

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 13 December 2024
7.30pm

Mirabile Mysterium

The Cardinal's Musick

Andrew Carwood director

Julie Cooper soprano

Katy Hill soprano

Patrick Craig alto

David Gould alto

William Balkwill tenor

Nicholas Todd tenor

Robert Rice bass

Tim Murphy bass

Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)

Tomás Luis de Victoria 1548-1611)

Plainchant

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Orlande de Lassus

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Plainchant

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Orlande de Lassus

Salve regina a8

O magnum mysterium (1592)

From *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Kyrie • Gloria

Alleluia: Crastina die

Credo from *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Ave regina caelorum a6

From *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Sanctus • Benedictus

Revelabitur gloria Domini

Agnus Dei from *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Alma Redemptoris mater a8

Interval

Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629)

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1912)

Jacobus Handl (1550-1591)

Orlande de Lassus

Cecilia McDowall (b.1951)

Anon

Cecilia McDowall

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525-1594)

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Angelus ad pastores ait a8

Verbum caro factum est

Mirabile mysterium

Omnes de Saba venient

Annunciation

There is no rose (c.1420)

Of a Rose

Hodie Christus natus est a8 (pub. 1575)

O regem coeli

Surge illuminare

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • Wigmore-hall.org.uk • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



'A wondrous mystery is declared today, natures are renewed; God has become man; that which he was, he remains, and that which he was not, he has assumed, suffering neither mixture nor division'.

Such is the text of the motet, 'Mirabile mysterium', by Jacobus Handl giving today's programme its name. The mystery of God becoming man, of God assuming a human form while remaining divine, lies at the heart of Christian belief and is also the uniting theme for today's concert. And at no point is that mystery more evident than at Christmas, when baby Jesus is born of a human mother, in a manger, observed – as is mentioned in some of today's texts – by lowly animals.

In this becoming of man, Mary, the mother of Christ, plays a vital role – a human chosen to bear God. Musical settings in her honour, so abundant in Renaissance polyphony, also take centre stage in today's concert. The first half of the programme is framed by two Marian antiphon settings by **Orlando de Lassus** with a third in the middle. The first of these three seasonal veneration of the Virgin Mary, 'Salve regina', is perhaps the most famous, also forming part of the rosary prayer. After the 'Ave regina caelorum' in the middle, we conclude the first half with 'Alma redemptoris mater', traditionally sung in Advent.

These important Christian themes, particularly the veneration of Mary associated with the Catholic faith, are perhaps not a surprising choice for a vocal group (one of the finest of our time) that takes its name from Cardinal Wolsey, a devout Catholic and historical figure (of *Wolf Hall* fame).

The focus of the first half of the programme is **Victoria's** *Missa O magnum mysterium*, which we hear in its entirety (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus). This mass is based, like most of Victoria's mass settings, on a pre-existing motet. In this so-called 'parody mass', the Spanish composer uses his own motet of the same name as the foundation for his composition. Appropriately, we first hear this well-loved and well-known motet, which conveys the mystery of the birth of Jesus. The slow opening with voices joining individually and then in paired imitation allows us to focus on the significance of the words. The floating harmonic centre conveys a sense of the mysterious, underscored by the ascending and descending lines – a motive that reappears in the Kyrie of the mass setting. Later in the motet we hear jubilation in the 'Alleluia' section, first in triple, later in duple meter.

In the mass published 20 years later, Victoria picks up some of these motives, again using triple metre, if sparingly, in Gloria and Hosanna sections. Victoria's output was smaller in volume than that of his two perhaps better-known contemporaries, Lassus and Palestrina, both featured in today's programme. Moreover, he focused exclusively on setting Latin sacred texts. Within that oeuvre, however, we find great variety and innovation, especially in his treatment of tonality. Interspersed between the mass settings and Marian

antiphons we also hear two **Plainchant** melodies, complementing – as they would have in a Renaissance mass – the polyphonic sections.

The second half of the programme continues the theme of Christ's birth in a series of motets by late-Renaissance composers as well as contemporary composer **Cecilia McDowall**. We begin with a trio of composers active in northern and central Europe: **Hieronymus Praetorius**, **Hans Leo Hassler** and **Jacobus Handl**.

