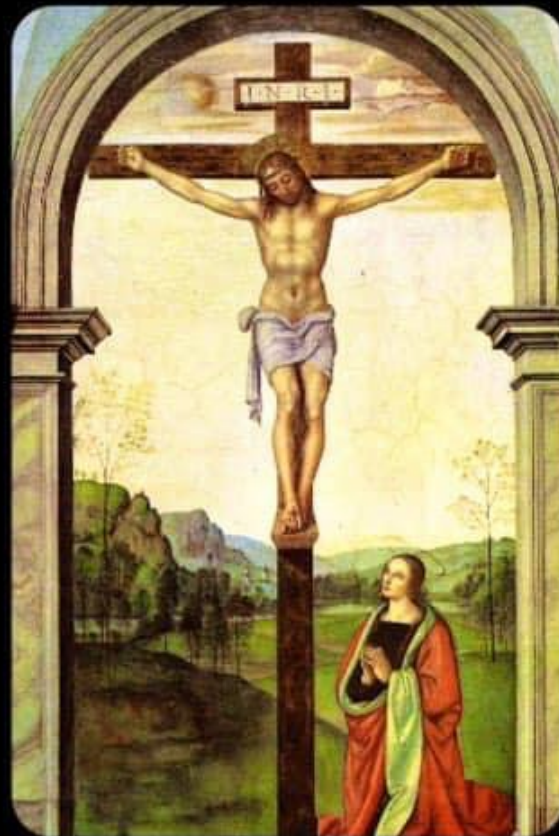
register for free at
christianaid.ie



St Ann's Church, Dawson Street

Good Friday Sacred Concert

CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD STABAT MATER
JOHN SANDERS THE REPROACHES



Midday Good Friday March 29th

ST ANN'S CHURCH CHOIR

Retiring collection in aid of Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem appeal & Music ministry at St Ann's Church

This Project is Supported by Ecclesiastical and the Little Museum of Dublin



Being Anglican webinar

Want to think about what Being Anglican means? The Lambeth Conference team are hosting a webinar starting soon...

Featuring Anglican guests from around the world, join the webinar as they discuss how scripture shapes faith and actions, and the ways we unite in mission across the globe. The webinar will also be introducing new resources to help churches and communities embrace the Lambeth Call on Anglican Identity.

Register your place here  <https://bit.ly/3Rk2M44>

Perspective

From Corrymeela

God in our private prayer,
God in our civic courage:
may the moments we take
to be still and silent
restore our spirits
and clear our minds.
But may they not be just for ourselves.
May all we do in resetting ourselves
lead us to a new sense of community
where our ways of being at peace
help others find peace, too,
and where our wellbeing

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is never separated
from the wellbeing of the whole.
Amen.

In the media

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The principal of a Co Antrim primary school has said she fears rural schools across Northern Ireland remain under

Speaking to the soul

Go

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

