

CONCERTS
59

The University of California, Davis
The Department of Music presents

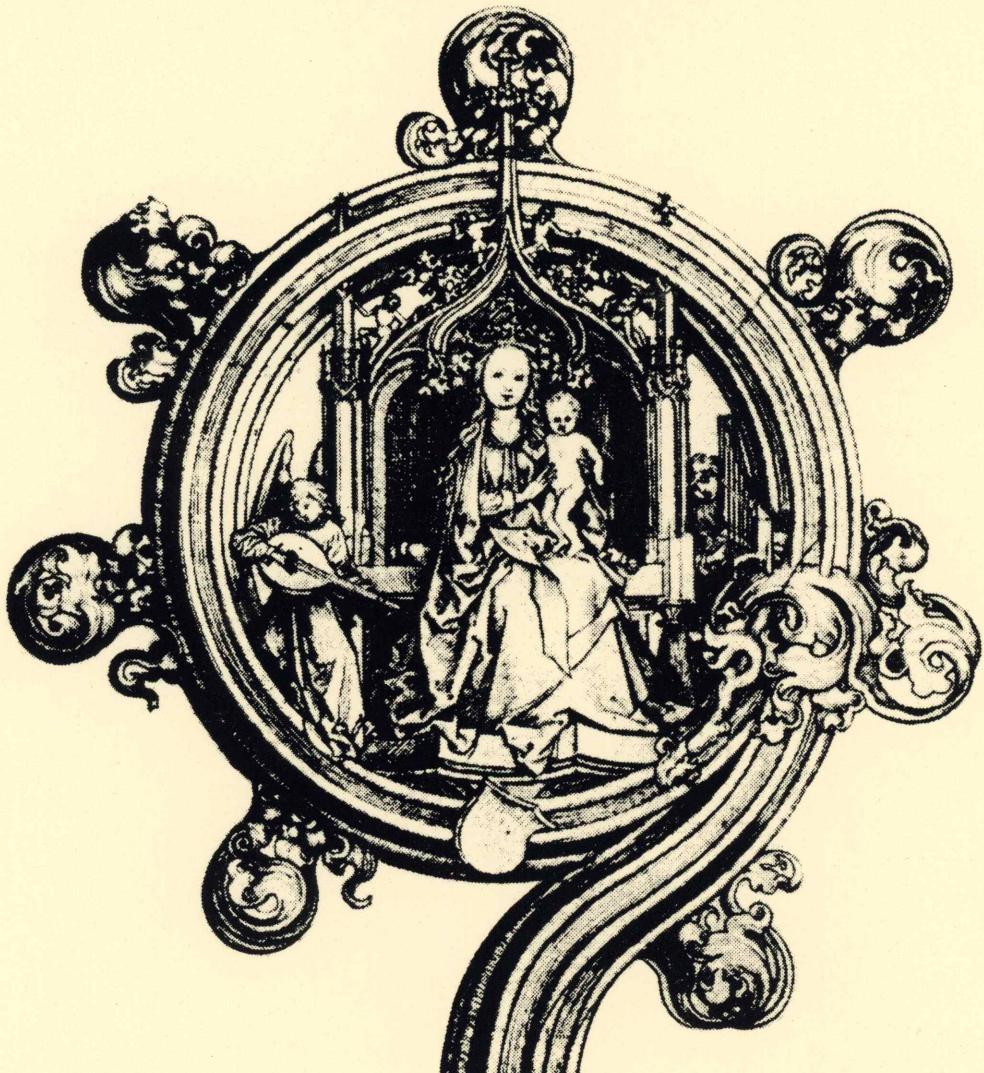
The Early Music Ensemble

David Nutter, *director*

John Taverner

(1490-1545)

MISSA GLORIA TIBI TRINITAS



FRIDAY, 8 JUNE 1990
8:00 PM
ADMISSION FREE

ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HAWTHORN LANE
DAVIS

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(1490-1545)

MISSA GLORIA TIBI TRINITAS

Gloria tibi Trinitas aequalis, una Deitas, et ante omnia saecula, et nunc, et in perpetuum.
Glory be to Thee, co-equal Trinity, only God since before the world began, and now, and for evermore.

Program

Mater Christi

John Taverner

GLORIA

In Nomine
In Nomine
In Nomine

William Byrd (1543-1623)
John Bull (1562-1628)
Richard Alwood (fl. 16th century)

CREDO

In Nomine
In Nomine
In Nomine

Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)
John Bull
Thomas Tomkins

SANCTUS

AGNUS DEI

FRIDAY, 8 JUNE 1990
8:00 PM

ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HAWTHORN LANE

The Early Music Ensemble

Treble

Haleh Abghari, Jennifer Moffitt, Helen Nutter

Mean

Carole Hom, Mary Kramer, Pam Lindquist, Heather Paulsen, Melissa Rossi, Rebecca Valentine

Countertenor I

Becky Littman, Andrew Merit, Brook Ostrom, Tom Phinney

Countertenor II

Darlene Franz, Stephanie Holm, Nick Moore, Keith Woeste, Vicky Woeste

Tenor

Hunter Brown, Lee Riggs, Neil Willits

Bass

Tom Kaiser, Don Meyer, Tony Pollock

Recorder ensemble

Darlene Franz, Robin Houston, E. J. Koford, Corey Thompson, Fred Weyman

Dona Lee Brandon, organ

*The Department of Music would like to thank the Elizabeth Rudisill Homann fund
for its financial support of this concert.*