As we move through the Christmas story, the next chapter – when the angels proclaim Jesus's birth to the shepherds, is portrayed in Praetorius's 'Angelus ad pastores ait'. Praetorius being some 30 years younger than Lassus, for example, exhibits a distinct late-Renaissance style, with double choir writing, inspired by Venetian choral music. An Italian influence is certainly also noticeable in Hans Leo Hassler's work, who indeed went – as many of his contemporaries – to study in Venice and played an important role in bringing Italian musical styles across the Alps. In 'Verbum caro factum est' we hear the influence of Hassler's teacher, Andrea Gabrieli, particularly in his writing for two groups of singers, interacting and competing in this motet. The text once again conveys the mystery of God becoming man, as it translates to 'The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth'.

Handl's motet, 'Mirabile mysterium', which gives today's programme its name is a well-known and most striking piece: chromaticism and dissonances in the imitative writing ultimately way to striking chords, portraying the profound mystery of Christ's birth.

After Lassus's 'Omnes de Saba', which alludes to yet another part of the Christmas story, the Epiphany, we arrive at the work of the celebrated contemporary composer Cecilia McDowall (born 1951). 'Annunciation', based on words from John Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, echoes earlier themes of this programme, reflecting on the Annunciation and Mary as the mother of Christ. Throughout this piece, McDowall effectively uses floating harmonies to evoke a sense of mystery.

A further motive is introduced in the rose, traditionally associated with Mary, which increasingly came also to symbolise Christ from the 15th Century onwards. McDowall's 'Of a Rose' celebrates, in jubilant melodies, the birth of Christ.

The programme concludes with a return to **Palestrina** and **Victoria**. Listen out for the Christmas cries of 'Noe, Noe' in Palestrina's 'Hodie Christus natus est', which together with his triumphant double-choir motet 'Surge illuminare', written for the feast of Epiphany, will send us back out into the world in a suitably festive mood, full of wonder and miracle.

© Elisabeth Giselbrecht 2024

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.

Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)

Salve regina a8

Anonymous

Salve regina, mater misericordiae; Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamamus Exsules filii Evae; Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes In hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos Misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende. O clemens, O pia, O dulcis virgo Maria.	Hail, O queen Hail, O queen, mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail. To you we cry out, exiled children of Eve; to you we sigh, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Then, gracious advocate, turn towards us your merciful eyes. And show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus, after this exile. O gentle one, O holy, O sweet virgin Mary.
--	--

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

O magnum mysterium O great mystery

(1592)

Liturgical text

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum iacentem in praesepio. O beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Jesum Christum. Alleluia!	O great mystery and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger! O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord. Alleluia!
--	---

From Missa O magnum mysterium

Liturgical text

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison	Lord, have mercy
Christe eleison	Christ, have mercy
Kyrie eleison	Lord, have mercy

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.
---	---

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, Adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi Propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus pater omnipotens: Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis: Qui tollis peccata mundi, Suscipe deprecationem nostram: Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, Miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, Cum Sancto Spiritu, In gloria Dei patris. Amen.	We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you. We give thanks to you for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us: you who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. You who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, you alone are most high, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
--	---

Plainchant

Alleluia: Crastina die

Liturgical text

Alleluia. Crastina die delebitur iniquitas terrae: et regnabit super nos salvator mundi. Alleluia.	Alleluia. Tomorrow the sin of the earth will be destroyed: and the Saviour of the world will reign over us. Alleluia.
--	---

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

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Credo from *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Liturgical text

Credo in unum Deum, patrem omnipotentem, Factorem caeli et terrae, Visibilibus omnium et invisibilibus. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum; Et ex patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, Consubstantiali patri: Per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, Descendit de caelis, Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto, Ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, Sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas, Et ascendit in caelum, Sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, Judicare vivos et mortuos, Cuius regni non erit finis. Et in spiritum sanctum Dominum et vivificantem: Qui ex Patre filioque procedit Qui cum Patre et Filio Simul adoratur et conglorificatur, Qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam Et apostolicam ecclesiam.	I believe in one God, the Almighty Father, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all time. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made: of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate: he died and was buried. And he rose on the third day according to the scriptures and ascended in to heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. And he will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead: whose kingdom has no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. And in one holy, catholic and apostolic church.
---	--

Confiteor unum baptisma In remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.	I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.
--	---

