



# The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

Monday 9 May 2022, 7.30pm  
St Pancras Parish Church

## **“Contrapunctus”: A Brief History of Mass**

The Swan Consort  
Anita Datta *direction*

*Readings selected and presented by Dr Amy Albudri*

# Programme

---

*John Taverner* Dum transisset Sabbatum

Reading from *Confessio Amantis* (1386 – 1390) by John Gower

*Alastair Borthwick* Kyrie Eleison from Missa Brevis

*William Byrd* Vigilate

Reading: *Caedmon's Hymn* (658 – 680), Anon.

*Alastair Borthwick* Gloria from Missa Brevis

*William Byrd* Ne irascaris, Domine  
Civitas sancti tui

*Thomas Tallis* In ieiunio et fletu

Reading: *Sumer is Icumen in* (c. 1250), Anon.

*Alastair Borthwick* Credo from Missa Brevis

*William Byrd* Emendemus in melius

Reading from *The Canterbury Tales* (1387 – 1400) by Geoffrey Chaucer

*Alastair Borthwick* Sanctus and Benedictus from Missa Brevis

*John Taverner* Quemadmodum

Reading from *Pearl* (c. 1400), Anon.

*Alastair Borthwick* Agnus Dei from Missa Brevis

Reading from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1390), Anon.

*William Byrd* Ad Dominum cum tribularer

“Contrapunctus” is not a word that would have been familiar to vernacular speakers in Ancient Rome; it was invented at a much later point of time to refer to the art of layered melodies creating polyphonic or fugal textures, particularly in a sacred music context. In a similar way, Alastair Borthwick’s *Missa Brevis* is not the High Latin Mass of 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, but rather emerges from the context of the motet writing of that era. We are delighted to present this new work alongside some of the most wonderful works of the Tudor English sacred music repertoire.

Most fittingly for the Church season, we begin the programme with Taverner’s setting of the Third Responory for Easter Sunday, *Dum transisset Sabbatum*. The text describes Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Salome’s coming to Jesus’ tomb at sunrise to anoint him with sweet spices. Taverner’s rising intervals and golden harmonies paint the dawn: his retention of the plainsong between iterations of the “Alleluia” foreshadow Borthwick’s use of plainsong-like motifs as a melodic device in the *Missa Brevis*. Byrd’s *Vigilate* is a masterclass in the construction of sonic landscape, traversing the emotional and atmospheric range of the text and demanding virtuosity of the performers as it does so. Notice the tender settling harmonies of “sero, in media nocte” (“in the evening, in the middle of the night”), contrasted with the almost comically proud “an gallicantu” (“at the crowing of the cockerel”) and the haughty insistence of “quod autem dico vobis, omnibus dico” (“and what I say to you, I say to all”).

After Borthwick’s Gloria, the sequence enters a more meditative mode. In *Ieiunio et fletu*, Tallis makes striking usage of repeated notes and tones, as if in an intonation, both invoking the priests in the narrative of the text and creating a sobbing effect within the harmonic resonances. Prayers or text intoned on a single note, as in the very earliest Christian and Jewish plainsong traditions, creates the musical effect of a drone, with the words throbbing in a measured adaptation of the natural speech rhythm. The legacy of this ancient musical tradition appears prominently in Borthwick’s setting of the Credo, while the shorter Sanctus and Agnus Dei are anchored around more familiar chordal harmonies than the earlier expositions. We finish with the Byrd’s explosive setting of Psalm 120, *Ad Dominum cum tribularer*. It exemplifies in glorious eight-part polyphony the power of a style of writing that showcases the individuality of outstanding voices, whilst raising them further to a level that is greater than the sum of their parts.

*Programme note by Anita Datta*

A characteristic of much of my music involves shifting between styles, usually signified harmonically, but in a manner that is contained within a range of techniques that provide an overarching coherence. For instance, triads such as C, F, B – which obviously fall within a tonal or modal space – are also central to a lot of atonal harmonies. I often use such chords as a way of mediating between harmonic worlds. Similarly, the idea of voice exchange, so important in tonal music, is used in a very generalised way so that similar voice-leading patterns can be present in very different harmonic contexts. You will often hear a note sounding against a note that, in tonal common practice, would be the note of resolution. And when the note resolves linearly, it swaps places with the note of resolution against which it was sounded in the first place (usually at a different octave register). These false resolutions are mostly combined with linear patterns in the music and in this sense harmony arises out of the individual lines, rather than being chordal in a way that can be isolated from the linear context. Such techniques find parallels in some of the Renaissance music within which the new *Missa Brevis* is immersed (e.g. false relations arising out of linear patterns), albeit in a more generalised way. But the techniques used also reference earlier musical styles too. While Renaissance composers distanced themselves from the organum style or earlier generations, for me parallel movement of any interval arising from lines that are independent in other respects is normal, as long as they are part of a general intervallic mix.

As a music analyst it is an occupational hazard to write about technicalities like this, but the real interest for me in these ideas is that they make writing in the English choral tradition (and that of its roots) particularly appealing: it is possible to reference seven or eight hundred years of music from a contemporary perspective. In doing so, the texts set can be responded to in a wide range of expressive and technical ways. Indeed, in the shadow of so much polyphonic perfection, the range of expressive signifiers available now is probably the main reason for writing music of this kind. One possible exception to this is in the musical emphasis given to particular words, which can inflect the meaning of the text overall. Consider how different settings over the centuries have responded to the word “Gloria” in comparison with the word “Deo”: this was certainly something I reflected on in my setting of the Gloria. Another exception might be the re-structuring of text to suggest a particular interpretation, as evinced by the texture used in the Credo. Just how this works is something best listened out for, rather than described.

