

PERVADING IMITATION

IKEN SCHOLARS

28 FEBRUARY 2020

RUNNING ORDER

FIRST HALF

Nicolas Gombert (c. 1495-1560): Regina Caeli a 12

Josquin des Prez (d. 1521): Kyrie (from Missa *Pange Lingua*)

Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-57): Andreas Christi famulus

Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1515-55): Ego flos campi

Adrian Willaert (c. 1490-1562): Verbum bonum

Gombert: O Jesu Christe

Gombert: Lugebat David Absalon

SECOND HALF

Gombert: In illo tempore

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643): Missa *In illo tempore*

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus et Benedictus

Agnus Dei

PROGRAMME NOTES

The best time to visit Venice is in the autumn: after the tourists and before the floods. I was fortunate enough to do this last year on a pilgrimage from the church where I am Director of Music (a blatant plug: All Saints' Blackheath is looking for voluntary singers if you are interested!).

Standing in the awe-inspiring San Marco for the first time in ten years, my Church musician brain started to assess the practical difficulties of singing in that space. Today the choir sings, as they always have, in two opposing galleries high above the altar which houses the tomb of S Mark. It is an exceptional distance and one that became the progenitor of a compositional technique all of its own: the Venetian Style. From 1527 composers like Adrian Willaert (1490-1562), Giovanni Gabrieli (d.1612), Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) and others began to compose music where opposing groups of singers alternate in performance, joining forces for only key moments. This idea – *cori spezzati* (or 'split choirs') as it came to be known – was a smash hit across Europe and composers from all over the continent came to experience this magical effect and incorporate it into their own music.

If you have been to an *Iken Scholars* concert before (and I hope you have), you'll as likely as not have heard some of the late Masses of Victoria: written in Spain at the end of his life, more often than not scored for double choir, and with the Venetian Style finger prints all over it. If you're coming to our next concert (and I certainly hope you are: 1st May, S Mary-le-Bow), you will hear Lassus' magnificent Missa 'Bell' Amfitrit' Altera': written in Munich, again scored for double choir, and again bearing all the hallmarks of the music written for this most influential building in Venice.

Tonight, however, is not about Venice.

Tonight is about the music that was written before the *cori spezzati* style came into being: arguably the style that gave birth to it. Tonight we will be looking at the so-called ‘pervading imitation’ of the Franco-Flemish school. A form of composition Josquin des Prez (d.1521) first mastered, Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-1560) brought to its fullest flowering, Willaert took to San Marco when he became *maestro di cappella* there (1527) and Monteverdi pastiched in 1610 when he wanted to demonstrate his mastery of the Northern and Southern compositional procedures as he climbed his own career ladder – leading once again to San Marco (1613).

If ‘*cori spezzati*’ is a seesaw, then ‘pervading imitation’ is a kaleidoscope: every voice is given equal weight; voices ceaselessly replicate and mimic each other; groups and alliances are formed and disbanded over and over again to electrifying effect. The music of tonight’s concert surely represents one of the very highest high watermarks in Renaissance musical achievement.

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We begin tonight with a speciality: Gombert’s twelve-voice *Regina Caeli* is the largest scale composition to be transmitted to us (via the French printer Attaignant in 1535).

Gombert’s biographical details are a little sketchy, but it is most likely he was born around 1495 close to Lille. At the age of 30 he became employed in the court of Emperor Charles V, firstly as a singer (and possibly composer) and later as the *magister puerorum* (‘master of the boys’). He rose to fame, only to suddenly disappear from the court records in 1540. He is reputed to have been convicted of sexual misconduct according to an account given to us by the physician and mathematician Gerolamo Cardano (1501-76), and he was sentenced to hard labour in the galleys. There is a story that he later received a pardon in 1547 from Charles V, when Charles heard the beauty of Gombert’s extraordinary magnificent cycle. This is all in the future, however, at the time of writing of our *Regina Caeli*.

The *Regina Caeli* is the Marian antiphon during the Easter season and is repeated each day until Pentecost. Gombert’s huge setting has a few things to note: listen out for how the Gregorian chant – the *cantus firmus* – is passed around the choir rather than the more usual practice of keeping it to one voice; notice, too, how the parts group themselves variously throughout the piece. For example, the upper three voices at the opening form a homophonic group unlike anything seen elsewhere in Gombert’s writing. Meanwhile, the remaining nine voices behave as two groups of five and four, three groups of three, two groups of four and five etc. This is a theme we will keep coming back to in tonight’s concert.

