

GESUALDO TENEBRAE RESPONSORIES

IKEN SCHOLARS

8 FEBRUARY 2019

RUNNING ORDER

FIRST HALF

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611): *Versa est in luctum*

Dominique Phinot (c.1510-c.1555): *De lamentatione Ieremiæ Prophetæ**

Carlo Gesualdo (c.1561-1613): *Tenebrae Responsoria del Sabato Sancto*

Nocturne 1

Sicut Ovis

Jerusalem surge

Plange quasi virgo

Nocturne 2

Recessit pastor noster

O vos omnes

Ecce quomodo moritur

Nocturne 3

Astiterunt reges

Aestimatus sum

Sepulto Domino

SECOND HALF

Alonso Lobo (c.1555-1617): *Versa est in luctum*

Alonso Lobo (c.1555-1617): *De lamentatione Ieremiæ Prophetæ*

**Dr Stephen Rice has prepared a new edition of Dominique Phinot's Lamentations for the Iken Scholars and this performance in particular. We would like to thank him for his kind work.*

PROGRAMME NOTES

The residents of Naples awoke to a grisly sight on the morning of 17 October 1590. Two aristocratic lovers, stripped naked, mutilated and brutally murdered lay scandalously exhibited on the steps of the Palazzo San Severo near to the Piazza San Domenico Maggiore, right in the heart of the city. In the outcry and investigation that followed the culprit was never in doubt. The woman's husband, a nobleman himself, having learnt of the illicit affair of his unfaithful wife, had stormed his own house, returning from a feigned hunting trip, and found his wife and her lover *in flagranti delecto* in the marital bed chamber. His brutal violence was evidentially uncontrollable: such was the mess it created.

The Gran Corte della Vicaria found the nobleman guilty of no crime, however.

The two victims were Maria d'Avalos and Fabrizio Carafa. The murderer tonight's anti-hero Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, Count of Conza (c.1561-1613). The drama and intrigue of this sorry episode has been a source of gruesome fascination ever since. Poetry, play, cinema and even opera have left their sedimentary deposits on the familiar tale, such that it is hard to disentangle history from fabrication. The bones as outlined above remain clear, however, and whilst Gesualdo was acquitted of crime, the episode had a dramatic impact on his life, mental stability and, indeed, his music. It is an impact that is heard and felt most keenly in his *Tenebrae Responsories*, written right at the end of his life in 1611, with their dark subject matter focusing on the Passion and death of Christ Himself.

This, however, is to be getting ahead of myself.

* * *

We begin tonight's concert in the comparatively sober environs of the Convent of Las Descalzas Reales in Madrid. On 26 February 1603 the Dowager Empress Maria of Spain died. She had been the wife of Maximilian II, sister of Philip II and for seventeen years had been the patron of Tomas Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611). The Dowager Empress had settled in Madrid from 1582: content to spend her days in 'a country without heretics', having spent much of her married life in Germany and Austria. Her death represents a seminal moment in Victoria's career. Under the strength and stability of Maria's patronage, Victoria had published what was to become the bulk of his mature output; had fulfilled his longing to return to his native Spain and had produced some of his very finest compositions. Her loss was profound both professionally and personally for Victoria and it is for the Dowager Empress that Victoria penned his famous *Requiem*.

Tonight's *Versa est in luctum* is the funeral motet from that Requiem. Listen out in particular to the very first words ('my harp is turned to grieving') and how Victoria presents this as an anguished series of discordant entries. It's worth noting, too, the bleak emptiness of the final moments ('for my days are as nothing').

Dominique Phinot (c.1510-c.1555) is a Franco-Flemish composer of the generation before Victoria. Like Gesualdo, he attracted controversy and was apparently executed in c.1555 for 'homosexual practices', though this is hard to substantiate. Whilst he hailed from the Low Countries, he seems to have spent most of his working life in Italy. Certainly his published works were printed in Italy (though tonight's *Lamentations* were printed posthumously in Nuremberg). His handling of double-choir polyphony in particular was seen as ground-breaking and could conceivably have influenced the likes of Palestrina and Victoria himself. The barely-ever performed *Lamentations* are a striking example of this. Listen out how the two choirs begin separately and then, through increasingly intricate interplays, eventually amalgamate for the final few glorious moments at 'Jerusalem, turn the Lord your God'.

