

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 8 October 2022

The Mysterious Motet Book of 1539

12 noon

Pre-Concert Talk Vocal ensemble Siglo de Oro has collaborated with Dr Daniel Trocmé-Latter (University of Cambridge) to bring to life a mysterious motet anthology from the late 1530s. Patrick Allies is joined by Dr Trocmé-Latter to explore the mysterious motet anthology that will be performed in the lunchtime concert.

1.00pm

Siglo de Oro

Patrick Allies artistic director
Hannah Ely soprano
Fiona Fraser soprano
Helena Thomson soprano
Rosie Parker alto
Simon Ponsford alto
Anna Semple alto

Paul Bentley-Angell tenor
Josh Cooter tenor
Jack Granby tenor
Chris Fitzgerald-Lombard tenor
David Le Prevost bass
Ben McKee bass
Ben Rowarth bass

Adrian Willaert (c.1490-1562)	Peccavi super numerum (pub. 1539)
Pierre Cadéac (b.fl.1538)	Salus populi ego sum (pub. 1539)
Phillippe de Monte (1521-1603)	Super flumina Babylonis
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)	Quomodo cantabimus
Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)	In jejunio et fletu (pub. 1575)
Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560)	Laus Deo, pax vivis (pub. 1539)
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)	Ne irascaris, Domine (by 1581)
Simon Ferrariensis	Ave et gaude gloriosa virgo (pub. 1539)
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)	Vigilate (pub. 1589)

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During the 1520s, at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, the city of Strasbourg took measures to ban the Roman Mass liturgy. The new limitations stretched to church music, with choirs falling silent (the cathedral choir was dismissed in 1529). It is curious, then, that during the 1530s, a Protestant publisher began printing polyphony in Strasbourg. Peter Schöffer the Younger's final musical publication – the *Cantiones quinque vocum selectissimae* (1539) – was the only anthology of sacred Latin motets that he ever produced. Four pieces from Schöffer's puzzling collection, recently edited by Dr Daniel Trocmé-Latter and recorded by Siglo de Oro, are featured in this programme.

Schöffer's motet collection can be called 'mysterious' for two reasons. As evidenced by the dissolution of church choirs, the Strasbourg reformers had no appetite for choral music – especially not in Latin. To add to the intrigue, the anthology had been assembled in Catholic Milan, by Hermann Matthias Werrecore, director of music at the city's cathedral. In some sense, therefore, the anthology is cross-confessional.

Schöffer's 1539 collection comprises a mixture of works by lesser- and better-known composers, including nine by **Nicolas Gombert**, who worked for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The celebratory text of Gombert's *Laus Deo, pax vivis* comes from an unknown source, although the opening line is traceable back to at least the 15th Century. The motet opens with a slow expansion, with the alto entry rising to an A and repeating the note as if to imitate a bell chiming. After the initial build-up the motet retains its density, hardly dropping below four voices.

Just as famous is **Adrian Willaert**, whose Requiem motet *Peccavi super numerum* opens the programme. Willaert settled in Italy, first in the service of Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este in Rome and Ferrara, before being appointed maestro di cappella at San Marco in Venice in 1527, a position he held for the rest of his life. His music here is mournful, often making use of sparse textures with only two or three parts.

Pierre Cadéac apparently never travelled beyond northern France and the Low Countries, although it is quite likely that his fame was beginning to spread across Europe at the time Schöffer's motet book was published. In *Salus populi ego sum*, Cadéac marries text and music through various means, including by drawing in the listener more closely through the lengthening of note values at 'Attendite popule meus'.

Arguably an even more obscure figure, **Simon Ferrariensis** has only three or four works attributed to him. The earliest source mentioning him is dated 1518, so it is likely that he was an established composer by this time. The text source of his motet, *Ave et gaude gloriosa virgo*, is unknown, though is probably based on a longer devotion to the Virgin Mary. The music is treated thematically: new lines of text are generally delivered with a distinct motif. The voices enter in

quick succession at the beginning – a rising minor third figure perhaps signalling a salutation to Mary.

