WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 7 October 2026
7.30pm

Wigmore Hall at St James's, Spanish Place

the earth resounds

The Sixteen
Harry Christophers conductor

soprano	alto	tenor	bass
Julie Cooper	Daniel Collins	Will Balkwill	Chris Bruerton
Katy Hill	Edward McMullan	Mark Dobell	Robert Davies
Kirsty Hopkins	Tania Murphy	Oscar Golden-Lee	Will Harmer
Alexandra Kidgell	Kim Porter	George Pooley	Tim Jones
Victoria Meteyard			Rob Macdonald
Charlotte Mobbs			Stuart Young

Orlande de Lassus (c.1532-1594)	Aurora lucis rutilat (1604)
Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)	Praeter rerum seriem
Antoine Brumel (c.1460-?1512)	Gloria from *Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus'*
Orlande de Lassus	Magnificat 'Praeter rerum seriem' (1602)
Jean Guyot de Châtelet (1512-1588)	Benedicta es caelorum regina (1568)
Antoine Brumel	Sanctus from *Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus'*
Orlande de Lassus	Magnificat octavi toni 'Aurora lucis rutilat' (1619)

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Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521), Antoine Brumel (c.1460-?1512) and Orlande de Lassus (c.1532-94) were some of the most famous of the Franco-Flemish Renaissance composers, their music dominating European sacred traditions for much of the later 15th and 16th centuries.

Des Prez not only travelled extensively across Europe during his career, serving two popes (Innocent VIII and Alexander VI), probably two French kings (Louis XI and Louis XII), Ercole I d'Este of Ferrara, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and possibly the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus, among others; his fame also lasted long after his death. His six-voice motet, *Praeter rerum seriem*, amply demonstrates the reasons for this fame in its rich, musically and intellectually ingenious response to its text about the mystery of the virgin birth. Josquin followed a common practice of the time in using a well-known chant as the basis of the piece, this one a rhymed, rhythmic tune sung at feasts associated with the Virgin Mary. The tune starts out being presented as a slow cantus firmus, alternating between the tenors and sopranos, while the other voices sing Josquin's own musical invention, in closer imitation. Only in the final section, describing the 'sweetness' of the mystery, does the chant tune appear at a recognisable speed, as if finally bringing its own mystery 'down to earth' to take humanly perceptible form.

Equal in fame to Josquin in his day was **Orlande de Lassus**, who also left his native Hapsburg Netherlands for Italy at a young age, achieving success and status while there, before eventually joining the court of Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria, in Munich in 1558. He remained there for the rest of his life, despite the numerous honours conferred on him (by Emperor Maximillian II, Pope Gregory XIII and Charles IX of France) in attempts to lure him away: as he wrote to one such suitor, the Duke of Saxony, 'I do not want to leave my house, my garden, and the other good things in Munich'. Lassus's fame was undoubtedly enhanced and his legacy cultivated by the circulation of his music in print, which had only become viable for polyphony in the 16th Century. Perhaps that is one reason he seems to have taken an interest in responding to a composer several generations his senior, Josquin, in writing his six-voice *Magnificat 'Praeter rerum seriem'*. Lassus uses not only Josquin but also the 'secundi toni' Magnificat chant as inspiration, in a traditional *alternatim* setting where the odd verses use the original plainchant and only the even verses are set as six-part polyphony, responding both to Josquin and to the plainchant.

