



Saturday 1 April, 7pm
St Martin's Church

A DOUBLE 'BILL' FOR PASSIONTIDE AND EASTER

BREMF Consort of Voices

Deborah Roberts *director*

Music of lamentation and rejoicing by two celebrated 'Williams' from either end of the English Renaissance – William Byrd (d. 1623) and William Cornysh (d. 1523)

The music

Part 1: Lent and Passiontide

Chant

The Lent Prose

William Byrd 1543–1623

Miserere mei Domine
Ne irascaris Domine

William Cornysh 1465?–1523

Woefully arrayed

Byrd

Peccantem me quotidie
Tristitia et anxietas

Interval

Part 2: Rejoicing!

Cornysh

Magnificat

Byrd

Propers for Easter Day:

Introit: Resurrexi

Gradual: Haec Dies

Sequence: Victimae paschali laudes

Offertory: Terra tremuit

Communion: Pascha nostrum

2023 is certainly a year to focus on the music of William Byrd, one of Britain's finest composers. We are lucky also that not only did he live a long and productive life, but his shared (with Thomas Tallis) monopoly on music printing, granted by Queen Elizabeth I, meant that the bulk of his music was published and therefore survives! His output was also very varied, including Latin sacred music for the Catholic rite, Anglican music and madrigals in English, consort music for viols – with or without voices – and keyboard music. His music also covers every season and major festival in the church year.

With William Cornysh, who died 100 years earlier than Byrd, we are less fortunate. What music survives from this period, before the invention of printing, is often a matter of chance. What does remain are big ceremonial pieces copied into lavish manuscripts such as the Eton Choirbook, and a few secular part songs, including the wonderfully expressive *Woefully arrayed*, with its really graphic depiction of the Crucifixion, copied into what is known as the Fayrfax Manuscript. There is also some confusion as to whether at least some of the music attributed to William Cornysh was the work of his father, also a composer and of the same name, but the Cornysh who died in 1523 is certainly 'the younger', and almost certainly the composer of both works performed tonight.

As a lover of anguished, chromatic music I find myself spoiled for choice when it comes to selecting works by Byrd for the penitential season of Lent! Moreover, in the case of Byrd, many of these works, even if based on Biblical texts, have another, metaphorical, level of meaning inspired by Byrd's devout and passionate Catholicism. In Protestant England under Queen Elizabeth I the Latin Mass was illegal and attendance at Anglican services obligatory. Both Byrd and his wife were fined several times for recusancy – refusal to attend – but many others were imprisoned or even executed. Byrd's musical skills earned him some immunity, but his anguish and anger at the state of England was poured into his music. In *Ne irascaris*, Jerusalem is a metaphor for England and Byrd's setting, especially of the words 'deserta' and 'desolata' leaves no doubt as to the state of his mind. This is a protest song!

In the second half we begin with Cornysh's very virtuosic Magnificat, representing the entirely unique colour and style of English music before the Reformation. Passages of extreme agility for reduced numbers of voices alternate with full passages of rich sonority. English choirs from that period must have been quite phenomenal.

Byrd's Propers for Easter Day were published as part of his 1607 Gradualia, a collection of settings of the Mass texts that would vary according to the season, as opposed to the unchanging 'Ordinary' of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Sanctus and Agnus Dei). They are highly dramatic pieces, radiant with joy.

Deborah Roberts

The translations

The Lent Prose

*Attende, Domine, et miserere,
quia peccavimus tibi.*

Ad te Rex summe, omnium redemptor,
oculos nostros sublevamus flentes:
exaudi, Christe, supplicantum preces.

Attende...

Dextera Patris, lapis angularis,
via salutis, ianua caelestis,
ablue nostri maculas delicti.

Attende...

Rogamus, Deus, tuam maiestatem:
auribus sacris gemitus exaudi:
crimina nostra placidus indulge.

Attende...

Miserere mei,

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam
misericordiam tuam;
et secundum multitudinem miserationum
tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.

Ne irascaris

Ne irascaris Domine satis,
et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostrae.
Ecce respice populus tuus omnes nos.

Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.
Sion deserta facta est,
Jerusalem desolata est.

Woefully arrayed

Text: John Skelton 1460–1529

Woefully arrayed,
my blood, man,
for thee ran,
it may not be nayed;
my body blo and wan,
woefully arrayed.

