

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Owen Rees *director*

P A L E S T R I N A :

M I S S A A S S U M P T A E S T M A R I A

Mass for the Assumption c. 1590

P R O G R A M M E

Sunday 8 December, 8.15 pm

Jesus College Chapel

P R O G R A M M E

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| 1 | Motet: Assumpta est Maria | G P da Palestrina |
| 2 | Introit (chant): Gaudeamus omnes | |
| 3 | Kyrie, Missa Assumpta est Maria | Palestrina |
| 4 | Gloria, Missa Assumpta est Maria | Palestrina |
| 5 | Alleluia (chant): Assumpta est Maria | |
| 6 | Credo, Missa Assumpta est Maria | Palestrina |
| 7 | Offertory motet: Exaltata est Sancta Dei Genitrix | Cristóbal de Morales |

INTERVAL OF 10 MINUTES

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|----|---|-----------------|
| 8 | Proper preface (chant) | |
| 9 | Sanctus and Benedictus.
Missa Assumpta est Maria | Palestrina |
| 10 | Motet at the Elevation: Gaude Maria Virgo | T L de Victoria |
| 11 | Pater noster and Peace (chant) | |
| 12 | Agnus Dei, Missa Assumpta est Maria | Palestrina |
| 13 | Communion motet: Ave nobilissima creatura | Costanzo Festa |
| 14 | Dismissal (chant) | |
| 15 | Motet: Vidi speciosam | Victoria |

P R O G R A M M E N O T E S

by Owen Rees

The first half of the sixteenth century witnessed a great expansion in the number of Roman sacred institutions which maintained polyphonic choirs. In 1513 Pope Julius II provided the funds to establish in St Peter's itself a choir independent of the already famous Sistine Chapel choir. The first *maestro* of this Cappella Giulia, appointed in 1551, was Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594), one of the young Italian composers who were - over the succeeding decades - to supplant the northern musicians that until then had dominated the musical life of sacred institutions in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. Palestrina left his post at St Peter's in 1555, but - after directing the music in the other great Roman churches of St John Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore - he returned to the Cappella Giulia in 1571, and remained there until his death.

The polyphonic repertory performed by the Cappella Giulia in services at St Peter's towards the end of the sixteenth century reflected the rich diversity of compositional talent either attracted to Rome from other countries or produced by the city's own institutions during the course of that century. The most prestigious of those institutions was, of course, the Cappella Sistina, among whose singers were some of the foremost composers of sacred music of the sixteenth century. Costanzo Festa (c. 1490-1545) had entered the choir by 1517, and was still a member in 1535 when the Spaniard Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553) was elected to a singer's place. Although the service of both men ended in 1545, their music continued to feature in the choir's repertory and in that of the Cappella Giulia long after their deaths. A younger Spanish composer, Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), followed the lead of such men as Morales in seeking to make his career in Rome. By 1573 Victoria had become *maestro* at the Collegio Germanico, and he remained in Italy until 1587, taking advantage of the active music publishing industry to issue large quantities of his music.

Tonight's concert presents music by these composers in the context of a Mass for the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as it might have been heard in the basilica of St Peter's on the morning of 15 August in 1590. As the Ordinary of the Mass we perform one of the greatest settings by the then *maestro*, Palestrina, a setting based on his own six-voice motet for the Assumption - *Assumpta est Maria*. The richly poetic text of Victoria's *Vidi speciosam* is drawn from the Song of Songs, and likens the Virgin to a dove rising above the waters, to a rose and a lily. Here and in the cases of the motets by Morales and Festa, the impassioned Marian texts have called forth similarly rich and expressive music. In both these latter works an inner part sings a separate text as an ostinato; Festa uses the *Ave Maria* and Morales the words *Virgo prudentissima*.

We should like to thank the Master and Fellows of Jesus College for their kind permission to sing in the Chapel.

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR
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sopranos

Diana Baumann
Sarah Caldwell
Josie Dixon
Helen Garrison
Bernadette Nelson
Rachel Sutton
Sally Terris

altos

Toby Gee
Simon Godsill
Rupert Preston Bell
David Trendell

tenors

Paul Baumann
Meurig Bowen
Finlay Lockie
David Thomson

basses

James Durran
Damian Kerney
Frank Salmon
Gary Snapper
Paul Watson

WHAT IS OUR LIFE?

Sunday 9 February, 8.15 pm. Jesus College Chapel

Themes of mortality and transience as explored by composers of the Renaissance in sacred and secular works: Josquin, Gombert, Morales, Victoria, Lobo, Ramsey, Weelkes, Gibbons and Tomkins.

MAILING LIST

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Name: Daytime tel:

Address:

(Please delete as applicable.)

- * I have taken advantage of the 3-/4-/5-concert package.
- * I normally buy tickets for individual Cambridge Taverner Choir concerts.