

Cambridge Taverner Choir

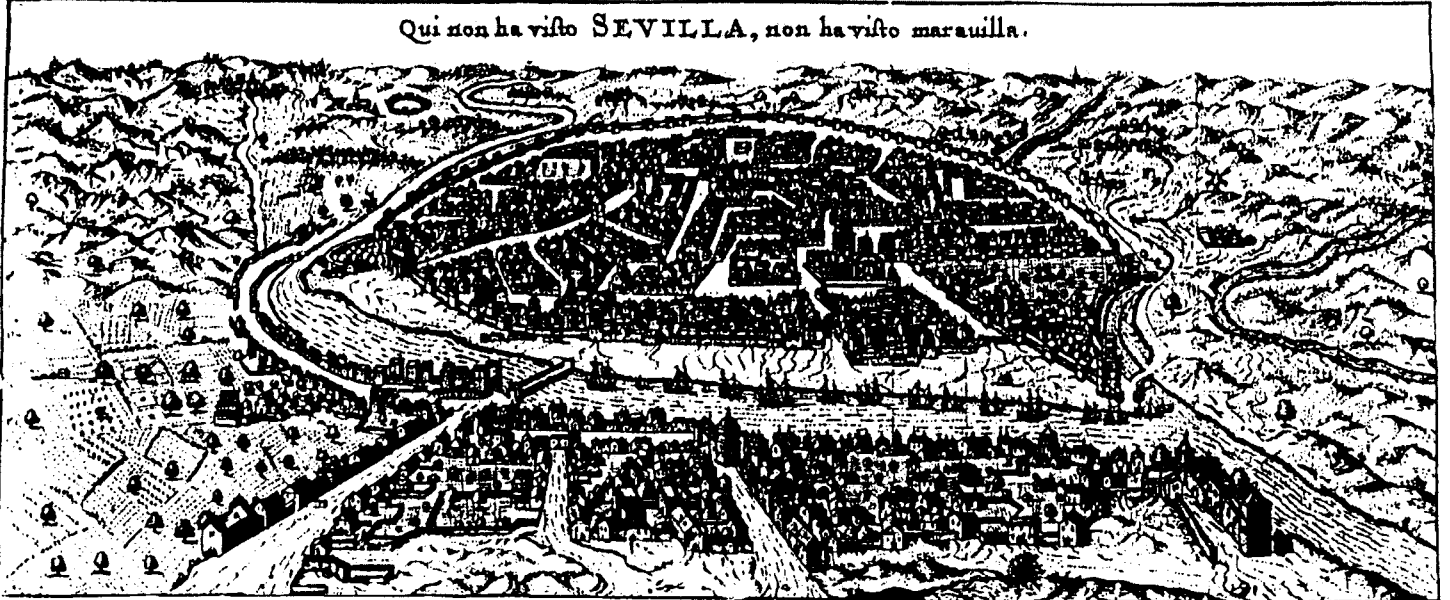
Owen Rees, director

'Sheer musicianship' (Gramophone)

'An absolute revelation' (Early Music)

Choral Music of the Renaissance 2002: Cambridge, Oxford, York

Qui non ha visto SEVILLA, non ha visto marauilla.



El Siglo de Oro

Music from the Golden Age of Spain

Music from the Courts of the Catholic Monarchs

Peñalosa: Missa Ave Maria, and motets by Peñalosa, Alba, Escobar & Ribera

The Queen's College, Oxford

Saturday 18th May, 8.15 pm

York Early Music Festival

Sunday 7th July, 7.00 pm

PROGRAMME

Gabriel angelus	anon.
Missa Ave Maria	Francisco de Peñalosa
Kyrie	
Gloria	
Ave Maria	Antonio de Ribera
Missa Ave Maria	Peñalosa
Credo	
O felix Maria	Alonso de Alba
Missa Ave Maria	Peñalosa
Sanctus	
Benedictus	
Ave decus virgineum	[Peñalosa?]
Missa Ave Maria	Peñalosa
Agnus Dei	

INTERVAL of 10 minutes

Beatus es	Pedro de Escobar
Si pie Domine	anon.
Peccavi Domine	anon.
Ave vera caro Christi	Peñalosa
Gloria	anon.

