

# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 24 January 2023  
7.30pm

## Tom and Will

### The King's Singers

Patrick Dunachie countertenor  
Edward Button countertenor  
Julian Gregory tenor  
Christopher Bruerton baritone  
Nick Ashby baritone  
Jonathan Howard bass

### Fretwork

Richard Boothby viol  
Jonathan Rees viol  
Emilia Benjamin viol  
Joanna Levine viol  
Sam Stadlen viol

Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)	Hark all ye lovely saints above (1598)
Thomas Weelkes	<b>To Adventure</b> In Nomine Thule the period of cosmography (1600)
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)	<b>To Spring</b> This sweet and merry month of May a6 (pub. 1590) Fantasia a3 No. 1 in C Fantasia a3 No. 2 in C Fantasia a3 No. 3 in C Browning 'The Leaves Be Green' a5
Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)	<b>To Friendship</b> In jejunio et fletu (pub. 1575)
William Byrd	Ye sacred muses
James MacMillan (b.1959)	Ye sacred muses (2021) <i>world première</i>
Thomas Morley (c.1557-1602)	Nolo mortem peccatoris
Thomas Weelkes	Death hath deprived me (1608)
Roderick Williams (b.1965)	Death, be not proud (2022) <i>world première</i>
	<i>Interval</i>
William Byrd	Prelude and Ground a5 'The Queen's Goodnight' Fantasia a5 in C
Thomas Weelkes	<b>To God</b> Hosanna to the Son of David
William Byrd	O salutaris hostia a6
William Byrd	<b>To Queen</b> O Lord make thy servant Elizabeth
Thomas Weelkes	As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending (1601)
Thomas Weelkes	<b>To Women</b> Like two proud armies (1600)
William Byrd	If women could be fair (pub. 1588)
William Byrd	Praise our Lord, all ye Gentiles (pub. 1611)

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Let's raise our glasses to Tom and Will, **Weelkes** and **Byrd**, these two great English composers who both died 400 years ago. And we'll drink musical toasts to things that were important to them.

'For Motets, and Musicke of pietie and devotion, as well for the honour of our Nation, as the merit of the man, I preferre above all other our Phoenix, M. William Byrd, whom in that kind, I know not whether any may equall. I am sure, none excell, even by the judgement of France and Italy, who are very sparing in the commendation of strangers, in regard of that concept they hold of themselves. ...and being of himsele naturally disposed to Gravitie and Pietie, his veine is not so much for light Madrigals or Canzonets, yet his Virginella, and some other in his first set, cannot be mended by the best Italian of them all.' - *Henry Peacham, 1622*

Byrd was 36 years old when Weelkes was born - he had served his apprenticeship with the great Thomas Tallis, singing in the Chapel Royal as a boy, had been appointed organist and choirmaster in Lincoln Cathedral, and moved back to his native London to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. All this before Weelkes had even been born.

### To Adventure

The Elizabethan age was the great age of exploration. Drake came back from circumnavigating the globe in 1580, bringing enormous wealth and tales of strange and far-off lands. Weelkes set this extraordinary poem, 'Thule the period of cosmography', which describes some of the wonder at these exotic lands; but finds that, wondrous as these things seem, the inner life of love is yet more so.

### To Spring

Weelkes was England's leading madrigalist; Byrd was not drawn to this form, despite having mastered almost all the other musical genres of his time. However, 'This sweet and merry month of May' is one of his few true madrigals, and shows how he could mix it with the best in the field.

There is an earthy side to Byrd, which comes out in both his keyboard and his consort music. Hear how easily he incorporates folksong into what might seem a serious composition in 'Browning'.

### To Friendship

Byrd's relationship to Thomas Tallis was long and full of mutual respect and affection. They met, it seems, when Byrd joined the Chapel Royal as a choir boy, where Tallis was organist. After his spell in Lincoln, Byrd rejoined the Chapel Royal as joint organist with Tallis, and three years later their first publication appeared - *Cantiones*. Byrd had witnessed Tallis's will, and when he died in 1585, Byrd composed one of the most heartfelt tributes to his friend and mentor.

And **James MacMillan** has used these same words in his own tribute to Byrd, substituting 'Will' for 'Tallis'.

Although Weelkes was greatly influenced by **Thomas Morley's** madrigals, it is not known when they met or how they became friends. Weelkes spent most of his life in Winchester, then Chichester; while Morley came from Norwich but lived in London, working at St Paul's and then at the Chapel Royal for

most of his life. But there is no doubting the evident affection with which Weelkes sets his tender elegy.

