



Saturday 30 May, 7.30pm
St Luke's Church, Queen's Park

Lassus and Weelkes: Psalms and Madrigals

BREMf Consort of Voices

James Elias *director*

Orlande de Lassus 1532–1594

Penitential Psalms

Thomas Weelkes 1576–1623

When David heard

Lassus

Domine quid multiplicati sunt

Interval

Weelkes

Alleluia. I heard a voice

Sing we at pleasure

Though my carriage be but careless

Lo country sports

The Andalusian merchant

Thule, the period of cosmography

Strike it up, Tabor

My tears do not avail me

Hark all ye lovely saints above

Hosanna to the son of David

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The music

This is a concert of two very different halves. The first half will feature Lassus's richly textured and emotional Penitential Psalms. Lassus paints the psalmist's words in fluid five-part harmony, as he moves between the emotional states of despair, fear for the mounting strength of his enemies, physical malady, and, underpinning them all, his faith in God. We will perform the piece antiphonally, alternating the chorus sections with verse sections sung by a smaller group of people.

The theme continues with the well-known anthem 'When David heard', in which King David laments the death of his son Absalom. In the second half of this piece, Weelkes sets David's direct speech to music, and in doing so, takes us through several different stages of grief: loss, anger, and eventually reconciliation. The first half ends with a 12-part setting of Psalm 3 'Domine quid multiplicati sunt' by Lassus.

The second half is very different and is an exploration of the variety in Weelkes' music. Bookended by two triumphant anthems 'Alleluia. I heard a voice' and 'Hosanna to the son of David', the choir will sing a selection of his madrigals, which range from songs about love, to drinking songs and even a song about a village fête! Some of these madrigals will be performed with smaller groups singing just one to a part, which is probably how they would have been performed historically.

If there is a similarity between the two halves, it is perhaps that both offer a chance to experience the difference between choral singing in a smaller group and singing as part of a bigger chorus.

James Elias

The next concert by BREMF Consort of Voices will take place in St Mary de Haura Church, Shoreham on **Saturday 4 July 2026**. Full details and tickets will be available at **bremf.org.uk** from 8 June.

The texts

Penitential Psalms

Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me, neque in ira tua corripas me:

quoniam sagittae tuae infixae sunt mihi, et confirmasti super me manum tuam

Non est sanitas in carne mea, a facie irae tuae;
non est pax ossibus meis, a facie peccatorum meorum:

quoniam iniquitates meae supergressae sunt caput meum, et sicut onus grave gravatae sunt super me.

Putruerunt et corruptae sunt cicatrices meae, a facie insipientiae meae.

Miser factus sum et curvatus sum usque in finem;
tota die contristatus ingrediebar.

Quoniam lumbi mei impleti sunt illusionibus, et non est sanitas in carne mea.

Afflictus sum, et humiliatus sum nimis; rugiebam a gemitu cordis mei.

Domine, ante te omne desiderium meum, et gemitus meus a te non est absconditus.

Cor meum conturbatum est; dereliquit me virtus mea, et lumen oculorum meorum, et ipsum non est mecum.

Amici mei et proximi mei adversum me appropinquaverunt, et steterunt;

et qui juxta me erant, de longe steterunt: et vim faciebant qui quaerebant animam meam.

Et qui inquirebant mala mihi, locuti sunt vanitates, et dolos tota die meditabantur.

Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy indignation; nor chastise me in thy wrath.

For thy arrows are fastened in me: and thy hand hath been strong upon me.

There is no health in my flesh, because of thy wrath:
there is no peace for my bones, because of my sins.

For my iniquities are gone over my head: and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me.

My sores are putrified and corrupted, because of my foolishness.

I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end:
I walked sorrowful all the day long.

For my loins are filled with illusions; and there is no health in my flesh.

I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly: I roared with the groaning of my heart.

Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hidden from thee.

My heart is troubled, my strength hath left me, and the light of my eyes itself is not with me.

My friends and my neighbours have drawn near, and stood against me.

And they that were near me stood afar off: And they that sought my soul used violence.

And they that sought evils to me spoke vain things, and studied deceits all the day long.

Ego autem, tamquam surdus, non
audiebam;
et sicut mutus non aperiens os suum.

Et factus sum sicut homo non audiens,
et non habens in ore suo redargutiones.

Quoniam in te, Domine, speravi;
tu exaudies me, Domine Deus meus.

Quia dixi: Nequando supergaudeant mihi
inimici mei;
et dum commoventur pedes mei, super me
magna locuti sunt.

Quoniam ego in flagella paratus sum,
et dolor meus in conspectu meo semper.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam annuntiabo,
et cogitabo pro peccato meo.

Inimici autem mei vivunt, et confirmati sunt
super me:
et multiplicati sunt qui oderunt me inique.