We come now to the monumental *Tenebrae Responsories for Holy Saturday*. By 'tenebrae' (meaning 'shadows') we are referring to a series of religious services undertaken over the three days from Maundy Thursday to Easter Eve in the first two canonical hours of the day (i.e. Matins and Lauds). They are characterised by the gradual extinguishing of candles (hence 'shadows') and a structure built around three 'nocturnes' consisting of readings from the Book of Psalms and the Book of Lamentations of Jeremiah. Phinot's *Lamentations* are taken from the same series of services. Hence the *Responsories* of Gesualdo are divided into three sets of three pieces, each with an antiphon and psalm verse.

It seems unlikely that Gesualdo ever intended these compositions for public performance, but rather for his private devotions in his country palace in the town of Gesualdo in the south of Italy. Gesualdo's compositional style could not be more different to Victoria's or Phinot's. Even to our ears it sounds strikingly modern, disconcerting and even dissonant. Gesualdo, by this time, was working in a style that belonged to a completely different lineage to the Roman School. His was a style much more closely related to the madrigals of Luzzasco Luzzaschi from Ferrara.

There are so many highlights in this music that it is hard to break it down succinctly for programme notes. Gesualdo is constantly word-painting so it is worth having your translations handy for each of the pieces. Three particular moments stand out for me: the build up from a single bass to the full

choir at 'the great and very bitter day of the Lord' in the second half of *Plange quasi virgo*; the other-worldly tranquillity of 'and his memory shall be in peace' in *Ecce quomodo moritur*; and the impossibly deep 'thou hast laid me in the lowest deeps' of *Aestimatus sum*.

INTERVAL

We begin the second half of our concert this evening where Victoria left off. Just before dawn on Sunday 13 September 1598 in El Escorial, some thirty miles north of Madrid, King Philip II of Spain died. Widely seen as one of the most significant patrons of the Renaissance, the arts had flourished across Spain and her territories throughout his 42-year reign. Arrangements were quickly put in place for his Requiem Mass and among the music composed for the occasion was Alonso Lobo's (c.1555-1617) celebrated motet *Versa est in luctum*.

Born in Osuna late in 1554 or early 1555 (he was baptised in February: just as Phinot was being executed), Lobo began his musical education as a choirboy at Seville, where he later became the assistant to Guerrero and then *maestro de capilla* during Guerrero's absence. In 1593 he became *maestro de capilla* at Toledo Cathedral and it was during this post that Philip II died. Lobo's six-voiced setting of words from Job is full of all the polyphonic and harmonic interest that made him famous in his own day and, even, considered the equal of Victoria. Listen out for the emotional climax at 'in vocem flentium' ('the voice of those who weep').

Sticking with Lobo, tonight's *Lamentations* are the first of two he composed for Holy Saturday. Tantalisingly, his setting of the second reading is extant, though untranscribed and unpublished, in Toledo Cathedral's MS B 25, which remains unavailable, though will surely offer a very significant addition to the repertory should it ever be made accessible to the scholarly community.

Nevertheless, there are some twenty minutes of music in Lobo's *Lamentations*, making it among the most expansive of the Renaissance settings (Victoria's setting of the same text takes approximately five minutes to perform). Lobo's text is punctuated with Hebrew letters (Heth, Teth etc.), because the original text was an acrostic poem in Hebrew. The letters were considered integral to the Vulgate text and so were kept. In their musical manifestation under Lobo, however, they become some of the most melismatically complex moments in all Lobo's output and provide stunning structural markers within this expansive composition.

Please keep an eye on the *Iken Scholars'* website for upcoming performances at St Paul's Cathedral on 6 April and (likely) at St Mary le Bow on 5 April, when the programme will include Sheppard's stunning *Media Vita*.