Behold me I pray thee
with all thy whole reason
and be not hard-hearted
and for this encheason,
sith I for thy soul sake
was slain in good season,
beguiled and betrayed
by Judas' false treason.

*Hear us, O mighty Lord, show us your mercy:
Sinners we stand before you.*

To thee, Redeemer, on thy throne of glory:
lift we our weeping eyes in holy pleadings:
listen, O Jesu, to our supplications.

Hear us...

O thou chief cornerstone, right hand of the Father: way
of salvation, gate of life celestial:
cleanse thou our sinful souls from all defilement.

Hear us...

God, we implore thee, in thy glory seated:
bow down and hearken to thy weeping children:
pity and pardon all our grievous trespasses.

Hear us...

Have mercy on me, O God, according to
thy great mercy:
and according to the multitude of thy commiserations,
take away mine iniquity.

Be not angry, O Lord,
and remember our iniquity no more.
Behold, we are all your people.

Your holy city has become a wilderness.
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem has been made desolate.

Modern English:

Clothed in sorrow,
O man, my blood
was spilt for you,
that cannot be denied;
my pale and bloodless corpse
was clothed in sorrow.

I beg you to look at me
with all your understanding
and for this reason
do not be hard-hearted,
since I was killed just in time
to save your soul,
cheated and betrayed
by Judas' guile.

Unkindly entreated,
with sharp cord sore fretted
the Jews me threatd.
They mowed, they grinned,
they scorned me,
Condemned to death,
as thou mayest see,
woefully arrayed.

Thus naked am I nailed;
O man, for thy sake
I love thee, then love me,
why sleep'st thou? Awake, awake.
Remember my tender
heart-root for thee brake,
with pains my veins
constrained to crake,
thus tugged to and fro,
thus wrapped all in woe,
whereas never man was so entreated,
thus in most cruel wise
was like a lamb offered in sacrifice,
woefully arrayed.

Of sharp thorn I have worn
a crown on my head.
So pained, so strained,
so rueful, so red.
Thus bobbed, thus robbed,
thus for thy love dead;
Unfeigned, not deigned,
my blood for to shed.
My feet and handes sore,
the sturdy nailes tore,
what might I suffer more
than I have done, O man, for thee?
Come when thou list,
welcome to me,
woefully arrayed.

Peccantem me quotidie

Peccantem me quotidie
et non paenitentem,
timor mortis conturbat me.
Quia in inferno nulla est redemptio.
Miserere mei, Deus, et salva me.

Tristitia et anxietas

Tristitia et anxietas occupaverunt interiora mea.
Moestum factum est cor meum in dolore,
et contenebrati sunt oculi mei.
Vae mihi, quia peccavi.

Inhumanly treated,
the Jews threatened me
and scourged me with whips.
They grimaced and mocked me,
they scorned me,
and condemned me to death,
as you can see,
clothed in sorrow.

So naked I am nailed;
O man, I love you for your own self,
so love me too,
why are you sleeping? Wake up, wake up.
Remember my human
Heart-strings were broken for you,
my veins forced
to crack with pain,
dragged in all directions,
so wrapped up in sorrow,
no man was ever so treated,
in such cruel fashion
offered like a lamb to the sacrifice,
clothed in sorrow.

I have worn a crown
of sharp thorns on my head.
So much in pain, so bruised,
so sad, so red with my blood.
Thus torn, robbed of life
and dead for love of you;
feigning not, but freely
shedding my blood.
My feet and hands sorely wounded,
torn by the thick nails,
what more could I suffer for you
than I already have, O man?
Come to me when your heart moves you,
for you are welcome,
clothed in sorrow.

While sinning daily,
and repenting not,
the fear of death troubles me,
for in Hell is no redemption.
Have mercy upon me, O God, and deliver me.

Sadness and anxiety have overtaken my inmost being.
My heart is made sorrowful in mourning,
my eyes are become dim.
Woe is me, for I have sinned.

Sed tu, Domine, qui non derelinquis
sperantes in te,
consolare et adjuva me propter nomen sanctum
tuum, et miserere mei.

Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum,
et exultavit spíritus meus: in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancíllae suae:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes
generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius in progenies et progenies
timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede:
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis:
et dívites dimísit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum:
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros:
Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Fílio, et Spiritui Sancto,

Sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Resurrexi

Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum, alleluia.
Posuisti super me manum tuam, alleluia.
Mirabilis facta est scientia tua, alleluia.

Domine, probasti me, et cognovisti me;
tu cognovisti sessionem meam,
et resurrectionem meam

Gloria Patri et Fílio et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,
Et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Resurrexi...

Haec dies

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus:
exultemus et laetemur in ea.
Confitemini Domino, quoniam bonus:
quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus, alleluia.
Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus.

But thou, O Lord, who dost not forsake those
whose hope is in thee,
comfort and help me for thy holy name's sake,
and have mercy on me.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For He hath regarded the humility of His handmaiden:
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call
me blessed.
For He that is mighty hath done great things to me;
and holy is His name.
And His mercy is from generation unto generations,
to them that fear Him.
He hath shewed might in His arm: He hath scattered
the proud in the conceit of their heart.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things;
and the rich He hath sent empty away.
He hath received Israel His servant,
being mindful of His mercy:
As He spoke to our fathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
forever and ever, Amen.

I rose up and am yet with thee, alleluia.
Thou hast put thy hand upon me, alleluia.
Thy knowledge is become marvellous to me, alleluia.

Lord, thou hast proved me, and hast known me: thou
hast known my sitting down,
and my rising up.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen.

I rose up...

This is the day, which our Lord made:
let us rejoice, and be glad therein.
Confess ye to our Lord because he is good:
because his mercy is for ever, alleluia.
Our Paschal lamb, Christ, is immolated.

Victimae paschali laudes

Victimae paschali laudes
immolent Christiani.
Agnus redemit oves:
Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.
Mors et vita duello
confluxere mirando:
dux vitae mortuus,
regnat vivus.
Dic nobis Maria,
quid vidisti in via?
Sepulcrum Christi viventis,
et gloriam vidi resurgentis
Angelicos testes,
sudarium, et vestes.
Surrexit Christus spes mea:
praecedet vos in Galilaeam.
Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere:
tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.
Amen. Alleluia.

Let Christians offer sacrificial praises
to the Passover victim.
The lamb has redeemed the sheep:
the Innocent Christ has reconciled
the sinners to the Father.
Death and life contended
in a spectacular battle:
the dead leader of life
reigns alive.
Tell us, Mary,
what did you see on the way?
'I saw the tomb of the living Christ
and the glory of his rising,
The angelic witnesses,
the shroud, and the clothes.'
'Christ my hope is arisen;
he will go before you into Galilee.'
We know Christ is truly risen from the dead!
On us, you conqueror, King, have mercy!
Amen. Alleluia.

Terra tremuit

Terra tremuit et quievit:
Dum resurgeret in iudicio Deus.
Alleluia.

The earth trembled, and was still:
When God arose to judgement.
Alleluia.

Pascha nostrum

Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus, alleluia.
Itaque epulemur in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis,
alleluia.

Christ our Paschal Lamb has been sacrificed, alleluia.
Therefore, let us keep the feast with the unleavened
bread of sincerity and truth, alleluia.

The performers

BREMF Consort of Voices (BCV) is an ensemble of solo and consort singers formed from semi-professional, student and experienced amateur singers. Dedicated to giving dramatic and exciting performances of music from the Renaissance and early Baroque, the ensemble gives several concerts each year at BREMF. It has taken part in music ranging from 15th-century a cappella polyphony to the spectacular 1589 Florentine Intermedi with renaissance orchestra, great Venetian works with The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble and Purcell with Emma Kirkby and the International Baroque Players.

Deborah Roberts was born in Europe and graduated from Nottingham University with an MA in editing and interpreting renaissance and baroque music. She has remained fascinated by the discovery of new repertoire and performance styles ever since. As a long-term former member of The Tallis Scholars, Deborah performed with them in over 1,200 concerts in many weird and wonderful places around the world and in countless recordings of rare and beautiful renaissance music. She also sang with many other early music ensembles as a soloist and consort singer. She took up choral direction 20 years ago, and enjoys running courses in sacred polyphony and early opera. In 2002 she co-founded Brighton Early Music Festival with Clare Norburn and remains its artistic director.