

MASTERPIECES OF THE FRANCO-FLEMISH SCHOOL

IKEN SCHOLARS

16 MARCH 2018

RUNNING ORDER

FIRST HALF

Jean Mouton (1459-1522): *Nesciens mater*
Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-1557): *Pater, peccavi in caelum*
Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-1557): *Andreas christi famulus*
Pierre de Manchicourt (1510-1564): *Ego sum panis*
Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-c.1560): *Angelus Domini*
Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1510-c.1556): *Ego flos campi*
Nicolas Gombert (c.1495-c.1560): *Lugebat David Absalon*

SECOND HALF

Giaches de Wert (1535-1596): *Deus justus et salvans*
Philippe de Monte (1521-1603): *O suavitas et dulcedo*
Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594): *Osculetur me*
Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594): *Missa Osculetur me – Kyrie, Gloria*
Giaches de Wert (1535-1596): *Deus tu scis*
Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594): *Missa Osculetur me – Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei*
Giaches de Wert (1535-1596): *O sacrum convivium*

PROGRAMME NOTES

I feel I should be frank with you, for I have a confession to make.

You have come to hear a concert of masterpieces from the Franco-Flemish School, but I am duty-bound to tell you that no such school exists. Never in the Renaissance Low Countries has there been a cultural melting pot where composers have regularly met to share works; nor can we look to teacher-pupil relationships between composers in any meaningful quantity; we cannot even identify a printing hub to serve as a focal point for disseminating works. No, the 'Franco-Flemish School' is an academic figment of the imagination that doesn't deserve its place in the parlance of early music students and enthusiasts.

What, then, are we doing here tonight?

Well, perhaps I have exaggerated a little. Firstly, you won't find many academics talking about a 'Franco-Flemish School' these days, but the name persists nonetheless to describe the distinctive output of a disparate collection of composers who all had some connection to what now forms parts of Belgium, the Netherlands and northern France, and spanned the period from the early fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century. In this sense, it is as good a term as any to distinguish these compositions from, say, the Roman, Venetian or English Schools, even if the composers themselves would hardly have recognised the concept.

And at any rate, tonight's concert is not a survey of this whole span, instead we'll explore its final portion: the period where compositions reached their expansive climax in scale and complexity, and when we increasingly see influences from outside the Low Countries mingling with the local styles. We'll identify links between composers as we find them, and we'll disentangle some of the building blocks that make this music so enduringly attractive. School or no School, the composers and

compositions from the Renaissance Low Countries have a unique and vital role in the history of European polyphonic writing.

We begin with Jean Mouton's (c.1459-1522) *Nesciens Mater*. As far as we can tell, Mouton spent his whole life in France, with the exception of one trip to Italy late in his life around 1515. Working first in Nesle for many years (first as singer, later as composer and *maître de chapelle*), he became a priest and entered the service of Queen Anne of Brittany around 1502, where he remained for the rest of his life composing for the royal state occasions of births, marriages, coronations and deaths. The *Nesciens Mater* is rightly famous amongst his output. In eight parts, only the first four are notated, with the second choir entering two breves later in strict canon up a fourth. It's an extraordinary feat of composition, all the more so as Mouton manages to express something of the mystery and wonder of the Christmastide text with his beautifully shifting harmonies. Listen out for the tenor voices, who paraphrase the plainsong melody of the antiphon.

Like Mouton, Thomas Crecquillon (c.1505-1557) prefers continuity of texture over dramatic contrasts (like those favoured by Josquin, among others, a generation earlier). His *Pater peccavi* sets text from the second Sunday in Lent, picking up themes from the story of the Prodigal Son whereby a wayward son returns to his father to ask for repentance and once more to be accepted into the family. Another priest, Crequillon worked in the court of Emperor Charles V, eventually rising to *maître de chapelle* and travelling widely with the imperial entourage. There is evidence of his dying in Béthune in 1557, probably falling victim to an outbreak of the plague which gripped the town in that year. A stylistic technique he did share with Josquin is the use of imitation. Listen out for the imitative entries particularly at the beginning.

This is shared by our next piece, *Andreas Christi famulus*, which some consider to be Crequillon's greatest work. Unusually, we know something of the specific origin of this piece. It seems likely to have been composed in 1546 for the meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a Roman Catholic order of chivalry founded in 1430 in Bruges to celebrate the marriage of the Burgundian Philip the Good to the Portuguese princess Isabella. The 1546 assembly is said to have included Francis I of France, Henry VIII of England, as well as Emperor Charles V. The patron saint of this order was Andrew, and Crequillon's text picks a number of antiphons to the saint, most likely to be used as a motet between Vespers and Compline as the ceremonial rubrics of the order demand.

