

# WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 13 April 2022 7.30pm

The Path to Salvation - Music for Holy Week and Easter

## Stile Antico

Helen Ashby soprano

Emma Ashby alto

Andrew Griffiths tenor

James Arthur bass

Kate Ashby soprano

Cara Curran alto

Jonathan Hanley tenor

Will Dawes bass

Rebecca Hickey soprano

Rosie Parker alto

Seb Hill tenor

Nathan Harrison bass

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**William Byrd** (c.1540-1623)

Miserere mei, Deus (pub. 1591)

**Palm Sunday**

**Thomas Weelkes** (1576-1623)

Hosanna to the Son of David

**Maundy Thursday**

**Alonso Lobo** (1555-1617)

O quam suavis est, Domine (pub. 1602)

**Leonora d'Este** (1515-1575)

Ego sum panis vivus

**John Sheppard** (c.1515-1558)

I give you a new commandment

**Orlande de Lassus** (c.1530-1594)

Tristis est anima mea (pub. 1565)

**Gregorio Allegri** (1582-1652)

Miserere mei, Deus (c.1638)

*Interval*

**Good Friday**

**Giaches de Wert** (1535-1596)

O crux ave, spes unica (pub. 1581)

**Tomás Luis de Victoria** (1548-1611)

O vos omnes (pub. 1585)

Tenebrae factae sunt (pub. 1585)

**Vigil**

**John Taverner** (c.1490-1545)

Dum transisset sabbatum

**Easter Day**

**Peter Philips** (c.1560-1628)

Ecce vicit Leo (pub. 1613)

**William Byrd**

Victimae paschali laudes (pub. 1607)

**Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** (c.1525-1594)

Regina coeli a8

**Thomas Tomkins** (1572-1656)

O sing unto the Lord a new song (1668)

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*The Path to Salvation* is a musical retelling of the events of Holy Week, beginning with Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and ending with Easter and the Resurrection. Along the way we encounter music by 14 different composers, representing many different European traditions, and ranging from the early years of the 15th Century to the threshold of the Baroque.

We begin in Lenten mood with **William Byrd's** 'Miserere mei, Deus'. The opening is a rhetorical masterstroke: instead of building up the texture through imitation, Byrd has all five voices enter together in insistent homophony, giving the music an urgency and fervour which never flag. We then mark Palm Sunday with 'Hosanna to the Son of David' by Byrd's younger contemporary **Thomas Weelkes**, capturing both the exuberant spirit and the chaotic jostling of the crowds who lined the streets of Jerusalem to honour Christ's arrival.

Maundy Thursday was the occasion for the Last Supper, at which Christ commanded his followers to share bread and wine in his memory. The gentle, warm-hearted 'O quam suavis est' by **Alonso Lobo** sets a text for Corpus Christi, the feast which celebrates this sacrament of the Eucharist. We pair it with another such work: an anonymous 'Ego sum panis vivus', which – thanks to recent research by Laurie Stras – can be convincingly attributed to **Leonora d'Este**, daughter of the infamous Lucrezia Borgia. As a woman, a member of the nobility and a nun, it would have been triply difficult for her to put her name to a musical publication, but we know that she kept keyboard instruments in her apartments and associated with leading musical theorists. Her music can readily be performed by female voices alone, and was surely intended for use at her convent in Ferrara. The relatively narrow compass between the lowest and highest parts means that the vocal lines must constantly cross and intertwine, to beautiful effect.

**John Sheppard** is best known for his resplendent pre-Reformation Latin music, but during Edward VI's reign he wrote English-texted anthems for the new Protestant liturgy, complying with Thomas Cranmer's rule that music should not be 'full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note; so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly'. 'I give you a new commandment' sets words from the so-called Farewell Discourse – Christ's final teachings to his remaining disciples. We then follow Christ to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he enjoined his followers to watch and pray with him, as related in one of **Orlande de Lassus's** most masterly motets, 'Tristis est anima mea'.

The climax of the Holy Week liturgy is the set of 'Tenebrae' services, for which **Gregorio Allegri's** famous 'Miserere mei, Deus' was written in c.1638. Few works have been the subject of so much myth-making; tradition relates that it was so jealously guarded that unauthorized copyists risked excommunication; that its famous ornaments were never notated, but solemnly passed from singer to singer; and that it was finally smuggled out of the Sistine Chapel in the head of the young Mozart. Though most of this is demonstrably

untrue, it is clear that the work we have now is far from what Allegri wrote – and in particular, that the famous passage containing the soprano top Cs is a bizarre conflation of different editions and transpositions.