We know that Lassus was also familiar with **Antoine Brumel**'s 12-voice *Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus'*, because his signature is included amongst those of the 33 Munich court singers inscribed in the sole surviving copy of the Mass, in a manuscript copied under Lassus's supervision for the Bavarian court in c.1570. After Josquin, Brumel was perhaps the most famous Franco-Flemish composer of the later 15th Century; according to Thomas Morley, who praised him in *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597), Brumel was particularly known for his canons. Like Josquin and Lassus, Brumel used pre-existing chant as foundational material, in this case the plainchant antiphon 'Et ecce terrae motus', which was sung each year on Easter morning, derived from the Gospel of Matthew 28:2 concerning Christ's resurrection: 'And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.' Brumel only used the first seven notes of the chant (D-D-B-D-E-D-D) for his canon in this Mass, giving it intermittently throughout the work to the third bass and first two tenors, but in notes so long and so buried in 12-part portions of the texture as to be inaudible as chant or canon. Instead it serves as harmonic and conceptual basis for work, with the other parts both harmonically static and perpetually moving in points of tight imitation, expressive of the idea of the earth's trembling. Only on the words 'Hosanna in excelsis' at the beginning of that section of the *Sanctus* do we hear the plainchant motto clearly and in all voices – of course 'Hosanna in excelsis' is the same number of syllables as 'Et ecce terrae motus'.

Two other Easter works bookend the programme, **Lassus**'s 10-voice motet, *Aurora lucis rutilat*, and his *Magnificat octavi toni 'Aurora lucis rutilat'*. Lassus divides the ten voices of the motet into two choirs of five (one higher than the other), which mostly sing alternate lines of text with evocative contrasts of heaven and hell, life and death, coming together at theologically important moments. Lassus wrote over 100 settings of the Magnificat, with many of these being parody works – responding in varied ways to another piece, whether sacred or secular. He often used earlier works of his own as sources of inspiration, as here, though the motet is not as much in evidence as in his Josquin parody.

Lassus also used Josquin's motet *Benedicta es caelorum Regina* as inspiration for another alternatim Magnificat. An alternative 'homage' technique is demonstrated by a less well-known Franco-Flemish composer, **Jean Guyot de Châtelet** (1512-88), based chiefly in Liège. The *si placet* technique, which adds new voices to an existing work, was discussed in a treatise by the Italian music theorist Gioseffo Zarlino, using Josquin's piece as his model. De Châtelet was one of several composers who took up the challenge, in de Châtelet's case, adding another six voices to Josquin's original six to update *Benedicta es caelorum regina* in 16th-century style.

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Orlande de Lassus (c.1532-1594)

Aurora lucis rutilat
(1604)
Liturgical text

Aurora lucis
rutilat,
Caelum laudibus
intonat,
Mundus exsultans
iubilat,
Gemens infernus
ululat.

Cum Rex ille
fortissimus,
Mortis confractis
viribus
Pede conculcans
tartara,
Solvit a paena
miseros,

Ille qui clausus lapide
Custoditur sub
milite,
Triumphans pompa
nobili,
Victor fugit de
funere.

Solutis iam
gemitibus,
Et infernis
doloribus
Quia surrexit
Dominus,
Resplendens clamat
Angelus,

Quae sumus Auctor
omnium,
In hoc pascali gaudio,
Ab omni mortis
impetu
Tuum defende
populum.

Gloria tibi
Domine,
Qui surrexisti a
mortuis,
Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu,
In sempiterna
saecula,
Amen.

The day draws on with golden light

The day draws on with
golden light,
glad songs go echoing
through the height,
the broad earth lifts an
answering cheer,
the deep makes moan
with wailing fear.

For lo, he comes, the
mighty King,
to take from death his
power and sting,
to trample down his
gloomy reign
and break the weary
prisoner's chain.

Enclosed he lay in rocky cell,
with guard of armed
sentinel;
but thence returning,
strong and free,
he comes with pomp of
jubilee.

But now they put their
grief away,
the pains of hell are
loosed today;
for by the grave, with
flashing eyes,
'Your Lord is risen!', the
Angel cries.

Maker of all, to thee we
pray,
fulfil in us thy joy today;
when death assaults,
grant, Lord, that we
may share thy paschal
mystery.

To thee, who, dead, again
dost live,
all glory, Lord, thy people
give;
all glory, as is ever meet,
to Father and to
Paraclete.
Amen.

Josquin des Prez (c.1450/55-1521)

Praeter rerum seriem
Liturgical text

Praeter rerum
seriem
Parit deum hominem
Virgo mater.
Nec vir tangit virginem
Nec prolis originem
Novit pater.

