



London Concord Singers

Conductor Malcolm Cottle

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Thomas Weelkes (1576 – 1623) O Lord Arise

Probably the son of a Sussex clergyman, Weelkes was appointed organist of Winchester College in 1598. There he composed some of his finest madrigals, which appeared in two volumes published in 1598 and 1600. In July 1602 he graduated BMus from New College, Oxford; and some time between October 1601 and October 1602 he was appointed organist and master of the choristers at Chichester Cathedral. Several of his anthems and services were written not with Chichester in mind but for the more sumptuous services and ceremonies of the Chapel Royal, with which he evidently had some informal contact. He never, however, consolidated the London connection to the extent that he could leave provincial Chichester.

After 1608 Weelkes published no more madrigals. Instead, well versed in the polyphonic techniques of William Byrd, he apparently devoted his creative energies to the production of a large quantity of church music, probably for use at Chichester Cathedral. Unfortunately, the composer's relationship with the ecclesiastical authorities was not a happy one and from 1609 onwards he was often in trouble. At first negligence and absenteeism were the main problem. But by 1616 he was '*noted and famed for a common drunkard and notorious swearer and blasphemer*'; and in 1619 he had '*Very often come so disguised eyther from the Taverne or Ale house into the quire as is much to be lamented, for in these humoures he will bothe curse and sweare most dreadfully*'. Weelkes' enormous talent rose above his daily personal difficulties, however, and he managed to produce a stream of sacred compositions in a wide range of styles.

*O Lord, arise into thy resting place,
thou and the ark of thy strength.
Save they people, good Lord,
and bless thine inheritance.
Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness
and thy saints sing with joyfulness. Alleluia*

Peter Philips (1561 – 1628) Tibi Laus

Philips was an English composer and organist who spent most of his working life in the Netherlands and in consequence was not very well known in his own country. He was a Catholic and as such chose to leave England after a tenure as singer at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. From the dedication date of a collection of madrigals by Philips, it is known that he was definitely established at Antwerp in

1590. Subsequently he was found at the English College in Rome where he met the English Catholic landowner Lord Thomas Paget. Philips and Paget travelled throughout Europe together, before settling in Antwerp shortly before Paget's death.

Philips was one of the most prolific northern composers of Latin sacred choral music, with a few hundred surviving motets. Philips' motets contain something of the English style in that they are all written with organ accompaniment. His style of vocal composition, however, is more in keeping with the great continental masters of the period, such as Orlandus Lassus. His vocal and instrumental writing is extremely smooth, with well-planned harmonies, and a general lack of contrapuntal artifice. Philips was one of the outstanding vocal composers of his day, publishing motets in German as well as Latin.

Philips' first set of *Cantiones Sacrae* (a 5) was printed in 1612, followed, in 1613, by a second set for double chorus. Tonight's motet comes from the first set of *Cantiones Sacrae*.

*To thee be praise, glory and thanksgiving for ever,
O blessed Trinity.
The Father is love, the Son grace, and the Holy Spirit imparting,
O blessed Trinity.
The Father is full of truth, and the Son and the Holy Spirit are truth,
O blessed Trinity.
The Father, the Son and the Spirit are of one substance,
O blessed Trinity.
And the holy renown of your glory is blessed,
full of praise and exalted for ever.*

Thomas Weelkes When David Heard

Midway between Weelkes' printed madrigals and his church music stand two sacred madrigals, the laments *O Jonathan* and *When David heard/O my son Absalom*. Both are richly scored for six voices, and the latter is one of the finest pieces in the repertory. Here, once again, Weelkes explores the depths of grief, and the music is outstanding for its striking textural contrasts, its wealth of ideas, its excellent contrapuntal technique, and its sheer expressive power.

*When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept:
and as he went, thus he said,
O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!
would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son, my son!*

Richard Dering (c. 1580 – 1630) Jubilate Deo

Richard Dering was, like Peter Philips, an expatriate English musician who because of his Roman Catholic faith, lived and worked in the Spanish-dominated South Netherlands. Dering, a generation younger than Philips, most likely began life as a Protestant in England and converted to the Roman Catholic faith during or after a visit to Italy in his early thirties. In 1617 he was organist to the community of English Benedictine nuns in Brussels. He returned to England in 1625 as organist to the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria and 'musician for the lutes and voices' to King Charles I.