With the Josquin ‘Kyrie’, we go back to the where the pervading imitation style first flourished. Probably the most famous composer in his day between Du Fay (1397-1474) and Palestrina (1525-94), Josquin has enjoyed something of a revival in the closing decades of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first. Much of his life’s details are speculative, but he seems to have travelled widely from his native France during his career. These travels included Milan and Rome, where he sang in the Papal Choir and possibly scratched ‘JOSQUINJ’ [sic] into the wall of the Sistine Chapel, a graffito that was rediscovered during restoration work in 1998.

His Missa ‘Pange Lingua’ is one of his most famous works from a huge oeuvre. I’ve included it tonight so you can hear the departure point for all the other pieces. Listen out for how the parts copy or mimic each other, without being directed by the more constrained style

Palestrina later developed and would ultimately be codified into 'species counterpoint' which is still the vexation of first year music undergraduates at some universities.

Andreas Christi famulus was composed for a very special occasion: the 1546 meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece. This was a pan-European club of elite leaders and in 1546 Francis I of France, Henry VIII of England and our Charles V were all in attendance. Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-57), the composer of tonight's motet, was one of two famous composers present that year (the other being Cristóbal de Morales: 1550-53) and for centuries a confusion meant the motet was misattributed to Morales. Occasionally you still see the misattribution of this piece, but musically, stylistically and historically we can be certain Crecquillon was the composer. This is an impressive example of sustained eight-part writing. Listen out for the Tenor II toward the end, who breaks away from the text of the rest of the group to proclaim 'Sanctus Andreas gaudet in caelis' ('S Andrew rejoices in heaven').

Jacob Clemens non Papa (1510-55: 'not the Pope' – apparently the appellation was first ascribed as a joke), seems to have held a number of high-profile musical positions in his life. In the mid-1540s, he was succentor at Bruges Cathedral; he likely later followed Gombert as the choir master for Philippe de Croÿ (one of Charles V's most celebrated generals); later in life he probably worked in Ypres and Leiden.

One of the shorter tenures seems to have been three autumnal months in 1550 at the snappily-named Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Broederschap in 's-Hertogenbosch. I am very grateful for this, however, because it seems the most likely origin of tonight's *Ego flos campi*. The motto of the confraternity (which was dedicated to the Virgin) was 'sicut lilium' ('like the lily'), which is stated three times to dramatic homophonic effect at the midpoint of the composition. The text, taken from the Song of Songs, has long been associated with the Virgin. Moreover, the piece is in seven parts and those of you who are in the habit of reciting a rosary will recall the seven joys, seven sorrows and seven glories of Mary.

Verbum bonum by Adrian Willaert is a special treat tonight. For a choir that tries to sing under-song pieces, this piece enters a new extreme where I have had to produce an edition of this piece just for this evening. There is a reason for singing this particular piece, however. Willaert came from the Low Countries, like the other composers so far in this evening's concert. In c.1514, however, Gioseffo Zarlino (the contemporary theorist of this period and style: 1517-90) tells us that Willaert travelled to Rome and the Vatican. There he was amazed to hear his own music being sung. The plot thickens, however, because Zarlino goes on to tell how the Papal Choir believed the composer of the piece they were singing to be Josquin and were apparently none-too-impressed to learn it was the work of the upstart Willaert instead. The piece Willaert heard and the choir were singing was tonight's *Verbum bonum*. Notice the catchy rhythm to the Latin poetry (see the text and translations), but this is totally lost in Willaert's mellifluous setting in praise of the Virgin.

Willaert went on to become the *maestro di cappella* in Venice, where the compositional technique you are about to hear proved useless in the acoustic of San Marco and so the Venetian Style was born. How that all come about, however, is a concert for another night!

Back to Gombert with two pieces to close the first half. *O Jesu Christe* is a rare example of a double canon in Gombert's output. That he sets the *comes* (follow) choir at the fourth makes it all the more impressive. It is based on the secular chanson *Qui ne l'aymeroit* which is a cheeky song about a young man with eyes for the local girl with a 'nice body'. Gombert's sensibilities

don't seem to have inhibited him using the same material for this penitential motet, however. It is interesting to note how Gombert uses silence within each of the *dux* (lead) and *comes* choirs to generate a sense of space.

Lugebat David is probably Gombert's most famous piece today. It is full of pathos as King David laments the death of his son, Absalom. Gombert sets again and again the text 'o fili mi' ('o my son'). Interestingly, this is one of nine pieces related to the single chanson *Je prens congie* which Neal (in her PhD on the topic) names the '*Je prens congie* complex'. Why Gombert devotes such efforts to the material of this one chanson Neal does not speculate on. She does, however, make a good point that this set of pieces, and the *Lugebat* in particular, are among the most-forward looking of Gombert's output and begin to hint at the polychoral style Willaert would establish and develop in Venice. Listen out, therefore, to the way the two choirs behaving antiphonally and compare this to the Josquin we heard at the beginning of our concert tonight.

