

THE PROGRAMME

The Catholics

Infelix ego (prima pars) WILLIAM BYRD (c.1539-1543)

Factum est silentium RICHARD DERING (c.1580-1639)

The Inbetweeners

Christe qui lux es et dies [IV] ROBERT WHITE (c.1538-1574)

Ave maria ROBERT PARSONS (c.1535-1572)

O Lord in Thee is my trust THOMAS TALLIS (c.1505-1585)

The Truly Reformed

Hosanna to the Son of David ORLANDO GIBBONS (1583-1625)

When David heard THOMAS WEELKES (c.1575-1623)

The Reformed Continent

Lobet den Herrn J S BACH (1685-1750)

INTERVAL

The House of Windsor

Three motets CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD (1852-1924)

My spirit sang all day GERALD FINZI (1901-1956)

Dear Shepherd of thy people, hear RICHARD LLOYD (b. 1933) World Premier

The Lord's Prayer WILLIAM PETTER (1982-2016)

Steal away (from *Five Negro Spirituals*) MICHAEL TIPPET (1905-1998)

John Brown's body TRAD. ARR. RICHARD MARLOW (1938-2013)

VOCE

Voices Of Cambridge Ensemble

<i>Sopranos:</i>	Rebecca Yates, Thalia Eley, Marie-Claire Byrne, Nicola Neary, Dora O'Sullivan
<i>Altos:</i>	Nina Leeming, Kate May
<i>Tenors:</i>	Duncan Byrne, Nicholas Yates, Philip Scard
<i>Basses:</i>	Mark Holmes, Chris Moore, Philip de Grouchy, David Leeming, Nigel Cassidy
<i>Conductor:</i>	Jonathan Sampson
<i>Younger singers:</i>	Thomas Byrne, Theo Sampson, Eloise Yates, Beth Yates, Eve Yates, Harriet Downer

VOCE - Voices Of Cambridge Ensemble, has its roots in the chapel of Trinity College Cambridge, where most of the current members first met, singing together under the direction of the late Richard Marlow. After Cambridge, the group was established by its director, **Jonathan Sampson**, and one of its tenors, **Nicholas Yates**. VOCE largely comprises musicians who have chosen to pursue career paths outside of full-time music and includes both singers and instrumentalists in its ranks. Its versatility allows it to perform music from a wide spectrum of genres, from polyphony of the High Renaissance to twenty-first century choral works and close harmony. **VOCE** has performed extensively in cathedrals, churches and concert halls around the country to critical acclaim.

VOCE is directed by **Jonathan Sampson**. He was a choral scholar at Trinity while reading theology. As well as conducting VOCE and other groups, he performs regularly as a violinist. Jonathan is a family law barrister working from Oxford.

The group does not usually charge a fee or, indeed, expenses for the concerts which it gives. It is founded upon a charitable constitution and gives concerts to enable churches and other organisations to raise money for altruistic causes.

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The group is very grateful to all the members of the church and Friends Committee who have helped in organising this concert and to the Rector, The Rev. Edward Wright.

LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

Almost 500 years ago, on 31 October 1517, Martin Luther pinned his 95 *Theses* to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, sparking what would come to be known as the Protestant Reformation. His ostensible complaint was against the corrupt practice of indulgences, the Catholic Church teasing money out of the gullible and persuading them that they could buy their way out of purgatory into heaven.

Although a hard-line opponent of Luther, between 1536-1540 Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in England and took for the crown the wealth which they had accumulated from these dark arts.

But what Luther, a professor of theology, really wanted was for God to be made accessible to everyone and for worship to be more intimate, more direct, and in the vernacular, not Latin. He was a man of words and text, who believed that faith was so important that its meaning should not be withheld by the priesthood or clouded by 'dead' language. Luther's quest was to help people understand that God was with them and for them. He recognised that music was and is the language of the human spirit and introduced four hours of music each week into the school curriculum. Choirs sprang up in every town and music was at the heart of the Lutheran Reformation.

