

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Owen Rees - director

EUROPE 1500



MUSIC FROM THE COURTS OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA

Jesus College Chapel, Cambridge
24th September 2000
8.15 p.m.

PROGRAMME

Gabriel angelus	anon.
Ave Maria	(opening of chant)
Missa Ave Maria: Kyrie	Francisco de Peñalosa
Ave Maria	Antonio de Ribera
Missa Ave Maria: Credo	Peñalosa
O felix Maria	Alonso de Alba
Missa Ave Maria: Sanctus	Peñalosa
Sancta mater, istud agas	Peñalosa
Missa Ave Maria: Agnus Dei	Peñalosa

INTERVAL of 10 minutes

Beatus es	Pedro de Escobar
Inter vestibulum et altare	Peñalosa
Clamabat autem mulier	Escobar
Ave vera caro Christi	Peñalosa
Gloria	anon.

The Cambridge Taverner Choir

Director: Owen Rees

Sopranos – Helen Arnold, Diana Baumann, Hester Higton, Helen Garrison, Rachel Godsill, Sally Terris

Altos – Janet Bullard, Tim Dallosso, Simon Godsill, Tom Harris

Tenors - Paul Baumann, James Eisner, David Thomson

Basses – James Durran, Frank Salmon, Gary Snapper, Paul Watson

The Cambridge Taverner Choir is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies

Our thanks to the Master & Fellows of Jesus College for their kind permission to use the chapel



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Gabriel angelus locutus est ad Mariam dicens: Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus. Spiritus Sanctus in te descendet Maria, et virtus altissimi obumbravit tibi. Ecce ancilla Domini. Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis. Sancta Dei genitrix, ora pro nobis. Sancta virgo virginum, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Amen.

The angel Gabriel spoke unto Mary, saying: Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. The Holy Spirit shall descend upon thee, Mary, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be unto me according to thy word. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us. Holy mother of God, pray for us. Holy virgin of virgins, pray for us sinners. Amen.

Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus. Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. O mater Dei, ora pro nobis. Regina cæli, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, pray for us. O mother of God, pray for us. Queen of heaven, pray for us sinners. Amen.

O felix Maria quæ, auctorem tuum ipsa concipiens, edidisti in tempore puberem quem habeas ante tempora conditorem.

O fortunate Mary, who, yourself conceiving your creator, gave birth at the due time to the child whom you bore before the ages, your creator.

Sancta Mater, istud agas: crucifixi fige plagas cordi meo valide. Tui nati vulnerati, tam dignati pro me pati, vim amoris imprime. Fac me vere tecum flere, crucifixo condolere, donec ego vixero. Iuxta crucem tecum stare, te libenter sociare in planctu desidero. Amen.

Holy mother, do this: let the pains of the crucified be imprinted on my heart. Mark me with the strength of love of thy wounded Son, so worthy to die for me. Make me truly weep with thee, and grieve with the crucified, as long as I shall live. Grant that I may stand with thee by the cross, freely sharing with thee in mourning.

Beatus es et bene tibi erit, egregie martyr Sebastiane, quia cum sanctis gaudebis, et cum angelis exsultabis in æternum.

Blessed art thou and well shall it be with thee, thou honourable martyr Sebastian, since thou shalt rejoice with the saints and exult with the angels for ever.

Inter vestibulum et altare plorabant sacerdotes, ministri Domini, dicentes: parce Domine, parce populo tuo, et ne des hereditatem tuam in opprobrium, ut non dominantur eis nationes. Da pacem Domine in diebus nostris. Amen.

Between the porch and the altar the priests were weeping, the ministers of the Lord, saying: spare, O Lord, spare Thy people, and give not your inheritance to reproach, that nations may not have domination over them. Give peace in our time, O Lord. Amen.

Clamabat autem mulier Cananea ad Dominum Jesum dicens: Domine Jesu Christe, fili David, adiuva me. Filia mea male a dæmonia vexatur. Respondens Dominus Jesus dixit: Non sum missus nisi ad oves quæ perierunt, domus Israel. At illa venit et adoravit eum dicens: Domine, adiuva me. Respondens Jesus ait illi: Mulier, magna est fides tua; fiat tibi sicut vis.