MJD

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

Sophie Cleobury
Jenny Forsyth
Katharina Dunn
Louisa Dawes

Altos

Jess Dagers
Marion Harris
Chris Murphy

Tenors

Andrew Balls
James Green
Gary Rushton
Philip Kennedy

Basses

Chris Jeanes
Maxime Rischard
Joachim Sabbat

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

Versa est in luctum

Versa est in luctum cithara mea
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi Domine,
nihil enim sunt dies mei.

My harp is turned to grieving
and my flute to the voice of those who weep.
Spare me, O Lord,
for my days are as nothing.

De lamentatione Ieremiæ Prophetæ

Incipit oratio Ieremiæ Prophetæ.
Recordare Domine quid acciderit nobis; intuerere
et respice opprobrium nostrum.
Haereditas nostra versa est ad alienos,
domus nostrae ad extraneos.
Pupilli facti sumus absque patre;
matres nostrae quasi viduae.
Aquam nostram pecunia bibimus,
ligna nostra pretio comparavimus.
Cervicibus nostris minabamur;
lassis non dabatur requies.
Aegypto dedimus manum
et Assyriis ut saturaremur pane.
Patres nostri peccaverunt et non sunt,
et nos iniquitates eorum portavimus.
Servi dominati sunt nostri;

The prayer of Jeremiah the prophet begins.
Remember, Lord, what has happened to us;
look, and see our disgrace.
Our inheritance has been turned over to
strangers, our homes to foreigners.
We have become fatherless,
our mothers are widows.
We must buy the water we drink;
our wood can be had only at a price.
Those who pursue us are at our heels;
we are weary and find no rest.
We submitted to Egypt
and Assyria to get enough bread.
Our ancestors sinned and are no more,
and we bear their punishment.
Slaves rule over us,

non fuit qui redimeret de manu eorum.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Sicut ovis

Sicut ovis ad occisionem ductus est,
et dum male tractaretur non aperuit os suum;
traditus est ad mortem
ut vivificaret populum suum.
Tradidit in mortem animam suam,
et inter iniquos reputatus est.
Ut vivificaret populum suum.

Jerusalem, surge

Jerusalem, surge,
et exue te vestibus jucunditatis;
induere te cinere et cilicio:
quia in te occisus est
Salvator Israel.
Deduc quasi torrentem lacrimas
per diem et noctem,
et non taceat pupilla oculi tui.
Quia in te occisus est
Salvator Israel.

Plange quasi virgo

Plange quasi virgo, plebs mea,
ululate, pastores,
in cinere et cilicio
quia veniet dies Domini magna
et amara valde.
Accingite vos, sacerdotes,
et plangite, ministri altaris,
aspergite vos cinere.
Quia veniet dies Domini magna
et amara valde.

Recessit pastor noster

Recessit pastor noster
fons aquae vivae
ad cuius transitum sol
obscuratus est:
Nam et ille captus est,
qui captivum tenebat primum hominem:
hodie portas mortis
et seras pariter
Salvator noster dirupit.
Destruxit quidem
claustra inferni
et subvertit potentias diaboli.

O vos omnes

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam:
attendite et videte si est dolor

and there is no one to free us from their hands.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
turn to the Lord your God.

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter,
mistreated, but he opened not his mouth;
He was delivered over to death
so as to give life to his people.
He delivered his soul unto death,
and was counted among the malefactors.
To quicken his people.

Arise, O Jerusalem,
and put off your garments of rejoicing;
cover yourself with sack-cloth and ashes:
for the Saviour of Israel
has been slain in your midst.
Let your tears run down like a river,
day and night,
and let not the apple of your eye cease.
For the Saviour of Israel
has been slain in your midst.

Weep like a virgin, my people,
howl, keepers of the flock,
covered with ashes and wearing sack-cloth,
for the great and very bitter
day of the Lord will come.
Prepare yourselves, priests,
and lament, acolytes before the altar,
cover yourselves with ashes.
For the great and very bitter
day of the Lord will come.

