



# CELEBRATE with Martin Read Foundation

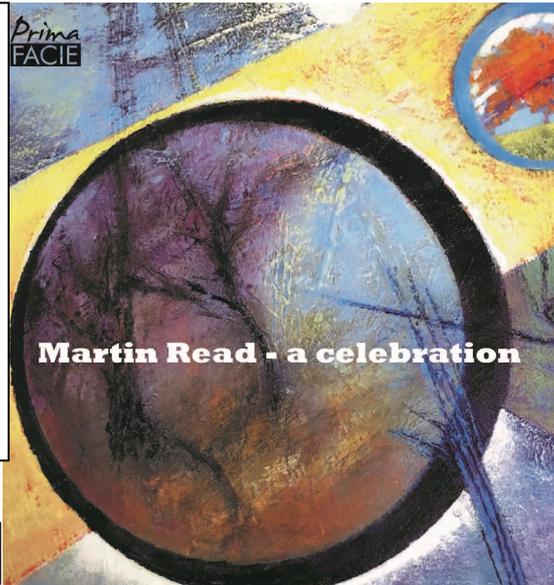
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
St Lawrence Church, Alton.

## CD launch

Featuring on the CD: Commotio,  
Joseph Spooner, David Owen  
Norris, Sylvia Ellison, Jake Rea, Tom  
Bullard, Hampshire County Junior  
Choir and others.



6pm drinks reception  
Donations to MRF



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## Annual Festival 7pm concert

Commotio with MRF award-holders Charlie,  
Sam, Sasha and Emily, Oxford Feb. '25



Joseph Spooner - cello



## Festival 2025

Grateful thanks to East Hants District Council and to St Lawrence Church for supporting this event.

**Welcome...** to this Annual Festival, the culmination of the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the Martin Read Foundation – supporting young composers.

Since launching in 2014, MRF has supported 24 young composers, and premiered over 50 new works, including those by its alumni. 21 of the 24 have gone on to conservatoire to study composition, many of whom have graduated and are now working as composers.

*Congratulations to our 4 awarded young composers for 2025:*

Charlie, Sam, Sasha and Emily.

Grateful thanks to our composer-mentors this year:

Tom Armstrong, Laura Jurd, Simon Speare, Alison Willis.

**Martin Read**, highly respected Hampshire-based Composer and Educator, died suddenly in 2012 at the age of 53. Something had to be done with the energy Martin had shared with the world, and as composing and teaching composition were his passions, MRF was born. The charity's aim from the outset was to not only support young composers but to bring playing, singing and hearing contemporary music, including Martin's own work, to wider, non-specialist audiences.

We are delighted that our ensemble-in-residence for this 2025 season is Oxford-based choir Commotio and their director Matthew Berry.

**Busy day today!** Our flexible ensemble has worked up a new piece by alumnus Ella Laughton *We did it to Ourselves* for tonight's concert. Also tonight, Commotio will not only premiere the 4 new works created with them by our 2025 award-holders, and Martin's *That Yonge Child*, the choir will also perform 2 choral pieces workshopped earlier: *Sanctus* by alumnus Freddie Hodkin and *Svyati* by John Tavener - with Joseph Spooner, solo cello, forming the ending to our concert.

The focus for this year's Festival is Climate Change

We are grateful to Philip Sealey for providing a text choice for our award-holders to set.

### Concert programme

*The award-holders will introduce their pieces.*

Martin Read	<i>That Yonge Child</i>	Commotio, directed by Matthew Berry
Charlie Jones	<i>We did it to ourselves</i>	Commotio, directed by Matthew Berry
Sam Bartlett	<i>I wandered lonely, as a cloud.</i>	Commotio, directed by Matthew Berry
Ella Laughton	<i>We did it to Ourselves</i>	Festival Flexible Ensemble, directed by Ella Laughton.
Sasha Krysov	<i>What enemy</i>	Commotio, directed by Matthew Berry
Emily Nice	<i>Daffodils</i>	Commotio, directed by Matthew Berry
Freddie Hodkin	<i>Sanctus</i>	Commotio with Festival singers
John Tavener	<i>Svyati</i>	Commotio with Festival singers, Joseph Spooner – solo cello, directed by Matthew Berry

Martin Read Foundation – supporting young composers

[martinreadfoundation.org](http://martinreadfoundation.org) · established 2014 · CIO no.: 1156661 · Hampshire Music Education Hub partner

Trustees: Tom Armstrong, Freddie Hodkin, Alex Ling, Beccy Read, Simon Speare, Alison Willis.

Patrons: Alan Bullard · Gwyneth Herbert · Howard Skempton · Dame Judith Weir



## Tonight's composers:

- Martin Read (1959–2012) [www.martinreadfoundation.org/martin-read-composer](http://www.martinreadfoundation.org/martin-read-composer)  
Charlie Jones (b. 2007) music A level student, Barton Peveril 6<sup>th</sup> form College, Eastleigh, MRF award-holder 2024 & '25  
Sam (b. 2007) music A level student, Barton Peveril 6<sup>th</sup> form College, Eastleigh, MRF award-holder 2025  
Ella Laughton (b. 2004) studying composition at the Royal Northern College of music, MRF award-holder 2022  
Sasha (b. 2007) music A level student, Barton Peveril 6<sup>th</sup> form College, Eastleigh, MRF award-holder 2025  
Emily (b. 2009) music GCSE student, St Anne's Catholic School, Southampton, MRF award-holder 2025  
Freddie Hodkin (b. 1997) Cornish-based composer, ex Cardiff Uni & Alton College, MRF award-holder 2015.