Gombert's *In illo tempore* motet sets a passage from S Luke where 'a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said until Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee' (S Luke ii, 27) and Jesus replies 'rather, blesses are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.' It is another lovely example of the pervading imitation style we have become familiar with this evening.

But the particular reason it is here is its relation to Monteverdi's *Mass* which forms the back bone of the second half of tonight's concert.

In 1610, Monteverdi was working for the Gonzaga family in Mantua (another good holiday destination if you get a chance to go incidentally: a genius of an architect has built a modern bridge across the ancient artificial lake that surrounds the Renaissance city to a similar specification to its Renaissance predecessor, such that it climbs towards the middle and gives the impression that the city rises out of the lake as it would have done in Monteverdi's day!).

Anyway, back to Monteverdi who in 1610 had written his famous opera *L'Orfeo* (1607), really the earliest that people still listen to, but was looking for a bigger position, with better and more reliable pay, in a more prestigious place. He sent a bundle of manuscript paper to Venice for publication by Ricciardo Amadino (1572-1621). The bundle contained two pieces: the *1610 Vespers* we all know and love, and the *1610 Mass* which we should know and love better.

The styles could not be more different: in the *Vespers* Monteverdi demonstrates this mastery of the modern Italian polychoral style, whilst his *Mass* demonstrates his Northern European pervading imitation credentials.

What better than to choose a motet by our Northern master Gombert as the basis for his parody *Mass*? Listen out for Monteverdi's use of imitation and the way the choir is split and regrouped consistently. Listen out, too, though for the new sounds of Monteverdi that hint at the early Baroque: there are cycles of fifths here, ostinato patterns and chains of suspensions that would have been unthinkable 30 years earlier.

The joint publication was undoubtedly impressive. In 1613 Monteverdi was appointed *maestro di cappella* in Venice and went on to become arguably the most famous person to hold that office in history.

MJD

Matthew would like to thank:

Brandi Neal for her very insightful PhD into the multi-voiced music of Gombert (2011 Pittsburgh)

Prof. Ross Duffin (Case Western Reserve University) for his help in tracking down the Willaert *Verbum bonum*

*Join the Iken Scholars on 1st May 2020 for their next concert exploring Lassus' work in the Munich court. S Mary-le-Bow, 7.30pm.
Details on the website – www.ikenscholars.co.uk*

CHOIR BIOGRAPHY

Established in 2012, the *Iken Scholars* are a London-based chamber choir dedicated to exploring hidden corners of the Renaissance repertoire. Recent performances at the Cadogan Hall, St John's Smith Square and St Paul's Cathedral have included masses and motets unheard in 400 years, as well as large-scale masterpieces from the central canon. Primarily focused on presenting unusual concerts in the capital, the choir is increasingly in demand in London's cathedrals and further afield. The group is made up of singers from London and close by, and directed by Matthew Dunn. For more information, visit our webpage: www.ikenscholars.co.uk.

Sopranos

Danielle Cahill
Sophie Cleobury
Katharina Dunn
Jenny Forsyth
Nerissa Taysom

Altos

Jess Dagers
Marion Harris
Rowan Cope

Tenors

Philip Kennedy
Tom Norrington
Gareth Moss

Basses

Chris Jeanes
Maxime Rischard
Owen Hubbard
Mark Begbie

Matthew Dunn

Matthew Dunn, director, formed the *Iken Scholars* in 2012 to perform programmes of hidden corners of the canon of Renaissance polyphony. Originally from Manchester, he read music at Cambridge and wrote a master's thesis on the dissemination of French thirteenth-century polyphony in England. He set up the *Iken Scholars* in 2012 after coming to London. He is Organist and Director of Music at the lovely church of All Saints' Blackheath. When not conducting choirs, he has a job in Insurance Strategy for a professional services firm.

TRANSLATIONS

Regina Caeli

Regina caeli laetare, alleluia:
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia:
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia:
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

Queen of heaven rejoice, alleluia,
He whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia,
Is risen as he said, alleluia,
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie, eleison.
Christe, eleison.
Kyrie, eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Andreas Christi famulus

Andreas Christi famulus,
dignus Deo Apostolus
germanus Petri
et in passione socius.

Andrew, servant of Christ,
God's worthy Apostle,
Brother of Peter and
Companion in his passion.