**Roderick Williams** has taken the tenth of John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* to mourn the loss of Weelkes.

Both Byrd and Weelkes composed striking *In Nomines*, instrumental works based on a plainchant, or *cantus firmus*, taken from John Taverner's mass, *Gloria tibi trinitas*. In this six-voice mass, the plainsong is heard in its entirety only in the *Sanctus*, in the section of four voices setting the words 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine', hence the title.

### To God

In matters of religion, we find the starkest distinction between these two composers. Byrd was Catholic and Weelkes Anglican, at a time when Catholics were under intense suspicion. Yet it was Byrd who was the pre-eminent court composer, sanctioned by the Queen, while Weelkes's career in Chichester can only be said to have declined rapidly. He was reprimanded for being drunk, then for not attending services and finally, in 1617, sacked as organist and choirmaster. Even then his behaviour didn't seem to improve, as it was reported two years later that:

dyvers tymes & very often come so disguised eyther from the Taverne or Ale house into the quire as is muche to be lamented, for in these humoures he will bothe curse & swear most dreadfully, & so profane the service of God ... and though he hath bene often tymes admonished ... to refrayne theis humors and reforme hym selfe, yett he daylye continue the same, & is rather worse than better therein.

### To Queen

Byrd's relationship with his sovereign was remarkable: she protected him from being fined for recusancy which enabled him to compose and publish overtly Catholic music, such as the Masses and *Gradualia*. He returned the favour with works praising the Queen.

Weelkes's 'As Vesta was from Latmos hill decending' is part of the *Triumphs of Oriana*, published in 1601 - Oriana being, of course, the Queen. It was a collection of madrigals by the leading composers of the day (though not by Byrd), all in hyperbolic praise of the ageing monarch, and heard by her as part of the May Day celebrations in 1601. They all conclude with the lines:

Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana: long  
live fair Oriana.

Two years later the Queen was dead.

### To Women

Despite the seemingly endless and extravagant praise heaped upon the sovereign, there was a deep well of misogyny in Elizabethan attitudes to women that is often difficult for contemporary listeners to stomach. Byrd's setting of The Earl of Oxford's poem interprets it as a comic song, a light, inconsequential piece of 'banter'. Yet the dark undercurrent is plain.

On the other hand, Weelkes's 'Like two proud armies' restores the balance, with unfeigned tender passion framed in a delightful conceit.

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## Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

### Hark all ye lovely saints above (1598)

*Anonymous*

Hark, all ye lovely saints above  
Diana hath agreed with Love,  
His fiery weapen to remove.  
Do you not see how they agree?  
Then cease, fair ladies; why weep ye?

See, see, your mistress bids you cease,  
And welcome Love, with love's increase;  
Diana hath procured your peace.  
Cupid hath sworn his bow forlorn  
To break and burn, ere ladies mourn.

## TO ADVENTURE

### Thomas Weelkes

#### In Nomine

### Thule the period of cosmography (1600)

*Thomas Weelkes*

Thule, the period of cosmography,  
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulfurious fire  
Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;  
Trinacrian Etna's flames ascend not higher:  
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,  
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns  
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,  
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns  
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes:  
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,  
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

## TO SPRING

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

#### This sweet and merry month of May a6

(pub. 1590)

*attr. Thomas Watson*

This sweet and merry month of May,  
While nature wantons in her prime,  
And birds do sing, and beasts do play,  
For pleasure of the joyful time,  
I choose the first for holy day,  
And greet Eliza with a rhyme.  
O beauteous Queen of second Troy:  
Take well in worth a simple toy.

## Fantasia a3 No. 1 in C

## Fantasia a3 No. 2 in C

## Fantasia a3 No. 3 in C

### Browning 'The Leaves Be Green' a5

*Anonymous*

The leaves be green, the nuts be brown:  
They hang so high they will not come down.

## TO FRIENDSHIP

### Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)

#### In jejunio et fletu (pub. 1575)

*Liturgical text*

In jejunio et fletu orabant  
sacerdotes:  
Parce, Domine, parce populo  
tuo, et ne des hereditatem  
tuam in perditionem.  
Inter vestibulum et altare  
plorabant sacerdotes,  
dicentes: Parce populo  
tuo.

#### In fasting and weeping

In fasting and weeping  
the priests prayed:  
Spare, O Lord, spare thy  
people, and give not thine  
inheritance to ruin.  
Between the porch and  
the altar the priests  
wept, saying: Spare thy  
people.