Henry VIII's urgent desire for divorce and remarriage coincided with this great European-wide movement of religious reform, but it was only after his death that Thomas Cranmer, as the advisor to the nine-year-old Edward's VI, ushered in real change and the full force of the Protestant Reformation was felt in England.

In 1549 Thomas Cranmer's new Book of Common Prayer swept away the old Latin liturgy and replaced it with prayers in English. This brand-new liturgy suddenly demanded that new music should be written for the church in English, and musicians of the Chapel Royal, such as Thomas Tallis, were called upon to demonstrate that the new Protestantism was no less splendid than the old Catholic religion.

During the reign of Mary Tudor (1553–1558) a revival of Catholic practice encouraged a return to Latin music which was, to a degree, reversed after Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558. This period has become known as 'the golden age of English church music' (although this music making was confined almost exclusively to the Chapel Royal).

But the real effects of the Reformation were not felt until after Elizabeth's death with the succession of the Stuarts (with James I taking the throne upon her death), William Laud and the eventual division of the Church of England into low church and high church, the former being much closer to Luther's original aims.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY RELIGIOUS MUSIC IN ENGLAND

The Catholics

Richard Dering was an English Catholic musician who went into exile in the Spanish Netherlands. By 1617 he was organist to the convent of English nuns in Brussels, and in the same year published his first collection of *Cantiones Sacrae*. *Factum est silentium* comes from a second collection which appeared in 1618, the full text of which is as follows:

Factum est silentium in caelo,
Dum committeret bellum draco cum Michaelae
Archangelo.
Audita est vox millia millium dicentium:
Salus, honor et virtus
omnipotenti Deo.
Alleluia.

There was silence in heaven,
When the dragon fought with the Archangel
Michael.
The voice of a thousand thousand was heard
saying: Salvation, honour and power be to
almighty God.
Alleluia

Infelix ego is the crowning glory of **William Byrd's** achievement as a composer of spiritual words and one of the greatest artistic statements of the sixteenth century. The text is a meditation on Psalm 50 written by the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498). This remarkable man, not unlike the later Luther, successfully led a campaign in Florence against the corrupt Medici family. With his powerful preaching he roused the townsfolk in religious zeal, cast out the Medici and set up a devastatingly rigorous Christian regime. Inevitably the fickle populace eventually grew tired of Savonarola's severe piety and welcomed the Medici back; to satisfy their wounded pride, the family arranged for Savonarola to be tried for heresy (rather than treason) and then executed by fire. This remarkable text, taking the form of a number of rhetorical statements and questions, shows the whole gamut of emotion from a soul in torment, guilt, fear, embarrassment, anger, but crucially the gift of release when Christ's mercy is accepted. The motet is in three parts, with only the first part being performed this evening (due to time constraints).

The Inbetweeners

While Dering and Byrd's lifelong commitment to the Catholic faith is well documented, little is known for certain about the religious convictions of White, Tallis and Parsons. The debate continues as to

whether they favoured Latin texts because they were writing for institutions where some of these texts were still permitted, because they retained loyalty to the Catholic faith, alternatively that they had in mind domestic or devotional music-making, or simply because they had an enduring affection for the old ways.

But Elizabeth I was no extreme Protestant, indeed more conservative than many of her bishops, keeping a crucifix in her chapel and evidently valuing ceremonial worship. Famously quoted as having no desire to 'make windows into men's souls', she was also a lover of music, and tolerated amongst her Chapel Royal musicians at least one whose non-conforming religious convictions must have been well-known: William Byrd.

Although Parsons and White were born of near enough the same generation as Byrd (Parsons c.1535, White c.1538, Byrd c.1539), we tend to think of them as belonging to a rather earlier period, because their working lives came to an end 50-odd years before Byrd's. Both of them met untimely deaths: Parsons drowned in the River Trent in 1572 and White died (with the rest of his family) as a result of an outbreak of plague in 1574. Parsons's place in the Chapel Royal was taken by Byrd, who had previously been at Lincoln Cathedral, while Robert White was appointed Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey in 1569; before that he was employed at Trinity College, Cambridge and then Ely Cathedral.