The Cambridge Taverner Choir

Director: Owen Rees

Sopranos – Diana Baumann, Josie Dixon, Hester Higton,
Helen Garrison, Caroline Preston Bell, Tanya Wicks

Altos – Rachel Elliott, Tom Harris, Rupert Preston Bell

Tenors – Paul Baumann, Tom Salmon, Edwin Simpson, 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 Provost & Fellows of The Queen's 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 benedictum fructum 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.

O decus virgineum, O dulcis domina mater, quæ omnium corda rapis ad æthera fidelium; O vita, quæ tuos cælestibus nutris alimentis, clamamus ergo in hac lacrimarum valle.

Surge, adjuva nos, regina cæli, porta paradisi, quia quotidie in acie versamur, et tecum semper virgo sit gloria nostra. Amen.

O splendour of a virgin, O sweet lady and mother, who transports the hearts of all the faithful to heaven, O life, who feeds your people with heavenly food, we cry [to you] therefore in this valley of tears.

Arise, help us, queen of heaven, gate of paradise, since daily we are engaged in battle, and with you, always virgin, may our glory be. Amen.

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.

Si pie domine defecit nobis Alphonsus rex noster, gaudium cordis nostri conversum est in luctum. Cecidit corona capitis nostri. Ergo ululate populi, plorate sacerdotes, lugete pauperes, plangite nobiles, et dicite: anima regis nostri Alphonsi requiescat in pace.

If, Holy Lord, our King Alphonsus has been lost to us, the joy of our heart is turned into weeping. The crown of our head is dead. Therefore cry out ye people, weep ye priests, mourn ye poor, lament ye nobles, and say: may the soul of our King Alphonsus rest in peace.

Peccavi Domine super numerum arenæ maris. Non sum dignus videre altitudinem cæli, quia perverti vias meas, et malum coram te feci. Precor te Domine ut transferas iniquitatem servi tui, quia stulte egi nimis, et malum coram te feci. O bone Jesu, miserere mei.

I have sinned, Lord, more than the number of the sands of the sea. I am not worthy to see the heights of heaven, for my ways are awry, and I have done ill before you. I pray you, Lord, to transform the iniquity of your servant, since I have behaved so foolishly, and have done ill before you. O good Jesus, have mercy upon me.

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 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 or Mary in a musical style which is often simple and presents the words with directness and rhetorical force. And there are Mass settings which demonstrate considerable musical complexity and virtuosity. These contrasts can be heard in tonight's concert, the first half of which concentrates on the devotion to Mary: we sing the 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 motets by Peñalosa and by his Portuguese contemporary Pedro de Escobar, and other motets preserved in Portuguese sources, and conclude with a fine anonymous 'Gloria' setting. Tonight's concert includes the first performance in modern times of the anonymous motet *Peccavi Domine*, and several other works have been specially edited for this recital.

Peñalosa (c. 1470–1528), the greatest Iberian composer of the time, was a singer in the court of King Ferdinand of Aragon 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 approach of the *devotio moderna* achieved great importance. Both of these last developments may be seen reflected in the motets of the court repertory. Following Ferdinand's death in 1516, Peñalosa joined the papal chapel, but his final years were spent in Seville, where he was a canon of the cathedral.

Peñalosa's *Missa Ave Maria* is based in part on the famous 'Ave Maria' chant: in the 'Kyrie' of the Mass, for example, the tenors sing the opening phrases of the chant melody. The vigorous melodic shapes and often syncopated rhythms of the 'Kyrie' (heard in much of the Mass) reach their climax with the striking cascade of falling figures in the top line leading to the final cadence. Later in the Mass—during the 'Sanctus'—Peñalosa inserts phrases from the other most famous Marian chant, 'Salve regina'. The second and final 'Agnus Dei' weaves together this melody—entering triumphantly in the topmost voice—and that of a French chanson, *De tous biens plaine* by Hayne van Ghizeghem. Peñalosa's Mass recalls in places the music of the most famous composer of the age, 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 upper voices in the first 'Agnus Dei', over a sustained-note statement of the 'et spes nostra salve' phrase from the 'Salve regina' chant, produces a mesmeric effect which is likewise redolent of the music of the northerners including Josquin.