The motets from the 1539 collection have been paired here with music from Elizabethan England, another Catholic repertory in a Protestant milieu. These works evoke the musical world of **William Byrd**, born at around the time Schöffer was publishing his motet volume. Byrd's first known appointment was at Lincoln Cathedral, where he became Organist and Master of the Choristers in 1563. Here, the cathedral authorities criticised his organ playing for being too 'Popish', which probably meant overly elaborate. But there may have been a religious tension: Byrd was a recusant, a Catholic who refused to submit to the authority of the Protestant Church in England.

Byrd's *Quomodo cantabimus* and **Philippe de Monte's** *Super flumina Babylonis*, like Schöffer's volume, represent collaboration across Europe between Catholic and Protestant territories. According to a later account, de Monte sent his eight-part setting of verses from Psalm 137 to Byrd. The Englishman then set the subsequent verses and matched de Monte's scoring. The words 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?', originally conveyed by Jewish exiles in Babylon, are repurposed here to reflect the religious persecution of Byrd and his fellow Catholics. The closing section of *Quomodo*, with its hopeful rising melodies, dwells on the word 'Jerusalem', often used as a by-word for the remnants of the Catholic Church in England.

Jerusalem is also a central metaphor in Byrd's *Ne irascaris, Domine*, composed no later than 1581. The first part of the motet asks for God's forgiveness, first in solemn tones, and then eventually in a passionate cry at the word 'Ecce' ('behold'). The second part is a lament for the holy city. At the words 'Sion deserta est' ('Zion has become a wilderness'), a series of slow-moving chords paint a bleak picture. The subtext is clear: England was becoming a wilderness for recusants like Byrd.

In jejuniis et fletu was published in the 1575 volume of 'sacred songs' which **Tallis** and Byrd produced together. Tallis's low-pitched music sets one word per syllable, in the style associated with newly Protestant England. On the other hand, the priests weep 'inter vestibulum et altare' ('between the porch and the altar'), in the manner of those who lamented the spiritual direction of Elizabethan England.

The concert closes with Byrd's *Vigilate*, which urges the faithful to watch for their Lord's coming. While the motet appears to warn of an imminent Day of Judgement, the subtext could well be vigilance in the face of religious persecution. Despite its biblical zeal, Byrd's motet is filled with the techniques from the secular madrigal. Clear evocations are provided for each line of text, not least the yawning suspensions at 'dormientes' ('sleeping') and a lively jump-start at 'an gallicantu' ('at the cock's crowing').

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Adrian Willaert (c.1490-1562)

**Peccavi super
numerum** (pub. 1539)
Liturgical text

**I have sinned
beyond the number**

Peccavi super
numerum arenae
maris,
Et multiplicata sunt peccata
mea:
Et non sum dignus videre
altitudinem coeli,
Prae multitudine iniquitatis
meae.

I have sinned beyond the
number of the sands of
the sea,
and my sins have
multiplied:
and I am not worthy to view
the height of heaven,
for the multitude of my
iniquity.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam
ego cognosco,
et delictum meum contra me
est semper,
tibi soli
peccavi,
quoniam irritavi iram
tuam,
et malum coram te feci.

Because I know my
iniquity,
and my transgression is
always against me,
I have sinned against you
alone,
because I have provoked
your wrath,
and done evil in your sight.

Pierre Cadéac (b.fl.1538)

Salus populi ego sum
(pub. 1539)
Liturgical text

**I am the salvation of
the people**

Salus populi ego sum, dicit
Dominus,
De quacunque tribulatione,
exclamaverint ad me,
Exaudiam eos,
Et ero illorum Dominus in
perpetuum.
Attendite popule meus
legem meam,
Et inclinate aurem vestram in
verba oris mei.

I am the salvation of the
people, says the Lord:
in whatever pain they
shall cry unto me,
I will hear them,
and I will be their Lord
forever.
O my people, hear my
laws:
and incline your ear to the
words of my mouth.

