



THE GESUALDO SIX

ENGLISH MOTETS

COUNTERTENOR Guy James

COUNTERTENOR Alasdair Austin

TENOR Joseph Wicks

TENOR Josh Cooter

BARITONE Michael Craddock

DIRECTOR AND BASS Owain Park

St. Mary's Church, Hamilton Village

Thursday, November 7 @ 7:30 PM

There will be no intermission.

PROGRAM

<i>Te lucis ante terminum</i>	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)
<i>Ave verum corpus</i>	William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)
<i>Aspice Domine</i>	William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)
<i>Ave Maria Mater Dei</i>	William Cornysh (1465-1523)
<i>Quemadmodum</i>	John Taverner (c. 1490-1545)
<i>Ave Regina Caelorum</i>	Walter Frye (d. 1475)
<i>Quid petis, O fili?</i>	Richard Pygott (c. 1485-1549)
<i>Laudibus in sanctis</i>	William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)
<i>A new commandment</i>	William Mundy (c. 1529-1591)
<i>Ah, gentle Jesu</i>	Sherynham (c. 1500)
<i>How are the mighty fallen</i>	Robert Ramsey (c. 1590-1644)
<i>If ye love me</i>	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)
<i>When David heard</i>	Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)
<i>Turn unto the Lord</i>	Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)

PROGRAM NOTES

During the renaissance, musical composition flourished, but it was a time of great change, fueled by religious division. This program traces music written by some of the English Renaissance masters over a period of two-hundred years, encompassing florid medieval-sounding pieces by Pygott and Cornysh, intricately woven polyphonic works by Tallis and Byrd, and the beautiful simplicity of Mundy and Tomkins.

All of these composers were obliged to write in the musical style of the moment, which was constantly fluctuating in one of the most turbulent periods in English history. Lavish Catholic services required suitably elaborate music, with Latin texts and rich sonorities. The Protestants did away with such excess, and as the walls were whitewashed so too was the music, with demands placed on composers to set English words as simply as possible, so that every syllable could be clearly heard by the congregation. Then, in Queen Elizabeth I's reign, came a kind of relaxed simplicity, a halfway house, in which the ideal was both that the words could be heard clearly and also that the music should be interesting.

While all composers in Tudor England were flexible to the period's shifting religious requirements, none was quite as skillful at reinvention as Tallis, whose music remains absolutely consistent in its quality, even while his style changes dramatically. The recusant Byrd gave voice to the plight of Catholics in England through many of his compositions, using his royal favor to escape punishment for his beliefs, and in doing so, wrote some of the most enduring and powerful music of the era.

The incredible productivity of composers writing during this period, coupled with the advent of printed sheet music and licenses granted for its production, has resulted in a wealth of material available to us—and, as such, selecting only a handful to represent 'English motets' as a whole is by no means easy. But I hope that we manage to showcase something of the extraordinary journey which composition took around the English Reformation and, in turn, reflect our immense enjoyment in performing the music we all grew up singing.

– Owain Park, 2024

TEXTS

***Te lucis ante terminum* - Thomas Tallis**

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus,
Ut pro tua clementia,
Sis praesul et custodia.

Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata:
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum. Amen.

Thee, Lord, before the close of day,
Maker of all things, Thee we pray
For Thy dear loving kindness' sake
To guard and guide us in Thy way.

Banish the dreams that terrify,
And night's fantastic company:
Keep us from Satan's tyranny:
Defend us from unchastity.

Protect us, Father, God adored,
Thou too, co-equal Son and Lord,
Thou, Holy Ghost, our Advocate,
Whose reign can know nor bound nor date. Amen.

***Ave verum corpus* - William Byrd**

Ave, verum corpus natum
de Maria Virgine:
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine:
cuius latus perforatum
unda fluxit sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum,
in mortis examine.
O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae.
Miserere mei. Amen.

Hail the true body, born
of the Virgin Mary:
You who truly suffered and were sacrificed
on the cross for the sake of man.
From whose pierced flank
flowed water and blood:
Be a foretaste for us
in the trial of death.
O sweet, O merciful, O Jesus, Son of Mary.
Have mercy on me. Amen.

***Aspice Domine* - William Byrd**

Aspice, Domine, quia facta est desolata civitas plena divitiis.
Sedet in tristitia;
Non est qui consoletur eam, nisi tu, Deus noster.
O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae.
Miserere mei. Amen.

Behold, O Lord, how the city full of riches is become desolate.
She sits in mourning;
there is none to comfort her save only thou, our God.
O sweet, O merciful, O Jesus, Son of Mary.
Have mercy on me. Amen.