Robert White's liturgical music falls into two main groups: those pieces that could have been used in Sarum services and devotions under Mary, and those (psalm-motets and Lamentations) that were probably written in Elizabeth's reign. The Compline hymn *Christe qui lux es et dies* (O Christ, who art the Light and Day) is the Compline hymn for the first Sunday of Lent. The text is full of the imagery of light and darkness and it seems to have held special appeal for White, who made four separate settings of it.

Christe qui lux es et dies,
noctis tenebras detegis,
lucisque lumen crederis,
lumen beatum praedicans.

O Christ, who art the Light and Day,
Thou drivest darksome night away,
We know thee as the Light of light,
Illuminating mortal sight.

Precamur, Sancte Domine,
defende nos in hac nocte,
sit nobis in te requies,
quietam noctem tribue.

All holy Lord, we pray to thee,
Keep us tonight from danger free,
Grant us, dear Lord, in thee to rest,
So be our sleep in quiet blessed.

Ne gravis somnus irruat,
nec hostis nos surripiat,
nec caro illi consentiens,
nos tibi reos statuat.

Let not the tempter round us creep,
With thoughts of evil while we sleep,
Nor with his wiles the flesh allure,
And make us in thy sight impure.

Oculi somnum capiant,
cor ad te semper vigilet,
dextera tua protegat
famulos qui te diligunt.

And while the eyes soft slumber take,
Still be the heart to thee awake,
Be thy right hand upheld above
Thy servants resting in thy love.

Defensor noster aspice,
insidiantes reprime,
guberna tuos famulos,

Yea, our Defender, be thou nigh,
To bid the powers of darkness fly,
Keep us from sin, and guide for good,

quos sanguine mercatus es.

Thy servants purchased by thy blood.

Memento nostri, Domine,
in gravi isto corpore,
qui es defensor animae,
adesto nobis Domine.

Remember us, dear Lord, we pray,
While in this mortal flesh we stay,
'Tis thou who dost the soul defend,
Be present with us to the end.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
eiusque soli Filio,
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
et nunc et in perpetuum.
Amen.

Blest Three in One and One in Three,
Almighty God, we pray to thee,
That thou now vouchsafe to bless
Our fast with fruits of righteousness.
Amen.

One or more of these settings may date from his years at Trinity College, Cambridge, during the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-58), although the text was still being issued with royal authority as late as 1564, suggesting that this prayer for peaceful rest continued to be valued in Elizabethan times for private devotion, even if not official liturgy.

Robert Parson's *Ave maria* has become Parsons' most famous and well-loved motet since it was included in the *Oxford Book of Tudor Anthems* in 1978. But settings of the *Ave Maria* were not frequent in England; even William Byrd only set them as required by the liturgy in his two books of *Gradualia* (1605 and 1607), rather than as stand-alone pieces. This is a magical setting with a beautiful 'Amen' coda.

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui.
Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
Amen.*

Thomas Tallis was adept in writing for both the Catholic and Protestant liturgies. Born a Catholic, he managed to survive - apparently without being persecuted - as a member of the "Old Faith," while becoming the chief composer for the new Church of England. For the Catholic Church he set Latin texts to music in the form of vocal polyphony; for the new Anglican Church he provided clear chordal settings for English texts, many of which are still used by church choirs today with *O Lord in Thee is my trust* perhaps being the best-known example.

The truly Reformed

King James I appointed **Orlando Gibbons** a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where he served as an organist from at least 1615 until his death in 1625. In 1623 he became senior organist at the Chapel Royal. He also held positions as keyboard player in the privy chamber of the court of Prince Charles (later King Charles I), and organist at Westminster Abbey. He was among the first major English choral composers schooled entirely in the Protestant universe, and his highly polished English anthems (of which *Hosanna to the son of David* is but one example) are among the finest in the repertory. It is a vivid and resplendent anthem for double choir (though with a single bass part, used to especially telling effect near the end); it could well have been written to grace a royal or other ceremonial occasion.

We don't know for certain when **Thomas Weelkes** composed *When David heard* but it is likely to have been written as part of the national outpouring of grief following the premature death in 1612 of the

heir to the throne Prince Henry, son of James I. It is regarded by many as, perhaps, the most poignant and emotional of all Tudor anthems.

