# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 3 May 2022 7.30pm Queen of Heaven

**Tenebrae** 

Fiona Fraser soprano Izzy Gibber soprano Rachel Haworth soprano Hannah King soprano Katie Trethewey soprano Emma Walshe soprano Rosanna Wicks soprano

Amy Blythe alto Martha McLorinan alto Ellie Minnev alto Sophie Overin alto

Jeremy Budd tenor Oscar Golden-Lee tenor Nicholas Madden tenor Joseph Wicks tenor

Joseph Edwards bass William Gaunt bass Nathan Harrison bass Jimmy Holliday bass Owain Park bass

Totus Tuus Op. 60 (1987) Henryk Mikolaj Górecki (1933-2010)

Robert Parsons (c.1535-1571) Ave Maria (c.1560s) **Anton Bruckner** (1824-1896) Ave Maria (1861) Ave Maria (1949) Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) A Hymn to the Virgin (1930 rev. 1934)

**Rebecca Clarke** (1886-1979) Ave Maria (?1937)

**Edvard Grieg** (1843-1907) Ave. maris stella (1893) Mater ora Filium (1921) **Arnold Bax** (1883-1953)

Interval

Owain Park (b.1993) Ave maris stella (2014)

**John Tavener** (1944-2013) Mother of God, here I stand from 5 Anthems from The Veil of the Temple

(1992 rev. 2002)

Sulpitia Cesis (b.fl. 1619) Stabat Mater (pub. 1619)

**Gregorian Chant** Tota pulchra es

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) Laudi alla Vergine Maria (c.1890)

**Gregorian Chant** Ave Regina caelorum Magnificat Op. 33 (1982) Giles Swayne (b.1946)

**Gregorian Chant** Salve Regina

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) Salve Regina (1941) Margaret Rizza (b.1929) Ave generosa (2007)

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The Virgin Mary wears many faces in Christian liturgy. She is the all-powerful Queen of Heaven, the all-knowing Throne of Wisdom, the radiant Star of the Sea, but also the Handmaid of the Lord, the tender Mother of God, the grieving Mother of Sorrows. She is at once saint and symbol – splendid as a gilded icon and just as untouchable – and daughter, mother and mourner, a woman at once divine and painfully human.

She is the still point at the centre of a programme that spans over six centuries, moving from plainsong and renaissance polyphony through 19th-century anthems to contemporary choral works.

This musical portrait chronologically begins with the melodic penand-ink sketches of **Gregorian Chant**. The arching lines of Marian antiphons 'Ave Regina caelorum' and 'Salve Regina' are graceful, delicate, and it doesn't seem too fanciful to hear the echo of their subject in them. Sung seasonally along with 'Alma Redemptoris Mater' and 'Regina Caeli' at the close of each day's Compline service, together they offer a portrait of the Virgin that is at once shifting and constant.

The influence of these chants runs through the programme, surfacing in many guises: the simple, scalic meditation of **Owain Park**'s 'Ave maris stella' (its ambiguous harmonic shifts so different to the warm affirmation of Grieg's setting of the same text, celebrating Mary as the 'Star of the Sea') as well as **Margaret Rizza**'s evocative 'Ave generosa', in which the purity of a single voice (the 'piercing gaze of chastity' described in Hildegard of Bingen's poetry) grows and swells outwards as isolated intercessions give way to 'heaven's flood', and **Górecki**'s 'Totus Tuus' ('I am completely yours, Mary') in which traditional Polish chants are amplified by the simplest of means into ecstatic, expansive choral gestures.

Mary's story begins with the Annunciation, an episode captured in the *Magnificat* – the Virgin's song of joy. Few settings have a greater sense of urgency or exhilaration than **Giles Swayne**'s, syncopated rhythms dancing through music for double-choir that collides the techniques and textures of 16th-century polyphony with traditional West African music in the form of a Senegalese worksong. The effect is at once earthy and light, rooted and suspended in the ear.

