

Music at King Charles

Cambridge Taverner Choir  
I Musici della Contessa  
Owen Rees

# From Venice to Dresden



Music by  
Giovanni Gabrieli  
and  
Heinrich Schütz

Sunday 18 March, 7.30 p.m.

## PROGRAMME

### **Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1555–1612)**

Jubilate Deo

O magnum mysterium

In ecclesiis

Instruments: Canzon 3 a6 (1615)

Hodie completi sunt

INTERVAL of 15 minutes

### **Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)**

O bone Jesu, fili Mariæ (SWV 471)

Ach Herr, du Schöpfer (SWV 450)

Deutsches Magnificat (SWV 494)

Instruments: Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock (SWV 389)

Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe (SWV 280) (from the *Musikalische Exequien*)

Selig sind die toten (SWV 391)

Singet dem Herrn (SWV 35)

### **Cambridge Taverner Choir**

*Owen Rees, director*

*Sopranos:* Josie Dixon, Grace Newcombe, Caroline Preston Bell,  
Kate Semmens, Roya Stuart-Rees, Sally Terris, Tanya Wicks

*Altos:* Helen Garrison, Helen Geary, Hester Higton, David Thomson

*Tenors:* Felix Leach, Tom Salmon, Paul Stapley, Edwin Simpson, Neil Thornton

*Basses:* Keith Bryant, Rupert Preston Bell, Harry Sever, Gary Snapper

### **I Musici della Contessa**

*Cornets:* David Jarrett-Knock, Stephen Cassidy, Wayne Plummer

*Sackbuts:* Dave Todd, David Ferguson

*Trumpet:* Rachel Haggarty

*Theorbo:* Mike Ashley

*Organ:* Michael Bacon

In 1600, Venice was among the most prestigious musical centres in the world, and acted as a magnet for those wishing to hear or learn the latest musical styles. At the centre of Venetian music stood the great basilica of St Mark's, the musical establishment of which included two organists as well as the choirmaster. Holders of these posts included the uncle and nephew Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, whose in their sacred works played a crucial role in the development of the grand styles characteristic of what was to become known as the 'colossal baroque'. This music exploited dramatic contrasts between different performing forces: multiple choirs, instruments, and solo voices. It is a myth that the high galleries of St Mark's basilica were used regularly for the performance of such polychoral works: rather, the main performing spaces in the basilica were two great pulpits either side of the quire screen. The combination of solo writing, instrumental ritornelli, and choral sections – the *concertato* style – is famously demonstrated in Giovanni Gabrieli's *In ecclesiis*, which also demonstrates the powerful deployment of 'refrains': in this piece and in *Hodie completi sunt* (a motet for Pentecost) the refrain word is 'Alleluia'. *O magnum mysterium* is a powerful evocation of the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas, scored for two choirs, one of high voices and the other of low, while *Jubilate Deo* is a joyful eight-voice setting of a text combining verses from various psalms.

The music of Gabrieli and Monteverdi (who arrived at St Mark's the year after Gabrieli's death) achieved an international reputation thanks in large part to the power of the Venetian music-printing industry, but their role as teachers was also important. In 1609 the young Heinrich Schütz was sent to Venice to study with Gabrieli by his patron and employer Landgrave Moritz, who paid Schütz a stipend to make his stay in Italy possible. Schütz remained in Venice for more than three years (until Gabrieli's death), and received from Gabrieli a rigorous training in composition and organ playing. In the 1620s Schütz returned to Italy, in part to study with Monteverdi. The results of these Italian sojourns are readily apparent in Schütz's music: Schütz developed a rhetorical-musical language (suited to German texts) which often exploits the dramatic possibilities of alternation between different performing forces, and which relies on the devices of heightened repetition heard also in the music of Gabrieli. In *O bone Jesu, fili Mariae* (the only Latin-texted piece by Schütz performed tonight) solo verses alternate with a refrain-chorus in simple but expressive chordal declamation. Dialogue between two equal choirs is the basis of the *Deutsches Magnificat* and the celebratory psalm-setting *Singet dem Herrn* with which our concert ends. The colourful 'word painting' – direct matching of verbal concepts with music ones – can be heard particularly vividly in *Selig sind die Toten*, with its evocation of the peace enjoyed by 'those that die in the Lord'.