Orlande de Lassus

Ave regina caelorum a6

Anonymous

Ave regina caelorum, Ave domina angelorum. Salve radix, salve porta, Ex qua mundo lux est orta. Gaude virgo gloriosa, Super omnes speciosa. Vale, O valde decora, Et pro nobis semper Christum exora.	Hail, queen of heaven, hail, mistress of the angels. Hail, root, hail gateway, from which has sprung the light of the world. Rejoice, glorious virgin, fair above all others. Farewell, most gracious one, and pray to Christ for us always.
--	---

Tomás Luis de Victoria

From *Missa O magnum mysterium*

Liturgical text

Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus sabaoth: Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.	Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
---	---

Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.	Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
---	--

Plainchant

**Revelabitur gloria
Domini**
Liturgical text

**The glory of the
Lord shall be
revealed**

Revelabitur gloria
Domini:
Et videbit omnis caro
Salutare Dei nostri.

The glory of the Lord
shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see
the salvation of our God.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

**Agnus Dei from *Missa O magnum
mysterium***
Liturgical text

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.

Lamb of God, who takes
away the sins of the
world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes
away the sins of the
world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes
away the sins of the
world,
grant us peace.

Orlande de Lassus (c.1530-1594)

**Alma Redemptoris
mater a8**
Anonymous

**Gracious mother of
the redeemer**

Alma redemptoris
mater,
Quae pervia caeli porta
manes,
Et stella maris,
Succurre cadenti surgere
Qui curat
populo.
Tu quae genuisti, natura
mirante,
Tuum sanctum genitorem.
Virgo prius ac posterius,
Gabrielis ab ore sumens
illud Ave,
Peccatorum miserere.

Gracious mother of the
redeemer,
you who remain the ever-
open gate of heaven,
and the star of the sea,
succour your people
who fall but strive to rise
again.
You who gave birth, while
nature marvelled,
to your holy creator.
A virgin before and after,
who heard that 'Ave' from
the mouth of Gabriel,
have mercy on sinners.

Interval

Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629)

**Angelus ad pastores
ait a8**
Liturgical text

**The angel said to
the shepherds**

Angelus ad
pastores ait:
Annuntio vobis gaudium
magnum,
Quia natus est vobis
hodie
Salvator mundi.
Alleluia.
Parvulus filius hodie natus
est nobis,
Et vocabitur Deus fortis.
Alleluia.

The angel said to the
shepherds:
'I bring you tidings of
great joy,
for the Saviour of the
world
has been born to you
today.' Alleluia.
A little son has been born
to us today,
and he will be called
Mighty God. Alleluia.

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1912)

**Verbum caro factum
est**
Liturgical text

**And the Word was
made flesh**

Verbum caro
factum est
Et habitavit in nobis
Et vidimus gloriam ejus
Gloriam quasi unigeniti
a Patre
Plenum gratiae et veritatis.

And the Word was made
flesh,
and dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only
begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

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

Jacobus Handl (1550-1591)

Mirabile mysterium

Liturgical text

Mirabile mysterium
declaratur hodie,
Innovantur
naturae:
Deus homo factus est.
Id quod fuit permansit,
Et quod non erat
assumpsit,
Non commixionem passus
neque divisionem.

A wonderful mystery

A wonderful mystery is
revealed today,
nature itself is
transformed:
God is made man.
He remained what he was
and became what he was
not,
suffering neither
confusion nor division.

Orlande de Lassus

Omnes de Saba venient

Liturgical text

Omnes de Saba
venient,
Aurum et thus
deferentes,
Et laudem Domino
annuntiantes. Alleluia.

All they from Sheba

All they from Sheba shall
come,
bringing gold and
frankincense,
and showing forth praise
to the Lord. Alleluia.

Reges Tharsis et
insulae
Munera offerent,
Reges Arabum et Saba
dona adducent.
Alleluia.

The kings of Tharsis and
the isles
shall offer presents,
the kings of Arabia and
Saba shall bring gifts.
Alleluia.

Cecilia McDowall (b.1951)

Annunciation

John Donne

Salvation to all that will is nigh,
That All, which always is All every where,
Which cannot sinne, and yet all sinnes must beare,
Which cannot die, yet cannot chuse but die,
Loe, faithfull Virgin, yields himselfe to lye
In prison, in thy wombe; and though he there
Can take no sinne, nor thou give, yet he will weare
Taken from thence, flesh, which deaths force may
trie.

