

COVER PAGE – SEE SEPARATE FILE

Peter Philips
Gaudeamus omnes

Josquin Desprez
Missa de Beata Virgine
Kyrie – Gloria

Gabriel Jackson
O sacrum convivium

Howard Skempton
Three motets
Locus iste – Beati quorum via – Ave virgo sanctissima

Gabriel Jackson
Salve Regina

Josquin Desprez
Missa de Beata Virgine
Credo – Sanctus – Agnus Dei

Peter Philips
Ecce vicit Leo



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Welcome to this evening's concert. The programme is constructed in three sections, with a brief two-minute pause between each to allow the choir to sit down and you, if you wish, to stretch your legs. As in recent concerts at St Alphege, we invite you to join us for a glass of wine in the church hall after the concert.

Peter Philips

The concert opens and closes with eight-part motets by Peter Philips (1560/61-1628), the 450th anniversary of whose birth we are celebrating. Born in London, Philips was a choirboy at St Paul's Cathedral and may have studied with Byrd. He fled England as a Catholic recusant in August 1582, arriving in Rome in October. He stayed there at the English College for three years, acting as college organist and studying with Felice Anerio, a conservative composer who greatly influenced Philips' musical style. In 1591, after some five years travelling in the service of Lord Thomas Paget, Philips settled in Antwerp and 'mainteyned him self by teaching of children of the virginals, being very cunning thereon'. He entered the service of the Brussels royal chapel in 1597, retaining his position there until his death.

Philips was, like his first teacher Byrd, an extremely versatile composer, and very highly regarded throughout northern Europe – Henry Peacham described him in 1622 as 'one of the greatest masters of music in Europe'. He was, after Byrd, the most published English composer of his time. His works include several hundred motets (many of the late ones being for one, two or three voices, possibly reflecting the straitened circumstances of the court more than an interest in newer styles); a large number of madrigals; and a significant number of keyboard and instrumental works, much more English in style than his vocal works.

A collection of eight-voiced motets was published in 1613. Our opening motet, *Gaudeamus omnes*, is a suitably festive setting of the introit for the feast of St Thomas Beckett; like *Ecce vicit Leo*, it has characteristic interpolated phrases in triple time. *Ecce vicit*, though, is more effervescent and highly madrigalian in style, with brilliant opening figuration and dancing phrases flung between the two choirs. Its text, for use at Eastertide, is taken from Revelations 5.

Josquin Desprez

The main work in the programme is Josquin Desprez' beautiful mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Josquin's biography and dates have been much revised by recent scholarship, but there are still significant areas of uncertainty. He lived from c.1450/5 to 1521. He was born in Hainault, and held church and court appointments in France and Italy before retiring to an ecclesiastical appointment in Condé in 1515.



The Kyrie from Josquin's *Missa de Beata Virgine*

Josquin was one of the greatest composers of the Renaissance, whose reputation stands equal to those of Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria and Byrd. He was highly regarded by his contemporaries – Martin Luther said of him: ‘Josquin is master of the notes, whereas others are mastered by them’; and Glarean said of this mass in particular: ‘finer music cannot be created’. When music began to roll off the printing presses at the beginning of the 16th century, it was Josquin’s music that led the way; though he was evidently (and rightly, one might say) aware of his worth – when the Duke of Ferrara was seeking a new *maestro di cappella* in 1502 one of his envoys wrote:

To me [Isaac] seems well suited to serve Your Lordship, more so than Josquin, because he is more good-natured and companionable, and will compose new works more often. It is true that Josquin composes better, but he composes when he wants to and not when one wants him to, and he is asking 200 ducats in salary while Isaac will come for 120.

This was a period of transition between the sound-worlds of the late Middle Ages and the high Renaissance. Increasing contact between the musicians of northern France/southern Netherlands and Italy was leading to a fusion of Franco-Netherlandish contrapuntal skill and Italian melody, which reached its full flowering in the late

Renaissance; major and minor modes were slowly beginning to achieve dominance over the older ecclesiastical modes; and composers were becoming increasingly adept in contrapuntal technique, the control of harmonic structure, the possibilities of vocal scoring, and responding more closely to the rhythm and meaning of the text. In all these developments Josquin was at the forefront.