Dilexit Andream Dominus,
in odorem suavitatis.
O Iesu Christe
Fili Dei
ora pro nobis.

The Lord delighted in Andrew,
as a sweet savour.
O Jesus Christ,
Son of God,
Pray for us.

Ego flos campi

Ego flos campi
et lilium convallium.
Sicut lilium inter spinas
sic amica mea inter filias.
Fons hortorum et puteus aquarum viventium
quae fluunt impetu de Libano.

I am the flower of the field
and the lily of the valleys.
As the lily among the thorns,
so is my beloved among the daughters.
A garden fountain, a well of living water,
flowing streams from Lebanon.

Verbum Bonum

Verbum bonum et suave
personemus illud ave
per quod Christi fit conclave
Virgo mater filia.

A word good and sweet
we resound that 'hail',
through which the virgin-mother daughter
became the dwelling-place of Christ.

Per quod ave salutata
mox concepit fecundata
Virgo David stirpe nata
inter spinas lilia.

Greeted by this 'hail'
and impregnated, the Virgin soon conceived,
the Virgin born of David's race,
a lily among thorns.

Ave veri Salomonis
mater vellus Gedeonis
cuius magi tribus donis
laudant puerperium.

Hail true[temple of] Solomon, [of Solomon's truth
the mother,] hail fleece of Gideon,
of whom the magi with three gifts
praise the act of childbearing.

Ave solem genuisti
ave prolem protulisti
mundo lapso contulisti
vitam et imperium

Hail, you have given birth to the sun,
hail, you have produced the child,
to the fallen world you have given
life and order.

Ave sponsa verbi summi
maris portus signum dumi
aromatum virga fumi
angelorum domina

Hail, mother of the highest Word,
safe harbour, sign of the bush,
pillar of aromatic smoke,
ruler of angels.

Supplicamus nos emenda
emendatos nos commenda
tuo natu ad habenda
sempiterna gaudia.
Amen.

O Jesu Christe

O Jesu Christe, filiae Mariae,
miserere nobis.
Qui solus in crucis patibulo
nos redemisti

Lugebat David Absalon

Lugebat David Absalon,
pius pater filium,
tristis senex puerum:
Heu me, fili mi Absalon, quis mihi det ut moriar,
ut ego pro te moriar, O fili mi Absalon!
Rex autem David filium, cooperto flebat capite:
Quis mihi det ut moriar, O fili mi, O fili mi!
Porro rex operuit caput suum,
et clamabat voce magna:
Fili mi Absalon, O fili mi.

INTERVAL

In illo tempore

In illo tempore, loquente Jesu
ad turbas, Extollens vocem,
quaedam mulier de turba dixit:
Beatus venter qui te portavit
Et ubera quae suxisti.
At ille dixit: Quinimmo beati,
qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt illud.

Missa

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison.

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.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;

We pray you, remove our faults,
and made faultless commend us
to your son, to have
everlasting joys.
Amen.

O Jesus Christ, Mary's Son,
have mercy on us.
You, who alone endured the cross,
have saved us.

David mourned for Absalom,
a pious father for his son,
a grieving old man for his boy:
Ah my son Absalom, would God I had died for you,
O my son Absalom!
King David wept for his son with his head covered:
Would God I had died for you, O my son!
Then the King covered his head
and cried with a great voice:
O my son Absalom, O my son!

At that time, as Jesus was speaking
to the crowds. Raising her voice,
a certain woman in the crowd said:
'Blessed the womb that bore you, and the breasts
you have sucked.'
But he said: 'Rather, blessed are those
who hear the word of God and keep it.'

Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace to men of
good will.
We praise you; we bless you;
we worship you; we glorify you;
We give thanks to you for your
great glory.
O Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the almighty Father.
O Lord Jesus Christ,
only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us;

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.

Credo

Credo in unum Deum;
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli 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 caelis.
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:
et ascendit in caelum.
Sedet ad dexteram
Patris:
et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
judicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus 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.

Credo in unam sanctam catholicam
et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

You take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For you alone are holy,
you alone are the Lord,
You only are the most high,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

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,
begotten of the Father
before all worlds.
God of God, light of light,
true God of 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
descended 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,
died and was buried.
And on the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures:
and ascended into heaven.
He sits at the right hand
of the Father:
and He shall come again with glory,
to judge the living and the dead:
and His kingdom shall have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, and giver of life:
Who proceeds from the Father
and the Son.
Who with the Father
and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified:
as it was told by the Prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic
and apostolic Church.

Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto
resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi sæculi.
Amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth;
pleni sunt caeli et terra
gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei

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.

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 who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest

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

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

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