***Ave Maria Mater Dei* - William Cornysh**

Based on the greeting of the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in the Gospel of Luke
Ave Maria, mater Dei,
regina caeli,
domina mundi,
imperatrix inferni,
miserere mei
et totius populi Christiani;
et ne permitas nos
mortaliter peccare;
sed tuam sanctissimam voluntatem
adimplere. Amen.

Hail Mary, mother of God,
queen of heaven,
mistress of the world,
empress of hell:
have mercy on me
and on all Christian people;
and do not allow us
to commit mortal sins;
but help us to fulfil
your most holy will. Amen.

Quemadmodum - John Taverner

Text from Psalm 42

Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita
desiderat anima mea ad te Deus.

Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fontem vivum: quando
veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks: so longeth my
soul after thee, O God.

My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God:
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

Ave Regina Caelorum - Walter Frye

Ave regina caelorum,
Mater regis angelorum
O Maria, flos virginum,

Hail, queen of heaven,
mother of the king of the angels,
Mary, flower of virgins,

Velut rosa velut lilium.
Funde preces ad Filium
Pro salute fidelium,

like as the rose and the lily.
Pour forth prayers to your Son
for the salvation of the faithful,

O Maria, flos virginum,
Velut rosa velut lilium.

Mary, flower of virgins,
like as the rose and the lily.

Quid petis, O fili? - Richard Pygott

Quid petis, O fili?
Mater dulcissima baba.
O pater, O fili?
Mihi plausus oscula da da.

What do you seek, O son?
Sweetest mother, kiss, kiss.
O father, O son?
Applaud me with kisses, da da.

The mother full mannerly
and meekly as a maid,
Looking on her little son,
so laughing in lap laid,
So prettily, so pertly,
so passingly well apayed,
Full softly and soberly
unto her sweet son she said:

Quid petis, O fili?...

What do you seek, O son?

Musing on her manners,
so nigh marred was my main
Save it pleased me so passingly
that passed was my pain;
Yet softly to her sweet son
methought I heard her sayn;
Now, gracious God and good sweet babe,
yet once this game again:

Quid petis, O fili?...

What do you seek, O son?

Laudibus in sanctis - William Byrd

Laudibus in sanctis Dominum celebrate supremum,
Firmamenta sonent inclita facta Dei.
Inclita facta Dei cantate, sacraque potentis
Voce potestatem saepe sonate manus.

Magnificum Domini cantet tuba martia nomen,
Pieria Domino concelebrate lira.
Laude Dei, resonent resonantia tympana summi,
Alta sacri resonent organa laude Dei.

Hunc arguta canant tenui psalteria corda,
Hunc agili laudet laeta chorea pede.
Concava divinas effundant cymbala laudes,
Cymbala dulcisona laude repleta Dei
Omne quod aethereis in mundo vescitur auris.

Alleluia canat, tempus in omne Deo.

Celebrate the Lord most high in holy praises:
Let the firmament echo the glorious deeds of God.
Sing ye the glorious deeds of God, and with holy voice
Sound forth oft the power of his mighty hand.

Let the warlike trumpet sing the great nae of the Lord:
Celebrate the Lord with Perian lyre.
Let resounding timbrels ring to the praise of the most-high God,
Lofty organs peal to the praise of the holy God.

Him let melodious psalteries sing with fine string,
Him let joyful dance praise with nimble foot.
Let hollow cymbals pour forth diving praise of God.
Let everything in the world that feeds upon the air of
heaven.

Sing Alleluia to God for evermore.

A new commandment - William Mundy

A new commandment give I unto you, saith the Lord, that ye love
together, as I have loved you, that e'en so ye love one another.

Ah, gentle Jesu - Sheryngham

Ah, gentle Jesu,
who is that, that doth me call?
I, a sinner, that oft doth fall.
What woud'st thou have?
Mercy, Lord of thee I crave
Why, lov'st thou me?
Yea, my Maker I call thee.
Then leave they sin, or I nill thee,
And think on this lesson that now I teach thee.
Ah I will, I will, gentle Jesu

Upon the cross nailed I was for thee,
Suffered death to pay thy ransom;
Forsake thy sin, man, for the love of me
Be repentant, make plain confessions;
To contrite hearts I do remission;
Be not despaired, for I am not vengeable;
Gain ghostly en'mies think on my passion;
Why art thou froward, sith I am merciabile
Ah, gentle Jesu!

My bloody woundes down railing by this tree,
Look on them well and have compassion;
The crown of thorn, the spear, the nails three
Pierced hand and foot of indignation,
My heart riven for they redemption;
Let now us twain, in this thing be treatable:
Love for love by just convention;
Why art thou froward, sith I am merciabile
Ah, gentle Jesu!