The tiny town of Béthune, not far from Lille, not only was Crecquillon's likely place of death, but also Pierre de Manchicourt's (c.1510-1564) birth place. Manchicourt, however, is the first of our composers to travel widely beyond the Low Countries. After singing as a choirboy in Arras, he took roles in Tours and Tournai, before travelling to Spain to work in the Flemish Chapel of Philip II. His *Ego sum panis* is a setting of a Eucharistic song for the feast of Corpus Christi, written before his travels to Spain, however, most probably around 1539 when Manchicourt was working in Tours.

Like Crequillon, Nicolas Gombert (1495-1560) worked in the court Emperor Charles V: first employed as a singer and possibly a composer from around 1529, and then later as *maître des enfants* in the 1530s, to be succeeded by Crequillon. In somewhat mysterious circumstances, he disappears from the court records in 1540, allegedly due to some sexual misdemeanour, only to be pardoned a decade or so later around the time of the composition of his famous *Magnificat* settings. The *Angelus Domini* is the first of two compositions we will perform tonight from his extensive output of over 160 motets, 10 masses and 8 *Magnificat* settings. It recalls the visit of the angels to the shepherds outside Bethlehem at Christ's birth. Unlike Mouton and Crequillon, listen out for how Gombert contrasts the polyphonic and homophonic textures in this piece. It is a technique he mastered and used to great effect here, and the *Lugebat David Absalon*.

Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c.1510-c.1556) had the 'non Papa' ('not the Pope') appended to his name during his lifetime by his printer, Tielman Susto, though there seems little chance of anyone ever have been confused, so it was probably added in jest and has nonetheless stuck with him ever since. He took jobs in Bruges and then later (in 1544) as choirmaster to Philippe de Croÿ, one of Charles V's prominent generals, a position he proceeded Gombert to. His seven-voiced *Ego flos campi* is among his most famous works, setting text from the Song of Songs 'I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys...'. Like Gombert, Clemens plays with the possibilities of splitting the group of singers into smaller ensembles and of contrasting imitative polyphony with homophonic writing. Listen out for 'sicut lilum inter spinas' ('like the lily among thorns').

Lugebat David Absalon is one of Gombert's most affecting compositions and one of a handful of large-scale eight-voice works. It describes King David's reaction to the news of the death of his son Absalon. Listen out to the cascading patterns of 'o fili mi' ('oh my son') and 'heu me' ('oh me'). Nonetheless, the motet began life years earlier under an entirely different circumstance. *Je prens congie de mes amours* is an eight-voice *chanson* describing the pain of a departed lover composed some time before 1552 with the same music as tonight's motet. Gombert evidently felt there was mileage in the music, because he reset the *chanson* in 1552 with the Easter text 'Tulerunt Dominum meum' ('They have taken away my Lord'), and again in 1564 with tonight's text 'Lugebat David Absalon'. As a further layer of complexity, a fragment of a Credo exists (also from 1564) with a portion of identical musical material to our motet. Whatever the origin of this curious piece (or perhaps because of it), tonight's version has become one of Gombert's most famous and often-performed pieces.

INTERVAL

In our second half tonight, we turn to pieces by composers in the generation after those we have explored so far and were active more widely across Europe. In it we find a fusing of styles from their native Low Countries and beyond, especially Italy.

We begin with Giaches de Wert (1535-1596), who was born in Flanders (quite possibly Weert, close to Antwerp), but who travelled to Naples as a young man to receive his later musical education, and who eventually became active in Ferrara where he is said to have influenced the musical style of Monteverdi. His *Deus justus et salvans* is a six-voice motet published in 1581 in his *Modulationum liber primus*. The Italian influences are obvious: the piece proceeds in a series of imitative entries, but without particular reference to the text. The rising motifs towards the end are particularly fine.

Philippe de Monte (1521-1603), unlike Wert, received all of his musical training at Mechelen (south of Antwerp), where he was born. He was a chorister at the cathedral there. Later in life, though, he became very widely travelled, taking positions first in Naples and then Rome, and later in Prague, Vienna and, for a brief period, in London. Tonight's piece was published in 1575 in his *Libro quarto de motetti*, and is considered one of his very finest. The expansive eight-voice writing takes a text for Passiontide. Watch out for the change of tactus (time) at '...a te nunquam possim separari' ('...I may never be separated from you').

Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594) is perhaps one of the most famous names of the late Renaissance (along with Palestrina and Victoria). Born in Mons, there is a legend he was kidnapped three times in his childhood due to the beauty of his voice. Aged 12, he left the Low Countries and headed first to Mantua, and later Milan. By the early 1550s, he was working in Naples and later took the job of

maestro di cappella at the Basilica of St John Lateran in Rome. This was short lived, however, and by 1556 Lassus had joined the court of Albrecht V, duke of Bavaria: a role he was to keep for the rest of his life in Munich. It was in this final period that he composed his motet *Osculetur me* and the parody mass on the musical material. The two works represent the mature style of Lassus, equally able to contrast choirs antiphonally, as well as write full eight-voice polyphony. Particular highlights include the rapid exchange of parts in the Gloria of the mass, the increasing intricacy of the entries at 'gloria tua' in the Sanctus, and the ethereal delicacy of the Agnus Dei.

Interspersed among the mass are two further motets of Wert. First, the *Deus tu scis insipientiam meam*, a Lenten motet published two years after our first motet by Wert in Nuremberg, and his *O sacrum convivium*, published long before in 1566.

This draws a close to our exploration of the late Renaissance styles of the Low Countries. Brief as our concert has been, I hope to have been able to give a sense of the breadth of influences and outputs that contributed to this extraordinarily productive period of sacred polyphonic writing.

In our next concert, we will turn our attention to the Portuguese School. Keep an eye on our website for further details.

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 and liturgically-focused 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

Emily Field
Sophie Cleobury
Jenny Forsyth
Katharina Dunn
Nerissa Taysom

Altos

Paul Smith
Jess Dagers
Tristram Cooke
Marion Harris
Chris Murphy

Tenors

Andrew Balls
Sidharth Prabhu-Naik
James Green
Oscar Golden-Lee

Basses

Chris Jeanes
William Hess
Joachim Sabbat
Maxime Rischard

Matthew Dunn

Matthew Dunn, director, formed the *Iken Scholars* (then *Sacred Voices*) 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 came to London in 2011, became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and became Organist and Director of Music at St Botolph without Aldgate, with its historic 1704 Renatus Harris instrument. He set up the *Iken Scholars* in 2012. He continues to give organ recitals to unsuspecting audiences around the country. When not conducting choirs, he has a job in FS professional services and (at the moment at least) is busy raising funds for a new piano at St Botolphs!

TRANSLATIONS

Nesciens mater

Nesciens mater virgo virum
peperit sine dolore
salvatorem saeculorum.
Ipsam regem angelorum
sola virgo lactabat,
ubere de caelo pleno.

Knowing no man, the Virgin mother
bore, without pain,
the Saviour of the world.
Him, the king of angels,
only the Virgin suckled,
breasts filled by heaven.

Pater, peccavi in caelum

Pater peccavi in coelum
et coram te.
Iam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus,
fac me sicut unum ex mercenariis tuis.
Quanti mercenarii in domo Patris mei
abundant panibus,
ego autem hic fame pereor,
Surgam, et ibo ad Patrem meum et dicam ei:
fac me sicut unum ex mercenariis tuis.

Father, I have sinned against heaven
and before you;
I am no longer worthy to be called your son:
make me like one of your hired men.
How many of my father's hired men
have food to spare,
and here I am starving to death!
I will arise and go to my father and say to him:
'Make me like one of your hired men.'

Andreas Christi famulus

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

Andrew, servant of Christ,
worthy apostle to God,
brother of Peter
and fellow sufferer.

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

The Lord held Andrew dear
in sweet aroma.
O Jesus Christ,
Son of God,
pray for us

Ego sum panis vivus

Ego sum panis vivus,
qui de caelo descendi.
Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane,
vivet in aeternum:
et panis quem ego dabo,
caro mea est pro mundi vita.
Alleluia.

I am the living bread
which came down from heaven:
if any man eat of this bread,
he shall live for ever:
and the bread that I will give is my flesh,
which I will give for the life of the world.
Alleluia.

Angelus Domini

Angelus Domini ad pastores ait:
Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum
quod erit omni populo,
quia natus est vobis hodie
Salvator mundi,
qui est Christus Dominus,
in civitate David.

