



Sunday 3 December, 3pm
Church of the Holy Cross, Woodingdean

A HEAVENLY BYRD IN AN EARTHLY TREE

Advent and Christmas music including medieval carols and works by Byrd

BREMF Consort of Voices

Deborah Roberts *director*

Medieval carol 14th century

William Byrd 1543–1623

Byrd

Medieval carols 15th century

Traditional 15th century

Byrd

Audience carol

Ashdown Consort of Viols

Maurice Rogers *treble viol*

Marion Pilbeam *tenor viol*

Janet Gascoine *tenor viol*

Ruth Ridley *bass viol*

Angelus ad virginem

An earthly tree
(soloists Natasha Stone & Bibi Lees)

In Nomine No. 2

Fantasia No. 1

Nowel – out of your sleep

Alleluya: a nywe werke

Coventry Carol

O magnum mysterium

Silent Night



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ENGLAND**

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Byrd	From Virgin's womb (soloist Natasha Stone)
Medieval carol 15 th century	Veni, veni Emmanuel
Audience carol	Once in royal David's city
Medieval carol 15 th century	Nowel sing we
Audience carol	O come, all ye faithful

In our last concert of 2023 we complete our celebration of William Byrd's anniversary year with two of his delightful sacred consort songs for the Christmas season, as well as his deeply reflective *O magnum mysterium*, a meditation on the idea that animals would be the first to witness the birth of Jesus and to see him lying in a (their) manger.

From his collection of Songs of Sundry Natures (1589) the two consort songs 'An earthly tree' and 'From Virgin's womb' are set for four viols and solo voices, the former a duet and the latter a solo, and both have cheerful choral refrains. Unfortunately, we are unable to perform both choruses this afternoon as each requires quite different scoring; that to 'From Virgin's womb', 'Rejoice with heart and voice', being set for a chorus of 4-part high voices. Maybe another year! It is charming to imagine the possible context for the performance of these Christmas songs: not a church service, but a domestic gathering, possibly on Christmas Day itself.

No Christmas would be complete without carols, so we offer a selection of the very oldest from medieval England. Some of the English needs a bit of help to understand it!

Please join in with the audience carols!

Deborah Roberts

The texts

Angelus ad virginem,
subintrans in conclave,
Virginis formidinem
demulcens, inquit "Ave!
Ave, regina virginum:
coeli terraeque dominum
concipies et paries intacta
salutem hominum;
tu porta coeli facta,
medela criminum."

"Quomodo conciperem,
quae virum non cognovi?
Qualiter infringerem,
quae firma mente vovi?"
"Spiritus sancti gratia
perficiet haec omnia.
Ne timeas, sed gaudeas
secura, quod castimonia
manebit in te pura
Dei potentia."

An earthly tree a heavenly fruit it bear,
a case of clay contained a crown immortal,
a crown of crowns, a King whose cost and care
redeemed poor man, whose race before was thrall
to death, to doom, to pains of everlasting,
by His sweet death, scorns, stripes, and often fasting.

Then let us sing the lullabies of sleep
to this sweet babe, born to awake us all
from drowsy sin that made old Adam weep,
and by his fault gave to mankind the fall.
For lo! this day, the birth day, day of days
summons our songs to give Him laud and praise.

Cast off all doubtful care, exile and banish tears,
to joyful news divine, lend us your list'ning ears.

The angel came to the Virgin,
entering secretly into her room;
the Virgin's fear
calming, he said, "Hail!
Hail, queen of virgins:
you will conceive the Lord of heaven
and earth and bear him, still a virgin,
to be the salvation of mankind;
you will be made the gate of heaven,
the cure of sins."

"How can I conceive,
since I have not known a man?
How can I break the vow
I made with firm intent?"
"The grace of the Holy Spirit
shall bring all this to pass.
Fear not, but rejoice,
secure in the knowledge that pure chastity
shall remain yours
through God's mighty power."

Nowel, nowel, nowel,
Nowel, nowel, nowel.

Out of youre slepe arise and wake,
For God mankind now hathe itake
All of a maide without any make.
Of all women she berethe the belle.

Nowel, nowel, nowel,
Nowel, nowel, nowel.

Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.

A nywe werke is come on honde
þorw my3t & grace of Godys sonde:
to saue þe lost of euery londe.
For now is fre þat erst was bonde:
we mowe wel synge, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

A new work has come on hand
through might and grace of God's messenger,
to save the lost of every land.
For he is now free who was once in bondage;
we may well sing, alleluia!

Coventry Carol

Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child,
by by, lully lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do
for to preserve this day
this poor youngling, for whom we do sing
"By by, lully lullay"?

Herod the king, in his raging,
charged he hath this day
his men of might, in his own sight,
all young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child for thee,
and ever morn and day,
for thy parting neither say nor sing
"By by, lully lullay".

Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child,
by by, lully lullay.

O magnum mysterium

et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepeio.

O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum.

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum.

O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum.

Alleluia!

O great mystery

and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger!

O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.

Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.

Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!

From Virgin's womb this day, this day did spring
the precious Seed that only saved man.
This day let man rejoice and sweetly sing
since on this day our Saviour first began.
This day did Christ man's soul from death remove
with glorious saints to dwell in Heaven above.

O sing unto this glittering, glorious King,
O praise His name let every living thing,
let heart and voice like bells of silver ring
the comfort that this day to man doth bring.
Let lute, let shawm, with sound of sweet delight
these joys of Christ His birth this day recite.

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

captivum solve Israel,
qui gemit in exsilio,
privatus Dei Filio.

R: Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
nascetur pro te Israel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

R: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,
to thee shall come Emmanuel.

Veni, O Sapientia,
quae hic disponis omnia,
veni, viam prudentiae
ut doceas et gloriae.

O come, Thou Wisdom, from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

Veni, veni, Adonai,
qui populo in Sinai
legem dedisti vertice
in maiestate gloriae.

O come, o come, Thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law,
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

Veni, O lesse virgula,
ex hostis tuos ungula,
de specu tuos tartari
educ et antro barathri.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,
from ev'ry foe deliver them
that trust Thy mighty power to save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Nowel sing we now all and sum
For *rex pacificus* is cum.

In Bedleem, in that fair cete,
a child was born of a maden free,
that schall a lord and prince be
A solis ortus cardine.

Children were slain full grete plente,
Jhesu, for the love of thee.
Wherfore here soules saved be,
Hostis Herodes impie.

As sunne schineth throw the glass,
so Jhesu in his moder was.
Thee to serve now graunt us gras,
O lux beata trinitas.

Now God is comen to wurchepen us,
Now of Marye is born Jhesus.
Make we mery amonges us ;
Exultet celum laudibus.

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.

bremf.org.uk/ensembles/bcv

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.

The audience carols

Silent night! Holy night!

All is calm, all is bright,
round yon Virgin, mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from Heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!

Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

Once in royal David's city

stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and His shelter was a stable,
and His cradle was a stall:
with the poor, and meek, and lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
through His own redeeming love;
for that Child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above,
and He leads His children on
to the place where He is gone.

O come, all ye faithful,

joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels,

sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
in the highest:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,

born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!