



LISTENING

Listening

A very warm welcome to St Stephen Walbrook. Many thanks for joining us for this celebration of the founding of Samaritans at the church by Chad Varah and of their remarkable, crucial work.

We are deeply grateful to a wonderful array of contributors who have given generously of their time, creativity and insights. In particular, Lizzi, Mark and Olivia have worked to produce a collaboration of dance, video and music which follows the church's challenging tradition of innovation.

We are also very privileged to be able to hear Felicity Varah Harding reflecting on her father and her life with Samaritans and also to read Kate Varah's memories of her grandfather in this programme.



A man willing to listen, with a base and an emergency telephone.

Programme

Welcome

Revd Stephen Baxter

Priest-in-Charge, St Stephen Walbrook

Reflection

Felicity Varah Harding OBE

Honorary President, Samaritans, & daughter of Chad Varah

Dance Constellations

Video On The Road (Again)

Music Da pacem Domine (Give peace, Lord), Arvo Pärt

Volunteering

Jess, Samaritan No.7595

Groping by RS Thomas

Sheila Ferris, Actor

Video Dark Night (Silver Screen)

Music Luminous Night by Ola Gjielo

Working with the Police

Inspector Caroline Hay & Police Sergeant Richard Scullion

City of London Police

The Answer by RS Thomas

Sheila Ferris, Actor

Dance Arrival & Departures

Video Seven Stars (Hedy Lamarr)

Music Seek Him Who Maketh the Seven Stars, Jonathan Dove

Credits

Video Artist Mark Dean

Film Credits On The Road (Again) stars Vivien Leigh, Psycho (1960)
Dark Night (Silver Screen) stars Greta Garbo, Queen
Christina (1933)
Seven Stars (Hedy Lamarr) stars Hedy Lamarr, Come
Live With Me (1941)

Choir The Choral Scholars of St Stephen Walbrook

Conductor Olivia Tait, Choral Director

Accompanist Ben Markovic

Choreographer Lizzi Kew Ross

Costume designer Suzie Holmes

Programme devised by Lizzi Kew Ross and the dance artists – Henry Montes, Alessandra Ruggeri, Alice Sara, Sonia Rafferty, Dave Waring.

We acknowledge with gratitude the support of the late Dr Mollie Davies in the making of these new dance works and thank Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance for the rehearsal space and support.

Reflections by Lizzi Kew Ross and Mark Dean

Lizzi

Human connection is key to our health and well-being. The language of dance has a capacity to speak beyond words and in my choreographic practice, both touch and conversation are fundamental in the way I and the dance artists have devised this movement.

My mother in her thirties with four young children suffered a nervous breakdown. Later, in about 1970, she became a volunteer with Samaritans. None of us is immune from suffering in this way, or living with members of our family and friends who do. We are not alone – as RS Thomas wrote, ‘But there are hands that I can take;’”

Mark

I began *On The Road (Again)* in 2017, long before tonight’s Listening project was conceived of, although I was thinking of both the Henry Moore altar as a screen, and of the survival of suicide as a subject. The name Samaritans is of course taken from the gospel story of a man left half dead on the road, who is saved by a passing stranger from Samaria.

Elsewhere in the gospels we read of the woman of Samaria, who met Jesus by a well, and went to tell her neighbours of her encounter with the Saviour of the World; in the Orthodox tradition she is known as St Photini, the Luminous One, while in cinematic tradition, her equivalent as the greatest star might be Greta Garbo.

Jonathan Dove’s *Seek Him That Maketh The Seven Stars* was originally commissioned by the Royal Academy for their Service for Artists, and is based on words from Psalm 139: If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

A Granddaughter's Perspective

Kate Varah, Executive Director, National Theatre

How he would have loved such an extraordinarily moving celebration of Samaritans, interpreted through the media of music, dance and video, all performed here in his beloved Church of St Stephen Walbrook where he founded the charity 70 years ago.

In reflecting on how music and dance, drama and all of the performing arts, influenced his life's work, there's no better place to start than here in this exquisite church – Sir Christopher Wren's small masterpiece. Chad arrived here as Rector in 1953, overseeing the final stages of the post-Blitz restoration and spearheading the transformation of the Crypt into the first HQ for his 'active listening therapy' charity, as he described it.

Fast forward to 1978 and the start of another nine-year restoration for the church. As part of that programme, surely there can be no greater testament to my grandfather's faith in the power of the creative arts than the Henry Moore Altar, which forms the focal point for tonight's performances. Chad's collaboration with Peter Palumbo (later Lord Palumbo, Chair of the Arts Council from 1988-1994) to commission one of the world's leading artists to create the magnificent travertine marble altar – and together with Peter to fight many battles before it could be installed – was, I realised even as a small girl, a source of immense pride for him, and remained so justifiably throughout his life.