John Tavener (1944-2013) English composer, known for his extensive output of choral religious works. Among his best known are *The Lamb* (1982), *The Protecting Veil* (1988), and *Song for Athene* (1993). Tavener first came to prominence with his cantata *The Whale*, premiered in 1968. Then aged 24, he was described by *The Guardian* as "the musical discovery of the year",<sup>[1]</sup> while *The Times* said he was "among the very best creative talents of his generation." *The Protecting Veil* was recorded by cellist Steven Isserlis and *Song for Athene* was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana.<sup>[3]</sup> *The Lamb* featured in the soundtrack for Paolo Sorrentino's film *The Great Beauty*.<sup>[4]</sup>

## 2025 selected texts:

Philip Sealey 2025

### **Fragment of a conversation recorded on Hampstead Heath**

*In language strange she spoke to me  
Recounting details of the light years travelled  
While the silver craft she'd left  
Hung in the lurid sky.*

*She stared at the view  
The veils of smoke  
The silent blackened towers  
And seemed to sniff the exhausted air.*

*Such a precious jewel she said  
The bluest eye when viewed from far beyond  
What happened here?  
What enemy?*

*Ashamed I looked away  
There was no foe I said  
No imperious adversary.*

*We did it to ourselves.*

William Wordsworth 1807

### ***Daffodils* (v 1-2)**

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

## Tonight's performers:

**Commotio** was formed in August 1999 to promote neglected contemporary choral repertoire. Performances have included the second UK performance of Alfred Schnittke's mighty *Requiem* and other rarely heard works including Paul Hindemith's *Mass* and Kenneth Leighton's *Mass for Double Choir*, and the world premiere of Pierre Villette's *Inviolata*. Commotio also promotes and performs the works of a younger generation of composers including, most recently, Grace-Evangeline Mason, David Bednall, and Kerensa Briggs. Their debut CD of South African choral music was released in February 2006, followed by a CD for choir and cello in February 2008. A track from the latter disc, Richard Allain's *Ubi caritas*, was chosen to feature on the Classic FM core playlist and appears in the compilation CD *Smooth Classics – the Ultimate Collection*. The choir recorded a disc of the music of James Whitbourn which was released on the Naxos label (8.572103) in February 2010 and reached no.2 in the Specialist Classical Chart. Their second Naxos CD, *In the Heart of Things* (8.572739), the choral works of Francis Pott, was released on the Naxos label in February 2012. In August 2013 Commotio featured as a gala choir at the Association of British Choral Directors' Convention. In November 2013, the choir's fifth CD *The Rose in the Middle of Winter – Carols by Bob Chilcott* was released and reached no.1 in the Specialist Classical Chart. Commotio's sixth recording, featuring jazz-inspired choral works by Bob Chilcott, was released in September 2017 and reached no.11 in the UK Jazz Charts. The choir gave the first UK performance of Rolande Falcinelli's *Messe de Sainte Dominique* in June 2018 and in March 2019 they embarked on their seventh recording featuring Francis Pott's *Word* and his new work for cello and double choir, *At First Light* (released July 2020). Commotio recorded works by the late Martin Read in Keble College Chapel in July 2023, including *The Death of Colonel Boles*, with cellist Joseph Spooner and baritone Paul Sheehan. Commotio celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September 2019, with a reunion concert of current and past choir members. Works included the 24-part *In Nomine* by Bo Holten, Pierre Villette's *Attende Domine*, and the world premiere of Richard Allain's *Music*, commissioned and written for the occasion. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary took place at SJE, Oxford, in September 2024. [www.commotio.org/about.html](http://www.commotio.org/about.html)

### Joseph Spooner – cello

Joseph's diverse career has taken him across the UK, from the Baltic to the Atlantic, and from the recording studio to concert platforms in Continental Europe, Russia, New York, Mexico, and New Zealand. There have been notable chamber music collaborations (with, among others, Madeleine Mitchell) and numerous premieres (including with Continuum Ensemble). Joseph's delving into the repertoire has led to the recovery of many unjustly neglected works, and he has earned high praise from critics for both the performances and recordings resulting from this exploration. Recent years have seen Joseph's varied discography expand further, and it now includes Percy Sherwood's Double Concerto (with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Rupert Marshall-Luck); Francis Pott's *At First Light* for choir and solo cello; and cello sonatas by Austin, Cooke, Gipps, Ireland, Jacob, Moeran, Rawsthorne, and Sherwood (with Duncan Honeybourne, David Owen Norris, and Rebeca Omordia). Joseph was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2012 and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 2022. He is proud to be the dedicatee of works by Alwynne Pritchard, Errollyn Wallen, and Martin Read. His instrument was made in the workshop of Nicholas Vuillaume in c.1865. [www.josephspooner.net](http://www.josephspooner.net)

## Other MRF projects:

### Tomorrow's Composers...

MRF is also engaged in generating interest in composition at a younger level. We are pleased to have been awarded funding via Hampshire Music Education Hub to run this project in-class in the New Forest area this term. It involves writing music for a choice of 1-minute films, ending with a popular on-line showcase event. Students who joined previous projects are keen to continue composing.



### MRF runs on a shoe-string!

Funds are needed to ensure the continuation of this unique support for young composers, filling the gap between local music service provision and undergraduate study.

Please support our Crowdfunder challenge '25: Pedal4Pounds, Winchester-Oxford, Sept. 27-28.

*Thank you!*

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