

CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

Owen Rees - director

Great Masses of the Renaissance

Jesus College Chapel
Sunday 9th December 2001
8.15pm

PROGRAMME

Procession: Veni, veni, Emanuel	13th-century?
Processional antiphon: Hodie Christus natus est	William Byrd (1539/40–1623)
Introit (chant): Puer natus est nobis	
Kyrie (chant): Deus creator omnium	
Gloria: Missa Puer natus est nobis	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585)
Sequence (chant): Celeste organum hodie sonuit in terra	
Videte miraculum	Tallis
INTERVAL of 10 minutes	
Offertory motet: O nata lux	Tallis
Sanctus: Missa Puer natus est nobis	Tallis
Agnus Dei: Missa Puer natus est nobis	Tallis
Communion: Viderunt omnes fines terræ	Byrd
This day Christ was born ('A Caroll for Christmas Day')	Byrd

The Cambridge Taverner Choir

Director: Owen Rees

Sopranos – Diana Baumann, Josie Dixon, Hester Higton, Helen Garrison,
Rachel Godsill, Caroline Preston Bell, Sally Terris, Tanya Wicks

Altos – Suzanne Aspden, Ally Barrett, Simon Godsill,

Tenors – David Allinson, Paul Baumann, Tom Salmon, Edwin Simpson, David Thomson

Basses – Sam Barrett, James Durran, Frank Salmon, Gary Snapper, Paul Watson



The Cambridge Taverner Choir is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies
Our thanks to the Master and Fellows of Jesus College for their kind permission to use the chapel

Veni, veni Emmanuel;
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio.
Gaude, gaude; Emmanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel.

Veni, veni, o Oriens;
Solare nos adveniens;
Noctis depelle nebulas
Dirasque noctis tenebras.
Gaude!

Veni, veni, Adonai,
Qui populo in Sinai
Legem dedisti vertice
In maiestate gloriae.
Gaude!

*O come, O come, Emmanuel.
Redeem thy captive Israel,
That into exile drear has gone,
Far from the face of God's dear Son.
Rejoice! rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright.
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.
Rejoice!*

*O come, O come, Adonai,
Who in thy glorious majesty
From that high mountain, clothed in awe,
Gavest thy folk the elder law.
Rejoice!
(Translation by T. A. Lacey)*

Hodie Christus natus est: hodie Salvator apparuit: hodie in terra canunt angeli,
lætantur archangeli: hodie exultant iusti, dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia.
*This day Christ was born; this day our Saviour did appear. This day the angels sing in
earth; the archangels are glad. This day the just rejoice, saying: Glory be to God on high.
Alleluia.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ
voluntatis.
Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te.
Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus Pater
omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere
nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen

*Glory to God on high.
And on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise Thee.
We bless Thee.
We adore Thee.
We glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
almighty.
O Lord the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy
upon us.
Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our
prayer.
Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have
mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy.
Thou only art Lord.
Thou only art most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the
Father.
Amen.*

Videte miraculum matris Domini: concepit virgo virilis ignara consortii, stans onerata nobili onere Maria; et matrem se lætam cognoscit, quæ se nescit uxorem.

Hæc speciosum forma præ filiis hominum castis concepit visceribus, et benedicta in æternum Deum nobis protulit et hominem.

Stans onerata . . . uxorem.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

Et matrem . . . uxorem.

Behold the miracle of the mother of our Lord: the virgin has conceived though she knew not a man, Mary, standing laden with her noble burden; and she is glad, knowing that she is a mother, and knowing that she is not a wife.

She has conceived in her chaste womb one who is more beautiful than the sons of men, and blessed for ever she has brought forth God and man for us.

Mary, standing laden . . .

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

And she is glad!

O nata lux de lumine,

Jesu redemptor sæculi,

Dignare clemens supplicum

Laudes preces sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi

Dignatus es pro perditis,

Nos membra confer effici

Tui beati corporis.

