

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Jesus College Chapel
Sunday 19 June, 8.15 p.m.



PROGRAMME

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O nata lux	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)
Gaude gloriosa Dei mater	Tallis
Spem in alium nunquam habui	Tallis

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

O Lord the maker of all things	William Mundy (c. 1530-before 1591)
Vox Patris caelestis	Mundy

* * * * *

Spem in alium: performers

choir 1

Helen Garrison, Joanna Forbes, James Gilchrist, Stephen Lawrence, Paul Watson

choir 2

Margaret Simper, Catherine Crowley, Simon Godsill, Benjamin Thompson, Daniel Pailthorpe

choir 3

Caroline Preston Bell, Julia Pyke, Nicholas Perkins, Philip Mills, Frank Salmon

choir 4

Nancy Jane Thompson, Barbara Shepherd, Rupert Preston Bell, Vijay Rangarajan, Gary Snapper

choir 5

Tanya Wicks, Bernadette Nelson, Toby Gee, Jonathan Stoughton, Simon Brown

choir 6

Sally Terris, Morag Bushel, Philip Gates, Richard Perry, Julian Rippon

choir 7

Diana Baumann, Judith Henderson, Martin Neill, Paul Baumann, Jeremy Hayter

choir 8

Josie Dixon, Rachel Godsill, Edwin Simpson, Peter Bennett, James Durran

The Cambridge Taverner Choir

director: Owen Rees

sopranos: Diana Baumann, Josie Dixon, Helen Garrison, Bernadette Nelson,

Caroline Preston Bell, Margaret Simper, Rachel Sutton, Sally Terris, Tanya Wicks

altos: Toby Gee, Simon Godsill, Martin Neill, Nicholas Perkins, Rupert Preston Bell

tenors: Paul Baumann, Stephen Lawrence, Philip Mills, Edwin Simpson

basses: James Durran, Frank Salmon, Gary Snapper, Paul Watson

We should like to thank the Master, Chaplain, and Fellows of Jesus College for their kind permission to perform in the chapel.

Among the Latin-texted works produced by English composers in the middle decades of the sixteenth century are some of the grandest musical edifices of the entire European Renaissance. The principal items heard in tonight's concert include three of these spectacular pieces: William Mundy's *Vox Patris caelestis*, Thomas's Tallis's *Gaude gloriosa Dei mater*, and - probably the most famous work of the period - Tallis's forty-voice motet *Spem in alium*.

Gaude gloriosa Dei mater and *Vox patris caelestis* represent a late stage in the development by English composers of the grand votive antiphon dedicated to Mary. The texts are extravagant songs of praise to Mary, that of *Gaude gloriosa* cast as a series of nine invocations each beginning with the word 'gaude' ('rejoice'); *Vox Patris* - an encomium from God to the Blessed Virgin as she ascends into Heaven - is in large part an extraordinarily rich trope of passages from the biblical Song of Songs. The two works share many external features, including the scoring for six voices (treble, mean, two contratenors, tenor, and bass) and the alternation of sections for a reduced number of voices and others for the full six-part choir. Both Tallis and Mundy employ the full choir to dramatic effect, taking their cue from the text at the word 'omnia/'omnes' ('all'). Both composers include a section employing the technique known as 'gimel' - where one or more parts (in both cases here the top two - trebles and means) divide temporarily into two in order to achieve a particularly ethereal scoring: Tallis does this at the beginning of the second section of his antiphon, whereas in Mundy's work it occurs towards the end at 'Veni ad me'. Both works conclude with a particularly stirring melismatic 'amen'. Finally, both composers set the text in a much more direct fashion than had been the case in earlier votive antiphons, with the voices clearly imitating one another with motives conceived with textual accentuation in mind. This trend is more pronounced, understandably, in the younger composer's work. Despite this careful approach to word-setting, the two pieces retain the tremendous melodic vigour characteristic of English music before the reformation, with wide leaps (octaves are found in both works) and syncopation.

There is some evidence, albeit anecdotal and dating from the 17th century, that the composition of *Spem in alium* was prompted by a spirit of competition. In 1567 the composer Alessandro Striggio (1535-1592) visited London, and apparently performed there his forty-part motet *Ecce beatam lucem*. According to our 17th-century anecdote, an unnamed Duke was moved to ask whether no English composer could match this achievement. Tallis's motet was - supposedly - the result, and since we are told that the first performance took place in the long gallery of Arundel House, the London home of the Early of Arundel, the unnamed Duke of the story was most likely the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Howard, an eminent patron of music who was son-in-law to Arundel.

Tallis scored his motet for eight five-voice choirs (each made up of treble, mean, contratenor, tenor, and bass), which sometimes sing as units or paired with the adjacent choir to produce antiphonal dialogues (as at 'Domine Deus') and sometimes divide into their constituent parts to build vast series of imitative entries (as at the start of the piece, where the entries move from choir 1 to choir 8). The most dramatic moments of all are the chordal entries of all forty voices after rests, at the repeated plea 'respice humilitatem nostram' which concludes the motet.

Texts

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor sæculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes precesque sumere.
Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis.
*O light begotten of light,
Jesus saviour of the ages,
in Your mercy deign to hear
the praises and prayers of the supplicants.
Thou who once put on
mortal flesh for those lost in sin,
grant that we may become
part of Thy blessed body.*

Gaude gloriosa Dei mater, virgo Maria vere honorificanda, quæ a Domino in gloria super cælos exaltata adepta es thronum.

Gaude virgo Maria, cui angelicæ turmæ dulces in cælis resonant laudes; iam enim lætaris visione Regis cui omnia serviunt.