The *Missa de Beata Virgine* was printed in 1514, and probably composed shortly before that; it survives in over 40 contemporary sources. Based on different plainsong settings of the mass, it lacks the thematic unity of, for example, a germinating motif (as in Byrd's masses), a single cantus firmus (as in Josquin's *L'Homme armé* masses) or in deriving its motivic material from a pre-existent chanson or motet. Josquin is not alone in this: the writing of *Beata Virgine* masses became quite fashionable from the turn of the century. The variety is further emphasised in this mass, however, by the use of four voices for the first two movements and five for the last three.

In the Kyrie and Gloria an ornamented version of the present plainsong Mass IX (for use at festivals of the BVM) appears initially in the soprano, and spreads through imitation in all four voices. The Kyrie is in the normal three sections (performed this evening ninefold, alternating polyphony and chant); Kyrie III becomes increasingly impassioned, with short phrases tossed between voices to create the final climax. The Gloria is also in three sections, the second of which changes at times into triple rhythm to reflect the Trinity to whom the pleas for mercy are addressed. This device, which reappears in the Credo, had been traditional since the beginning of the 15th century. The Gloria includes settings of the Marian tropes, poetic interludes which enabled late medieval writers and composers not only to 'personalise' a text for an individual feast, but to indulge in creativity in an otherwise fixed entity; they (the tropes) were banned by the Council of Trent. The Gloria ends with a glorious Amen that is a marvel of contrapuntal dexterity.

In the Credo the ornamented plainsong (Credo I) is given to the alto and an additional voice (tenor II) in canon, the latter repeating the alto part two bars later a fifth below. This leads to some intriguing twists in the harmony, and very complicated choices of *musica ficta* (amendments to the musical text which singers would have made to avoid unnecessary clashes or 'devilish' intervals). The other parts, particularly the soprano, decorate the chant, sometimes virtuosically. This does not, however, prevent Josquin from responding acutely and with great variety to the many short textual phrases of both Credo and Gloria.

In the Sanctus and Agnus Dei I & III the decorated plainsong (from Mass IV) is in tenor II, with the alto following at a distance of four bars, again a 5th higher. The texture is somewhat more unified, however, and the *cantus firmus* in the Sanctus further removed from the original chant. There are strong affinities between *Pleni sunt caeli* and *Benedictus*, and between Sanctus and Agnus I, the former pair particularly showing how Josquin can convey quite different moods through a subtle change of technique and melodic shape. Agnus II is a beautiful duet for altos and basses.

This is music which combines great beauty and a formidable contrapuntal technique, from long-lined duets to closely-worked four- and five-part textures. It is also music of vibrant buoyancy, which reflects its medieval inheritance. Josquin uses much French

word stress in the setting of the text, which is one reason why we are singing it in (we hope) something approaching the vernacular Latin that he would have known.

Gabriel Jackson and Howard Skempton

The middle section of the concert focuses on the work of two contemporary composers, Gabriel Jackson (b.1962) and Howard Skempton (b.1947). *O sacrum convivium* and *Salve Regina* are each typical of Jackson's essentially contemplative style, which has similarities with other contemporaries such as Gorecki and Lauridsen. Jackson was born in Bermuda and studied at the Royal College of Music; he is in great demand as a composer of choral music. These two antiphon settings, from 2000 and 1990, were dedicated respectively to his father and his mother on their 60th birthdays.

We have frequently featured the music of Howard Skempton, whose style reveals a highly individual type of 'minimalism'. He achieves beauty through the apparently simplest means, the music's homophonic movement enlivened by fluid rhythm and an original melodic and harmonic twist. Though he has written larger scale orchestral and instrumental works, Skempton works more often on a miniature scale, of which these three motets are typical. They were written in 2007. *Locus iste* sets a gradual for the dedication of a church – the text will be familiar to singers from Bruckner's famous setting, though this is very different; similarly *Beati quorum via* will be familiar in Stanford's beautiful setting, with which the contrast in style is even greater; *Ave virgo sanctissima* sets a Spanish Magnificat antiphon, widely used in the 15th and 16th centuries but no longer part of the liturgy.

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Gaudeamus omnes

Gaudeamus omnes,
gaudeamus in Domino,
diem festum celebrantes sub honore beati
Thomae Martyris:
de cuius passione gaudent Angeli
et collaudant Filium Dei.