And then there were those Friday lunchtime concerts that he introduced in the Church, because he knew that listening to sublime music within this exquisite space, would be restorative for the wellbeing of stressed city workers. He was passionate about the music of Rachmaninov – and he loved Russian Church Music. Indeed, when in 2003, aged 92, he finally retired as Rector of St Stephen Walbrook and prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral, he was, at the time, the oldest incumbent in the Church of England. I remember him tasking my parents to clear all his possessions from the Church (accumulated over the past five decades!) They told me that his collection of Russian Church Music manuscripts was the *first* thing he asked to be sent back home to him in Barnes!

Another memory from my childhood are the photographic prints he shared with all his grandchildren (long before photography got digital!) often of him watching dance, and theatre, and opera. Plus the colourful Postcards he sent from his global visits to Samaritans and Befrienders International branches, from amazing locations (we were *always* reminded to keep the stamps for his collection!). I realise now that he must have understood so well the vital importance of the performing arts for improved mental health globally – and how vital that was in his befriending work.

And then there were his friends! At a young age I remember being in total awe when I discovered his friendship with the author Monica Dickens, whose books I adored! They were such close friends: ultimately, she founded the US Samaritans.

Because he lived into his nineties, my larger-than-life grandfather was part of *my* life for three decades. I followed him to his Oxford College, Keble, and it was back then that Chad told me about another close friendship he had had in Oxford, with the Polish composer and pianist, Andre Tchaikowsky. Chad had taken the funeral when Andre died aged just 46, and what especially fascinated me then – and now – was Chad’s recollections of how involved he had been in the process of Andre leaving his skull to the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1982, to be used in productions of Hamlet but how it wasn’t until 2008 that it made its stage debut at Stratford, with David Tennant in the title role!

Thank you to everyone who is contributing to this event, to make ‘Listening’ such a memorable, moving and appropriate tribute to the work of all those Samaritans who have volunteered for this extraordinary charity over the past 70 years.

My grandfather called these volunteers: “Unsung heroes, whose commitment and dedication is the lifeblood of the organisation”. There will be many unsung heroes here tonight.

Biographies

Mark Dean



Mark began looping appropriated film as an art student in the late 1970's, and in the 1980's extended this technique into music; these practices were eventually combined in the methodology for which he became recognised as a video & sound artist from the 1990's onwards, via exhibitions and museum collections in the UK and abroad. Mark's use of appropriation differs, at least from some of the more reductive interpretations of such work, in that it is based not on a theory of the emptiness of images, but on a theology of kenosis, or self-emptying; a practice grounded in the lived experience of trauma.

In 2009, Mark received a Paul Hamlyn Award for Artists, and in 2010 was ordained in the Church of England, currently serving as chaplain to University of the Arts London and coordinator of Arts Chaplaincy Projects.

Photo: Jon Rees

Lizzi Kew Ross



Lizzi is a dancer, choreographer and teacher, and artistic director of LKR & Co, a dance company specialising in site specific dance music performances in unusual spaces. She trained at Roehampton and London Contemporary Dance School.

Commissions include projects Lizzi Kew Ross is a dancer, choreographer and teacher, and artistic director of LKR & Co, a dance for Dance United, in Selfridges Department Store, and at the William Morris exhibition at Temple Place, new work at the Old Vic Tunnels underneath Waterloo Station,

musicals for the Arts Theatre Cambridge, and a film on a lighthouse. As part of the Ruth Etchells Fellowship at St John's College Durham, she researched into the nature of poetic images in film and poetry in relation to her own choreographic work.

Lizzi was awarded at the Educators Livery Company 2020 for professional work in educational environments and has received further support from the Professional Development Grant scheme of the Worshipful Company of Educators Trust.

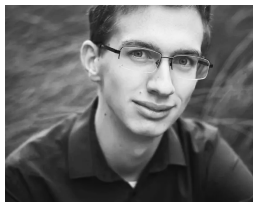
Olivia Tait



Olivia is Choral Director of Artist Development Programmes at St Martin-in-the-Fields where she oversees the Choral Scholars of St Martin's and St Stephen Walbrook, Emerging Artists, and Associate Choral Leader programmes, as well as conducting the St Martin's Chamber Choir. At St Martin's, she has enjoyed conducting for BBC Radio 3 broadcasts, Church of England recordings, concerts with the St Martin's Voices and chamber orchestra, and has assisted in setting up the Diocese of Manchester Choral Scholar programme. Alongside her work as St Martin's, Olivia was also the Carlos Miguel Prieto conducting fellow for 22-23, assistant conductor with the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra and Blackheath Halls, musical director of Exodus choir and freelance workshop leader with The Sixteen.

