WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 11 November 2026
7.30pm

Discord to Harmony

Renaissance music of war and peace

Stile Antico

Helen Ashby soprano
Kate Ashby soprano
Rebecca Hickey soprano
Emma Ashby alto
Cara Curran alto
Rosie Parker alto
Andrew Griffiths tenor
Oscar Golden-Lee tenor
Benedict Hymas tenor
James Arthur bass
Nathan Harrison bass
Gareth Thomas bass

Anon — L'homme armé

Our strength and shield

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) — Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (1607)
Robert Parsons (c.1535-1571) — Deliver me from mine enemies (1641)
Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656) — O God, the proud are risen against me (pub. 1668)

To arms!

Richard Dering (c.1580-1630) — Factum est silentium (pub. 1618)
Clément Janequin (c.1485-1558) — La guerre (pub. 1528)

How are the mighty fallen

Bernardino de Ribera (1520-c.1571-2) — Rex autem David (pub. c.1275)
Guillaume Du Fay (1397-1474) — Lamentatio sanctae matris ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae ('O tres piteulx') (c.1454-57)
Robert Ramsey (c.1595-1644) — How are the mighty fallen

Interval

The Spoils of War

Anon — The Agincourt Carol (early 15th C.)
Fernando de las Infantas (1534-c.1610) — Congregati sunt inimici nostri (pub. 1579)
Sulpitia Cesis (b.fl.1619) — Cantemus Domino (pub. 1619)

Peace and Diplomacy

Loyset Compère (c.1445-1518) — Quis numerare queat (pub. 1502)
Quis numerare queat • Audivit ipse • Fundant preces
Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) — Verleih uns Frieden genädiglich (pub. 1648)
Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553) — Jubilate Deo omnis terra (1538)

The Peace of Heaven

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) — Agnus Dei from *Missa pro victoria* (pub. 1600)
Cipriano de Rore (c.1515-1565) — Da pacem (1595)
Tomás Luis de Victoria — Laetatus sum (pub. 1583)

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For most of us war is mercifully remote, but in Renaissance Europe things could hardly have been more different. According to Sir George Clark, 'during the whole course of the seventeenth century there were only seven complete calendar years in which there was no war between European states' – and so when composers wrote music touching on themes of war and peace, they would often have been able to draw on their own experiences, or those of people close to them.

Warfare and religion were inextricably linked. During the Middle Ages, the Church had developed a doctrine of 'holy war' (*sanctum bellum*) to justify the violence of the Crusades. Similar ideas underpinned the Spanish *Reconquista*, completed with the fall of Granada in 1492, and the ongoing struggle against the Ottoman Turks. The wildly popular Burgundian song *L'homme armé* may have been composed in response to the 1453 fall of Constantinople, representing the end of the Christian Byzantine Empire.

Yet most often war pitted Christians against Christians. The Reformation saw both Protestants and Catholics enlisting God to their cause, culminating in the horrendous Thirty Years War (1618-48), during which the population of the Holy Roman Empire dropped by a full third. Martin Luther's famous hymn *Ein feste Burg* is full of military imagery, describing God as 'our shield and weapon' against the Devil; we perform it in a 1607 elaboration by **Hans Leo Hassler**. **Robert Parsons**'s *Deliver me from mine enemies* is an intense plea for God's help, crowned by a strict canon between the highest voices. A similar sentiment underlies **Thomas Tomkins**'s eight-voiced *O God, the proud are risen against me*. In later life Tomkins experienced the English Civil War at first hand: his beloved Worcester Cathedral was desecrated and his own house badly damaged by cannon fire.

Two vivid depictions of conflict follow – one celestial, and one flesh-and-blood. **Richard Dering**'s *Factum est silentium* thrillingly recounts a scene from Revelation in which the Archangel Michael fights the dragon-Devil. **Clément Janequin**'s celebrated *La guerre* brilliantly imagines the sounds of battle as the French fought the Swiss Confederacy at Marignano in 1515; we hear trumpets, cannons, fusillades and finally the French declaring victory, as the defeated Swiss slink from the field.