O light born of light,

Jesus redeemer of the age,

O merciful, deign to hear

supplicants' praises and prayers.

Thou who once deigned

to take on flesh for those who are lost,

vouchsafe to make us members

of Thy blessed body.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. The heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world. grant us peace.

Viderunt omnes fines terræ salutare Dei nostri.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

This day Christ was born; this day our Saviour did appear. This day the angels sing in earth; the archangels are glad. This day the just rejoice, saying: Glory be to God on high. Alleluia.

The seven-voice *Missa Puer natus est nobis* by Thomas Tallis is an extraordinary work, exceptional within both Tallis's surviving output and the Mass repertory by English sixteenth-century composers. The monumental impression which the work makes is due partly to the very slow unfolding of the chant cantus firmus upon which it is composed. This chant is the Introit (beginning 'Puer natus est nobis') for the Third Mass of Christmas, i.e. the main Mass of Christmas Day, and tonight we surround the movements of Tallis's work with appropriate chants and polyphony (by Tallis himself and by his famous pupil William Byrd) to give some impression of the effect of this monumental piece in liturgical context. We also sing Tallis's famous setting of a responsory for First Vespers of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Videte miraculum*, the text of which is appropriate to the Christmas theme of this concert. The chants performed are those of the Use of Salisbury, the dominant liturgical use in England before the Reformation. The polyphonic settings of the Processional Antiphon and Communion for the Third Mass of Christmas are from the second volume of Byrd's great collection of Mass music, the *Gradualia*. We begin the concert with a processional performance of verses from the famous text *Veni, veni Emanuel*, a text based on the series of 'O' antiphons sung in the days before Christmas. The version performed tonight includes a second voice-part, and was discovered by Mary Berry in a fifteenth-century French source.

We do not know the circumstances surrounding the composition of Tallis's Mass, although its style makes it quite likely that the piece was written during the reign of Queen Mary (1553–1558); Tallis was a member of Mary's Chapel Royal, an institution for which the Mass might well therefore have been composed. Jeremy Noble advanced the suggestion that the choice of cantus firmus, 'Puer natus est nobis', might have been related to the news (erroneous, as it turned out) that Mary was expecting a child at Christmas 1554, when Philip of Spain, together with his chapel establishment, was in London following his marriage to the Queen. We know that on the first Sunday in Advent both Mary's and Philip's chapel singers performed at Mass in St Paul's Cathedral (although we do not know that they sang in the same work or works), as did the cathedral choir itself, and it is very possible that both groups participated again at the Third Mass on Christmas Day, a service for which Tallis's setting would have been perfectly suited.

The scoring of the Mass is rather unusual for a festal English work, the two upper voices being 'means' (reaching up only to a 'written pitch' of *d*"') rather than the high trebles which are employed in *Videte miraculum*. The resulting texture (there are two contratenor parts, two bass parts, and a single tenor line with the chant) is marvellously rich: Tallis usually keeps all seven voices in play, although there is some antiphonal writing, such as that between high and low voices at 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus...' in the 'Gloria'. The slow progress of the tenor chant results in some mesmeric passages in which the free voices present their imitative motives over and over again, as in the final 'Agnus Dei', in the first part of which the two mean parts answer one another in canon. Tallis laid out his tenor cantus firmus in an ingenious fashion, assigning each note of the chant a length determined by the vowel which it originally carried in the Introit chant, so that, in the 'Gloria', a = 1 semibreve, e = 2 semibreves, and so on. One statement of the chant (with repetition of some constituent phrases) occurs in the 'Sanctus' and 'Agnus Dei'. The other statement would have occupied the 'Gloria' and 'Credo', but unfortunately the final section only of the 'Credo' has so far been discovered (and we do not perform this fragment tonight).