Of all the Marian prayers, the *Ave Maria* is surely the most familiar – the traditional 'Angelic Salutation' to the Virgin is a litany whose lulling rhythms are the pulse of worship in both the Catholic and Orthodox Church. The four settings included here each belong to a different age. **Robert Parsons**'s 16th-century 'Ave Maria' weaves a fine, filmy veil of polyphony around the text in a work that may have been intended for the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots. Parsons's treatment of dissonance is particularly striking, delaying harmonic resolution with painful mastery, adding bolder shades to the motet's largely pastel purity.

Reacting against the increasingly operatic drama of 19th-century church music, **Bruckner**'s setting harks back to the musical purity of an earlier age. There are echoes of both Palestrina and Bach in the

elegant a cappella texture that grows from barest homophony in the upper voices to cascading waves of suspensions that peal through all seven parts. Palestrina is also the starting point for both **Verdi**'s late 'Laudi alla Vergine Maria' and for 20th-century British composer **Rebecca Clarke**. The latter's delicate upper-voices setting of the *Ave Maria* pays overt tribute to the renaissance polyphony she would have encountered under the guidance of her teacher Vaughan Williams.

The moving underlying parts of **Stravinsky**'s 'Ave Maria' turn the prayer almost into a cradle song. 'I can endure unaccompanied singing in only the most harmonically primitive music,' the composer wrote – a pronouncement amply borne out here. Any narrative quality in the text is negated by a meditative setting that restricts its harmonic language and range to the absolute minimum, creating a deliberately naïve piece of 20th-century musical sophistication.

Traditionally sung between Pentecost and Advent, the *Salve Regina* is a plea for the intercession of Mary, Queen of Heaven: a humble prayer for the redemption of a fallen people. Humility and directness are at the fore in **Poulenc**'s hymn-like, often homophonic setting, shaped by the rhetoric of the text but inflected by the composer's distinctive bittersweet harmonies that settle briefly, but always seem to grasp at something just beyond reach.

Mary is at her most human in the *Stabat Mater* – the 13th-century hymn that captures a mother's grief at the foot of the cross. We hear the text here in **Sulpitia Cesis**'s understated setting, composed for the female voices of the Modena convent of which the aristocratic Cesis was herself a member. Traditional plainsong alternates with Cesis's own stanzas, a poignant tension between vulnerability and shared expression, heightened by the plangent arcs of Cesis's counterpoint.

Heavily influenced by the faith and music of the Russian Orthodox tradition, the works of **John Tavener** pursue spiritual truth through simplicity and sonic drama. Taken from Tavener's eight-hour, allnight vigil *The Veil of the Temple*, the short anthem 'Mother of God, here I stand' is so audaciously, so exquisitely simple as to defeat musical analysis – its power is all in performance. Two strophic verses sustain a hushed meditation, direct and familiar as any folksong, a small, still point of contemplation within a musical epic.

Anonymous medieval poems supply the starting point for both Benjamin Britten's 'A Hymn to the Virgin' and Bax's 'Mater ora Filium'. But while the teenage Britten's precocious carol is a perfect miniature – two SATB groups articulating the contrast between accessible English text and other-worldly Latin, shifting human emotions and the eternal, unchanging mystery of faith – Bax takes a small poem and, under the influence of Byrd's Mass for 5 Voices, transforms it into a mighty, almost symphonic statement for unaccompanied double-choir: an ambitious and demanding exercise in textural variety.

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## Henryk Mikolaj Górecki (1933-2010)

**Totus Tuus Op. 60** (1987) Completely yours

Maria Boguslawska

Maria! Totus tuus sum, Maria,

Mater nostri Redemptoris,

Virgo Dei, virgo

pia,

Mater mundi Salvatoris. Totus tuus sum, Maria!

Marv!

I am completely yours, Mary, mother of our Redeemer. Virgin Mother of God, blessed

virgin,

mother of the world's Savior. I am completely yours, Mary!

## Robert Parsons (c.1535-1571)

Ave Maria (c.1560s)

Liturgical text

Hail Mary

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;

Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Et benedictus fructus ventris

tui. Amen. Hail Mary, full of grace,

the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy

womb. Amen.

### Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

**Ave Maria** (1861)

Hail Mary

Liturgical text

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; Benedicta tu in mulieribus,

Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus [Christus]. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,

Ora pro nobis peccatoribus, Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.

Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus [Christ]. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

## Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

**Ave Maria** (1949)

Hail Mary

Liturgical text

Amen.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; Benedicta tu in mulieribus. Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus [Christus]. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, Ora pro nobis peccatoribus, Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus [Christ].

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

## Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

A Hymn to the Virgin (1930 rev. 1934)

Anonymous

Of one that is so fair and bright

Velut maris stella

Brighter than the day is light

Parens et puella

I cry to thee, thou see to me

Lady, pray thy Son for me

Tam pia

That I may come to thee

Maria!

All this world was forlorn

Eva peccatrice

Till our Lord was y-born

De te genetrice

With ave it went away

Darkest night, and comes the day

**Salutis** 

The well springeth out of thee

Virtutis.

Lady, flow'r of everything

Rosa sine spina

Thou bare Jesu, Heaven's King

Gratia divina

Of all thou bear'st the prize

Lady, queen of paradise

Electa

Maid mild, mother

Es Effecta.

## Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

**Ave Maria** (?1937)

Liturgical text

Ave Maria, gratia plena,

Dominus tecum:

benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus

fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, regina caeli,

dulcis et pia, O mater Dei: ora pro nobis peccatoribus, ut cum electis te videamus.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee:

blessed art thou among women, and blessed is

the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, queen of heaven, sweet and pious, O mother of God:

pray for us sinners, so that we may see thee with the saints.

## Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

### Ave, maris stella (1893)

Hail, star of the sea

Anonymous

Ave. maris stella Dei Mater alma Atque semper Virgo, Felix caeli porta.

Hail, star of the sea. nurturing Mother of God, and ever Virgin happy gate of Heaven

Solve vincla reis. Profer lumen caecis Mala nostra pelle, Bona cuncta posce.

Loosen the chains of the guilty, send forth light to the blind, our evil do thou dispel, entreat (for us) all good things.

Vitam praesta puram, Iter para tutum Ut videntes Jesum, Semper collaetemur.

Bestow a pure life, prepare a safe way: that seeing Jesus, we may ever rejoice.

Sit laus Deo Patri, Summo Christo decus Spiritui Sancto, Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Praise be to God the Father, to the Most High Christ (be) glory, to the Holy Spirit (be) honour, to the Three equally. Amen.

## **Arnold Bax** (1883-1953)

### Mater ora Filium (1921)

Mother pray thy son

Anonymous

Mater ora filium Ut post hoc exilium Nobis donet gaudium Beatorum omnium. Amen.

Mother pray thy son that, after his exile, he may grant us thy joy of all the blessed ones. Amen.

Fair Maiden, who is this bairn That thou bearest in thine arm. Sir it is a kinges son That in Heaven doth wone. Mater ora filium ...

Mother pray thy son ...

Man to father He had none But Himself God alone Of a maiden He would be born To save mankind that was forlorn. Mater ora filium ...

Mother pray thy son ...

The kings brought Him presents Gold, myrrh, and frankincense To my son full of might. Alleluia. King of kings and Lord of Right. Mater ora filium ...

Mother pray thy son ...

Fair Maiden, pray for us Unto thy Son, sweet Jesus That He may send us of His grace. In heav'n on high to have a place. Mater ora filium ...

Mother pray thy son ...

#### Interval

### Owain Park (b.1993)

### Ave maris stella (2014)

Anonymous

Ave, maris stella, Dei mater alma. Atque semper virgo, Felix coeli porta.

Sumens illud «Ave» Gabrielis ore, funda nos in pace, mutans Evae nomen.

Solve vincla reis, Profer lumen caecis, Mala nostra pelle, Bona cuncta posce.

Monstra te esse matrem. Sumat per te precem Qui pro nobis natus Tulit esse tuus.

Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos culpis solutos Mites fac et castos.