If these works seem to glorify warfare, then those which follow lament its human cost. In the Spanish composer **Bernardino de Ribera**'s *Rex autem David*, the biblical King mourns his son Absalon, against whom he had been fighting; his grief is eloquently depicted by falling chromatic lines. **Robert Ramsey**'s masterpiece *How are the mighty fallen* finds King David instead pouring out his love for his soulmate Jonathan, killed in battle. Ramsey, a Scottish composer who followed James I to London, may be responding to the 1612 death of James's young heir Prince Henry, which occasioned a remarkable outpouring of public grief – a reading supported by the music's vivid colour and gut-wrenching dissonance. Between these works we sing **Du Fay**'s *Lamentatio* for the fall of Constantinople, in which a French text, plangently declaimed by the outer voices, is combined with a Latin *cantus firmus* from the book of Lamentations – itself a response to the fall of Jerusalem.

Our second half opens with three works honouring military successes. The strutting *Agincourt Carol* was written to celebrate Henry V's famous victory over the French. *Congregati sunt inimici nostri*, by the Spanish aristocrat, composer and theologian **Fernando de las Infantas**, commemorates the lifting of the 1565 Siege of Malta, at which the Knights Hospitaller had repulsed Ottoman forces; a *cantus firmus* repeats the text 'if God be for us, who can be against us?'. **Sulpitia Cesis** was a nun from Modena; her *Cantemus Domino* sets Moses's hymn of praise after the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army – 'the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea'.

Our thoughts now turn to peace, with two works marking treaties. **Loyset Compère**'s *Quis numerare queat* likely honours a pact between the composer's sometime Ferrarese employer and a coalition of Venetians and Papal States. Alongside a text deploring the savagery of war, Compère sets the chant 'Da pacem Domine' as a canon, placing it in different voices and at different intervals and distances in each of the three parts of his motet. **Cristóbal de Morales**'s *Jubilate Deo* celebrates a short-lived 1538 treaty between Charles V of Spain and Francis I of France, brokered by Pope Paul III who is fulsomely credited in the text. The tenor simply repeats the world 'Gaudeamus' – rejoice – in slow notes, and later in thrilling double tempo. Between these motets we perform music by **Heinrich Schütz**, whose career included the entire Thirty Years War. By 1648, when the Peace of Westphalia was agreed, the privations of war found his Dresden ensemble reduced to a shadow of its former size. The same year saw the publication of *Verleih uns Frieden*, whose plea for peace and good government surely came straight from the heart.

We end by contemplating a greater peace to come. The *Missa pro victoria* is one of **Tomás Luis de Victoria**'s many 'parody' masses based on pre-existing motets; here the parent work is Janequin's *La guerre*, the 'battle' *chanson* heard earlier. In his *Agnus Dei*, Victoria transforms Janequin's feisty trumpet fanfares into a gentle prayer for peace at the words 'dona nobis pacem'. A similar serenity is found in *Da pacem* by **Cipriano de Rore**, a Flemish composer who worked chiefly in Ferrara. But we end in exuberant style with **Victoria**'s *Laetatus sum*, a superb motet for three choirs of four voices each, which looks forward to the peace of a new, heavenly Jerusalem.

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Anon

L'homme armé
Anonymous

L'homme armé doibt on doubter.
On a fait partout crier
Que chascun se viegne armer
D'un haubregon de fer.
L'homme armé doibt on doubter.

The armed man should be feared.
Everywhere it has been proclaimed
that each man shall arm himself
with a coat of iron mail.
The armed man should be feared.

Our strength and shield

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612)

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (1607)
Martin Luther

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen.
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
Der alt böse Feind
Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,
Gross Macht und viel List
Sein grausam Rüstung ist,
Auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen.

A sure stronghold our God is He

A sure stronghold our God is He,
a trusty shield and weapon;
Our help He'll be and set us free
from every ill can happen.
That old malicious foe
means us deadly woe;
armed with might from hell
and deepest craft as well,
on earth is not his fellow.

