

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 23 June 2024
7.30pm

Queen of Hearts

The Gesualdo Six

Owain Park artistic director, bass
Guy James countertenor
Alasdair Austin countertenor

Joseph Wicks tenor
Josh Cooter tenor
Michael Craddock baritone

Antoine Brumel (c.1450-1512)
Josquin des Prez (c.1450-1521)
Loyset Compère (c.1445-1518)
Antoine Brumel
Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)
Johannes Prioris (fl. c.1485-1512)
Owain Park (b.1993)
Jean Lhéritier (c.1480-1551)

Sub tuum praesidium (pub. 1520)
O virgo prudentissima
Plaine d'ennuy/Anima mea
Sicut Lilium
Ave Maria ... virgo serena (pub. c.1520)
Dulcis amica Dei (pub. 1508)
Prière pour Marie (2023)
Sub tuum presidium a6

Interval

Josquin des Prez
Antoine de Févin (c.1470-1511)
Jean Mouton
Anon

Petite camusette (pub. 1545)
Fors seulement (pub. c.1515)
De tous regretz
Se je souspire/*Ecce iterum attributed to Margaret of Austria*

Costanzo Festa (c.1485-1545)
Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade (b.1989)
Johannes Prioris
Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560)

Quis dabit oculis (1514)
Plaisir n'ai plus Commissioned by The Gesualdo Six (2023)
Consommo la vita mia
Tous les regretz (pub. 1544)

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Over the past few years, it has been a joy to delve further into the rich tapestry of musical works that inspired our *Josquin's legacy* project, which explored the cross-currents of texts and the movement of 'Oltremontani' composers (from the Franco-Flemish School who came 'over the Alps' to northern Italy) as they travelled around Renaissance Europe. As we developed our concert programmes for performance, a new thread emerged: music that connected the queenly courts of Europe.

In this programme, we explore music that venerates the Virgin Mary - the 'regina caelorum' - and that memorialises her terrestrial counterparts, highlighting the interwoven lives of Anne of Brittany, Margaret of Austria and - in England - Anne Boleyn and Mary Tudor. We have thoroughly enjoyed putting together this collection, both for our forthcoming album release (28 June) and for concerts such as today. Our particular thanks go to Guy James for his work researching and preparing editions of the music.

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The Ancient Greek hymn *Sub tuum praesidium* beseeches the Mother of God for protection. **Brumel** uses lower voices and simply ornamented homophonic statements in his peaceful setting.

Josquin des Prez spent his later life in Flanders and was well-respected by the French courts. *O virgo prudentissima* is one of his two settings of a Marian text by Angelo Poliziano which references *Sub tuum praesidium*. Josquin's masterwork employs a canon on the chant *Beata Mater*, around which the remaining four voices weave rich polyphony. *Plaine d'ennuy/Anima mea* from Margaret of Austria's *chansonnier* is a beautiful example of a *motet-chanson*. **Loyset Compère** adapts the tenor melody from Gaspar van Weerbeke's *Anima mea liquefacta est*, and adds two voices in French which welcome death as a relief from earthly pains.

Brumel's *Sicut Liliun* bears striking resemblance to *Dulcis amica Dei* by **Prioris**, and one likely inspired the other. Both gorgeous miniatures, they open with cascading thirds delicately depicting the opening of flower petals, with lilies and roses representing French and English royalty adorning the manuscripts.

Those works bookend **Mouton's** masterful *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*, which also references Mary as the flower: 'rosa sine spina'. Mouton uses appropriately florid melodic lines, culminating in a homophonic plea for intercession.

Anne Boleyn left the court of Margaret of Austria in 1514 to attend to Mary Tudor, who was on her way to marry Louis XII and become his third wife, following the death of Anne of Brittany. Written specially for this

programme, **Owain Park's** *Prière pour Marie* sets a prayer reportedly uttered by French peasants during Mary's journey to the wedding and reflects upon the blurring of the boundary between queens terrestrial and celestial.

Lhéritier's setting of *Sub tuum praesidium* has grander scope than Brumel's, with six parts freely composed in a playful, almost instrumental style. Somewhat atypically Lhéritier resorts to homophony for 'libera nos', abandoning dense polyphony to provide a moment of clarity.