In *Videte miraculum* Tallis likewise weaves a grand polyphonic texture around the chant, sung once again in the tenor part. The polyphony alternates with sections left in chant: the verse and the 'Gloria Patri...', after each of which a briefer section of the original polyphony is repeated. The intense expressiveness of the six-voice music derives in part from the extended series of aching dissonances heard for example at the opening of the piece on the word 'miraculum' and at 'matris'. Later in the piece Tallis draws climactic attention to the name 'Maria'. The tiny motet *O nata lux* is a remarkable exercise in simple chordal presentation of a text, with a top line beautifully constructed from just a few motives used repeatedly.

Tonight's concert includes two settings by Byrd of the same Christmas-Day text, one in Latin—*Hodie Christus natus est*—and the other in English—*This day Christ was born*. The first was published in the *Gradualia* of 1607, and the latter in the *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets* of 1611, where it is entitled 'A Caroll for Christmas Day'. Both works are ebullient treatments of these joyful words, the Latin piece showing the rhythmic energy typical of the *Gradualia* music, and the latter magnificently scored for six voices.

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Cambridge Taverner Choir, founded in 1986, belongs to a generation of exciting early music chamber choirs which, like The Tallis Scholars and The Sixteen, emerged from the Oxford and Cambridge choral tradition. As well as regular concert series and festival appearances in Cambridge, the choir has performed in many parts of the U.K., and undertaken highly successful tours of Portugal in 1991 and Switzerland and Italy in 1996; it has also broadcast on Radio 3, and has been featured on Radio 4. The choir has released three recordings; all have been acclaimed by the critics, and Music from Renaissance Portugal was short-listed for the Gramophone Early Music Award in 1994.

The choir specialises in the performance of sacred polyphony in illuminating thematic, liturgical and physical contexts, aiming to recreate the grandeur and excitement of the European Renaissance, and especially the Tudor age in England and the Iberian 'Golden Age'. The choir also performs baroque and contemporary works. The 1995/6 season celebrated the music of John Taverner on the 450th anniversary of his death, and included a prestigious commission from the contemporary composer, John Tavener, while the 1996/7 season explored the music of five great European cities at the turn of the seventeenth century. In 1999 the choir performed the complete motets of J.S. Bach with guest director John Butt. Amongst other engagements next year they will be appearing at the York Early Music Festival.

Owen Rees began his academic and conducting career as Organ Scholar at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, studying with Peter le Huray and Iain Fenlon. After a period as College Lecturer in Music at St Peter's College and St Edmund Hall, Oxford, he joined the Music Department at the University of Surrey. In 1997 he returned to Oxford, where he is Fellow in Music and Organist at the Queen's College, Lecturer at Somerville College, and Lecturer in the Faculty of Music. His published studies include work on musical sources and repertoires from Coimbra, and on the music of, for example, Francisco Guerrero and William Byrd. His work as a scholar has consistently informed his work as a performer. He has conducted at festivals in the UK, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, and the Netherlands. Choirs under his direction have released CD recordings on the Herald, Hyperion, and Unicorn Kanchana labels, to consistently high critical acclaim.

*Recordings by the choir of two of the works in tonight's concert are included on the choir's CD **The Song the Virgine Soong** (Christmas Music from Tudor England), which may be purchased at the desk in the ante-chapel.*

*'The choir's performances are immaculate... The best disc of its type' (Cathedral Music)
'A very enjoyable disc... A refined and controlled sound' (Organists' Review)*

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CAMBRIDGE TAVERNER CHOIR

NEXT SEASON OF CONCERTS, APRIL-JULY 2002

Music from Renaissance Spain

17 March 2002, 8.15 pm: Chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge
Music by Cristóbal de Morales

18 May 2002, 8.15 pm: Chapel of The Queen's College, Oxford
Music by Francisco de Peñalosa and other Iberian discoveries

7 July 2002: York Early Music Festival
Music by Francisco de Peñalosa and other Iberian discoveries

If you would like to receive further information about these concerts and are not currently on the choir's mailing list, please speak to someone at the desk in the ante-chapel.