Qui retribuunt mala pro bonis detrahebant
mihi, quoniam sequebar bonitatem.

Ne derelinquas me, Domine Deus meus;
ne discesseris a me.

Intende in adjutorium meum, Domine Deus
salutis meae.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto,

sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

But I, as a deaf man, heard not:

and as a dumb man not opening his mouth.

And I became as a man that heareth not:
and that hath no reproofs in his mouth.

For in thee, O Lord, have I hoped:
thou wilt hear me, O Lord my God.

For I said: Lest at any time my enemies rejoice
over me:
and whilst my feet are moved, they speak
great things against me.

For I am ready for scourges:
and my sorrow is continually before me.

For I will declare my iniquity:
and I will think for my sin.

But my enemies live, and are stronger than I:

and they that hate me wrongfully are
multiplied.

They that render evil for good, have detracted
me, because I followed goodness.

Forsake me not, O Lord my God:
do not thou depart from me.

Attend unto my help, O Lord, the God of my
salvation.

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.

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate,
and wept. And thus he said:
'O Absalom, my son! Would God I had died
for thee. O Absalom my son.'

Domine, quid multiplicati sunt qui tribulant me? Multi insurgunt adversum me; Multi dicunt animae meae: non est salus ipsi in Deo eius.

Tu autem Domine, susceptor meus es, gloria mea, et exaltans caput meum.

Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi;
et exaudivit me de monte sancto suo.

Alleluia. I heard a voice as of strong thunderings, saying, [alleluia]
Salvation and glory and honour and power be unto the Lord our God, and to the lamb for evermore. Alleluia.

Sing we at pleasure,
Content is our treasure.
Fa la la.

Sweet Love shall keep the ground,
Whilst we his praises sound.
All shepherds in a ring,
Shall dancing ever sing:
Fa la la.

Though my carriage be but careless,
though my looks be of the sternest,
yet my passions be compareless,
when I love, I love in earnest.

No, my wits are not so wild
but a gentle soul may yoke me,
nor my heart so hard compiled
but it melts, if love provoke me.

Lo country sports, that seldom fades,
a garland of the Spring,
a prize for dancing country maids,
with merry pipes we bring.
Then all at once for our town cries,
pipe on for we will have the prize.

Why, O Lord, are they multiplied that afflict me?
many are they who rise up against me.

Many say to my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God.

But thou, O Lord art my protector,
my glory, and the lifter up of my head.
I have cried to the Lord with my voice:
and he hath heard me from his holy hill.

Thule, the period of cosmography,
doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphureous fire
doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;
Trinacrian Etna's flames ascend not higher:
these things seem wondrous, yet more
wondrous I,
whose heart with fear doth freeze,
with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns
laden with cochineal and china dishes,
reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns
amidst an ocean full of flying fishes:
These things seem wondrous, yet more
wondrous I,
whose heart with fear doth freeze,
with love doth fry.

Strike it up, Tabor
and pipe us a favour,
thou shalt be well paid for thy labour.
I mean to spend my shoe-sole
to dance about the Maypole,
I will be blithe and brisk,
leap and skip, hop and trip,
turn about in the rout
until very weary joints can scarce frisk.

Lusty Dick Hopkin
lay on with thy napkin.
The stitching cost me but a dodkin.
The Morris were half undone
were't not for Martin of Compton.
O, well, said jigging Alice.
Pretty Jill, stand you still,
Dapper Jack means to smack.
How now, fie fie fie, you dance false.

My tears do not avail me,
and hope doth ever fail me,
wherefore my comfort's treasure,
shall be to live in pleasure.
The more I spend, the more I may,
then welcome pleasure ev'ry day.

Hark, all ye lovely saints above,
Diana hath agreed with Love,
his fiery weapon to remove.
Fa la la.
Do you not see
how they agree?
Then cease fair ladies; why weep ye?
Fa la la.

See, see, your mistress bids you cease,
and welcome Love, with love's increase,
Diana hath procured your peace.
Fa la la.
Cupid hath sworn
his bow forlorn
to break and burn, ere ladies mourn.
Fa la la.

Hosanna to the son of David.
Blessed be the king that cometh in the name
of the Lord. Hosanna!

Thou that sitteth in the highest heavens.
Hosanna in excelsis Deo!

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
Liz James	Janet Gascoine	Nicolas Chisholm	Terry Cannon
Eleanor Knight	Bibi Lees	Peter Larcombe	Anthony Jay
Hannah Loach	Silvia Reseghetti	Matthew Ryan	Simon Madge
Pam Mason	Charlotte Tayler	David Waterhouse	David Stocks
Olly Parr			
Zoë Peyton-Jones			
Cathy Rowland			

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.