Brighton Early Music Festival 2026

BRINGERS OF DREAMS

Saturday 4 July, 7.30pm
St Mary de Haura Church, Shoreham-by-Sea

A Triptych of Four-Part Harmony

BREMF Consort of Voices

James Elias *director*

Johannes Ockeghem c. 1410-1497	Kyrie: Missa L'homme armé
Jean Mouton c. 1459-1522	Gloria: Missa 'Alleluia'
Josquin des Prez c. 1450–1521	Credo: Missa Pange Lingua
Christopher Tye c. 1505–1572/73	Sanctus: Western Wynd Mass
Thomas Tallis c. 1505–1585	Benedictus: Mean mass in F
William Byrd 1539/40–1623	Agnus Dei: Mass for four voices

Interval

John Dowland 1563–1626	Me, me and none but me If floods of tears It was a time Heavy sleep Can she excuse my wrongs Lachrimae Come again, sweet love doth now invite O sweet woods What poor astronomers

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Interval

Robert White c. 1538–1574	Christe qui lux es et dies IV
Maurice Duruflé 1902–1986	Quatre motets sur des thèmes grégoriens: Ubi caritas Tota pulchra es Tu es Petrus Tantum ergo
Ola Gjeilo b. 1978	Ubi caritas
Anthony Bernarducci b. 1984	Veni Creator Spiritus

The music

Tonight's concert is divided into three parts, with two shorter intervals between them.

Each third has a theme: the first third takes the familiar form of a mass setting, but for this concert we are performing different movements taken from settings by different composers. The composers are in chronological order, starting with Ockeghem's Kyrie, dating from about 1450, and ending with the Agnus Dei from Byrd's Mass for four voices. All of the movements are in four parts, so this is a chance to hear something of the development of choral works between the mid-15th and the mid-16th centuries.

The second third focuses on the songs of John Dowland, typically about love, loss and death. Dowland believed that it was beneficial for humans to feel sorrow, and in particular to cry, in order to soften the heart, in a way that we might today label as catharsis. His music is an exploration of this theme. Particularly well known are his *Lachrimae,* where the first four notes in the soprano line are intended to be the musical equivalent of the forming and falling of a tear drop.

Our final section contains works which all take plainchant as their basis or inspiration. Although many works from the 15th and 16th centuries also do this, tonight's concert only features Robert White's *Christe qui lux es et dies* in order to focus on some less common examples from the modern era. Duruflé's four motets on Gregorian themes, particularly *Ubi caritas,* are well respected for their beauty and use of 20th-century (tonal) harmonies. We end with two pieces from the 21st century.

James Elias

The texts

Me, me and none but me, dart home O gentle death,
and quickly, for I draw too long this idle breath.
O how I long till I may fly to heav'n above,
unto my faithful and beloved turtle dove?

Like to the silver swan before my death I sing,
and yet alive my fatal knell I help to ring,
still I desire from Earth and earthly joys to fly,
he never happy lived that cannot love to die.

If floods of tears could cleanse my follies past,
and smokes of sighs might sacrifice for sin,
if groaning cries might salve my fault at last,
or endless moan for error pardon win:
then would I cry, weep, sigh, and ever moan,
mine errors, faults, sins, follies past and gone.

I see my hopes must wither in their bud,
I see my favours are no lasting flowers,
I see that words will breed no better good
than loss of time and lightning but at hours.
Thus when I see, then thus I say therefore,
that favours, hopes and words can blind no more.

It was a time when silly bees could speak,
and in that time, I was a silly bee,
who fed on time until my heart 'gan break,
yet never found the time would favour me.
Of all the swarm, I only did not thrive,
yet brought I wax and honey to the hive.

Then thus I buzzed when time no sap would give,
why should this blessed time to me be dry,
sith by this time the lazy drone doth live,
the wasp, the worm, the gnat, the butterfly?
Mated with grief I kneeled on my knees,
and thus complained unto the king of bees.

'My liege, gods grant thy time may never end,
and yet vouchsafe to hear my plaint of time,
which fruitless flies have found to have a friend,
and I cast down when Atomies do climb?'
The king replied but thus, 'Peace, peevish bee.
Thou'rt bound to serve the time, the time not thee'.