The work, then, is inauthentic, but it is precisely its inauthenticity which has become its most enduring feature: this odd hybrid has a hypnotic beauty all of its own. A complete setting of the penitential Psalm 51, it is based on the plainchant *Tonus peregrinus*. Two separate choirs, one of five voices and one of four, harmonise and elaborate the chant in *falsobordone* style, alternating with verses of unadorned plainchant. Only in the final psalm verse do the two choirs come together to close the work in satisfyingly monumental fashion.

**Giaches de Wert** was born in Flanders but made his career in Italy, chiefly in Ferrara, where the young Claudio Monteverdi was one of his court musicians. Though famed for his madrigals, his sacred music is no less fine, as evidenced by his intense setting of the Good Friday text 'O crux ave, spes unica'. The Spaniard **Tomás Luis de Victoria** also spent time in Italy; his *Tenebrae Responsories* were published while he worked in Rome. We perform two of the 18 responsories: the plangent 'O vos omnes' for high voices, and the despairing 'Tenebrae factae sunt', traditionally sung at low pitch, culminating in an exquisitely tender setting of the words 'he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost'.

**John Taverner's** magical 'Dum transisset Sabbatum' is a distilled moment of stopped time on Easter morning, just as the sun rises and the women arrive to anoint the body of Christ. Taverner sets the traditional plainchant in even notes in the baritone voice, whilst the other voices weave rhapsodic, caressing lines around it. By contrast, **Peter Philips's** 'Ecce vicit Leo' is an irrepressible shout of Resurrection joy, casting Christ as conquering hero. Philips had left England in order to practise his Catholic faith, making his career in Antwerp and Brussels. Here he writes in distinctly Italianate vein, employing two choirs and revelling in antiphonal exchanges in the best Venetian manner.

Byrd was probably Philips's teacher, and certainly shared his Catholic faith. His thrilling Easter sequence 'Victimae paschali laudes' was written for the secret Catholic masses at the Essex home of his patrons, the Petres. The dramatic text is set as a dialogue, alternating passages for reduced voices with the full ensemble, but always carrying a defiant, unflinching energy. Less driven, if no less joyful, is **Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina's** double-choir setting of the Marian antiphon *Regina coeli*, appropriate to the period between Easter Day and Pentecost. We finish in jubilant vein with music by **Thomas Tomkins**, the 450th anniversary of whose birth falls this year. 'O sing unto the Lord' is one of his finest anthems; it ends with a superb 'Alleluia', replete with quintessentially English false relations, which seems perfectly suited to Easter day.

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## William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

### Miserere mei, Deus (pub. 1591)

*Liturgical text*

Miserere mei, Deus: secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.	Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.
Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.	According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies remove my transgressions.

## Palm Sunday

## Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

### Hosanna to the Son of David

*Liturgical text*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Blessed be the King of Israel.  
Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest places.  
Hosanna in the highest heavens.

## Maundy Thursday

## Alonso Lobo (1555-1617)

### O quam suavis est, Domine (pub. 1602)

*Thomas Aquinas*

O quam suavis est, Domine, spiritus tuus, qui ut dulcedinem tuam in filios demonstrares pane suavissimo de caelo praestito, esurientes reple bonis, fastidiosos divites dimittens inanes.

### O how sweet is thy spirit, Lord

O how sweet is thy spirit, Lord, thou who, in order to demonstrate thy sweetness to thy children, send down from heaven the sweetest bread unsurpassed, filling the hungry with good things, sending away empty the disdainful rich!

## Leonora d'Este (1515-1575)

### Ego sum panis vivus

*Liturgical text*

Ego sum panis vivus.  
Patres vestri manducaverunt manna in deserto et mortui sunt.  
Hic est panis qui de caelo descendit.  
Si quis ex ipso manducaverit non morietur.

### I am the bread of life

I am the bread of life.  
Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.  
This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Ego sum panis vivus qui de caelo descendit.  
Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane vivet in aeternum.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven.  
If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.

## John Sheppard (c.1515-1558)

### I give you a new commandment

*Liturgical text*

I give you a new commandment:  
That ye love one another e'en as I have loved you.  
By this all men shall know that ye are my disciples.

## Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)

### Tristis est anima mea

(pub. 1565)

*Liturgical text*

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem:  
Sustinete hic et vigilate mecum.  
Nunc videbitis turbam quæ circumdabit me.  
Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

### Sorrowful is my soul

Sorrowful is my soul even unto death.  
Stay here, and watch with me.  
Now you shall see the mob that will surround me.  
You shall take flight, and I shall go to be sacrificed for you.

## Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)

### Miserere mei, Deus (c.1638)

*Liturgical text*

Miserere mei, Deus: secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.  
Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.  
Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: et a peccato meo munda me.  
Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco: et peccatum meum contra me est semper.  
Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci: ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum iudicaris.  
Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum: et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

### Have mercy on me, O God

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.  
According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies remove my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin.  
I knowingly confess my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.  
Against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil before Thee: that they may be justified in Thy sayings, and might they overcome when I am judged.  
But behold, I was formed in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Ecce enim veritatem  
dilexisti: incerta et occulta  
sapientiae tuae manifestasti  
mihi.

Asperges me hysopo, et  
mundabor: lavabis me, et  
super nivem dealabor.

Auditui meo dabis gaudium  
et laetitiam: et  
exultabunt ossa  
humiliata.

Averte faciem tuam a peccatis  
meis: et omnes iniquitates  
meas dele.

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus:  
et spiritum rectum innova in  
visceribus meis.

Ne proicias me a facie tua: et  
spiritum sanctum tuum ne  
auferas a me.

Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris  
tui: et spiritu principali  
confirma me.

Docebo iniquos vias tuas:  
et impii ad te  
convertentur.

Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus,  
Deus salutis meae: et  
exultabit lingua mea justitiam  
tuam.

Domine, labia mea aperies:  
et os meum annuntiabit  
laudem tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses  
sacrificium, dedissem  
utique: holocaustis non  
delectaberis.

Sacrificium Deo spiritus  
contribulatus: cor contritum,  
et humiliatum, Deus, non  
despicies.

Benigne fac, Domine, in  
bona voluntate tua Sion:  
ut aedificentur muri  
Ierusalem.

Tunc acceptabis sacrificium  
justitiae, oblationes,  
et holocausta: tunc  
imponent super altare tuum  
vitulos.

Behold, Thou desirest truth in my  
innermost being: and shalt make  
me to understand wisdom  
secretly.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,  
and I shall be clean: wash me,  
make me whiter than snow

Open my ears and make me  
hear of joy and gladness: and  
my bones that have been  
humbled shall rejoice.

Turn away Thy face from my  
sins: and remember not all my  
misdeeds.

Create in me a clean heart, O God:  
and make anew a righteous spirit  
within my body.

Do not cast me away from Thy  
presence: and take not Thy  
holy spirit from me

Restore unto me the joy of your  
salvation, and uphold me with  
a willing spirit.

I will teach those that are unjust  
Thy ways: and sinners shall  
be converted unto Thee.

Deliver me from blood, O God,  
the God of my salvation: and  
my tongue shall sing of Thy  
righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips: and my  
mouth shall spring forth Thy  
praise

For Thou desirest no sacrifice,  
where others would: with  
burnt offerings Thou wilt not  
be delighted.

Sacrifices of God are broken  
spirits: dejected and contrite  
hearts, O God, Thou wilt not  
despise.

Deal favourably, O Lord,  
in Thy good pleasure unto  
Zion: build Thou the walls of  
Jerusalem.

Then shalt Thou be pleased with  
the sacrifices of righteousness,  
with small and large burnt  
offerings: then shall they lay  
calves upon your altar.

## Good Friday

### Giaches de Wert (1535-1596)

#### O crux ave, spes unica

(pub. 1581)

*Venantius Fortunatus*

O crux ave, spes unica  
hoc passionis tempore  
auge piis justitiam  
reisque dona veniam.

#### O hail the cross our only hope

O hail the cross our only hope  
in this Passiontide  
grant increase of grace to believers  
and remove the sins of the guilty.

### Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

#### O vos omnes (pub. 1585)

*Liturgical text*

O vos omnes, qui transitis per  
viam, attendite et videte  
[R] si est dolor similis sicut  
dolor meus.  
[V] Attendite universi populi, et  
videte dolorem meum:  
[R] si est dolor similis sicut  
dolor meus.

#### O, all of you

O, all of you that pass by the  
way, look, and see  
if there is any sorrow like my  
sorrow.  
Look, all you people, and see my  
sorrow,  
if there is any sorrow like my  
sorrow.