Vitam praesta puram, Iter para tutum, Ut videntes Jesum Semper collaetemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri, Summo Christo decus, Spiritui Sancto Tribus honor unus. Amen

### Hail, star of the sea

Hail, star of the sea. nurturing Mother of God, and ever Virgin, happy gate of Heaven.

Receiving that 'Ave' (hail) from the mouth of Gabriel, establish us in peace, transforming the name of 'Eva' (Eve).

Loosen the chains of the guilty send forth light to the blind, our evil do thou dispel, entreat (for us) all good things.

Show thyself to be a Mother: through thee may he receive prayer who, being born for us, undertook to be thine own.

O unique Virgin, meek above all others, make us, set free from (our) sins, meek and chaste.

Bestow a pure life, prepare a safe way: that seeing Jesus, we may ever rejoice.

Praise be to God the Father, to the Most High Christ (be) glory, to the Holy Spirit (be) honour, to the Three equally. Amen.

## John Tavener (1944-2013)

## Mother of God, here I stand from 5 Anthems from The Veil of the Temple (1992 rev. 2002)

Mikhail Lermontov

Mother of God, here I stand now praying, Before this ikon of your radiant brightness, Not praying to be saved from a battlefield; Not giving thanks, nor seeking forgiveness For the sins of my soul, nor for all the souls, Numb, joyless and desolate on earth -But for her alone, whom I wholly give you.

## Sulpitia Cesis (b.fl. 1619)

### Stabat Mater (pub. 1619)

**Anonymous** 

Stabat Mater dolorosa luxta crucem lacrimosa Dum pendebat Filius. Cuius animam gementem Constriantem, et dolentem Pertransivit gladius. O quam tristis et afflicta Fuit illa benedicta Mater unigeniti. Quis est homo qui non fleret Christi Matrem si videret

In tanto supplicio?

Sancta Mater istus agas Crucifixi fige plagas Cordi meo valide. Tui nati vulnerati lam dignato pro me pati Paenas mecum divide. Fac me plagis vulnerati Cruce hac inebriari Ob amorem filii. Quando corpus morietur Fac ut anime donetur Paradisi gloria.

### The mother stood

The sorrowful mother stood weeping beside the cross while her son was hanging there. Her grieving soul ssd and dolorous was pierced through as by a sword. O how sad and afflicted was that blessed mother of an only son. Who is the man who would not weep if he saw the mother of Christ in such distress?

Holy Mother, hear me, and inflict the wounds of the cross deeply in my heart. Your son, covered with wounds, desired to suffer for me; May I share his pains. May his wounds hurt me, may I become intoxicated from the cross, for the love of your son. When my body dies may my soul be granted heavenly glory.

## **Gregorian Chant**

### Tota pulchra es

Tu gloria Ierusalem.

Liturgical text

Tota pulchra es, Maria. Et macula originalis non est in Te.

## You are all beautiful

You are all beautiful, Mary, and the original stain [spot] (of sin) is not in you. You are the glory of Jerusalem, Tu laetitia Israel. Tu honorificentia populi nostri. Tu advocata peccatorum. O Maria, O Maria. Virgo prudentissima. Mater clementissima. Ora pro nobis.

Intercede pro nobis.

you are the joy of Israel, you give honour to our people. You are an advocate of sinners. O Mary, O Mary, Virgin most intelligent, Mother most merciful. Pray for us, plead for us, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

### Laudi alla Vergine Maria

Ad Dominum Iesum Christum.

