
CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

OWEN REES, director

MISERERE MEI DEUS

P R O G R A M M E

Jesus College Chapel
Sunday 14 October 8.30 pm

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

1990-1991 SEASON
in Jesus College Chapel

Sunday 9 December, 8.30 pm

PUER NATUS EST NOBIS

Mass for Christmas as it might have been heard in Mary Tudor's Chapel Royal c. 1553, including Tallis's festal seven-part mass.

Sunday 3 February, 8.30 pm

SINGET DEM HERRN

Music of the German Baroque including settings of Psalm 149, *Singet dem Herrn*, by Schutz and Bach.

Sunday 24 March, 8.30 pm

VICTORIA: REQUIEM

One of the finest choral masterpieces of the late Renaissance performed in its liturgical context.

Sunday 2 June, 8.30 pm

TALLIS: SPEM IN ALIUM

The Cambridge Taverner Choir joins forces with the London-based choir, Bel Canto (Richard Egarr, director), to perform Tallis's magnificent forty-part motet, and antiphons in the English florid style, including Tallis's *Gaude Gloriosa*.

By kind permission of the Master, Chaplain
and Fellows of Jesus College

AUDITIONS

If you are interested in auditioning for the Choir,
please contact Owen Rees on 0865 278859.

P R O G R A M M E

- 1 Plainsong: Psalm 50, Miserere mei Deus
 - 2 Miserere mei Deus Josquin Desprez (c 1440-1521)
 - 3 Miserere mei Deus Robert Whyte (c 1538-1574)
 - 4 Infelix ego William Byrd (1542/3-1623)
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INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

- 5 Miserere mei Deus William Byrd
- 6 Mass for five voices William Byrd
Kyrie
Gloria
Agnus Dei
- 7 Timor et tremor Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594)
- 8 Miserere mei Deus Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)

The penitential Psalm 50 was the inspiration for some of the most emotionally charged music of the Renaissance and Baroque. Robert Whyte's treatment of the text is, for example, in a deeply expressive style usually reserved in England for settings of the Lamentations. The originally simple *falsobordone* setting by Allegri has become encrusted over the centuries with expressive ornament, a manner of performance which was originally the jealously-guarded secret of the Sistine Chapel choir. The setting by Josquin achieved particularly widespread fame, producing numerous progeny in the works of subsequent generations of composers. His piece is particularly remarkable for the use of the *sogetto ostinato*, a simple melodic

phrase, always associated with the words 'Miserere mei Deus' and recognisable by its rise and fall of a step. This phrase reappears periodically throughout the work: each appearance during the first section of the motet is one note lower in pitch, whereas in the second section the *ostinato* rises again one step at a time; in the third and final section it falls back to its original pitch.

One of the most famous devotional texts in the sixteenth century was a meditation on this same psalm, *Miserere mei Deus*, by Girolamo Savonarola, the spiritual leader of the Florentine Republic who suffered a martyr's death in 1498. Savonarola's meditation, which begins with the words *Infelix ego*, and incorporates the psalm verse by verse at intervals, was translated into several languages and printed in numerous editions throughout Europe. It was the opening section of this text, up to the first verse of the psalm, which particularly attracted composers, and it was in such settings that musicians such as Vicentino, Kore, Willaert, and Byrd made reference

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Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea et a peccato meo munda me. Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram te feci, ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis et vincas cum iudicaris. Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum et in peccatis concepit me mater mea. Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi. Asperges me hyssopo et mundabor; lavibus me et super nivem dealbabor.

Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam et exultabunt ossa humiliata. Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis et omnes iniquitates meas dele. Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis. Ne proicias me a facie tua, et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.

to Josquin's *soggetto ostinato*. Byrd's *Infelix ego* reserves the quotation from Josquin to the climactic end of the piece, where the words of the psalm which had accompanied Josquin's *ostinato* appear. This grand motet, published in 1591, is a remarkable combination of elements from traditional English styles (rich scoring, passages for a reduced number of voices, the use of high trebles) with an expressive treatment of the text and use of tonality which are thoroughly 'modern'.