Program note

John Taverner was born about 1495 in Lincolnshire, but the first reference to him is in 1525 when he was a clerk-fellow at Tattershall Collegiate Church, Lincolnshire. In 1526 he accepted the post of *Informator Choristarum* at Wolsey's newly-founded Cardinal College (now Christ Church), Oxford, presiding over a choir of sixteen choristers and twelve clerks skilled in polyphony. In 1528 Taverner became involved in the underground activities of the Lutherans at Cardinal College, and was arrested, but quickly released because he was "but a musician." Taverner left Cardinal College in 1530, possibly because the College's fortunes were already declining as a result of Wolsey's recent disgrace. In the late 1530s he acted as an agent of Thomas Cromwell, principally in the suppression of the Boston friaries. Taverner ended his life as a well-to-do citizen and small landowner in Boston, serving as one of the town's twelve aldermen. He died in October 1545, leaving a widow, Rose, and two daughters.

The sumptuous "festal" Mass *Gloria tibi Trinitas* is named after its cantus firmus, the first antiphon at first Vespers of Trinity Sunday in the Sarum (Salisbury) rite. Trinity Sunday was not only a major Feast, but also the Patronal Festival of Tattershall Collegiate Church and Cardinal College, Oxford. It seems particularly likely that Taverner wrote *Gloria tibi Trinitas* at Cardinal College for Trinity Sunday in 1527, 1528 or 1529.

Gloria tibi Trinitas is one of Taverner's greatest compositions. In the 16th century the great popularity of the four-voice "in nomine Domini" section of the Benedictus portion of the Sanctus initiated the long tradition of the English "In Nomine," instrumental arrangements of the same "Gloria tibi Trinitas" plainsong. This extract seems to have become detached from the main work and circulated as a separate movement. The In Nomine was the most conspicuous single form in the early development of English consort music, over 150 examples surviving by some 58 composers from Taverner to Purcell. A sampling of these for ensemble and for organ appear on tonight's program, interspersed between the movements of the Mass.

Most of Taverner's music is grounded in the English florid style established in the late 15th century and represented in the Eton choirbook. In this tradition the various voice-parts enjoy an extremely high degree of rhythmic and melodic independence, with imitation occurring infrequently and chordal writing almost non-existent. The individual line is often very complex rhythmically, and its accentual pattern is rarely tied at all to the underlying metrical structure. The alternation of sections for full choir and small groups is the most obvious method of formal articulation. Very long phrases on single syllables, even unstressed ones, are a feature of most works; and even in syllabic passages the rhythmic complexity makes it difficult to hear the words distinctly. In addition there is scarcely any sign of a deliberate "expressive" response: music was a reflection of divine order, an aid to devotion, and part of the church's ceremonial.

Taverner's music is informed by these same traditions while showing a limited easing of the rhythmic complexity of the individual lines, and a greater use of short figures often triadic in shape treated imitatively. He also makes use of bold melodic sequences to shape an individual line and to build a powerful drive towards the cadence. The mass is unified by the recurrence of similar music at the outset of each movement (as is usual with English masses of this period, there is no polyphonic setting of the Kyrie as it would have been sung to troped chant).

Scored for six-part choir with high trebles characteristic of English music of this period, the mass is a masterpiece of finely balanced construction. The *cantus firmus* is stated three times in each movement in the Mean part in progressive rhythmic diminution. This pattern is however interrupted in the Agnus where a freely composed section is substituted for the expected second repetition. The many subsections for reduced choir (2-5 parts) make use of various voice combinations that rarely repeat and never within any given movement. The music is pan-consonant though richly ornate. The individual voices continually cross one another creating intricate arching patterns from which composite melodic lines spring like gothic tracery.

A quite different aesthetic informs Taverner's setting of the votive antiphon *Mater Christi*. Here the influence of Continental models - Josquin and his contemporaries - is clearly discernable in a closer adherence to the text and its accentual patterns, the use of voice pairings, chordal part-writing, and fermata-marked block chords. The text is a prayer to Jesus for grace through receiving Holy Communion, preceded by a short Marian invocation. It is known only from Taverner's setting:

Mater Christi

Mater Christi sanctissima Virgo Sacrata Maria, tuis orationibus benignum redde filium, unica spes nostra Maria, nam precibus nitentes tuis rogare audemus filium. Ergo Fili, decus Patris, Jesu, fons fecundissime, a quo vivae fluunt aquae rigantes fida pectora, O Jesu, vitalis cibus, te pure manducantibus, salutari potu et cibo, pavisti nostra corpora. Tua pasce animam gratia, tibi consecratos Spiritu fove munere. Quin et nostras, Jesu bone, mentes illustra gratia, et nos pie fac vivere ut dulci ambrosio tuo vescamus in palacio. Amen.

Most holy Mother of Christ, blessed Virgin Mary, through your prayers make your Son look with kindness upon us. Mary, our only hope, with boldness we make our petition to your Son, relying on your prayers. Therefore, O Son, the Father's glory, Jesus, plenteous fountain, from which flows the waters of life, refreshing the hearts of the faithful, fill our bodies with life-giving food that, by feeding on you in purity, we may be saved. Nourish our souls with your grace, guard us, who are consecrated to you by the Spirit, with your grace, and grant us to live in holy life that we may feast on the sweet food of heaven in your palace. Amen.



tempus - ordo - numerus - mensura