A Canaanite woman cried to the Lord Jesus, saying: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of David, help me. My daughter is sorely troubled by a demon. The Lord Jesus replied, saying: I was not sent to any except the sheep who are lost, the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped Him, saying: Lord, help me. In reply Jesus said to her: woman, great is thy faith; let it be unto you as you wish.

Ave vera caro Christi,
qui in cruce pependisti,
cuius Patri tu dixisti:
Ut quid me dereliquisti?

Salve sancta caro Dei,
per te salvi fiunt rei,
et tuum servum redemisti,
dum in cruce pependisti.

O Jesu, O pie, O dulcis fili Mariæ, miserere nobis. Amen.

*Hail true flesh of Christ,
Who hung on the Cross,
Who cried to Thy Father:
Why hast Thou forsaken me?*

*Hail sacred flesh of God;
Through Thee the accused are saved,
And Thou hast redeemed Thy servant,
While Thou hung upon the Cross.*

O Jesus, O holy one, O sweet Son of Mary, have mercy upon us. Amen.

The sacred music composed c. 1500 by musicians (predominantly Spaniards) serving at the courts of the Catholic Monarchs—King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile—is full of contrasts. There are devotional motets setting impassioned and vivid prayers to Christ and/or Mary in a musical style which is often simple and often presents the words with directness and even rhetorical force. On the other hand, there is considerable musical complexity and virtuosity within Mass settings from the same repertory. These contrasts can be heard in tonight's concert, in the first half of which we sing movements of Francisco de Peñalosa's *Missa Ave Maria* interspersed with Marian motets by Peñalosa and other composers associated with the Spanish courts. In the second half we present two motets by Peñalosa and two by his Portuguese contemporary Pedro de Escobar, and conclude with a magnificent anonymous 'Gloria' setting from this Iberian repertory.

Peñalosa (c. 1470–1528), the greatest Iberian composer of the period, was a singer in the court of King Ferdinand from 1498. He belonged to the court at a time of extraordinary political and cultural developments. The most important 'crusading' triumph of the Catholic Monarchs was the completion of the reconquest of Muslim Spain with the taking of Granada in 1492. The Monarchs encouraged humanist learning at court and elsewhere, and during their reigns the spiritual flavour and vivid devotional methods of the *devotio moderna* achieved great importance. Both of these last developments may be seen reflected in the devotional motets of the court repertory. Following Ferdinand's death in 1516, Peñalosa joined the papal chapel, but his final years were spent in Seville.

Peñalosa's *Missa Ave Maria* is based on the famous 'Ave Maria' chant: we sing the opening of this chant before the 'Kyrie' of the Mass, in which the tenors are given this part of the chant melody. The vigorous melodic shapes and often syncopated rhythms of the 'Kyrie' (heard in much of the Mass) reaches their climax with the striking falling pattern of decorative figures in the topmost line leading into the final cadence. The 'Ave Maria' text appears also in the anonymous motet *Gabriel Angelus* with which we open the concert. Iberian music manuscripts of the period are far from consistent in supplying the name of a composer, and some fine music survives anonymously, as a consequence tending to receive less attention. *Gabriel angelus*, receiving its first modern concert performance tonight, provides a good example of the Iberian motet c. 1500. The bulk of its text is Gabriel's annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and Mary's response, and ends with a litany-like series of petitions to Mary. The composer picked out two words from Gabriel's salutation—'Dominus tecum': 'The Lord is with thee'—and repeated them at several points in the work as a refrain. Exactly the same idea can be heard in Antonio de Ribera's motet *Ave Maria*: again it is the words 'Dominus tecum' that receive this emphatic treatment, and again we have a repetitive litany-like ending ('Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis...'). In both these motets changes in scoring make clear the division of the text into phrases, so that both for example have an upper-voice duet for 'et benedictus fructus ventris tui'. Such scoring-contrasts are exploited also in Peñalosa's motets, and notably in *Clamabat autem mulier* by Pedro de Escobar, in which the stages of the dialogue between Jesus and the Canaanite woman are made more vivid by variations in scoring, including here a number of telling solo phrases. Text is also emphasised in this motet repertory by bringing all the voices together in chordal writing, as in the 'Dominus tecum' refrains just mentioned and in the climactic section of Peñalosa's *Sancta Mater, istud agas*, as the petitioner asks to stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross ('iuxta crucem tecum stare, te libenter sociare'). The held chords for the name 'Jesus' which Ribera uses in *Ave Maria*—a standard device at the period—are used also (twice) in the anonymous 'Gloria' which ends the concert. In contrast, some of the duet sections in the motets performed tonight rival parts of Peñalosa's Mass in rhythmic and melodic liveliness and complexity: the central duets of Alonso de Alba's *O felix Maria*, surrounded by much more slow-moving music, provide a good example of such contrasts.