Come, heavy sleep, the image of true death,
and close up these my weary weeping eyes,
whose spring of tears doth stop my vital breath,
and tears my heart with sorrow's sigh-swoll'n cries.
Come and possess my tired through-worn soul,
that living dies, till thou on me be stole.

Come, shadow of my end, and shape of rest,
allied to death, child to his black-fac'd night.
Come thou and charm these rebels in my breast,
whose waking fancies do my mind affright.
O come, sweet sleep, come or I die for ever,
come ere my last sleep comes, or come never.

Can she excuse my wrongs with virtue's cloak?
Shall I call her good when she proves unkind?
Are those clear fires which vanish into smoke?
Must I praise the leaves where no fruit I find?

No, no: where shadows do for bodies stand,
thou may'st be abused if thy sight be dim.
Cold love is like to words written on sand,
or to bubbles which on the water swim.

Wilt thou be thus abused still,
seeing that she will right thee never?
if thou canst not overcome her will,
thy love will be thus fruitless ever.

Was I so base, that I might not aspire
unto those high joys which she holds from me?
As they are high, so high is my desire:
if she this deny, what can granted be?

If she will yield to that which reason is,
it is reason's will that love should be just.
Dear make me happy still by granting this,
or cut off delays if that I die must.

Better a thousand times to die,
than for to live thus still tormented:
Dear but remember it was I
who for thy sake did die contented.

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!
Exiled for ever, let me mourn;
where night's black bird her sad infamy sings,
there let me live forlorn.

Down vain lights, shine you no more!
No nights are dark enough for those
that in despair their lost fortunes deplore.
Light doth but shame disclose.

Never may my woes be relieved,
since pity is fled;
and tears and sighs and groans my weary days
of all joys have deprived.

From the highest spire of contentment
my fortune is thrown;
and fear and grief and pain for my deserts
are my hopes, since hope is gone.

Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,
learn to contemn light.
Happy, happy they that in hell
feel not the world's despite.

Come again! sweet love doth now invite
thy graces, that refrain
to do me due delight,
to see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die
with thee again in sweetest sympathy.

Come again! that I may cease to mourn
through thy unkind disdain;
for now left and forlorn
I sit, I sigh, I weep, I faint, I die
in deadly pain and endless misery.

Gentle Love, draw forth thy wounding dart,
thou canst not pierce her heart;
for I, that do approve
by sighs and tears more hot than are thy shafts
do tempt, while she for triumph laughs.

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness,
O how much do I love your solitariness.

From fame’s desire, from love’s delight retir'd,
in these sad groves an Hermit’s life I led,
and those false pleasures which once I admir'd,
with sad remembrance of my fall, I dread.
To birds, to trees, to earth, impart I this,
for she less secret, and as senseless is.
O sweet woods…

You woods, in you the fairest nymphs have walked,
nymphs at whose sight all hearts did yield to Love.
You woods, in whom dear lovers oft have talked,
how do you now a place of mourning prove?
Wanstead! My mistress saith this is the doom,
thou art love's childbed, nursery, and tomb.
O sweet woods…

What poor astronomers are they
take women's eyes for stars,
and set their thoughts in battle 'ray,
to fight such idle wars,
when in the end they shall approve
'tis but a jest drawn out of love.

And love itself is but a jest,
devis'd by idle heads,
to catch young fancies in the nest
and lay it in fools' beds;
that, being hatch'd in Beauty's eyes,
they may be fledg'd ere they be wise.

But such as will run mad with will,
I cannot clear their sight,
but leave them to their study still,
to look where is no light.
'Till them too late we make them try,
they study false astronomy.

Christe qui lux es et dies,
noctis tenebras detegis,
lucisque lumen crederis,
lumen beatum praedicans.

Precamur Sancte Domine,
defende nos in hac nocte,
sit nobis in te requies,
quietam noctem tribue.

Ne gravis somnus irruat,
nec hostis nos surripiat,
nec caro illi consentiens,
nos tibi reos statuat.
Oculi somnum capiant,
cor ad te semper vigilet,
dextera tua protegat
famulos qui te diligunt.

Christ, who art the light and day,
you drive away the darkness of night,
you are called the light of light,
for you proclaim the blessed light.