Phillippe de Monte (1521-1603)

**Super flumina
Babylonis**
Liturgical text

**Upon the rivers of
Babylon**

Super flumina Babylonis
illic sedimus et flevimus,
dum recordaremur
Sion. Illic interrogaverunt
nos qui captivos duxerunt
nos verba cantionum.
Quomodo cantabimus
canticum Domini in
terra aliena? In salicibus
in medio ejus suspendimus
organa nostra.

Upon the rivers of Babylon,
there we sat and wept,
when we remembered
Sion. There they that led
us into captivity required
of us the words of songs.
How shall we sing the
song of the Lord in a
strange land? On the
willows in the midst
thereof we hung up our
instruments.

William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Quomodo cantabimus
Liturgical text

How shall we sing

Quomodo cantabimus
canticum Domini in terra
aliena? Si oblitus fuero tui,
Jerusalem, oblivioni detur
dextera mea. Adhæreat
lingua mea faucibus meis,
si non meminero tui. Si non
proposuero Jerusalem in
principio lætitiæ meæ.
Memor esto, Domine,
filiorum Edom, in die
Jerusalem.

How shall we sing the song
of the Lord in a strange
land? If I forget thee, O
Jerusalem, let my right
hand forget her cunning. If
I do not remember thee,
let my tongue cleave to
the roof of my mouth. Yea
if I prefer not Jerusalem in
my mirth. Remember the
children of Edom, O Lord,
in the day of Jerusalem.

Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)

In jejunio et fletu
(pub. 1575)
Liturgical text

**In fasting and
weeping**

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

Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560)

Laus Deo, pax vivis

(pub. 1539)

Liturgical text

Laus Deo, pax vivis,
et requies
defunctis,
Tu autem Domine miserere
nostri.
Benedictum sit nomen
Domini
Et nomen virginis
Mariæ
Cum omnibus sanctis,
Nunc et in sæcula sæculorum.
Amen.
Et beata viscera Mariæ
virginis
Quæ portaverunt æterni
Patris Filium.
Tu autem Domine miserere
nostri,
Deo gratias.

Praise be to God, peace for the living

Praise be to God, peace
for the living, and rest
for the dead;
but thou, O Lord, have
mercy on us.
Blessed be the name of
the Lord
and the name of the
Virgin Mary
with all the saints,
now and forever.
Amen.
And blessed [be] the womb
of the Virgin Mary
that bore the Son of the
eternal Father.
But thou, O Lord, have
mercy on us.
Thanks be to God.

William Byrd

Ne irascaris, Domine

(by 1581)

Liturgical text

Ne irascaris Domine satis,
Et ne ultra memineris
iniquitatis nostrae.
Ecce respice populus tuus
omnes nos.

Be not angry, O Lord

Be not angry, O Lord,
and remember our
iniquity no more.
Behold, we are all your
people.

Civitas sancti tui facta est
deserta.
Sion deserta facta
est,
Jerusalem desolata
est.

Your holy city has
become a wilderness.
Zion has become a
wilderness,
Jerusalem has been
made desolate.

Simon Ferrariensis

Ave et gaude gloriosa virgo (pub. 1539)

Liturgical text

Ave et gaude gloriosa virgo
Maria,
Mater Domini nostri Jesu
Christi,
Regina cœli, domina
mundi,
Miserere nostri.

Hail and rejoice, glorious Virgin

Hail and rejoice, glorious
Virgin Mary,
mother of our Lord Jesus
Christ,
Queen of Heaven, lady of
the world,
have mercy on us.

William Byrd

Vigilate (pub. 1589)

Liturgical text

Vigilate, nescitis enim
quando dominus domus
veniat,
Sero, an media
nocte, an gallicantu, an
mane.
Vigilate ergo, ne cum venerit
repente, inveniatis vos
dormientes.
Quod autem dico vobis,
omnibus dico: vigilate.

Watch ye

Watch ye therefore (for you
know not when the lord of
the house cometh,
at even, or at midnight, or
at the cock crowing, or
in the morning):
Watch therefore, lest
coming on a sudden, he
find you sleeping.
And what I say to you, I
say to all: Watch.

All translations except Willaert by Dr Daniel Trocmé-Latter