Previously, Olivia was conductor on the Dartington Summer School programme and also participated in the Jette Parker Women Conductors programme at the Royal Opera House.

Ben Markovic



Ben is Organ Scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields and St Stephen Walbrook. He is a recent graduate from the University of Cambridge, where he read Music at Queens' College, holding the Aliko Vatikioti Senior Organ Scholarship. Alongside this award, he held the prestigious Harry Gabb Scholarship of the Royal College of Organists and was until recently the Magister Scholae of the Fisher House Schola Cantorum, Cambridge. He has recently passed his FRCO and LTCL (in piano performance) with distinction.

He was Organ Scholar at Worcester Cathedral during the year 2019-2020, where he was responsible for assisting with the training of the choristers and accompanying the cathedral choirs. He currently studies organ with Jeremiah Stevenson and piano with Michael Dussek.

Henry Montes

Henry is a freelance dance maker, performer and teacher.

He has performed for many independent choreographers and companies in New York and Europe including Susanne Linke, Reinhild Hoffmann, Keely Garfield, Kirstie Simson, KJ Holmes, Gaby Agis, Charles Linehan, Rosemary Butcher, Joan Davis, Liz Roche and Jonathan Burrows. Henry performed with Siobhan Davies Dance from 1998- 2009 and has worked with Lizzi Kew Ross on *Stations* and *Reading With Bach*.

Alice Sara

Alice is a dance artist with a portfolio that spans performance, choreography, rehearsal direction and teaching. She has performed extensively in site-specific, dance theatre and film projects with Seven Sisters Group, Deborah Tiso, Tom Dale & co, Deborah Hay, Maresa Von Stockert, and most recently with Lizzi Kew Ross & Co. Her choreographic collaborations include '*Between & Aparts*' with Clare Baker for Tate Exchange (2019), '*Going, Going, Gone*' with Mel Clarke for Trinity Laban graduating students (2023) and she is currently '*Scratching Beneath the Surface*' with Emma Teixidor and Claire Burrell, and co-authoring a chapter published in a forthcoming Routledge title.

David Waring

David is a dance artist, choreographer, performer, dance educator, mindfulness teacher and workshop facilitator, and retail assistant. He created and performed in his own guerrilla solo series: *hustler*, *hustler #2*, and *hustler #4.5* between 2008 and 2013, in pub toilets, urban environments, theatres and festivals. He led a post graduate dance company (2002-2021) and has performed with Ricochet, Kate Brown, Extemporaneous Dance Theatre, Motionhouse, Walker Dance, The Featherstonehaughs, and his own group fishpool (co-directed with Gaynor Coward). This is David's 4th project with Lizzi Kew Ross & Co.

Alessandra Ruggeri

Alessandra is invested in working with movement. She was a gymnast before moving to London to dance. In the UK she collaborated for several years with the theatre company Clod Ensemble and performed in works by choreographers Frauke Requardt and David Rosenberg, Jasmin Vardimon and Maresa Von Stockert. Ale collaborated with choreographers in Austria, Norway, Switzerland and Ireland before returning to London and working with Lizzi Kew Ross. Ale teaches movement and Pilates classes and has been a regular guest lecturer at East 15 Acting School since 2018.

Sonia Rafferty

Sonia is a freelance teacher, performer, choreographer, director, researcher and author, and is the Programme Leader for the BSc Dance Science at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She has performed extensively in a range of work from La Bouche (electric voice dance) to V-TOL (physical theatre) and more recently with Athina Vahla and several projects with Lizzi Kew-Ross. An active researcher in dance science and safe dance practice, she is co-founder of Safe in Dance International and co-author of "*Safe Dance Practice: An Applied Dance Science Perspective*".

Suzie Holmes

Suzie's design credits include works for: Rosemary Butcher, Maresa Von Stockert, Protein Dance, CandoCo Dance Company, Phoenix Dance Theatre, Ludus Dance, and Transitions Dance Company. Her work has been seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in *A Flash of Light: The Dance Photography of Chris Nash*. Suzie is Head of Costume and Lecturer at Trinity Laban, where she teaches design, performance and contextual studies

SAMARITANS

70 years of being there for anyone who needs someone.

Although not a religious organisation, Samaritans was founded by a vicar called Chad Varah, in 1953 at St Stephen Walbrook. Throughout his career Chad had offered counselling to his parishioners, and wanted to do something more specific to help people contemplating suicide.

On 2nd November 1953, Chad Varah, a vicar and writer, answered the first ever call to a brand new helpline for people contemplating suicide.

But back then, Samaritans was a far cry from the organisation of 22,000 volunteers it is now.

In Chad's own words, the service was just "a man willing to listen, with a base and an emergency telephone".

Call: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org>

Donations: <https://www.samaritans.org/donate-now/>