

125
Nov 2010

The Early Music Ensemble

David Nutter, director

with

Faire Violls

Marie Dalby, Julie Jeffreys, Rebekah Ahrendt, David Morris

English Cathedral music by Taverner, Ludford, and Tallis
consort music by William Byrd

Program

*If ye love me
O nata lux
Salvator mundi
O sacrum convivium*

Thomas Tallis
(ca. 1505–85)

Pavan and Galliard in A Minor
In Nomine No. 2
Prelude and Voluntary

William Byrd
(1543–1623)

Ave Maria, ancilla trinitatis

Nicholas Ludford
(ca. 1485–1557)

PAUSE

Fantasia No. 1
In Nomine No. 1
Pavan and Galliard in B flat

Byrd

Gloria tibi Trinitas (first antiphon at Vespers of Trinity Sunday)

In trouble and adversity

Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas
Sanctus
Agnus Dei

John Taverner
(ca. 1490–1545)

Sunday, 21 November 2010, 3pm
St Martin's Episcopal Church

UCDAVIS
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

THE EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass	Faire Violls
Alice Del Simone	Jacki Amos	Michael Accinno	Leonidas Constable	Treble, Tenor
Britney Haapanen	Charlsie Berg	Jared Cacho	Dominick Di Carlo	and Bass Viols
Carole Hom	Amarpreet Everest	Joe Espena	Erich Drossel	Marie Dalby
Erica Nurse	Leslie Gilhooly	Tucker Fischer	Ron Holmgren	Julie Jeffreys
Helen Nutter	Hilary Hecht	Tom Hill	Lucas Rasweiler-Richter	Rebekah Ahrendt
	Deepti Menon	Erik Moroney	Neil Willits	David Morris
	Sara Ruiz	Brook Ostrom	Matt Zavod	
		Dan Phillips	Geoff Zovickian	

NOTES

Tallis (ca. 1505–85)

In 1543 Tallis was appointed organist and Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where he served Henry VIII, Edward VI (1547–53), Queen Mary (1553–58), and Queen Elizabeth (1558 until Tallis died in 1585). Throughout his service to successive monarchs as organist and composer, Tallis avoided the religious controversies that raged around him, though, like William Byrd, he stayed an unreformed Roman Catholic while composing sacred music in English to accommodate the Anglican rite (“If ye love me”). Tallis and Byrd were colleagues in the Chapel Royal, and in 1575 Queen Elizabeth granted them a patent for the printing and marketing of part-music and lined music paper, a trade with only a very limited history in England up to that time. They issued the famous *Cantiones, quae ab argomento sacrae vocantur*, comprising Latin motets for five to eight voices by both composers, and dedicated it with much ceremony to the queen. There are seventeen motets each by Tallis and Byrd, one for each year of the queen’s reign. Three motets from this collection, *Salvator mundi*, *O nata lux*, and *O sacrum convivium*, contrast markedly to the florid polyphony of the previous generation in their use of sharply profiled word-generated rhythmic and melodic motifs, chordal (homophonic) writing, and harmonic audacity (in particular Tallis’s well-known fondness for “false relations,” the simultaneous sounding of, for example, F natural and F sharp in different voices).

These means, as frets upon an instrument,
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.

—William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*

In these lines Shakespeare plays upon the notion, from Renaissance anatomy, that the heart was sustained and braced by a network of tendons and nerves. As “strings” they were sensible to the airy motions of sound and would vibrate sympathetically. Because the heart was considered the seat of all feeling, music had the power to transport the listener physically and literally to “tune” the soul. References to viol consorts as a symbol of properly functioning society abound, for if even one string is out of tune, or one player enters at the wrong time, the entire consort can be thrown off. Such is the meaning behind a line from Shakespeare’s *Pericles*, from which “Faire Violls” draws its name:

You are a faire Violl, and your sense, the stringes;
Who finger’d to make man his lawfull musicke,
Would draw Heaven downe, and all the Gods to harken:
But being played upon before your time,
Hell onely daunceth at so harsh a chime.

Byrd’s music for viol consort is cast in a variety of forms. The fantasia is a contrapuntal work exploiting imitative motifs; the Pavan and Galliard, as paired stylized dances, contrast the duple meter of the pavan, usually with three strains or sections, and its complementary galliard, a triple-meter version of the pavan. The In Nomine settings use the *cantus firmus* from Taverner’s Mass, *Gloria tibi Trinitas*, more of which below.

Ludford (ca. 1485–1557)

Little is known of Nicholas Ludford’s life. A document places him in London in 1521, but his professional life seems to have been spent as a member of the Royal Free Chapel of St. Stephen’s, Westminster, a college of secular canons adjoining the Royal Palace of Westminster. In the Dissolution Certificate for St. Stephen’s (1547) he was named as verger and awarded a pension. He may have ceased composing altogether following Henry VIII’s Act of Supremacy (1534). Only three performable motets by Ludford survive; all

NOTES

of them are for five voices and all of them missing the second tenor part (here reconstructed by David Skinner). The text of *Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis* is comprised of a series of salutations addressed to the Virgin Mary, each ending with a superlative, and concluding with a prose prayer. Ludford varies the scoring, exploiting successive voice combinations that intertwine, then unfold, blossoming, as it were, into the full sections.