Robert Parsons (c.1535-1571)

Deliver me from mine enemies (1641)
Biblical text

Deliver me from mine enemies, O God, defend me from them that rise up against me.
O deliver me from the wicked-doers, and save me from the blood-thirsty men.
O be thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man.

Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)

O God, the proud are risen against me
(pub. 1668)
Biblical text

O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assembly of violent men,
Which have not thee before their eyes, seek after my soul.
But thou, O Lord, art a pitiful God, and a merciful God,
Slow to anger, and great in goodness and truth.

To arms!

Richard Dering (c.1580-1630)

Factum est silentium
(pub. 1618)
Liturgical text

Factum est silentium in caelo
Dum committeret bellum draco
Cum Michaele Archangelo.
Audita est vox milia milium, dicentium:
Salus, honor et virtus omnipotenti Deo. Alleluia.

There was silence

There was silence in heaven
as the dragon joined battle
with the Archangel Michael.
A voice was heard, thousand upon thousand-fold, saying:
Salvation, honour and virtue to almighty God. Alleluia.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Clément Janequin (c.1485-1558)

La guerre (pub. 1528)
Anonymous

Escoutez, tous gentilz Galloys,	Listen, all you gallant noblemen,
La victoire du noble roy Françoys.	to the victory of the noble King Francois.
Et orrez, si bien escoutez,	And you shall hear, if you listen well,
Des coups ruez de tous costez.	clouts hurled from every side.
Phiffres soufflez, frappez tambours.	Fifes, blow; strike, drummers;
Tournez, virez, faictes vos tours.	turn, spin, make your turns.
Avanturiers, bon compagnons	Soldiers, good comrades,
Ensemble croisez vos bastons.	together cross your batons.
Bendez soudain, gentilz Gascons.	Band together quickly, noble Gascons.
Nobles, sautez dens les arçons.	Noblemen, jump in your saddles,
La lance au poing, hardiz et promptz comme lyons!	the lance in your fist, daring and swift like lions!
Haquebutiers, faictes voz sons!	Harquebusiers, make your sounds!
Armes bouclez, frisques mignons.	Buckle your arms, elegant minions.
Donnez dedans! Frappez dedans!	Strike them! Hit them!
Alarme, alarme!	Alarm, alarm!
Soyez hardiz, en joye mis.	Be daring, be joyful.
Chascun s'asaisonne.	Let everyone spruce up.
La fleur de lys, fleur de hault pris,	The fleur-de-lys, flower of high prize,
Y est en personne.	is here in person.
Suivez Françoys, Le roy Françoys.	Follow François, The King, François.
Suivez la couronne.	follow the crown.
Sonnez, trompettes et clarons,	Let trumpets & clarions resound
Pour resjouyr les compagnons,	to delight our comrades,
Les cons, les cons, les compagnons.	our com-, our com-, our comrades.
Fan fan, fre re le le lan fan feyne. Fa ri ra ri ra.	Fan fan, fre re le le lan fan. Fa ri ra ri ra.
A l'estandart tost avant.	Quickly rally to the flag.
Boutez selle, gens d'armes à cheval.	Into the saddle, men at arms.
Fre re le le lan fan feyne	Fre re le le lan fan feyne
Bruyez, tonnez bombardes et canons.	Roar & thunder, bombards and cannons.
Tonnez, gros courtaux et faulcons,	Thunder, great swords and foils,
Pour secourir les compaignons,	to help our comrades,
Les cons, les cons, les compagnons.	Our com-, our com-, our comrades.
Von, von, pa ti pa toc, von, von.	Von von, pa ti pa toc
Ta ri ra ri ra ri ra reyne	Ta ri ra [etc.]
Pon pon pon pon	Pon, pon [etc.]
La la la … poin poin … la ri le ron	La la la … poin poin … la ri le ron
France courage, courage.	France, have courage.
Donnez des horions.	Deal your blows.
Chipe, chope, torche, lorgne.	Steal them, catch them, torch them, stare them down.
Pa ti pa toc, tricque trac, zin zin	Pa ti pa toc, trique trac, zin zin
Tue! à mort: serre.	Kill them, put them death,
Courage, prenez, frapez, tuez.	courage, take, strike, kill them.
Gentilz gallans, soyez vaillans.	Be valiant, you noble, brave men.
Frapez dessus, ruez dessus.	Strike them down, hurl yourselves at them.
Fers émoluz, chiques dessus. Alarme, alarme!	Freshly cast blades, stab them. Alarm, alarm!
Courage prenez, après suyvez, frapez, ruez.	Take courage, pursue, strike, hurl.
Ils sont confuz, ils sont perduz.	They're muddled, they're lost.
Ils monstrent les talons.	They're showing their heels.
(Escampe toute frelore la tintelore.)	(Escape, everything is lost)
Ilz son deffaictz.	They are defeated.
Victoire au noble roy Françoys!	Victory to the noble King Francois!
(Escampe toute frelore bigot.)	(Escape, everything is lost, by God)