The influence of Josquin's *ostinato* is indicated by its appearance at appropriate points in other works of Byrd: it is there at the very opening of his *Miserere mei Deus*, and also forms the head-motive for the Five-Part Mass, where its use is surely explained by the fact that 'Kyrie eleison' is the Greek equivalent of 'Miserere mei Deus'. Lassus's penitential motet *Timor et tremor* is a remarkable experiment in the use of chromatic harmony to expressive purpose: the tonality changes so rapidly that at many points particular keys are reduced to passing colours.

Owen Rees

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy and according to the abundance of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my offence and my sin is ever before me.

Against You only have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight that You may be justified in Your sentence and vindicated when You judge. Behold, in guilt was I conceived and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You delight in sincerity of heart and in my inmost being You teach me wisdom. Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be purified; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; the bones which You have crushed shall rejoice. Avert Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew in me a righteous spirit. Cast me not out from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui et spiritu principali confirma me
Docebo iniquos vias tuas: et impij ad te convertentur. Libera me de
sanguinibus Deus, Deus salutis meae, et exsultabit lingua mea
iustitiam tuam. Domine labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit
laudem tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium dedissem utique; holocaustis non
delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus: cor contritum
et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies. Benigne fac, Domine, in bonae
voluntate tua Sion, ut aedificentur muri Ierusalem. Tunc acceptabis
sacrificium iustitiae, oblationes, et holocausta: tunc imponent super
altare tuum vitulos.

Infelix ego, omnium auxilio destitutus, qui coelum terramque offendi
Quo ibo? Quo me vertam? Ad quem confugiam? Quis me
misereretur? Ad coelum levare oculos non audeo, quia ei graviter
peccavi. In terra refugium non invenio, quia ei scandalum fui. Quic
igitur faciam? Desperabo? Absit. Misericors est Deus, pius est
salvator meus. Solus igitur Deus refugium meum: ipse non despicies
opus suum, non repellet imaginem suam. Ad te igitur piissime Deus
tristis ac moerens venio, quoniam tu solus spes mea, tu solus
refugium meum. Quid autem dicam tibi, cum oculos levare non audeo
Verba doloris effundam, misericordiam tuam implorabo, et dicam
Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

Timor et tremor venerunt super me, et caligo cecidit super me
Miserere mei Domine, miserere mei, quoniam in te confidit anima mea
Exaudi Deus deprecationem meam, quia refugium meum es tu e
adiutor fortis. Domine, invocavi te: non confundar.

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Sopranos Josie Dixon,
Helen Garrison; Caroline Preston Bell
Alison Smart; Rachel Sutton,
Sally Terris; Margaret Wallace

*Give me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me in a willing spirit.
I shall teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall return to
You. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall exalt Your justice. O Lord, open my lips, and
my mouth shall proclaim Your praise.
For You are not pleased with sacrifices, else would I give them to
You; neither do You delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God
is a contrite heart: a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not
despise. Be favourable and gracious unto Sion, O Lord, build again
the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifice
of righteousness, oblations and burnt offerings; they shall offer
young bulls upon Your altar.*

*Unhappy I, bereft of all succour, who have offended against heaven
and earth. Whither shall I go? Where shall I turn? To whom can I
fly? Who will have pity on me? To heaven I dare not lift my eyes,
for against her I have grievously sinned: on earth I find no refuge,
for I have become an outrage to her. What then shall I do? Shall I
despair? Let it not be. God is merciful, my saviour is holy.
Therefore God alone shall be my refuge; He will not despise what He
has made; He will not reject what is made in His image. To Thee then,
most holy God, sad and sorrowing I come, since Thou art my only
hope. Thou art my only refuge. But what should I say to Thee,
since I dare not raise my eyes? I shall pour out words of sorrow, I
shall implore Thy mercy, and shall say: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Thy great mercy.*

*Fear and trembling have come upon me and darkness has fallen upon
me: have mercy, Lord, have mercy, for my soul has put her trust in
Thee. Hear my prayer, O God, for Thou art my refuge and my strong
helper. O Lord, I have called upon Thee, let me not be confounded.*

James Black; Michael Entwistle; *Altos*
Simon Godsell; Rupert Preston Bell
James Gilchrist; Finlay Lockie; Phillip Mills; Tom Salmon *Tenors*
James Durran; Frank Salmon; Gary Snapper; Simon Yates *Basses*

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