Lighter fare is found in **Josquin's** *Petite camusette*, likely first set by Ockeghem with three voices, with this playful setting presenting a rare example of the secular application of the central canonic technique used by Josquin and Lhéritier in their Marian motets. **Févin** moves in a different direction for his *Fors seulement*, spurning Ockeghem and instead ornamenting one of Matthaëus Pipelare's settings.

Mouton's *De tous regretz* survives in a later print, but stylistically belongs alongside the other regretz chansons from the early 1500s and is infused with all of his typical poise.

It is likely that some texts from **Margaret of Austria's** *chansonnier* were penned by her, and she may have also composed the music for the *motet-chanson* *Se je souspire*. The Latin text in the bass laments the passing of her brother Phillip le beau.

Constanzo Festa's gorgeous *Quis dabit oculis* laments the death of Anne of Brittany in 1514, culminating in a particularly heartbreaking manner with 'Anna, Anna, Requiescat in Pace'. The falling thirds of this final cadence echo those of Brumel's *Sicut Liliun* and Prioris's *Dulcis amica Dei*.

Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade's *Plaisir n'ai plus* sets Clément Marot's poetry of c.1532. Marot was part of the circle of court poets surrounding Anne of Brittany, and his poetry explores themes very familiar to regretz *chansons* but from a male perspective, longing after a lost 'Dame de valeur'. Cruttwell-Reade expands and transcends the harmony of the early Renaissance, recomposing cadential figures favoured by Monteverdi and Gesualdo, before pushing this yet further in chromatic twists and turns.

Consummo la vita mia was almost certainly written by **Prioris** for Anne's funeral. A rare Italian text setting in these sources, it closes one of the *chansonniers*, and is a companion work of *Dulcis amica Dei*.

Gombert's *Tous les regretz* was published in 1544, displaying the longevity and appeal of the regretz *chanson*. Inimitably Gombert, it sets the same text as one of Brumel's regretz, but on a larger scale, six voices allowing Gombert to outgrow the confines of the trope and exhibit his own beautiful stylistic harmonic language.

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Antoine Brumel (c.1450-1512)

Sub tuum praesidium To your protection

(pub. 1520)

Anonymous

Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix;	To your protection we fly, holy mother of God;
Nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus meis,	do not spurn our prayers in our time of need,
Sed a periculis cunctis libera nos	but from all perils set us free,
Semper virgo Maria benedicta.	ever blessed virgin Mary.

Josquin des Prez (c.1450-1521)

O virgo prudentissima O Virgin most wise

Angelo Poliziano

O Virgo prudentissima Quam coelo missus Gabriel	O Virgin most wise whom Gabriel, sent from heaven
Supremi regis nuntius	as messenger of the most-high king,
Plenam testatur gratia.	affirms as full of grace,
Te sponsam factor omnium,	The maker of everything called you wife,
Te Matrem Dei Filius,	the Son of God called you mother,
Te vocat habitaculum	the blessed Spirit calls you
Suum beatus spiritus.	his home.
Tu stella maris diceris	You are called star of the sea,
Quae nobis inter scopulos,	You who show us among the rocks
Inter obscuros turbines Portum salutis indicas.	and dark winds the harbour of salvation.
Per te de tetro carcere	Through you the ancient fathers
Antiqui patres exerunt;	are freed from their foul prison;
Per te nobis astriferae	through you are opened to us
Panduntur aulae limina.	the gates of the starry palace.
Audi Virgo puerpera Et sola Mater integra;	Hear, child-bearing virgin and the only mother who remains unblemished;
Audi precantes quesimus	hear your servants praying
Tuos Maria servulos.	as we call to you, Mary.

Repelle mentis tenebras	Drive the shadows from our minds,
Disrumpe cordis glaciem.	shatter the ice in our hearts.
Nos sub tuum praesidium	Protect us, who take refuge
Confugientes protege.	under your guardianship.
Alleluia.	Alleluia.

Loyset Compère (c.1445-1518)

Plaine d'ennuy/Anima Filled with mea boredom/My soul

Anonymous

Liturgical text

Se par la mort estoit ma vie estainte.

Plaine d'ennuy de longue main atteinte	Filled with boredom at long waiting,
De desplaisir en vie langoureuse,	with unhappiness at idle life,
Dis a par moy que seroit bien heureuse	tell me how I might be happy

<i>bassus</i>	<i>bassus</i>
Anima mea liquefacta est.	My soul melted.
Filiae Jerusalem, nuntiate dilecto meo quia amore languet.	Daughters of Jerusalem, tell my beloved that I languish from love.