Our Shepherd is departed,
the fount of living water,
At whose passing the sun
was darkened,
For even he was made captive
who was holding captive the first man.
Today the gates of death
and their bars
as well our Saviour has destroyed.
Indeed He has destroyed
the strongholds of the underworld
And he has overthrown the powers of the devil.

O all ye that pass by the way,
attend and see if there be any sorrow

sicut dolor meus.
O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,
attendite et videte:
Si est dolor similis
sicut dolor meus.
Attendite, universi populi,
et videte dolorem meum.

Ecce quomodo

Ecce quomodo moritur justus
et nemo percipit corde.
Viri justus tolluntur
et nemo considerat.
A facie iniquitatis
sublatus est justus
et erit in pace memoria eius:
Tamquam agnus coram tondente
se obmutuit,
et non aperuit os suum:
de angustia,
et de iudicio sublatus est.
Et erit in pace memoria eius.

Astiterunt reges

Astiterunt reges terrae,
et principes convenerunt in unum,
adversus Dominum
et adversus Christum eius.
Quare fremuerunt gentes,
et populi meditati sunt inania?

Aestimatus sum

Aestimatus sum cum
descendentibus in lacum,
factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio,
inter mortuos liber.
Posuerunt me in lacu inferiori,
in tenebris et in umbra mortis.
Factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio,
inter mortuos liber.

Sepulto Domino

Sepulto Domino,
signatum est monumentum,
Volventes lapidem
ad ostium monumenti,
Ponentes milites qui custodirent illum.
Accedentes principes sacerdotum
ad Pilatum, petierunt illum.

like to my sorrow.
O all ye that pass by the way,
attend and see:
If there be any sorrow
like to my sorrow.
Attend, all ye people,
and see my sorrow:

Behold how the righteous man dies
And no one understands.
Righteous men are taken away
And no one considers:
The righteous man has been taken away from
present iniquity
And his memory shall be in peace.
As a sheep before her shearers
is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth:
he was taken from prison
and from judgement.
And his memory shall be in peace.

The kings of the earth rise up,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord,
and against his anointed.
Why do the heathen rage,
and the people imagine a vain thing?

I am counted with them
that go down into the pit:
I am as a man that hath no strength:
free among the dead.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
in darkness, in the deeps.
I am as a man that hath no strength:
free among the dead.

The Lord being buried,
the tomb was sealed
By rolling a stone
across the door,
And soldiers were placed to guard it.
The chief priests went
to Pilate and petitioned him.

INTERVAL

Versa est in luctum

Versa est in luctum cithara mea
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi Domine,
nihil enim sunt dies mei.

My harp is turned to grieving
and my flute to the voice of those who weep.
Spare me, O Lord,
for my days are as nothing.

De lamentatione Ieremiæ Prophetæ

De lamentatio
Ieremiæ prophetæ.

The Lamentations
of Jeremiah the prophet.

Heth.

Misericordiae Domini, quia non sumus
consumpti; quia non defecerunt miserationes
ejus.

Heth.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come
to an end.

Heth.

Novi diluculo,
multa est fides tua.

Heth.

They are new every morning;
great is thy faithfulness.

Heth.

Pars mea Dominus, dixit anima mea; propterea
exspectabo eum.

Heth.

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

Teth.

Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum, animæ
quærenti illum.

Teth.

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to
the soul that seeks him.

Teth.

Bonum est præstolari cum silentio salutare Dei.

Teth.

It is good that one should wait quietly for the
salvation of the Lord.

Teth.

Bonum est viro cum portaverit jugum ab
adolescencia sua.

Teth.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his
youth.

Iod.

Sedebit solitarius et tacebit
quia levavit super se.

Iod.

Let him sit alone in silence,
for the Lord has laid it on him.

Iod.

Ponet in pulvere os suum
si forte sit spes.

Iod.

Let him bury his face in the dust-- there may yet
be hope.

Iod.

Dabit percutienti se maxillam saturabitur
Obprobriis.

Iod.

Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike
him, and let him be filled with disgrace.

Ierusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum. Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.