

Historic music in historic churches – early and Baroque music for voices and period instruments

THE FINAL
Suffolk Villages Festival



28 – 31 August 2026

Artistic Director: Peter Holman MBE



STOKE BY NAYLAND POLSTEAD
HADLEIGH



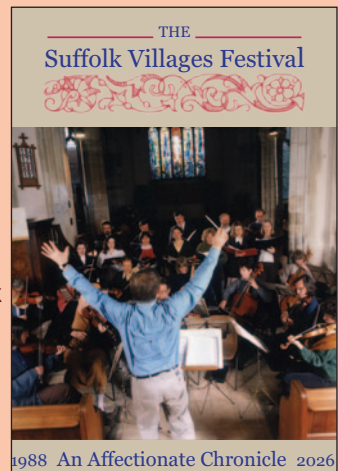
A message from the Artistic Director

Welcome to the 2026 Suffolk Villages Festival. After careful consideration, we have decided that this will be our final August festival: none of us is getting any younger (I will soon be 80); I have no obvious successor; and we want to go out on a high.

As usual, there are many delights in store. We explore and celebrate the wonderful music of Marc-Antoine Charpentier, including his famous *Te Deum*. Steven Devine brings us a feast of suites and concertos by J. S. Bach, including the double violin concerto and a brilliant Vivaldi bassoon concerto. In our final educational project, Philippa Hyde, Elizabeth Kenny and Reiko Ichise mentor a group of students in Dowland's wonderful part-songs, while Mediva take us back to the riotous world of Paris c.1300. We end the Festival, and our Purcell project, with *Dido and Aeneas*. Please spread the word, making this final festival a memorable one.

The Suffolk Villages Festival: An Affectionate Chronicle

The Suffolk Villages Festival, founded in 1988, has been bringing high-quality performances of early music to rural East Anglia for 38 years. Its principal venues are the fine historic wool churches of the area, situated to the north of the River Stour and Dedham Vale. To mark its final year, Lyn Rodley has compiled and edited an extraordinary illustrated book that chronicles the Festival year by year and has many reminiscences and tributes from performers, helpers and audience members. It will be available to pre-order, or to buy at the Festival in August; don't miss your opportunity to acquire a copy.



Registered Charity No. 1102789

The Suffolk Villages Festival
119 Maldon Road
Colchester CO3 3AX

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01206 543417

Friday 28 August at 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Hadleigh IP7 5DT

A Portrait of Marc-Antoine Charpentier to include the Te Deum in D major

Charles Daniels *tenor*
Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Psalmody
The John Jenkins Consort
Essex Baroque Orchestra
directed by Peter Holman



Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704) was one of the greatest seventeenth-century composers, to be ranked with Monteverdi, Schütz and Purcell. After studying in Italy, he became singer and composer for the elite group of musicians in the household of the Duchesse de Guise, Louis XIV's first cousin. Following her death in 1688, he became music master to the Jesuits in Paris and then in the Sainte-Chapelle at court. In this special concert we bring together a cross-section of his most memorable music, sacred and secular. It ranges from a wonderful extended motet, 'Annunciate superi', for six-part choir, two treble viols and continuo, written for the Guise musicians, to his famous setting of the Te Deum, probably written in August 1692 to celebrate the French victory at Steenkerque. Its Prelude has become famous as the Eurovision theme tune. Charpentier's secular music is represented mainly by a superb scene, set in the underworld, from his unfinished opera *La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers*.

**Tickets £20 (£15 unreserved)
half-price for those under 30**

Friday 28 August at 6.15pm
United Reformed Church, The Market Place, Hadleigh IP7 5DL

**pre-concert
talk**

Marc-Antoine Charpentier as a Performing Musician

a talk by Peter Holman, Artistic Director & Emeritus Professor, University of Leeds

(free admission to concert ticket-holders)



Saturday 29 August at 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland CO6 4QY

Johann Sebastian Bach & Antonio Vivaldi

In the French and Italian Styles

Tassilo Erhardt & Asuka Sumi *violin*

Sally Holman *bassoon*

SVF Bach Soloists

directed by Steven Devine *harpsichord*

For our final festival Steven Devine returns to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and his milieu. The concert is bookended by two masterpieces: the original version of his famous Overture or Suite no. 3 in D major (played without the wind and brass parts that were added later), and the sublime Concerto in D minor for two violins.