Praise to the Virgin Mary

(c.1890)

Dante Alighieri

Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Umile ed alta più che creatura Termine fisso d'eterno consiglio Tu se' colei che l'umana natura Nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo Fattore Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore Per lo cui caldo nell'eterna pace Così è germinato questo fiore Qui se' a noi meridiana face Di caritade, e giu so, in trai mortali Se' di speranza fontana Donna, se' tanto grande, e tanto Che qual vuol grazia, e a te non ricorre Sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali La tua benignità non pur soccorre A chi domanda, ma molte fiate Liberamente al dimandar precorre In te misericordia, in te

pietade

bontade

In te magnificenza, in te s'aduna

Quantunque in creatura è di

thy Son. counsel. nobility the love. peace torch

Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of humble and high beyond all other creature, the limit fixed of the eternal Thou art the one who such to human nature gave, that its did not disdain to make himself its creature. Within thy womb rekindled was by heat of which in the eternal after such wise this flower has germinated. Here unto us thou art a noonday of charity, and below there among mortals Thou are the living fountainhead of hope. Lady, thou art so great, and so prevailing, that he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee, would fly. the asking.

his aspirations without wings Not only thy benignity gives to him who asketh it, but oftentimes forerunneth of its own accord

In thee compassion is, in thee is

in thee magnificence; in thee unites whate'er of goodness is in any creature.

## **Gregorian Chant**

### Ave Regina caelorum

Liturgical text

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 Christum exora.

# Giles Swayne (b.1946)

Magnificat Op. 33 (1982)

Liturgical text

Magnificat anima mea Dominum; Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo,

- Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
- Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.
- Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.
- Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo;
- Dispersit superbos mente cordis
- Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.
- Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.
- Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae,
- Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

### Hail, Queen of Heaven

Hail, Queen of Heaven.
Hail, Lady of Angels
hail, thou root, hail, thou gate
from whom into the world, a
light has arisen.

Rejoice, glorious Virgin, lovely above all others, farewell, most beautiful maiden, and pray for us to Christ.

### Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden: For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with

he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

his arm:

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:

as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

## **Gregorian Chant**

### Salve Regina

Anonymous

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae, Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.

Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevae,

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes

In hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos

Misericordes oculos ad nos converte:

Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui.

Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

### O, holy Queen

O, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;

To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping

in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate,

thine eyes of mercy toward us;

And after this our exile, show unto us

the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

## Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Salve Regina (1941)

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,

Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra,

salve.

Anonymous

Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes

In hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos

Misericordes oculos ad nos converte;

Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,

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thine eyes of mercy toward us;

And after this our exile, show unto us

the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

## Margaret Rizza (b.1929)

### Ave generosa (2007)

Hildegard of Bingen

### Hail, high-born

Ave generosa, gloriosa et intacta puella

Tu pupilla castitatis, tu materia

sanctitatis, Que Deo placuit.

Nam hec superna infusio in te fuit,

Quod supernum Verbum in te carnem induit

Tu candidum lilium quod
Deus ante omnem creaturam
inspexit.

O pulcherrima et dulcissima, quam valde Deus In te delectabatur, Cum amplexionem caloris sui in te posuit, ita quod Filius eius de te lactatus est.

Venter enim tuus gaudium habuit cum omnis celestis Symphonia de te sonuit, Quia virgo filium Dei portasti, Ubi castitas tua in Deo claruit.

Viscera tua gaudium habuerunt sicut gramen super quod ros cadit,

Cum ei viriditatem infundit, ut et in te factum est,
O mater omnis gaudii.

Nunc omnis ecclesia in gaudio rutilet

Ac in symphonia sonet
Propter dulcissimam Virginem
et laudabilem Mariam,
Dei Genitricem. Amen

Hail, high-born, glorious, inviolate Maid!
You are the pupil of chastity, the matrix of sanctity, pleasing to God.

For this supernal flood was within you, as the supernal word put on flesh in you.

You are the shining lily on which God before all creation gazed.

O fairest and sweetest one, how greatly God delighted in you, when he set within you the embrace of his warmth so that his son took milk from you.

For your womb held joy when all the harmony of heaven resounded from you; for as a virgin you bore God's own son when your chastity shone bright in God.

Your flesh held joy like
the grass when the dew
falls,
and floods it with living green.
So it was in you also,
O Mother of all joy.

Now let the whole church flush with gladness and resound in harmony for the sake of the Virgin, sweetest Mary, deserving all praise, Mother of God. Amen.

Translation of Rizza by Barbara Newman, reprinted from Hildegard of Bingen.

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Second Edition, with Introduction, translations, and commentary by Barbara Newman.

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