Ere by the speares time was created, thou
Wast in his minde, who is thy Sonne, and Brother,
Whom thou conceiv'st, conceiv'd thou art now
Thy Makers makers, and thy Fathers mother,
Thou hast light in darke; and shutst in little roome,
Immensity cloysterd in thy deare wombe.

Anon

There is no rose (c.1420)

Anonymous

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu;
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda.

By that rose we may well see
That He is God in persons three,
Pari forma.

The angels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo:
Gaudeamus.

Now leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus.

Cecilia McDowall

Of a Rose

Anonymous

Listen, Lordinges, old and yonge,
How this rose began to sprynge;
Such a rose to mine lykyng
In all this world ne knowe I non.
Alleluia.

The aungel came from hevene tour
To greet Marye with gret honour,
Seyd she should bere the flour
That should breke the fiends bond.
Alleluia.

The flower sprong in heye Bethlem,
That is bothe bryht and schen:
The rose is Marye, hevene qwene,
Out of here bosom the blosme sprong.
Alleluia.

The ferste braunche is ful of myth,
That sprong on Chrystemesse nyht,
The sterre schon over Bethlem bryht
That is bothe brod and long.
Alleluia.

The seconde braunche sprong to helle,
The fiends power down to felle:
There in myth non soule dwelle;
Blyssd be the time the rose sprong!
Alleluia.

The thredde braunche is good and swote,
It sprang to hevene, crop and rote,
There to dwell and ben our bote;
Every day it scheweit in prystes hond.
Alleluia.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

(c.1525-1594)

Hodie Christus natus est a8 (pub. 1575)

Liturgical text

Hodie Christus natus est.	Today Christ is born.
Hodie Salvator apparuit.	Today the Saviour has appeared.
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,	Today the Angels sing on earth
Laetantur Archangeli.	and the Archangels rejoice.
Hodie exsultant iusti dicentes:	Today the just rejoice saying:
Gloria in excelsis Deo: Alleluia.	Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.

Tomás Luis de Victoria

O regem coeli **O King of heaven**

Liturgical text

O Regem caeli, cui talia famulantur obsequia!	O King of heaven, served with such obedience!
Stabulo proponitur qui continet mundum:	He is laid in the stable who holds the world:
lacet in praesepio, et in caelis regnat.	he lies in a manger and reigns in heaven.
Alleluia.	Alleluia.

Natus est nobis hodie Salvator	Today is born a Saviour
Qui est Christus Dominus, in civitate David,	who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David:
lacet in praesepio, et in caelis regnat.	he lies in a manger and reigns in heaven.
Alleluia.	Alleluia.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Surge illuminare **Arise, shine**

Liturgical text

Surge, illuminare Jerusalem, Quia venit lumen tuum,	Arise, shine O Jerusalem, for your light is come,
Et gloria Domini super te orta est.	and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.
Quia ecce tenebrae operient terram	For behold darkness shall cover the earth,

Et caligo populos:	and gross darkness the people:
Super te autem orietur Dominus	but the Lord shall arise upon you,
Et gloria eius in te videbitur.	and his glory shall be seen upon you.

Et ambulabant gentes in lumine tuo	And the Gentiles shall come to your light
Et reges in splendore ortus tui.	and kings to the brightness of your sunrise.
Leva in circuitu oculos tuos et vide:	Lift up your eyes and look around you:
Omnes isti congregati sunt, venerunt tibi;	all of them gather together, they come to you;
Filii tui de longe venient	your sons shall come from afar
Et filiae tuae de latere surgent.	and your daughters shall be at your side.
Tunc videbis et afflues	Then you will see, and abound,
Et mirabitur et dilatabitur cor tuum:	and your heart will be amazed and be enlarged;
Quando conversa fuerit ad te multitudo maris;	the multitude of the seas will turn to you;
Fortitudo gentium venerit tibi.	the strength of the nations will come to you.
Inundatio camelorum operiet te,	Herds of camels will cover you,
Dromedarii Madian et Epha;	the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
Omnes de Saba venient,	all they from Sheba shall come,
Aurum et thus deferentes,	bringing gold and frankincense,
Et laudem Domino annuntiantes.	and showing forth praise to the Lord.