How are the mighty fallen

Bernardino de Ribera (1520-c.1571-2)

Rex autem David (pub. c.1275)
Liturgical text

Rex autem David, cooperto capite,	Now David the king, going forth,
Incedens, lugebat filium suum dicens,	with covered head, mourned for his son saying:
Absalon, fili mi,	Absalon, my son,
Quis mihi det ut ego moriar pro te,	would that I might die for you,
Fili mi, Absalon.	my son Absalon.

Guillaume Du Fay (1397-1474)

Lamentatio sanctae matris ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae ('O tres piteulx') (c.1454-57)

Robert Ramsey (c.1595-1644)

How are the mighty fallen

Biblical text

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle. O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places.
O Jonathan, woe is me for thee, O Jonathan, my brother, very kind hast thou been to me:
Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war destroyed.

Interval

The Spoils of War

Anon

The Agincourt Carol (early 15th C.)

Anonymous

Deo gracias Anglia redde pro victoria!
Give thanks to God, England, for the victory!

Our king went forth to Normandy,
With grace and might of chivalry;
There God for him wrought marvellously,
Wherefore England may call, and cry

Deo gracias Anglia redde pro victoria.

He set a siege, forsooth to say,
To Harfleur town with royal array;
That town he won, and made affray,
That France shall rue till Domesday.

Deo gracias Anglia redde pro victoria.

Then went him forth our King comely
In Agincourt he fought manly
Through grace of God most marvellously
He had both field and victory

Deo gracias Anglia redde pro victoria.

Fernando de las Infantas (1534-c.1610)

Congregati sunt inimici nostri (pub. 1579)

Liturgical text

Our foes are gathered

Congregati sunt inimici nostri, et gloriantur in virtute sua:	Our foes are gathered and rejoice in their strength:
Contere fortitudinem illorum, Domine, et disperge illos ut cognoscant,	wear down their might, O Lord, and scatter them that they may learn
Quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis, nisi tu Deus noster.	that there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O Lord.
Si Deus pro nobis quis contra nos?	If God be for us who can be against us?

Sulpitia Cesis (b.fl.1619)

Cantemus Domino (pub. 1619)

Biblical text

I will sing unto the Lord

Cantemus Domino gloriose enim magnificatus est.	I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.
Equum et ascensorum proiecit in mare.	The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
Fortitudo mea Dominus et factus est mihi in salute.	The Lord is my strength and he has become my salvation.
Iste Deus meus, et glorificabo eum, Deus patris mei, et exaltabo eum.	This is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Peace and Diplomacy

Loyset Compère (c.1445-1518)

Quis numerare queat (pub. 1502)
Liturgical text

Who is able to number

Quis numerare quaeat bellorum saeva peracta, dampna referta malis inreparabilibus? Censeat ipse bonus perpessus talia, sed qui illa sibi intulerit censeat ipse malus. Dicat quisquae quod haec nobis Deus omnia fecit, nostris peccatis premia digna ferens.

Who is able to number the savageries committed in war, the heaped injuries from irredeemable evils? Let him reckon it, that good man who has suffered such things but the one who did these things to him, let that bad man reckon it also. Let each man say that God did all these things to us, for our sins apportioning just rewards.