## William Byrd

### Ye sacred muses

*Anonymous*

Ye sacred Muses, race of Jove,  
Whom Music's lore delighteth,  
Come down from crystal heav'ns above  
To earth, where sorrow dwelleth,  
In mourning weeds with tears in eyes:  
Tallis is dead, and Music dies.

### James MacMillan (b.1959)

#### Ye sacred muses (2021)

*Anonymous*

Ye sacred Muses, race of Jove,  
Whom Music's lore delighteth,  
Come down from crystal heav'ns above  
To earth, where sorrow dwelleth,  
In mourning weeds with tears in eyes:  
Will is dead, and Music dies.

## Thomas Morley (c.1557-1602)

**Nolo mortem peccatoris**                      **I do not want the death of a sinner**

*attr. John Redford*

Father I am thine only Son, sent down from heav'n mankind to save.

Father, all things fulfilled and done according to thy will, I have.

Father, my will now all is this: Nolo mortem peccatoris.

Father, behold my painful smart, taken for man on ev'ry side;

Ev'n from my birth to death most tart, no kind of pain I have denied,

But suffered all, and all for this: Nolo mortem peccatoris.

Nolo mortem peccatoris; Haec sunt verba Salvatoris.	'I do not want the death of a sinner.' These are the words of the Saviour.
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## Thomas Weelkes

**Death hath deprived me (1608)**

*Anonymous*

Death hath deprived me of my dearest friend,

My dearest friend is dead and laid in grave,

In grave he rests until the world shall end

As end must all things have.

All things must have an end that Nature wrought,

Must unto dust be brought.

**Roderick Williams (b.1965)**

**Death, be not proud (2022)**

*John Donne*

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

**Interval**

## William Byrd

**Prelude and Ground a5 'The Queen's Goodnight'**

**Fantasia a5 in C**

**TO GOD**

**Thomas Weelkes**

**Hosanna to the Son of David**

*Liturgical text*

Hosanna to the Son of David.

Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, thou that sittest in the highest heavens.

Hosanna in excelsis Deo.

## William Byrd

**O salutaris hostia a6**

*St Thomas Aquinas*

O salutaris hostia

Quae caeli pandis  
ostium,

Bella premunt hostilia:

Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino

Sit sempiterna gloria,

Qui vitam sine termino

Nobis donet in patria.

**O saving victim**

O saving victim

who opens the gate of  
heaven,

hostile wars press on us:

give strength, bring aid.

To the Lord, three in one,

be everlasting glory,

for life without end

He gives us in his Kingdom.

**TO QUEEN**

## William Byrd

**O Lord make thy servant Elizabeth**

*Anonymous, after Liturgical text*

O Lord make thy servant Elizabeth our Queen to rejoice in thy strength:

Give her her heart's desire, and deny not the request of her lips;

But prevent her with thine everlasting blessing,

And give her a long life, even for ever and ever. Amen.

## Thomas Weelkes

### As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending

(1601)

*Anonymous*

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,  
She spied a maiden queen the same ascending,  
Attended on by all the shepherds swain,  
To whom Diana's darlings came running down amain,  
First two by two, then three by three together,  
Leaving their goddess all alone, hasted thither;  
And mingling with the shepherds of her train,  
With mirthful tunes her presence entertain.  
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,  
Long live fair Oriana.

## TO WOMEN

## Thomas Weelkes

### Like two proud armies (1600)

*Anonymous*

Like two proud armies marching in the field, -  
Joining a thund'ring fight, each scorns to yield, -  
So in my heart your beauty and my reason:  
One claims the crown, the other says 'tis treason.  
But oh! your beauty shineth as the sun;  
And dazzled reason yields as quite undone.

## William Byrd

### If women could be fair (pub. 1588)

*Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*

If women could be fair and never fond,  
Or that their beauty might continue still,  
I would not marvel thought they made men bond  
By service long to purchase their good will.  
But when I see how frail these creatures are  
I laugh that men forget themselves so far.

To mark what choice they make and how they change,  
How, leaving best, the worst they choose out still,  
And how, like haggards wild, about they range,  
Scorning after reason to follow will.  
Who would not shake such buzzards from the fist  
And let them fly (fair fools) which way they list?

Yet for our sport, we fawn and flatter both  
To pass the time, when nothing else can please;  
And train them on to yield by subtle oath  
The sweet which gives such humour ease;  
And then we say, when we their follies try,  
To play with fools, O what a fool was I.

## William Byrd

### Praise our Lord, all ye Gentiles (pub. 1611)

*Liturgical text*

Praise our Lord all ye Gentiles, praise him all ye people,  
Because his mercy is confirmed upon us, and his truth  
remaineth forever. Amen.