The contrast between the French and Italian styles is pursued further with the charming but rarely heard Overture no. 5 in G minor, long attributed to J.S. Bach but probably by one of his sons or followers, and by Bach's fine Harpsichord Concerto no. 4 in A major.

The programme is completed by Bach's Sonata in G major for violin and continuo and Vivaldi's brilliant Bassoon Concerto in D minor RV481, played by Sally Holman – making a welcome return to SVF as a concerto soloist.

Steven Devine is one of Britain's leading harpsichordists, prominent also as a director of period-instrument ensembles. We are fortunate that he has found time over the years to appear regularly at SVF, most recently this April in a programme of music for two harpsichords with Satoko Doi-Luck.

**Tickets £20 (£15 unreserved)
half-price for those under 30**

Sunday 30 August at 7pm

St Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland CO6 4QY

The Dowland Song Project

led by

Philippa Hyde *soprano*

Elizabeth Kenny *lute*

Reiko Ichise *bass viol*



This year we mark the 400th anniversary of the death of the lutenist John Dowland, the greatest song composer of the Elizabethan age. His four collections, published between 1597 and 1612, contain an extraordinary variety of songs ranging from light, humorous dance songs to tragic masterpieces, exploring Dowland's famous melancholic persona.

Most of Dowland's songs are laid out so that they can be performed as solos with lute, or as part-songs, and these four-voice versions, rarely performed, form the basis of our last educational initiative, in which three leading early music specialists mentor student singers studying the specialised techniques needed for Dowland's music. Philippa Hyde will also contribute some solo lute songs, and there will be lute solos from Elizabeth Kenny and bass viol solos from Reiko Ichise.

**Tickets £20 (£15 unreserved)
half-price for those under 30**

Sunday 30 August at 6pm

St Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland

**Members of the Dowland Song Project
in conversation with Stephen Varcoe**

(free admission to ticket holders)

pre-concert
event

Monday 31 August at 11am
St Mary's Church, Polstead CO6 5BS

Estampie

Party like it's 1300!

Mediva

Ann Allen *shawm, douçaine
recorder & voice*

Grace Newcombe *harp & voice*

Patrick Rimes *bagpipes
vielle & voice*



Paris c.1300 was a vibrant place, resounding with people singing and dancing, from clerics in their cloisters to courtiers in royal chambers and merchants down by the meadows. Thanks to an unknown scribe, a precious selection of these dances have been preserved in a manuscript of troubadour and trouvère songs, the *Chansonier du Roi*. Referred to as 'Estampies Real' (Royal Estampies), these pieces give us a rare insight into instrumental music from the middle ages. Mediva combine them with other dance-inspired vocal music from the Montpellier Codex, also written in Paris around this time.

Estampie is Ann Allen's latest project for Mediva, a ground-breaking Medieval group we have featured a number of times over the years. This new programme has been specially supported by SVF, with the aim of bringing insights from medieval and folk music to experiment with how these pieces were performed, composed and enjoyed.