Dering wrote three books of motets with continuo, two of canzonets and one of continuo madrigals, and is represented in many MSS and anthologies. His music must have had a wide appeal, for much of it was brought out by the enterprising Antwerp publisher Pierre Phalese between 1612 and 1628. Dering's two- and three-voice pieces were published in London by John Playford in 1662, long after the composer's death. It is likely that Dering took the pieces with him to England: they were certainly sung in Henrietta's chapel, and they were used for private devotion during the Commonwealth (when they were reputedly Oliver Cromwell's favorite music).

*Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:
Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.
Come and hear, all ye that fear God,
and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*

Mathieu Gascogne (early 16th Century) Caro Mea

Mathieu Gascogne (Gascongne, Gasconus, Gascone, Gasconia, Guascogna), was a French composer, little is known about his life for certain. In 1518 he was a chaplain of Tours Cathedral and a singer in the king's chapel. His motets *Christus vincit*, *Christus regnat* and *Deus regnorum* were probably composed for the coronation of Francois I in 1515; *Caro mea* and another motet, *Cantemus et laetemur*, refer directly or indirectly to that king. Gascogne may also have been responsible for the revision of Mouton's motet *Non nobis Domine*, revised to honour Francois I. Gascogne may have been associated with the royal court as early as 1500: his motet *Bone Jesu dulcissime* sets a prayer for an unnamed monarch, probably Louis XII. Attaignant, holder of a royal patent for printing music, attributed 13 sacred works to Gascogne in his anthologies of 1534–5 (though not all are now thought to be by him) and also included his *Missa super 'Nigra sum'* in the sumptuous Liber primus tres missas continet

(1532). The Flemish composer Adriaen Willaert, named Gascogne along with Josquin Ockeghem and his own teacher, Mouton, as the 'buoni antichi', and took Gascogne's motet *Osculetur me* as the model for an early parody mass.

*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,
dwelleth in me, and I in him.
As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father:
so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me
This is that bread which came down from heaven:
not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead:
he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

Jean Conseil (1498 – 1535) Adjuva me Domine

Jean Conseil (Johannes Consilium) is first listed as a boy singer in the household of Eleazar Genet, the maestro di capella of Pope Leo X. Conseil was closely connected with Clement VII who, after the disaster of the Sack of Rome in 1527, sent him on an important mission to recruit singers from France and Flanders. Conseil had left by August 1528 and returned in December bringing six new singers with him. In June 1526, Conseil is called "maestro della cappella secreta di N.S." although there is no other real documentary evidence that such a special group of singers actually existed.

*Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe:
and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.
Be surety for thy servant for good:
let not the proud oppress me.
Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy,
and teach me thy statutes*

Claudin de Sermisy (1495 – 1562) Benedic Anima Mea

Claudin de Sermisy occupied a position of contemporary importance in French music, serving the successive Kings of France and the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris in the first half of the 16th century. Sermisy appears for the first time in a document June 15, 1508 as clerk of the Ste Chapelle and served successively Louis XII, Francis I, Henry II and Francis II along with his colleagues Jean Mouton, Antoine Divitis and Jean Richafort. As a singer he took part in the mass celebrated by the Pope and the Royal Chapels of France at Bologna in 1515. He would also have taken part in the ceremonies at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 when Francis I of France met Henry VIII of England.

Sermisy left the capital in 1524 to become a canon in Rouen. He subsequently moved to Amiens and returned to Paris in 1532 as deputy musical director of the Chapel Royal. Church music by Claudin includes a dozen surviving Mass settings and some 110 motets, a St. Matthew Passion, settings of the Magnificat and a four-voice Lamentations for the Holy Week liturgy.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

Cipriano de Rore (1516 – before 1565) Jubilate Deo

A Franco-Flemish composer, nothing certain is known of his early life but he was probably born into poverty in Antwerp. He sang in the choir of St Mark's, Venice, in 1542–6 and studied with Adrian Willaert, the maestro di capella at St. Marks. In 1547 he became director of music to Duke Ercole II of Ferrara. While he was away visiting Antwerp in 1559 his patron died and since the next duke did not retain his services, Rore took up a similar court post at Parma in 1560. In 1563 he succeeded Willaert as maestro di cappella at St Mark's, but finding the duties too onerous he returned to his previous post at Parma in 1564.