Audivit ipse tamen populi gemitus lachrymosos, ad pacem versus, hincque miseratus ei pacem donavit e caeli culmine tractam, quam nec mortales sic dare sufficerent. Ergo omnis populus nunc cum iubilo moduletur et Domino laudes eximias referat.

He has heard, however, the lamenting groans of the people, turned to peace, and therefore compassionate to them peace he has granted brought from the heights of heaven, such that mortals were not able to give. Therefore let every people now sing with joy and to the Lord repay exceptional praises.

Fundant preces Itali, exorent precibus omnes, quaequae es in terris natio funde preces ad Dominum, ut data pax sit duratura per aevum, ne modico laeta tempore deinde gemas, muneris et tanti ne si sis immemor ipse lora trahat, quare pacis habena cadat. Amen.

Let the Italians utter prayers, let all entreat with prayers, whatever nation there be on earth utter prayers to the Lord that peace bestowed may be enduring for ever, lest for a moment happy you then groan, and of such a gift be mindful that he might take up the whip whereby the bond of peace might fall. Amen.

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris, quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis, nisi tu, Deus noster.

Give peace, O Lord, in our time because there is no one else who will fight for us, if not you, our God.

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)

Verleih uns Frieden genädiglich (pub. 1648)
Liturgical text

Give peace O Lord, in our time

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich,
Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten.
Es ist doch ja kein ander nicht,
Der für uns könnte streiten,
Denn du, unser Gott, alleine.

Give peace,
O Lord, in our time,
because there is no one else
who will fight for us,
if not you, our God.

Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553)

Jubilate Deo omnis terra (1538)
Liturgical text

Rejoice in the Lord, all you lands

Jubilate Deo omnis terra, cantate omnes,
Jubilate et psallite, quoniam suadente Paulo,
Carolus et Franciscus, principes terrae,
Convenerunt in unum, et pax de caelo descendit.

Rejoice in the Lord, all you lands, sing everyone,
rejoice and play the psaltery, because persuaded by Paul,
Charles and Francis, princes of the earth,
have united, and peace has descended from Heaven.

O felix aetas, O felix Paule, O vos felices principes,
Qui christiano populo pacem tradidistis.
Vivat Paulus! Vivat Carolus! Vivat Franciscus!
Vivant simul, et pacem nobis donent in aeternum!

O happy age, O happy Paul, O you happy princes,
who have delivered peace to the Christian people.
Long live Paul! Long live Charles! Long live Francis!
Long may they live together, and may they give us peace for ever!

Cantus firmus: Gaudeamus.

Cantus firmus: Let us rejoice.

The Peace of Heaven

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

Agnus Dei from *Missa pro victoria* (pub. 1600)

Liturgical text

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,	Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,	Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.	Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Cipriano de Rore (c.1515-1565)

Da pacem (1595)

Liturgical text

Give peace

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis nisi tu Deus noster.	Give peace in our time, O Lord, because there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou, O God.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Laetatus sum (pub. 1583)

Liturgical text

I rejoiced

Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: In domum Domini ibimus.	I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord.
Stantes erant pedes nostri, in atriis tuis, Jerusalem.	Our feet were standing in thy courts, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem, quae aedificatur ut civitas: cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.	Jerusalem, which is built as a city, which is compact together.
Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini: testimonium Israël, ad confitendum nomini Domini.	For thither did the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord: the testimony of Israel, to praise the name of the Lord.
Quia illic sederunt sedes in judicio, sedes super domum David.	Because their seats have sat in judgment, seats upon the house of David.
Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Jerusalem, et abundantia diligentibus te.	Pray ye for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem, and abundance for them that love thee.
Fiat pax in virtute tua, et abundantia in turribus tuis.	Let peace be in thy strength: and abundance in thy towers.
Propter fratres meos et proximos meos, loquebar pacem de te.	For the sake of my brethren, and of my neighbours, I spoke peace of thee.
Propter domum Domini Dei nostri, quaesivi bona tibi.	Because of the house of the Lord our God, I have sought good things for thee.
Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning and is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.