



MUSIC IN THE ABBEY

Friday 7th August 7.30pm

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Director: Owen Rees

Programme

Music from the Spanish Renaissance

Tota pulchra es Maria
Sancta Maria, succurre miseris
Alma redemptoris mater
Maria Magdalene

Tiento y discurso de segundo tono
(Owen Rees, organ)

O cruz ave, spes unica
Ave Regina caelorum
Surge propebra amica mea

Francisco Guerrero (1528 - 1599)

Francisco Correa de Arauxo (c. 1576 - 1654)

Cristóbal de Morales (c. 1500 - 1553)
Francisco Guerrero
Francisco Guerrero

Interval

Music from Tudor and Jacobean England

Gloria from the *Western Wynde* Mass

O nata lux
Miserere mei
O Ionathan
Gaudemus omnes in Domino

Master Tallis' Testament
(Henry Wallace, organ)

Twentieth-Century English sacred music

A Hymn to the Virgin
Magnificat, St Paul's Service
(Henry Wallace, organ)

John Tavener (c. 1495 - 1545)
Thomas Tallis (c. 1505 - 1585)
William Byrd (1542/3 - 1623)
Thomas Weelkes (1576 - 1623)
William Byrd

Herbert Howells (1892 - 1984)

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)
Herbert Howells

The first half of tonight's concert presents music from three of the greatest composers of the Spanish Renaissance and Baroque. Morales, Guerrero, and Arauxo were all associated with Seville, a city which became one of the chief ports of Europe during the age of discoveries (in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries). Seville cathedral - of which Guerrero was chapelmaster for part of his career - acted as a model for a great many newly-founded cathedrals in the New World, and music by Sevillian composers was thus disseminated widely in Latin America; some works by Guerrero, for example, were still being re-copied and performed in the nineteenth century.

All but two of the Spanish motets included in this recital are settings of marian texts, illustrating the importance of marian feasts and devotions in Renaissance Spain. These motets range in style from simple four-voice works (*Sancta Maria, Alma redemptoris mater*, and *Ave Regina caelorum*) to the grand six-voice *Surge propebra. Maria Magdalene* is an Easter motet concerned with the discovery of the empty tomb. This work reaches a remarkable climax at the angel's words, "Surrexit, non est hic" ("He is risen; he is not here").

The English polyphonic tradition in the sixteenth century was - at least until the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 - a highly insular art, and the music of John Taverner occupies a very different sound-world from that of his near-contemporary Morales, for example. The *Western Wynde* is unusual for an English work being based on a secular melody, heard in the top voice at the very opening of the *Gloria*. The Mass setting as a whole is essentially a set of variations upon this memorable theme. William Byrd's sacred music is more directly obedient to the sense of the text than that of his English predecessors, as can be heard in the penitential *Miserere Mei* and the joyful *Gaudemus omnes*; the latter being a setting of the introit for Mass on All Saints' Day.

The modal harmonies of Britten's *A Hymn to the Virgin* evoke the music of his tudor predecessors. This brief work - scored aniphonally for choir and semi-chorus of soloists - was composed in 1930 when Britten was only seventeen. Modal harmony also provides much of the characteristic colour of Herbert Howells' music. The setting of the *Magnificat* performed tonight, written for St Paul's Cathedral, reveals the composer at his most expansive, sustaining beautifully-shaped phrases of great length.

The Cambridge Taverner Choir, founded in 1986, specialises in the Renaissance sacred music of England, Spain and Portugal, with emphasis on the exploration of lesser-known parts of the repertory and on the presentation of polyphony in an appropriate liturgical context. The choir presents a yearly series of five concerts in the chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge, and has appeared in the Cambridge Festival. A highly successful tour of Portugal in 1991 was followed by broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4, and on Portuguese National Radio. At the end of the current tour of the north of England, the choir will appear in the Cambridge Early Music Festival, and a first CD recording will be made in October.

For further information about the choir, the 1992-3 season of concerts, and the forthcoming CD recording, please contact:

Gary Snapper - 0223 840168 Diana Baumann - 0703 650641 Owen Rees - 0483 892183

Owen Rees studied music at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, attaining the degrees of MA and PhD. He has taught at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and is currently a Lecturer in Music at the University of Surrey. As a musicologist he has specialised in the music of the Renaissance in England and Portugal, applying the fruits of his research in his work with the Cambridge Taverner Choir and A Capella Portuguesa (an Oxford-based ensemble which performs Portuguese polyphony, and which is co-directed by Dr Bernadette Nelson)

The next event in the Music in the Abbey series will be an Organ Recital to be given by Simon Wright, organist of Ampleforth Abbey. This recital will take place next Friday, 14th August at 7.30 p.m. Simon Wright's programme will include works by Schmidt, Brahms, Guilman, Philip Moore, Rossi, and Demessieux.