Rore's surviving output consists of three Masses, 65 motets, one Passion, eight psalms and Magnificats, 125 madrigals and a few chansons. His sacred music is on the whole conservative though at times most impressive; but his madrigals are historically far more important. He was said (by his publisher) to be endowed with "*delightful melodic invention and beautiful singing, the true art of contrapuntal variation, and continuity of sweet harmony*".

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Orlandus Lassus (1532 – 1594) Messe 'On me la' dit' (Kyrie, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei)

Orlandus Lassus, [Orlande de Lassus, Orlando (di) Lasso, Orlandus Lassus, Roland de Lassus, Roland Delattre] was a Franco-Flemish composer, legend holds that as a choirboy with an uncommonly beautiful voice he was thrice kidnapped from his birthplace for service elsewhere. His first known position was in the service of

Ferrante Gonzaga, who passed through the Low Countries in 1544 on his way to Italy. Lassus spent the next decade in Italy, at first with Gonzaga, later in the service of Constantino Castrioto of Naples. By 1553 he was choirmaster at St. John Lateran in Rome. His career from 1556 was centered in Munich at the court chapel of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, as maestro di cappella from 1563, with duties that included some travel in Germany, Flanders, France, and Italy. While employed at Munich, he came to know both Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, each of whom spent time in the musical establishment he directed. His accomplishments brought formal recognition from Emperor Maximilian II, the French king Charles IX, and Pope Gregory XIII.

Lassus's production of over 2,000 works in nearly every Latin, French, Italian, and German vocal genre known in his time places him among the most prolific and versatile composers of the era. A close connection between text and music, in both small- and large-scale respects, is perhaps the single most prominent characteristic of his output. Almost sixty Masses of undoubted attribution survive complete. Few predate the Munich years. Most are parodies, modeled usually on his own sacred motets or, more often, other composers' secular works (until 1570 French, afterwards Italian). Yet one widely popular Mass is a parody of his own chanson *Susanne un jour*. Three fairly late works are for double choir; of the rest, the majority are for 4–6 voices.

INTERVAL

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 – 1924) Four partsongs to texts by Mary E Coleridge

Irish by birth, Stanford was destined to follow his father's footsteps as a lawyer. As a condition of allowing him to attempt a musical career, his father insisted that he read classics at Cambridge before studying in Leipzig. He obediently went to Queen's College, Cambridge and spent more time in making music than reading for his degree. In his third year he was appointed organist of Trinity and conductor of two choral societies which he combined to form the Cambridge University Musical Society.

In 1874, still only 22, Stanford managed his third-class honours degree in classics and immediately left for Germany. After Leipzig he studied in Berlin and travelled all over Germany and France listening to all the 'new music' of Wagner, Brahms, Meyerbeer and Offenbach. With unbridled energy he returned regularly to conduct much contemporary music (including his own) and to begin the tradition of performing the great classical choral works (including his own edition of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*). His unrivalled knowledge of contemporary music, together with his love and respect for earlier choral music, allowed him to make the biggest impact of all his colleagues in the renaissance of English music in the late 19th century. First came the church services, almost symphonic in design, with meaty organ parts which helped revive the flagging English choral tradition. Then, writing for the new upsurge of amateur choirs born of the Industrial Revolution, who joined together in large 'festivals', he revitalised the oratorio which had been the province of the privileged ruling classes

Mary E Coleridge was the great granddaughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's elder brother. Born in London, she was educated at home and began to write verse as a child. She published her first volumes *Fancy's Following* and *Fancy's Guerdon* under the pseudonym Anodos in 1896 and 1897 respectively. Her mother died in 1898 and she stayed at home to help her sister look after their father. She published five novels, a volume of essays and four books of poems. Her poems are short – no longer than forty lines. She believed that the process of conscious thought caused unhappiness and her verse is tinged with melancholy and sentimentality.