In parts of Peñalosa's *Missa Ave Maria* the music is clearly akin to that of the Spaniard's great northern contemporaries, including Josquin Desprez. Josquin is suggested most vividly in some of the long ostinato passages, as when the lowest voice part obsessively repeats a four-note rising figure setting 'in nomine' towards the end of the 'Benedictus'. The interweaving of the three equal imitating upper voices in the first 'Agnus Dei', producing a rather mesmeric effect, is likewise suggestive of the music of the northerners including Josquin. The second and final 'Agnus Dei' weaves together a two borrowed melodies: that of a northern chanson (*De tous biens plaine* by Hayne van Ghizeghem) and—entering triumphantly in the topmost voice—the 'Salve regina' plainchant. The same chant appears at the word 'Salve' in Peñalosa's motet *Ave vera caro Christi*, the text of which belongs to that large group of Iberian motet texts of the period concerned with the Passion. Escobar's *Beatus es*, in contrast, is in praise of a saint, Sebastian. Its lively first section is constructed over the appropriate chant melody in the tenors, while the final section portrays the rejoicing of 'et cum angelis exultabis in eternum' through a change to triple metre.

The **Cambridge Taverner Choir**, founded in 1986, belongs to a generation of exciting early music chamber choirs which, like The Tallis Scholars and The Sixteen, emerged from the Oxford and Cambridge choral tradition. As well as regular concert series and festival appearances in Cambridge, the choir has performed in many parts of the U.K., and undertaken highly successful tours of Portugal in 1991 and Switzerland and Italy in 1996; it has also broadcast on Radio 3, and has been featured on Radio 4. The choir has released three recordings; all have been acclaimed by the critics, and *Music from Renaissance Portugal* was short-listed for the *Gramophone* Early Music Award in 1994.

The choir specialises in the performance of sacred polyphony in illuminating thematic, liturgical and physical contexts, aiming to recreate the grandeur and excitement of the European Renaissance, and especially the Tudor age in England and the Iberian 'Golden Age'. The choir also performs baroque and contemporary works. The 1995/6 season celebrated the music of John Taverner on the 450th anniversary of his death, and included a prestigious commission from the contemporary composer, John Tavener, while the 1996/7 season explored the music of five great European cities at the turn of the seventeenth century. In 1999 the choir performed the complete motets of J.S. Bach with guest director John Butt.

Owen Rees began his academic and conducting career as Organ Scholar at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, studying with Peter le Huray and Iain Fenlon. After a period as College Lecturer in Music at St Peter's College and St Edmund Hall, Oxford, he joined the Music Department at the University of Surrey. In 1997 he returned to Oxford, where he is Fellow in Music and Organist at the Queen's College, Lecturer at Somerville College, and Lecturer in the Faculty of Music. His published studies include work on musical sources and repertoires from Coimbra (which include a number of the words performed tonight), and on the music of, for example, Francisco Guerrero and William Byrd. His work as a scholar has consistently informed his work as a performer. He has conducted at festivals in the UK, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, and the Netherlands. Choirs under his direction have released CD recordings on the Herald, Hyperion, and Unicorn Kanchana labels.

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Next concert in the series
Europe 1500

3 December 2000, 8.15 pm
ITALY

Music from the Papal Court, including
Josquin: *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*
and motets by Josquin and other composers

For further information about the choir, or to be placed on the free mailing list, please contact the Choir Administrator, Christian Rutherford, on Cambridge (01223) 352542, or leave your name and address with the stewards at the door.