***How are the mighty fallen* - Robert Ramsey**

How are the mighty fall'n
in the midst of the battle,
O Jonathan.

Thou wast slain in thy high places.
O Jonathan, woe is me for thee,
O Jonathan, my brother,

Very kind hast thou been to me.
Thy love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fall'n,
and the weapons of war destroyed,
How are the mighty fall'n.

***If ye love me* - Thomas Tallis**

If ye love me, keep my commandments.
And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another
Comforter, that He may 'bide with you for ever, e'en
the spirit of truth.

***When David heard* - Thomas Tomkins**

2 Samuel 18:33

When David heard that Absalom was slain
He went up into his chamber over the gate and wept,
and thus he said: my son, my son, O Absalom my son, would God I had died for thee!

***Turn unto the Lord* - Thomas Tomkins**

Turn unto the Lord our God for the Lord is gracious,
his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Gesualdo Six is an award-winning British vocal ensemble comprising some of the UK's finest consort singers, directed by Owain Park. Praised for its imaginative programming and impeccable blend, the ensemble formed in 2014 for a performance of Gesualdo's *Tenebrae Responsories* in Cambridge and has gone on to perform at numerous major festivals across the UK, Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

Notable highlights include a concert in the distinguished Deutschlandradio Debut Series, performances at renowned venues including London's Wigmore Hall, New York's Miller Theatre, the Sydney Opera House and the group's debut at the BBC Proms in 2023. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2024, the group will tour venues in South America, Japan, China and Hong Kong for the first time. The ensemble has collaborated with Fretwork, the Brodsky Quartet and Matilda Lloyd and toured a work of concert-theatre titled *Secret Byrd* with Director Bill Barclay.

The Gesualdo Six is committed to music education, regularly hosting workshops for young musicians and composers. The ensemble has curated two composition competitions, with the most recent edition drawing entries from over three hundred composers worldwide. The group recently commissioned new works from Shruthi Rajasekar and Joanna Marsh, alongside *coronasolfège for 6* by Héloïse Werner.

The ensemble has harnessed the power of social media to make classical music accessible to millions worldwide, creating captivating videos from beautiful locations while on tour. The group released its debut recording, *English Motets*, on Hyperion Records in early 2018 to critical acclaim, followed by six further albums (*Christmas, Fading, Josquin's Legacy, Tenebrae Responsories, Lux Aeterna* and William Byrd's *Mass for five voices*) and most recently, *Morning Star*.

Owain Park (Director)

Park was born in Bristol in 1993. As well as directing The Gesualdo Six, he maintains a busy schedule of conducting projects with ensembles including London Mozart Players, Southbank Sinfonia, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music and Cappella Cracoviensis. Park is Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers and formerly Musical Director of Cambridge Chorale.

Park's compositions are published by Novello and have been performed internationally by ensembles including the Tallis Scholars and the Aurora Orchestra. While at Cambridge University, he studied orchestration with John Rutter, before undertaking a master's degree in composition. He is composer-in-residence for the London Choral Sinfonia and was one of BBC Radio 3's 31 under 31 Young Stars 2020. The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge recorded an album of his compositions which was nominated for the *BBC Music Magazine Awards*. In 2023, *Battle Cry*, a collaborative album from Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano) and Toby Carr (theorbo) featuring Park's composition as the title track, won the *Gramophone Award* for Best Concept Album.

Park is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO) and was awarded the Dixon Prize for improvisation, having been Senior Organ Scholar at Wells Cathedral and Trinity College Cambridge. He was a Tenebrae Associate Artist for two seasons and has worked with ensembles including The Sixteen, Gabrieli Consort and Polyphony. Park is a keen gardener and when he's not on stage, he can be found raking, pruning or picking cherry tomatoes.

Nova! Nova!

Fri, Dec 20 The Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square
Sat, Dec 21 Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill
Sun, Dec 22 Westminster Presbyterian Church, Wilmington

Timeless English music for the Christmas season

Fragments of medieval music discovered in book bindings at the Worcester Cathedral Priory, hauntingly beautiful polyphony from the Eton Choirbook, beloved carols like *There is no rose* and *Green groweth the holly*, and two ethereal new pieces written for New York Polyphony by Andrew Smith - this is music to make your spirit soar on the cusp of Christmas.

"Audience and musicians were drawn together in a holiday mood both festive and reflective—a welcome, layered, and moving musical experience...a reminder of the continuity and depth of this celebratory time, filled with the inspiring joy in music-making that transcends the centuries."

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