We beseech you, Holy Lord,
protect us this night.
Let us take our rest in you;
grant us a tranquil night.

Let our sleep be free from care;
let not the enemy snatch us away,
nor flesh conspire within him,
and make us guilty in your sight.
Though our eyes be filled with sleep,
keep our hearts forever awake to you.
May your right hand protect
your willing servants.

Defensor noster aspice,
insidiantes reprime,
guberna tuos famulos,
quos sanguine mercatus es.

Memento nostri Domine
in gravi isto corpore,
qui es defensor animae,
adesto nobis Domine.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
eiusque soli Filio,
cum Spiritu Paraclito,
et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

Ubi caritas et amor, deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum christi amor

Exultemus et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus deum vivum.

Tota pulchra es, Maria
Et macula originalis non est in te.
Vestimentum tuum candidum quasi nix
Et facies tua sicut sol.

Tu gloria Jerusalem
Tu laetitia Israel
Tu honorificentia populi nostri.

Tu es Petrus
Et super hanc petram
aedificabo ecclesiam meam.

Tantum ergo sacramentum
veneremur cernui,
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui;
praestet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.

Genitori genitoque
laus et iubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et benedictio;
procedenti ab utroque
compar sit laudatio.
Amen.

You who are our shield, behold;
restrain those that lie in wait,
and guide your servants whom
you have ransomed with your blood.

Remember us, O Lord,
who bear the burden of this mortal form;
you who are the defender of the soul,
be near us, O Lord.

Glory be to God the Father,
and to his only Son,
with the Spirit, Comforter,
both now and evermore. Amen.

Wherever there is charity and love, there God is.
He gathers us together in the love of Christ.

Let us celebrate and rejoice in him.
Let us fear and love the living God.

Thou art all fair, Mary
and the original stain is not in thee.
Your raiment is pure as the snow,
and your face is like the sun.

Thou art the glory of Jerusalem,
thou art the joy of Israel,
thou art the honour of our people.

You are Peter,
and on this Rock
I will build my church.

Therefore so great a Sacrament
let us fall down and worship,
and let the old law
give way to a new rite,
and let faith stand forward
to make good the defects of sense.

To the Father and the Son
be praise and joy,
health, honour and virtue
and blessing,
and to him proceeding from both
be equal praise.
Amen.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,
mentes tuorum visita,
imple superna gratia,
quae tu creasti pectora.

Accende lumen sensibus,
infunde amorem cordibus,
infirma nostri corporis
virtute firmans perpeti.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,
from thy bright heav'nly throne,
come take possession of our souls,
and make them all thy own.

O guide our minds with thy bless'd light,
with love our hearts inflame;
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays
confirm our mortal frame.

The performers

BREMF Consort of Voices was founded by Deborah Roberts in 2009 and is a consort of semi-professional, student and experienced amateur singers. Now directed by James Elias, the choir is dedicated to giving dramatic and exciting performances of music from the Renaissance and early baroque, and performs regularly both as part of the Festival and in stand-alone concerts throughout the year. It has taken part in music ranging from 15th-century chant and polyphony to the spectacular 1589 Florentine Intermedi with Renaissance orchestra and great Venetian works with The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble. For the 2026 Brighton Early Music Festival the choir will perform as part of City of Dreams – a musical extravaganza tracing the history of Renaissance Florence.
bremf.org.uk/ensembles/bcv

Sopranos:	**Altos:**	**Tenors:**	**Basses:**
Harriet Hyatt	Maria Birch	Nick Boston	Matthew Bright
Naomi Law	Isabelle Chousmer-Kerr	Nicolas Chisholm	Anthony Jay
Hannah Loach	Janet Gascoine	Matthew Ryan	David Stocks
Zoë Peyton-Jones	Bibi Lees		
Cathy Rowland	Silvia Reseghetti		
	Charlotte Tayler		

James Elias has been singing in choirs for nearly half a century, studying under James O'Donnell, George Guest and Richard Marlow in various Cambridge choirs, before singing and conducting regularly in churches, concerts, recordings and broadcasts in London and abroad. Now a specialist in *a cappella* choral music, his negligible claims to musical fame include being three yards away from José Carreras on stage in a performance of Bizet's *Carmen*, and singing at the Sydney Opera House.