When Mary thro' the garden went

When Mary thro' the garden went,
there was no sound of any bird,
And yet, because the night was spent,
the little grasses lightly stirred,
the flowers awoke, the lilies heard.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
the dew lay still on flower and grass,
The waving palms above her sent
their fragrance out as she did pass.
No light upon their branches was.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
her eyes, for weeping long, were dim.
The grass beneath her footsteps bent,
the solemn lilies, white and slim,
These also stood and wept for Him.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
she sought, within the garden ground,
One for whom her heart was rent,
one Who for her sake was bound,
One Who sought and she was found.

The blue bird

The lake lay blue below the hill,
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue,
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew.

The haven

Where the gray bushes
by the gray sea grow,
Where the gray islands lie,
Naked and bare
to all the winds that blow,
Under the dim gray sky.
The very flowers are gray,
and dare not show the blue
we know the harebell by.

Chillingham

O the high valley, the little low hill,
and the cornfield over the see,
The wind that rages then then lies still,
and the clouds that rest and flee!

O the gray island in the rainbow haze,
and the long thin spits of land,
The roughening pastures and the stony ways,
and the golden flash of the sand!

O the red heather on moss-wrought rock,
and the fir tree stiff and straight,
The shaggy old sheep dog barking at the flock,
the rotten old five-barred gate!

O the brown bracken, the blackberry bough,
the scent of the gorse in the air!
I shall love them ever as I love them now,
I shall weary in Heav'n to be there.

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

Trois Chansons de Charles D'Orleans

Debussy, born in Paris, France, was one of the original exponents of musical Impressionism. He employed the whole-tone scale to create nuances of mood and expression, exploring unusual harmonies and dissonances. He is best known for the tone poem *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (1894), inspired by a poem of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898). Other orchestral works include *Nocturnes* (1899) and *La Mer* (1905). His piano works include *Suite Bergamasque* (1905), which includes the well-known "Clair de lune", *Estampes* (1903), and a number of preludes, and études, and art songs.

The *Trois Chansons* were published in 1908 and first performed as a group in 1909 at a concert in Paris. Only the second was new, the first and third were revised versions of pieces composed in 1898 for an amateur choir that Debussy directed at the time. At the 1909 concert, the songs received a rapturous reception from the audience, but a hostile one from critics, who were suspicious of both Debussy's contrapuntal archaisms and novel harmonies. Charles, duc d'Orléans (1364 - 1465), prince and poet, was a captive in England for twenty-five years following the battle of Agincourt.

1. Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder

Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder
la gracieuse bonne et belle;
pour les grans biens que sont en elle
chacun est prest de la louer.
Qui se pourroit d'elle lasser?
Tousjours sa beauté renouvelle.
Par de ça, ne de là, la mer
nescay dame ne damoiselle
qui soit en tous bien parfaits telle.
C'est ung songe que d'i penser:
Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder.

2. Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin

Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin
sonner pour s'en aller au may,
en mon lit n'en ay fait affray
ne levé mon chief du coissin
en disant: il est trop matin
ung peu je me rendormiray:
Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin
sonner pour s'en aller au may,
jeunes gens partent leur butin;
De non chaloir m'accointeray
A lui je m'abutineray.
Trouvé l'ay plus prouchain voisin
Quant j'ai ouy le tabourin
Sonner pour s'en aller au may,
En mon lit n'en ay fait affray
ne levé mon chief du coissin.

3. Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain

Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain!
Esté est plaisant et gentil
en témoing de may et d'avril
qui l'accompagnent soir et main.
Esté revet champs bois et fleurs
de salivrée de verdure
et de maintes autres couleurs,
par l'ordonnance de nature.
Mais vous, Yver, trop estes plein
de nége, vent, pluie et grézil.
On vous deust banir en éxil.
Sans point flater je parle plein:
Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain!

God, what a vision she is

God, what a vision she is;
imbued with grace, true and beautiful!
For all the virtues that are hers
everyone is quick to praise her.
Who could tire of her?
Her beauty constantly renews itself;
On neither side of the ocean
do I know any girl or woman
who is in all virtues so perfect;
it's a dream even to think of her;
God, what a vision she is.