Let us all rejoice,
let us rejoice in the Lord
on this feast day in honour of blessed
Thomas the martyr:
for whose passion the angels rejoice
and praise the Son of God.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax
hominibus, bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te. Adoramus te.
Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter
magnam gloriam tuam.

Glory be to God on high, on earth peace
and goodwill to men. We praise you, we
bless you, we worship you, we glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your great glory.

Domine Deus. Rex caelestis. Deus Pater
omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu
Christe. *Spiritus et almen orphanorum paraclite.*
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
primogenitus Mariae virginis matris.

Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
almighty. Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus
Christ. *Gracious spirit and protector of orphans.*
O lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father, *firstborn of Mary the virgin mother.*

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostrum, *ad Mariae gloriam.*
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere
nobis.

You who takes away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon us; who takes away the sins of the
world, receive our prayer, *to the glory of Mary;*
who sits at the right hand of the Father, have
mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, *Mariam
sanctificans*, tu solus Dominus, *Mariam
gubernans*. Tu solus altissimus, *Mariam
coronans*, Jesu Christe. Cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

For you alone are the holy one, *sanctifying
Mary*: you only are the Lord, *governing Mary*:
you only are the most high, *crowning Mary*,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory
of God the Father, Amen.

O sacrum convivium

○ sacrum convivium, in quo Christus
sumitur: recolitur memoria passionis eius;
mens impletur gratia et futurae gloriae
nobis pignus datur.

O sacred banquet, in which Christ is
received, the memory of His Passion is
renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a
pledge of future glory is given to us.

Locus iste

Locus iste a Deo factus est,
inaestimabile sacramentum
irreprehensibilis est.

This place was made by God;
an inestimably holy place,
it is without blame.



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Beati quorum via

Beati quorum via integra est:
qui ambulant in lege Domine.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
who walk in the law of the Lord.

Ave virgo sanctissima

Ave virgo sanctissima
Dei mater piissima
maris stella clarissima
Salve semper gloriosa
margarita pretiosa
sicut lilium formosa
nitens olens velut rosa.

Hail, Holy Virgin,
most blessed Mother of God,
bright star of the sea.
Hail, ever glorious,
precious pearl,
lovely as the lily,
beautiful and perfumed as the rose.

Salve Regina

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 tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte,
Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris
tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail Queen, mother of pity:
Our life, sweetness, and hope, hail.
To you we cry, the exiled sons of Eve.
To you we sigh, lamenting and weeping in
this vale of tears.
Therefore, our advocate, turn your pitiful
eyes upon us.
And show us, after this exile, Jesus, the
blessed fruit of thy womb.
O merciful, O holy, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum,
ante omnia saecula.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum
verum de Deo vero. Genitum, non
factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem
omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter
nostram salutem, descendit de coelis. Et
incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto, ex Maria
Virgine, et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio
Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et
resurrexit tertia die, secundum
Scripturas.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, and of all
things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-
begotten Son of God, born of the Father
before all ages.

God from God, light from light, true God
from true God. Begotten, not made, being
of one substance with the Father, by
whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation,
came down from heaven. And was
incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin
Mary, and was made man.

He was crucified also for us, suffered under
Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And on the
third day he rose again according to the
Scriptures.

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Et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris.

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum, et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen

Sanctus and Benedictus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei

Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.
Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Ecce vicit Leo

Ecce vicit Leo de tribu Juda, radix David, aperire librum et solvere septem signacula eius.
Alleluia.
Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est accipere virtutem et divinitatem et sapientiam et fortitudinem et honorem et gloriam et benedictionem.
Alleluia.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.

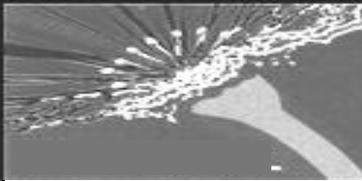
He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead: his reign shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; he has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the book and to loose its seven seals.
Alleluia.
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and divine distinction, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
Alleluia.



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Keith Bennett (director)

Keith studied music at Oxford, where he was organ scholar at Brasenose College, and at Trinity College of Music. He was awarded a doctorate from Oxford in 1978 for his study of the Italian madrigalist Luca Marenzio. From 1979-2004 he was a principal lecturer at Bath Spa University, including 18 years as Course Director of the BA Music degree. As well as conducting Paragon Singers, he has performed widely as an accompanist, continuo player and singer.

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Full concert details to be announced.