The angel of the Lord said to the shepherds:
I bring you news of a great joy
which will be for every people,
for to you is born this day
the Savior of the world,
who is Christ the Lord,
in the city of David.

Et inveniatis infantem
pannis involutum,
et positum in praesepe.
Qui est Christus Dominus,

And you shall find the infant
wrapped in swaddling clothes
and placed in a manger.
He is Christ the Lord,

in civitate Dávid.

Ego flos campi

Ego flos campi
et lilium convallium.
Sicut lilium inter spinas
sic amica mea inter filias.
Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum,
sic dilectus meus inter filios.
Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi,
et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.
Introduxit me Rex in cellam vinariam ordinavit in
me charitatem.
Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis
quia amore languo.
Fons hortorum puteus
aquarum viventium
quae fluunt impetu de Libano

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.

Deus justus et salvans

Deus justus et salvans
non est praeter me,
convertimini ad me
et salvi eritis omnes fines terrae,
quia ego Deus et non est alius.

O Suavitas et dulcedo

O suavitas et dulcedo
humani generis, Iesu Christe,
qui pro nostra salute
in cruce extensus fuisti,
per omnia membra et ossa
corporis tui, quae distenta
in te et numerata fuerunt,
rogo te, piissime Iesu,
ut me miserum
sic tibi iungas,
quod per prospera et adversa
huius saeculi a te nunquam

in the city of David.

I am the flower of the field,
and the lily of the valleys.
As the lily among thorns,
so is my love among the daughters.
As the apple tree among the trees of the woods,
so is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow, whom I desired:
and his fruit was sweet to my palate.
He brought me into the cellar of wine,
he set in order charity in me.
Stay me up with flowers, compass me about
with apples: because I languish with love.
The fountain of gardens:
the well of living waters,
which run with a strong stream from Libanus.

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

A just God and a saviour,
there is none besides me.
Be converted to me,
and you shall be saved, all ye ends of the earth,
for I am God, and there is no other.

Oh, the sweetness, and delight
of the human race, Jesus Christ,
you who for our salvation
were stretched out on the Cross,
by all the limbs and bones
of your body, which were stretched out
in you, and were numbered,
I ask you, O most merciful Jesus,
to join my unhappy self
to you thus,
that through prosperity or adversity
of this world, I may never

possim separari. Amen.

Osculetur me

Osculetur me osculo oris sui,
quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino.
Fragrantia unguentis optimis.
Oleum effusum nomen tuum,
ideo adulescentulae dilexerunt te.
Trahe me post te,
curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.
Introduxit me Rex in cellaria sua:
exultabimus et laetabimur in te
memores uberum tuorum super vinum:
recti diligunt te.

Missae Osculetur me: Kyrie

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison.

Missae Osculetur me: 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;
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.

Deus tu scis

Deus tu scis insipientiam meam et delicta mea a
te non sunt abscondita,

be separated from you. Amen.

Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth:
for thy breasts are better than wine,
Smelling sweet of the best ointments.
Thy name is as oil poured out:
therefore young maidens have loved thee.
Draw me along with you,
and let us fly in the scent of your perfume.
The King has brought me into his room:
we will exult and be joyful in you when we think
of your breasts, better than wine,
all the right-minded love you.

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

Glory be to God in the highest
and on earth peace to men of
good will.
We praise Thee; we bless Thee;
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee;
We give thanks to Thee for Thy
great glory.
O Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
Thou that takest away the sins
of the world,
have mercy upon us;
Thou that takest away the sins
of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand
of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy,
Thou only art the Lord,
Thou only art the most high,
Jesus Christ,
together with the Holy Ghost
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my
offences are not hidden from thee:

in multitudine misericordiae tuae exaudi me.

In the multitude of thy mercy hear me.

Missae Osculteur me: Sanctus & Benedictus

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

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts;
heaven and earth are full of
Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Missae Osculetur me: Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis
peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

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

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis
peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

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

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

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

O sacram convivium

O sacram convivium, in quo Christus sumitur;
recolitur memoria passionis ejus;
mens impletur gratia;
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.

O sacred banquet, wherein Christ is received;
the memorial of his passion is renewed;
the soul is filled with grace;
and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

Panem de caelo praestitisti eis
Omnem delectamentum in se habentem.

You gave them bread from heaven
Containing in itself all sweetness.