The Reformed Continent

Although this evening's programme is devoted to the effects of the Lutheran Reformation on English church music, it would be an outrage not to include a piece by **J S Bach**: the embodiment of the Lutheran message. *Lobet den Herrn*, a setting of part of Psalm 117, is the shortest of his six motets and the only one scored for four voices.

Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,
und preiset ihn, alle Völker!
Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit
waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.
Alleluja!

Praise the Lord, all nations,
and praise Him, all peoples!
For His grace and truth
rules over us for eternity.
Alleluja!

The House of Windsor

The second half of the concert is a small selection of pieces written in the 19th, 20th & 21st centuries.

Of all **Stanford's** anthems and motets, the *Three Motets*, Op 38, are the most regularly sung. Though published by Boosey in 1905, they were composed at a much earlier date. We know that *Justorum animae* was sung in Trinity Chapel on at least two occasions (24 February 1888 and 24 February 1892) and that the motets were written as anthems to be sung in the Hall of Trinity College. They are also a good example of a well-known English choral composer returning to Latin for his text, something which would have appealed to the then recent high church, Oxford Movement.

My spirit sang all day is the third movement of **Gerald Finzi's** *Seven Poems of Robert Bridges*. He wrote it around the time of his marriage to his wife Joyce (Joy) and is as Matthew Oltman put it "an ecstatic declaration of the joy wrought by love".

My spirit sang all day
O my joy.
Nothing my tongue could say,
Only My joy!
My heart an echo caught
O my joy
And spake,
Tell me thy thought,
Hide not thy joy.
My eyes gan peer around,
O my joy
What beauty hast thou found?
Shew us thy joy.

My jealous ears grew whist;
O my joy
Music from heaven is't,
Sent for our joy?
She also came and heard;
O my joy,
What, said she, is this word?
What is thy joy?
And I replied,
O see, O my joy,
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee:
Thou art my joy.

The next piece in the programme *Dear Shepherd of thy people, hear* is a world premiere, written by the well-known English choral composer **Richard Lloyd**. He was the Organist and Master of the Choristers of Hereford and then Durham Cathedral before becoming deputy headmaster of Salisbury Cathedral School. Richard has composed more than 500 pieces and in 2010 he received a Fellowship (FRSCM) of the Royal School of Church Music. We are very grateful to him for allowing us to give the premier of this work this evening and to Christopher Moore (one of VOCE's basses) for arranging it. Christopher sang under Richard as a treble in the 1960s and the dedication are the start of the piece reads: "Written for a 50th anniversary reunion of Choristers who sang with R.H.L. in Hereford Cathedral Choir in the 1960s".

No concert celebrating words in music would be complete without a version of The Lord's Prayer. Until his untimely death last year at the age of 34, **William Petter** was a rising star amongst English religious composers and well-known to some of the members of VOCE. His *Lord's Prayer* can be found on a CD of his music recently been released (and which can be purchased from Amazon).

The concert nears to an end with **Michael Tippett's** iconic *Steal away*. It comes from his secular oratorio *A child of our time*. But what is less well-known is that Tippett also wrote the libretto, including the lyrics of the spirituals (i.e. not only his music but his words as well), that the oratorio uses a three-part format based on Handel's *Messiah* and that it is structured in the manner of Bach's Passions, the spirituals carrying out the role allocated by Bach to chorales.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus,
Steal away, steal away home;
I han't got long to stay here.

My Lord, he calls me, he calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul;
I han't got long to stay here.

Green trees a-bending, poor sinner stands a-trembling,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul;
I han't got long to stay here.

The concert ends with an arrangement by the late **Richard Marlow** of the traditional American, Civil War marching song, *John Brown's body*. Many of the group sang with under Richard while at Trinity, often after a little too much college port in the minstrels' gallery in Hall after dinner.

William Byrd



“Although the heathen poets did Apollo famous praise,
As one who for his music sweet no peer had in his days.”

Text from a secular partsong by Byrd