Antoine Brumel

Sicut Lilium

Liturgical text

As the lily

Sicut lilium inter spinas, Sic amica mea inter filias.	As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
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Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)

Ave Maria ... virgo serena (pub. c.1520)
Liturgical text

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum, Virgo serena.

Tu parvi et magni,
Leonis et agni,
Salvatoris Christi;
Templum extitisti,
Sed virgo intacta.

Tu floris et roris,
Panis et pastoris,
Virginum et regina,
Rosa sine spina,
Genitrix es facta.

Tu civitas regis justitiae,
Tu mater es misericordiae,
De lacu faecis et miseriae,
Theophilum reformans gratiae.
Te collaudat caelestis curia,
Tu mater es regis et filia.

O Maria dulcissima,
Per te reis donator venia.
O Maria piissima,
Per te reis donatur venia.
O Maria mitissima,
Per te justis confertur gratia.

Pro nobis semper Christum exora. Amen.

Hail Mary ... serene Virgin

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you,
serene Virgin.

For lowly and great,
lion and lamb,
our saviour Christ:
you have been his temple,
while still a virgin.

For the flower and rose,
the bread and the shepherd:
you queen of virgins,
a rose without a thorn,
you became their mother.

You are the royal seat of justice,
you are the mother of mercy,
from out of the depths of dregs and misery restoring Theophilus to grace.
The heavenly court praises you,
you the king's mother and daughter.

O sweetest Mary,
through you the accused is forgiven.
O most pious Mary,
through you the accused is forgiven.
O most gentle Mary,
through you favour comes to the just.

For us always entreat Christ. Amen.

Johannes Prioris (fl. c.1485-1512)

Dulcis amica Dei (pub. 1508)
Anonymous

Dulcis amica Dei,

Sweet companion of God

Sweet companion of God,

Rosa vernans, stella decora,
Tu memor esto mei
Dum mortis venerit hora.

rose blooming, beautiful star,
be mindful of me
when comes the hour of death.

Owain Park (b.1993)

Prière pour Marie (2023) **Prayer for Mary**
Pierre Gringore

Comme la paix entre Dieu et les hommes
Par le moyen de la Vierge Marie
Fut jadis faite, ainsi a present sommes
Bourgeois François déchargez de nos sommes,
Car Marie avec nous se marie.

Justice et paix auprès d'elle

Au parc de France et pays d'Angleterre,
Puis que le lien d'amours tient l'armoire.

Acquis avons, pour nous nul n'en varie,
Marie au ciel et Marie en la terre.

As the peace between God and man
through the means of the Virgin Mary
was once made, so are we now,
French bourgeois, released of our burdens,
because Mary has married us;
justice and peace appear through her
in the fields of France and countryside of England;
since the ties of love restrain arms,
we have acquired for ourselves, nothing less,
Mary in heaven and Mary on earth.

Jean Lhéritier (c.1480-1551)

Sub tuum presidium a6 **To your protection**
Anonymous

Sub tuum presidium confugimus, sancta Dei genitrix;

Nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus meis,

Sed a periculis cunctis libera nos

Semper virgo Maria benedicta.

To your protection we fly,
holy mother of God;

do not spurn our prayers in our time of need,

but from all perils set us free,

ever blessed virgin Mary.

Interval

Josquin des Prez

Petite camusette (pub. 1545) <i>Anonymous</i>	Little Camusette
Petite camusette, à la mort m'avez mis, Robin et Marion, s'en vont au bois joly. Ilz s'en vont, ilz s'en vont bras à bras, Ilz se sont endormis. Petite camusette, à la mort m'avez mis.	Little Camusette, you will be the death of me. Robin and Marion, they went off to the greenwood. They went off, they went off arm in arm. They fell asleep. Little Camusette, you will be the death of me.

Antoine de Févin (c.1470-1511)

Fors seulement (pub. c.1515) <i>Anonymous</i>	Simply waiting
Fors seulement la mort sans aultre l'atente que je meure, En mon las cueur num espoir ne demeure, Car mon malheur si tresfort me tourmente Qu'il n'est douleur que par vous je ne sente, Pource que suis de vous perdre bien seure.	Simply waiting until without more ado I might die, in my weary heart no hope remains, for my misery so much pains me that there is no grief which by you I do not feel, because I to lose you am certain.