#### Tenebrae factae sunt

(pub. 1585)

*Liturgical text*

Tenebrae factae sunt, dum  
crucifixissent Jesum Judaei:  
et circa horam nonam  
exclamavit Jesus voce magna:  
Deus meus, ut quid me  
dereliquisti?  
[R] Et inclinato capite, emisit  
spiritum.  
[V] Exclamans Jesus voce magna  
ait: Pater, in manus tuas  
commendo spiritum meum:  
[R] Et inclinato capite, emisit  
spiritum.

#### There was darkness

There was darkness when the  
Jews crucified Jesus,  
and around the ninth hour Jesus  
cried with a loud voice: My  
God, my God, why have you  
forsaken me?  
And, bowing his head, he gave  
up the ghost.  
Crying out with a loud voice,  
Jesus said: Father, into your  
hands I commend my spirit.  
And, bowing his head, he gave  
up the ghost.

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## Interval

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## Vigil

### John Taverner (c.1490-1545)

#### Dum transisset sabbatum **And when the Sabbath was past**

*Liturgical text*

Dum transisset Sabbatum,  
Maria Magdalene et  
Maria Jacobi et Salome  
emerunt aromata ut  
venientes ungerent Jesum.  
Alleluia.

Et valde mane, una  
sabbatorum, veniunt ad  
monumentum, orto iam  
sole.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui  
Sancto.

And when the Sabbath was  
past, Mary Magdalene and  
Mary the mother of James  
and Salome had bought sweet  
spices, that they might come  
and anoint him. Alleluia.

And very early in the morning,  
the first day of the week, they  
come to the sepulchre, the  
sun being now risen.

Glory to the Father and to the  
Son and to the Holy Ghost.

## Easter Day

### Peter Philips (c.1560-1628)

#### Ecce vicit Leo (pub. 1613) **Behold, the Lion**

*Liturgical text*

Ecce vicit Leo de tribu  
Juda, radix David, aperire  
librum, et solvere  
septem signacula eius.  
Alleluia.

Dignus est Agnus qui occisus  
est, accipere virtutem, et  
divinitatem, et sapientiam, et  
fortitudinem, et  
honorem, et gloriam, et  
benedictionem. Alleluia.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of  
Judah, the root of David, hath  
prevailed to open the book  
and to loose the seven seals  
thereof. Alleluia.

Worthy is the Lamb that was  
slain to receive power, and  
godliness, and wisdom, and  
strength,  
and honour, and glory, and  
blessing. Alleluia.

### William Byrd

#### Victimae paschali laudes (pub. 1607) **To the paschal victim make praise**

*Liturgical text*

Victimae paschali laudes  
immolent Christiani Agnus  
redemit oves:  
Christus innocens Patri  
reconciliavit peccatores.  
Mors et vita duello conflixere  
mirando, Dux vitae mortuus,  
regnat vivus.

Christians, to the paschal victim  
make sacrifice and praise. The  
Lamb has redeemed the sheep:  
Christ, the innocent one, hath  
reconciled sinners to the Father.  
Death and life fought a wondrous  
duel. The ruler of life, once dead,  
now lives and reigns.

Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in  
via?

Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et  
gloriam vidi resurgentis:  
Angelicos testes, sudarium et  
vestes.

Surrexit Christus spes mea:  
praecedet suos in Galilaeam.

Credendum est magis soli  
Mariae veraci quam  
Judaeorum turbae fallaci.

Scimus Christum surrexisse a  
mortuis vere: Tu nobis, victor  
Rex, miserere.

Amen. Alleluia.

Tell us, Mary, what you have  
seen on the way.

I saw the tomb of the living  
Christ and his risen glory,  
angelic witnesses, grave-clothes  
and vestments.

Christ, my hope, is risen, and  
will go before you into Galilee.

We know that Christ  
has truly risen from  
the dead.

Thou victorious King,  
have mercy upon  
us.

Amen, Alleluia.

### Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525-1594)

#### Regina coeli a8 **Queen of Heaven**

*Liturgical text*

Regina coeli laetare, Alleluia.

Quia quem meruisti portare,  
Alleluia.

Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia.

Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia.

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

For He whom you were worthy  
to bear, alleluia.

Has risen, as He said, alleluia.

Pray for us to God, alleluia.

### Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656)

#### O sing unto the Lord a new song (1668)

*Liturgical text*

O sing unto the Lord a new song, and let the congregation of saints  
sing praise unto him.

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him:

and let the children of Sion forever sing, alleluia.