The 'Ave Maria' text from which the Mass takes its title appears also in the anonymous motet *Gabriel Angelus* with which the concert opens. Iberian music manuscripts of the period often fail to supply a composer's name, and some extremely fine music survives anonymously. We present several such works tonight. *Gabriel angelus*, receiving only its second modern concert performance, provides an excellent example of the style of many Iberian motets from the time of the Catholic Monarchs. The bulk of its text consists of Gabriel's annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and Mary's response, and it ends with a litany-like series of petitions to Mary—'Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis; sancta Dei genitrix, ora pro nobis...'—each set to the same musical idea using stark chordal declamation. In the body of the motet the composer picked out two words from Gabriel's salutation—'Dominus tecum': 'The Lord is with thee'—and repeated them no fewer than four times as a refrain. Exactly the same techniques 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 emphasise the divisions in the text: both for example have an upper-voice duet for 'et benedictum fructum ventris tui'. Such

scoring-contrasts are exploited also in the beautiful Marian motet *Ave decus virgineum*, which again survives anonymously, but which Tess Knighton has argued is likely to be by Peñalosa. Once again the text-presentation is strikingly clear and vivid, with, for example, all the voices coming together in chordal declamation to emphasise 'clamamus': 'we cry [to thee]'. Chordal declamation for emphasis was also common at occurrences of the name of Jesus: Ribera does this in his *Ave Maria*, as does (twice) the composer of 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 slower-moving music, provide a good example of such contrasts.

The second half of the concert opens with a piece in honour of the martyr St Sebastian by a Portuguese composer, Pedro de Escobar, who—like the Spanish composers already mentioned—served the Spanish Catholic Monarchs as a chapel singer. *Beatus es* contrasts with the motets heard in the first half, being founded on the chant melody sung by the tenors, and maintaining full four-voice texture almost throughout. It is followed by what is surely one of the finest motets of the early sixteenth century to survive anonymously in Portuguese sources. *Si pie Domine* is a moving lament for the first king of Portugal, D. Alfonso Henriques, and was—in all likelihood—composed for the reburial of the king's body in a splendid new tomb in the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra. This ceremony, which took place on 16 July 1520, was presided over by the then king of Portugal, D. Manuel I (reigned 1495–1521), whose marriages demonstrate the close dynastic ties between the Spanish and Portuguese royal houses at this period: the king married three times, all of his brides being daughters or granddaughters of the Catholic Monarchs: Isabel (their eldest daughter), Maria (their third daughter), and Leonor (daughter of Philip the Fair and of Joana 'the Mad', the second daughter of the Catholic Monarchs).

Peccavi Domine—which receives its first modern performance tonight—is, like *Gabriel angelus*, an anonymous work which clearly belongs to the repertory associated with the courts of the Catholic Monarchs. Its penitential text ends with the prayer 'O bone Jesu, miserere mei': 'O good Jesus, have mercy upon me'.

Peñalosa's *Ave vera caro Christi* belongs to a large group of Iberian motets of the period the texts of which are concerned with the Passion. Peñalosa highlights the word 'Salve' by stating in imitation the famous four-note opening motive of the 'Salve regina' chant, which we have heard used climactically in the final 'Agnus Dei' of the *Missa Ave Maria*.

The setting of the '**Gloria**' with which we end is again preserved anonymously in a Portuguese manuscript, as is a great deal of Mass music belonging to the repertory of the Spanish monarchs' courts. The piece shares with much of that Mass repertory a tremendous rhythmic vitality achieved partly through syncopation, to be heard here for example at 'gratias agimus tibi' near the start of the movement and in the concluding triple-time 'cum sancto spiritu'.

The Cambridge Taverner Choir, founded in 1986, specialises in the performance of sacred polyphony in illuminating thematic, liturgical and physical contexts, aiming to recreate the musical grandeur and excitement of the European Renaissance, and especially the Tudor age in England and the Iberian 'Golden Age'. As well as its regular concert series in Cambridge, the choir has performed in many parts of the U.K. and the Continent, and has broadcast on Radio 3. The choir has released three recordings, of which *Music from Renaissance Portugal* was short-listed for the *Gramophone* Early Music Award. Its next recording of Portuguese music will be released in the Autumn.