Virtus sancti spiritus
Opus illud coelitus
Operatur.
Initus et exitus
Partus tui penitus
Quis scrutatur?

Dei providentia
Quae disponit omnia
Tam suave.
Tua puerperia

Transfer in mysteria.
Mater ave.

This is no normal scheme of things

This is no normal scheme
of things:
God and man is born
of a virgin mother.
She has known no man;
the child's origin is unknown
to the father.

By the Holy Spirit's power
this heavenly work
has been brought about.
The beginning and end
of your giving birth
who can really know?

By God's grace,
which orders all things
so smoothly,
your childbearing
confronts us
with a mystery.
Hail, Mother.

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

Antoine Brumel (c.1460-?1512)

Gloria from Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus'

Liturgical text

Gloria in excelsis Deo	Glory to God in the highest,
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.	and on earth peace to people of good will.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.	We praise you. We bless you.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.	We adore you. We glorify you.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.	We give you thanks for your great glory,
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,	Lord God, heavenly King,
Deus Pater omnipotens,	O God, almighty Father.
Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.	Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.	Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	who takes away the sins of the world,
Miserere nobis.	have mercy on us.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	You take away the sins of the world,
Suscipe deprecationem nostram.	receive our prayer.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,	You are seated at the right hand of the Father,
Miserere nobis.	have mercy on us.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.	For you alone are the Holy One.
Tu solus Dominus.	You only are the Lord.
Tu solus altissimus, Iesu Christe.	You only are the most high, Jesus Christ.
Cum Sancto Spiritu	With the Holy Spirit
In gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Orlande de Lassus

Magnificat 'Praeter rerum seriem' (1602)

Liturgical text

Magnificat anima mea Dominum;	My soul doth magnify the Lord.
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo,	And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae;	For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.	For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.	For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.	And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo;	He hath shewed strength with his arm:
Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui;	he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles;	He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.
Esurientes implevit bonis	He hath filled the hungry with good things:
Et divites dimisit inanes.	and the rich he hath sent empty away.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae,	He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,	as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.	Abraham and his seed for ever.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in Saecula saeculorum. Amen.	As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Jean Guyot de Châtelet (1512-1588)

Benedicta es caelorum regina (1568) / Blessed you are, queen of heaven

Liturgical text

Benedicta es, caelorum regina,	Blessed you are, queen of heaven,
Et mundi totius domina,	and ruler of the whole world,
Et aegris medicina.	and medicine for the sick.
Tu praeclara maris stella vocaris,	You are called brightest star of the sea,
Quae solem justitiae paris,	who gives birth to the sun of clemency,
A quo illuminaris.	by whom you are illuminated.
Te Deus Pater, ut Dei Mater	God the Father, that you might become
Fieres et ipse frater,	God's Mother and he God's brother,
Cujus eras filia,	whose daughter you were,
Sanctificavit, sanctam servavit,	Sanctified you, kept you sacred,
Et mittens sic salutavit:	and sent you this greeting:
Ave plena gratia.	hail, full of grace.
Per illud ave prolatum	Through that spoken 'Hail'

Et tuum responsum gratum	and your pleasing response
Est ex te Verbum incarnatum,	the Word became flesh from you,
Quo salvantur omnia.	by whom all are saved.
Nunc Mater exora natum,	Now, Mother, implore your son,
Ut nostrum tollat reatum,	that he may take away our guilt,
Et regnum det nobis paratum	and may give us the kingdom prepared
In caelesti patria.	in the celestial fatherland.
Amen.	Amen.

Antoine Brumel

Sanctus from *Missa 'Et ecce terrae motus'*

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

Orlande de Lassus

Magnificat octavi toni 'Aurora lucis rutilat' (1619)

Magnificat anima mea Dominum;	My soul doth magnify the Lord.
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo,	And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae;	For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.	For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.	For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
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Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
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Translation of des Prez Praeter rerum seriem by © The Gesualdo Six.