Taverner (ca. 1490–1545)

John Taverner was born about 1490 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. Taverner ended his life as a well-to-do citizen and small landowner in Boston (Lincolnshire), 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 sixteenth 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 with over 150 examples surviving by some 58 composers from Taverner to Purcell. *In trouble and adversity* is an instrumental variant by Taverner of his own *In Nomine*, to which words have been added by John Coustun, a minor Tudor composer, and published in John Day's *Mornynge and Evenyng Prayer and Communion* of 1565.

Most of Taverner's music is grounded in the English florid style established in the late fifteenth century. In this tradition the various voice-parts enjoy an extremely high degree of rhythmic and melodic independence. 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. 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 toward the cadence. The mass is unified by the recurrence of similar music at the outset of each movement.

Scored for six-part choir (SATTBB) 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 (alto) 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 (two to five 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.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

If ye love me

If ye love me, keep my commandments,
and I will pray the Father,
and he shall give you another Comforter,
that he may bide with you forever,
e'en the spirit of truth.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

O nata lux

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
dignare clemens supplicum
laudes precesque sumere,
qui carne quondam contegi
dignatus es pro perditis,
nos membra confer effici
tui beati corporis.

text: Hymn at Lauds, The Transfiguration

Salvator mundi

Salvator mundi salva nos,
qui per crucem et sanguinem redemisti nos,
auxiliare nobis te deprecamus Deus noster

text: Matins Antiphon, The Exaltation of the Cross

O sacrum convivium

O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur
recolitur memoria passionis ejus,
mens impletur gratia,
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.

text: Magnificat antiphon, Second Vespers, Corpus Christi

Ave Maria, ancilla trinitatis

Ave Maria, ancilla trinitatis humilia.
Ave Maria, preelecta Dei filia sublimissima.
Ave Maria, sponsa spiritus sancti amabilissima.
Ave Maria, mater Domini nostri Iesu Christi dignissima.
Ave Maria, soror angelorum pulcherissima.
Ave Maria, promissio prophetarum desideratissima.
Ave Maria, regina patriarcharum gloriosissima.
Ave Maria, magistra evangelistarum veneratissima.
Ave Maria, doctrix apostolorum sapientissima.
Ave Maria, confortatrix martirum validissima.
Ave Maria, fons et plenitudo confessorum suavissima.
Ave Maria, honor et festivitas virginum iocundissima.
Ave Maria, consolatrix vivorum et mortuorum promptissima.

Nobiscum sis in omnibus temptationibus tribulationibus
necessitatibus angustiis et infirmitatibus nostris.
Et in hora mortis nostre suscipe animas nostras
et offer illas dulcissimo filio tuo Iesu.
Et impetra nobis omnium peccatorum nostrorum
veniam et celestis patrie gloriam. Amen.

In trouble and adversity

In trouble and adversity, the Lord will hear thee still,
The majesty of Jacob's God will thee defend from ill,
And send thee from his holy place his help at ev'ry need,
and so in Sion stablish thee, and make thee strong indeed.

—metrical setting from Psalm 20

SANCTUS

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
with loving kindness deign to receive
suppliant praise and prayer.
Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh
for the sake of the lost,
grant us to be members
of thy blessed body.

O Saviour of the world, who by thy
Cross and Blood hast redeemed us,
help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord our God.

O sacred banquet, wherein Christ is received,
the memory of his passion is renewed,
the soul with grace is filled,
and a pledge of future glory is bestowed.

Hail Mary, most humble handmaid of the Trinity.
Hail Mary, most exalted chosen daughter of God the Father.
Hail Mary, most lovely bride of the Holy Ghost.
Hail Mary, most worthy mother of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Hail Mary, most beauteous sister of the angels.
Hail Mary, most longed-for promise of the prophets.
Hail Mary, most glorious queen of patriarchs.
Hail Mary, most venerated teacher of evangelists.
Hail Mary, most wise teacher of the apostles.
Hail Mary, most mighty comforter of martyrs.
Hail Mary, most sweet source and fulfillment of confessors.
Hail Mary, most pleasing grace and celebration of virgins.
Hail Mary, most ready comfort of the living and the dead.

Be with us in all our times of trial and tribulation,
of need, anguish and sickness. And in the hour of
our death, receive our souls and offer them to your
most loving son Jesus.
And ask on our behalf pardon for all our sins
and the glory of a heavenly home. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are filled with Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of
the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of
the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of
the world, grant us peace.