Gaude con civis in cælis sanctorum, quæ Christum in utero illaesa portasti: igitur Dei mater digne appellaris. Gaude flos florum speciosissima, virgo iuris, forma morum, fessi cura, pes labentis, mundi lux, et peccatorum refugium.

Gaude virgo Maria, quam dignam laude celebrat ecclesia, quæ Christi doctrinis illustrata te matrem glorificat.

Gaude virgo Maria, quæ corpore et anima ad summum provecta es palacium: et, ut auxiliatrix et interventrix pro nobis miserimis peccatoribus, supplicamus.

Gaude Maria intercessorum adiutrix et damnandorum salvatrix celebranda.

Gaude santa virgo Maria, cuius prole omnes salvamur a perpetuis inferorum suppliciis et a potestate diabolica liberati.

Gaude virgo Maria, Christe benedicta mater, vena misericordiæ et gratiæ: cui supplicamus ut nobis pie clamantibus attendas, itaque tuo in nomine mereamur adesse cælorum regnum. Amen.

Rejoice, O glorious Mother of God, Virgin Mary most worthy of honour; who, raised in glory by the Lord above the heavens, hast gained Thy throne.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, whose sweet praises the angelic hosts sing out in the heavens; for now Thou rejoicest in the sight of the King to whom all things give service.

Rejoice, Thou fellow citizen with the saints on high; who barest without any hurt Christ in thy womb; wherefore most justly art Thou called the Mother of God.

Rejoice, most beautiful of flowers; firm rod of the Law, pattern of virtues, succour of the weary, foothold to those who fall, light to the world and refuge of sinners.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, whose worthy praise the church celebrates; enlightened by the teaching of Christ, she glorifies Thee as His Mother.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, who - body and soul - hast been borne up to the highest courts of heaven; to Thee we make our petition, Thou strength and advocate for us wretched sinners.

Rejoice, O Mary, help of those who pray; Thou art the means of salvation to all the damned, most highly to be praised.

Rejoice, O Holy Virgin Mary; by Thy offspring are we all saved from the everlasting punishments of hell, and have been freed from the power of the devil.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, Blessed Mother of Christ, channel of mercy and grace; give ear, we beseech Thee, to our dutiful cry, so that we may deserve, in Thy name, to come to the kingdom of heaven.

Spem in alium nunquam habui præter in te, Deus Israel, qui irasceres, et propitius eris, et omnia peccata hominum in tribulatione dimittis. Domine Deus, creator cæli et terræ, respice humilitatem nostram.

I have never put my trust in any but Thee, O God of Isrel, who will be angry and yet become gracious again, and who forgives all the sins of suffering men. O Lord God, creator of heaven and earth, look upon our humility.

Vox Patris cælestis ad sacram virginem Mariam, filii eius genitricem, in eius migratione a corpore mortali in hiis verbis prorumpens: tota pulchra es, amica mea, mihi amabilissima Annæ prolis, virgo sacratissima Maria, et macula ab incunte conceptionis tuæ instanti vel usquam non est in te. Favus distillans labia tua ex corde purissimo verba mira dulcedinis spiritualis gratia. Iam enim hiems terreni frigoris et miseria transiit; flores æternæ felicitatis et salutis mecum tibi ab æterna præparatæ olfacere et sentire apparuerunt. Vineæ florentes odorem cælestis ambrosianæ dulcedinis dederunt, et vox turturis, quæ mea tui dilectissimi amatoris sola est exoptatio te amplecti, audita est in terra nostra tali sonante gratia. Surge propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, de terra longinqua miseris plena, et veni in terram quam monstravero tibi. Veni ad me, dilectissimum amatorem tuum, præ omnibus adamata, et ponam in te thronum meum, quia concupivi speciem tuam. Veni de Libano, monte mundano quoquam altissimo humanæ contemplationis, ad montem Sion, ubi innocentes manibus et corde ascendere deberent. Veni ad me, Assuerum verum, Esther, mea nobilissima, pro populo tuo oratura mecum in æternum manere et delectare. Te omnes cæli cives summo desiderio exoptant videre. Veni cælesti gloria coronaberis. Amen.

The voice of the heavenly Father broke forth in these words to the holy Virgin Mary, mother of His Son, as she was passing from her mortal body: "Wholly fair art thou, very dear to me and most worthy of my love, Mary, offspring of Anna, and holiest of virgins, and from the very moment of thy conception no stain at all has been found in thee. Thy lips are a honeycomb, dropping from the purest of hearts words marvellous for the grace of spiritual sweetness. Now the cold and wretchedness of the winter of earthly life are past; the flowers of secure and eternal happiness with me, prepared for thee before all ages, are manifest to smell and sight. The flowering vines put forth a scent of heavenly and ambrosial sweetness; and the voice of the turtledove, which is none other than the longing that I, thy most dearly beloved lover, have to embrace thee, is heard in our land, which echoes with its beauty. Arise, hasten, my dear, my dove, my beautiful one, filled with the woes of a far country, and come into a land that I shall show thee. Come from thy mortal body, dear heart, and put on thy vesture of gold, wrought about with the diverse colours of heavenly glory. Come to me, the lover thou holdest most dear, thou whom I love above all others, and in thee I will set my throne, for I have desired thy beauty. Come from Mount Lebanon of the world, the highest peak of human contemplation, to Mount Sion, whither those of clean hands and a pure heart ought to ascend. Thou Esther, my noblest of souls, come to me, thy true Assuerus, to intercede for thy people, and to remain with me and delight me for all eternity. All the dwellers in highest heaven yearn with deep desire to see thee. Come! Thou shalt be crowned with heavenly glory." Amen.

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For further information about the choir please contact Owen Rees (0483 274119) or Helen Garrison (071 278 1590)

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