**Tickets £15 (£12 unreserved)
half-price for those under 30**

Monday 31 August at 7pm
St Mary's Church, Hadleigh IP7 5DT

Henry Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*

concert performance

with scenes from the Restoration Theatre

Helen Charlston *mezzo-soprano*

Philippa Hyde *soprano*

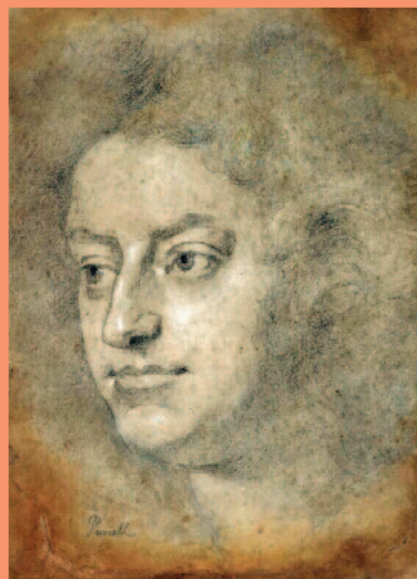
Zachary Kleanthous *tenor*

Michael Craddock *bass*

Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Psalmody, Essex Baroque Orchestra

directed by Peter Holman



Dido and Aeneas is one of the greatest seventeenth-century operas, much performed and recorded today, yet its origins are obscure: it was never performed in public in Purcell's lifetime, and it has not come down to us in its original form. With an all-star cast we bring our Purcell Project to a fitting end, offering *Dido* as it might have been heard at its first performance, at Josias Priest's girls' school in Chelsea in 1688. This involves restoring dance music cut out when the opera was put on in London in the early eighteenth century, and allocating the role of the Sorceress to a bass as Purcell intended – at the time theatrical witches were conventionally portrayed by men in drag.

We preface *Dido* with an anthology of music written for Restoration plays, including Matthew Locke's remarkable *Masque of Orpheus* from Settle's tragedy *The Empress of Morocco*, John Eccles's sensational mad song 'I burn', written for the great actress Anne Bracegirdle and sung for us by Helen Charlston, and a newly discovered theatre song by Henry Purcell.

**Tickets £20 (£15 unreserved)
half-price for those under 30**

Monday 31 August at 5.45pm

United Reformed Church, The Market Place, Hadleigh IP7 5DL

Rethinking the Place of *Dido and Aeneas* in Purcell's Theatrical Career

A talk by Professor Bryan White, University of Leeds,
author (with Peter Holman) of *The Purcell Compendium*

(free admission to concert ticket-holders)

**pre-concert
talk**

booking information

Booking opens on 1 June to Supporters (Friends, Patrons and Benefactors) of Suffolk Villages Festival, and on 8 June to the general public. To book tickets, please visit the website at www.suffolkvillagesfestival.com or telephone the box office on **01206 543417**.

Please note that we no longer issue paper tickets. You will receive email or postal confirmation with your allocated seat numbers, together with information about the concerts and venues.

Festival season ticket

£86 for a top-price ticket for each of the five concerts (a saving of about 10%).

concessions

Half-price tickets are available to full-time students and those under 30.

seating

Top-price seats in the central section of the venue will be reserved, allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

Unreserved seats will be at the side of the venue and may have a view which is partially obscured by a pillar.

refunds

We regret that refunds can only be given if the concert is sold out and we are able to sell on the ticket. Every effort will be made to adhere to the advertised programme but please note that the organisers reserve the right to amend or cancel any part.

venue information

Public car parks are clearly signposted in Hadleigh but for ease of navigation we suggest the Magdalen Road car park (IP7 5AD). Please follow signs to the SVF car parks in Stoke by Nayland and Polstead. Toilet facilities are available at all venues.

programme

This year's full Festival programme and copies of *The Suffolk Villages Festival: An Affectionate Tribute* will be on sale at the Festival for £10 each or you can pre-order them at a cost of £8 each (or £15 for both) when you book your tickets. You can collect your copies at the first Festival concert you attend.

Our website lists local accommodation. Alternatively, please contact the Visitor Information Centre: The Town Hall, Gaol Lane, Sudbury, CO10 1TL telephone: 01787 372331

**SUFFOLK VILLAGES FESTIVAL
BOX OFFICE**

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Cover illustration:

Dido and Aeneas Seek Shelter from the Storm
by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (c.1646)