When I hear the tambourine

When I hear the tambourine
sound, calling us to May,
in my bed I remain calm,
not lifting my head from the pillow
saying, "It is too early,
I'll fall asleep again."
When I hear the tambourine
sound, calling us to May,
the young jump from partner to partner
not even bothering to remember you.
From him, I'll move on,
finding a lover conveniently close by.
When I hear the tambourine
sound, calling us to May,
in my bed I remain calm,
not lifting my head from the pillow.

Winter, you're nothing but a villain

Winter, you're nothing but a villain!
Summer is pleasant and nice,
joined to May and April,
who go hand in hand.
Summer dreams of fields, woods,
and flowers, covered with green
and many other colors,
by nature's command.
But you, Winter, are too full
of snow, wind, rain, and hail.
You should be banished!
Without exaggerating, I speak plainly -
Winter, you're nothing but a villain!

Benjamin Britten Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'

Britten's Choral Dances appear in Act 2, Scene 1 of his coronation opera *Gloriana*, set in Norwich, and form part of a masque in honour of Queen Elizabeth I. *Gloriana*, to a libretto by the novelist William Plomer, was based on Lytton Strachey's 'Elizabeth and Essex'. The opera included the famous scene where Essex interrupts the elderly Elizabeth at her toilet and sees the real, elderly woman rather than the constructed image of Gloriana. Needless to say, the work's premiere, during the 1953 Coronation Season at Covent Garden, was disastrous. It took place before an audience whose lack of appreciation for what was presented to them was later put into perspective by the acclamation of opera-lovers attending subsequent performances. Not for the first (or last) time, a major work of art had been misunderstood, its subtleties and dimensions unrealised.

Britten felt that the craft of composition was important in the sense that a truly creative artist should be able to write 'to order'. This is reflected above all, perhaps, in the wonderful inventions which occur in his music for the young. But Britten also proved his point in the many arrangements he made of his music for various occasions. *The Choral Dances* are a case in point, as is the orchestral suite from *Gloriana*. *The Choral Dances* extracted from the opera as a cappella choral pieces for the general repertoire. Britten also created a version for tenor, harp and chorus for the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall on London's South Bank, an event graced by the presence of another Elizabeth, Her Majesty the Queen.

The Dances are short and without pretension, yet each is a miniature masterpiece, the diatonic chording of 'Concord' revealing once again that ability of the truly great composer to capture the essence of what has to be said with the simplest of means.

1. Time

Yes, he is Time, Lusty and blithe,
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.
No reaper he that cries "Take heed!"
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

2. Concord

Concord is here our days to bless
And this our land to endue with plenty, peace and happiness.
Concord and Time each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where not one, but only two can reach

3. Time and Concord

From springs of bounty
Through this county
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow!
Where life was scanty
Fruits of plenty
Swell resplendent
From earth below!
No Greek or Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heav'n above
As she whose presence
Is our pleasance
Gloriana hath all our love.

4. Country Girls

Sweet flag and cuckoo flower
Cowslip and columbine,
Kingcups and sops-in-wine
Flower-deluce and calamint
Harebell and hyacinth
Myrtle and bay
With rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands
For our Queen.

5. Rustics and Fishermen

From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets
They bring ensamples
Of all they grow.

In earthen dishes
Their deep-sea fishes;
Yearly fleeces,
Woven blankets;

New cream and junkets
And rustic trinkets
On wicker flaskets
Their country largess
The best they know.

E. Final Dance of Homage
These tokens of our love receiving
O take them witness of our love

Would you like to sing with us?

London Concord Singers always welcome new members. If you would like to sing just contact one of the choir or our conductor. We rehearse on Monday evenings and will be starting rehearsals for our new season in September.

London Concord Singers on tour

On July 26th the choir will be travelling to Normandy where they will be performing this programme at St. Aubin-sur-Mer and the Church of St. Ouen, Rouen. We will also be singing Mass at the Church of St. Jeanne d'Arc, Rouen.