Jean Mouton

De tous regretz <i>Anonymous</i>	Of all regrets
De tous regretz ung tout seul me tormente Et le support ne puy plus soubstenir. Triste seray sans joye maintenir, Jusques a ce qu'auray qui me contente.	Of all regrets just one torments me, and bearing it I can no longer manage. Sad will I be without joy to hold, until I have what contents me.

Anon

Se je souspire/Ecce iterum attributed to Margaret of Austria <i>attr. Margaret of Austria</i>	Thus I sigh/Behold, again
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Se je souspire et plaignz, Disant 'Helas, aymy!' Et par champs et par plains Je plains mon doux amy. Sur tous l'avoir eslu, Mai fiere destinée Par mort le m'a toulu, Dolente Infortunée.	Thus I sigh and lament, saying 'Helas, aymy!' And in fields and plains I grieve for my sweet friend. He was chosen above all, but proud destiny has by death taken him from me, the sad, unfortunate one.
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Mes chantz sont de deuil plains; Bon jour n'ay ne demy. Vous qui oyes mes plaints, Avez pitie de my!	My songs are full of sorrow; I have neither a good day nor half. You who hear my laments, have pity on me!
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Ecce iterum novux dolor accedit! Nec satis erat infortunissime Cesaris filie conjugem amississe dilectissimum; nisi etiam fratrem unicum mors acerba surriperet. Doleo super te, frater mi Philippe, Rex optime; nec est qui me consoletur.	Behold, again a new sorrow comes! It was not enough for the most unfortunate daughter of the Emperor to have lost her dearest husband; bitter death must steal even her own brother. I mourn thee, my brother Philip, greatest King; nor is there anyone to console me.
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O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus!	O ye who pass this way, attend and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow!
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Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended

Costanzo Festa (c.1485-1545)

Quis dabit oculis (1514) <i>Anonymous</i>	Who will give our eyes
Quis dabit oculis nostris fontem lacrymarum Et plorabimus die ac nocte coram Domino?	Who will give our eyes a fountain of tears? And we shall weep day and night in the presence of the Lord.
Britannia, quid ploras? Musica sileat.	Brittany, why do you lament? Let music keep silent.
Francia, cur deducta lugubri veste moerore consumeris?	France, why did you tear your vest in mourning and are spent with grief?
Anna. Requiescat in pace.	May Anne rest in peace.

Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade (b.1989)

Plaisir n'ai plus (2023) <i>Clément Marot</i>	Pleasure I have no longer
Plaisir n'ai plus, mais vis en déconfort. Fortune m'a remis en grand douleur. L'heur que j'avais est tourné un malheur, Malheureux est, qui n'a aucun confort.	Pleasure I have no longer, but a life of discomfort. Fortune has dealt me a great sorrow. The time that I had has turned to misfortune, unhappy is he who lacks all comfort.
Fort suit dolent, et regret me remord, More m'a ôté ma Dame de valeur. L'heur que j'avais est tourné un malheur, Malheureux est, qui n'a aucun confort.	Deep is my mourning, and regret consumes me. Death has robbed me of my precious lady. The time that I had has turned to misfortune: unhappy is he who lacks all comfort.
Valoir ne puis, en ce monde suis mort. Morte est m'amour, dont suis en grand langedeur. Langoureux suis, pleine d'amère liqueur, Le cœur me part pour sa dolente mort.	I can be of no worth, to this world I am dead. Dead is my love, and great my languor. Languishing, I am filled with a bitter cordial, my heart breaks at her sorrowful death.

Johannes Prioris

Consummo la vita mia <i>Anonymous</i>	I eat up my life
Consummo la vita mia poco a poco, Et non audar demandare de la mercede.	I eat up my life little by little, and I dare not ask for any reward.

Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560)

Tous les regretz (pub. 1544) <i>Anonymous</i>	All regrets
Tous les regretz quoncques furent au monde, Venez vers moy, quelque part que je soie. Prennez mon cueur en sa douleur parfonde Et le fendez que soudainement la voye.	All regrets there have been in the world, come to me wherever I may be. Take my heart in its grief profound and break it so that suddenly she sees.

Translation of 'Plaisir n'ai plus' by Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade. All translations kindly provided by tonight's artists.