*Programme note by Alastair Borthwick*

The texts chosen in support of this programme reflect the harmonic union of the music. When we speak of “referencing the past” we acknowledge its ongoing presence: as the techniques in the *Missa Brevis* absorb and rearticulate those found in early music, the texts show a similar mediation between worlds. Rather than rejecting in their entirety the pagan art forms dominating pre-Christian Europe, we witness a fascinating interplay between the two cultures. In almost any medieval church you need only turn your head upwards to discern little Green Men peering out through the stone foliage. The glorious motets composed for Christian worship abound with strains of Late Medieval European folk music: they can be especially heard in Byrd’s *Vigilate* with the ascending “cock crow” motif at “an galli cantu”. Yet nowhere is this union better exemplified than in the literature of the High and Late Middle Ages. By absorbing the vivid tales of the Celtic Britons, even the most chivalric Romances sing out in celebration of the life and fertility at the heart of our most primal forms of worship.

*Programme note by Dr Amy Albudri*

*Tonight’s performance takes place as part of a larger research project  
thanks to generous support from Canterbury Christ Church University.*



## Texts and Translations

---

### **Dum transisset Sabbatum**

Maria Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi,  
et Salome emerunt aromata ut venientes  
ungerent Jesum. Alleluia.  
Et valde mane una sabbatorum  
veniunt ad monumentum orto iam sole.  
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

*And when the Sabbath was past  
Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James,  
and Salome, bought sweet spices, that they might come  
and anoint Jesus. Alleluia.  
And very early on the morning after the Sabbath,  
they came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.  
Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

## Confessio Amantis

Of hem þat writen ous tofore  
Pe bokes duelle, and we þerfore  
Ben tawht of that was write þo:  
Forþi good is þat we also  
In oure tyme among ous hiere  
Do wryte of newe som matiere,  
Essampled of þese olde wyse,  
So þat it myhte in such a wyse,  
Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,  
Beleve to þe worldes eere  
In tyme comende after þis.  
Bot for men sein, and soþ it is,  
Þat who þat al of wisdom writ  
It dulleþ ofte a mannes wit  
To him þat schal it aldai rede,  
For þilke cause, if þat ye rede,  
I wolde go þe middel weie  
And wryte a bok betwen þe tweie...  
...So woll I now þis werk embrace  
With hol trust and wiþ hol believe  
God grante I mot it wel achieve.

**Vigilate** nescitis enim,  
quando dominus domus veniat,  
sero, an media nocte, an gallicantu, an mane.

Vigilate ergo, ne cum venerit repente,  
inveniat vos dormientes.  
Quod autem dico vobis, omnibus dico:  
vigilate.

## Caedmon's Hymn

Nū scylun hergan hefaenrīcaes Uard,  
metudæs maecti end his mōdgidanc,  
uerc Uuldurfadur, suē hē uundra gihwaes,  
ēci dryctin ōr āstelidæ  
hē ærist scōp aelda barnum  
heben til hrōfe, hāleg scepen.  
Thā middungeard moncynnæs Uard,  
eci Dryctin, æfter tiadæ  
firum foldu, Frēa allmectig.

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

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

*Of those that wrote before us,  
The books remain. And we therefore  
Are taught from that which was written.  
Therefore it is also good that we also  
In our time among us here  
Do write of some new matter,  
Exemplified by these wise books,  
So that it might in such a manner,  
When we be dead and elsewhere,  
Be left behind for the world's ear  
In time coming after this.  
But since men say, and true it is,  
That they who write only words of wisdom,  
Often dull a man's wit  
Especially one who reads it all day.  
For that same cause, if you agree,  
I will go the middle way,  
And write a book between the two...  
...So will I now this work embrace  
With whole trust and with whole belief  
God grant I might it well achieve.*

*Watch, therefore  
for you do not know when the lord of the house will come,  
whether at evening, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or  
in the morning.*

*Watch, then, lest arriving suddenly  
he finds you sleeping.  
So what I say to you, I say to all:  
Watch.*

*Now we ought to praise the Guardian of the heavenly kingdom,  
The might of the Creator and his conception,  
The work of the glorious Father, as he of each of the wonders,  
Eternal Lord, established the beginning.  
He first created for the sons of men  
Heaven as a roof, holy Creator;  
Then the middle-earth, the Guardian of mankind,  
The eternal Lord, afterwards made  
The earth for men, the Lord almighty.*

*Be not angry, O Lord,  
and do not forever remember our iniquities.  
Behold, we are all your people.*

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

**In ieiunio et fletu** orabant sacerdotes:  
Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo,  
et ne des hereditatem tuam in perditionem.  
Inter vestibulum et altare plorabant sacerdotes,  
dicentes: Parce populo tuo.

*In fasting and weeping the priests prayed:  
Spare, O Lord, spare thy people,  
and give not your inheritance to perdition.  
Between the porch and the altar the priests wept,  
saying: Spare thy people.*

**Sumer is icumen in**  
Lhude sing cuccu  
Groweþ sed  
and bloweþ med  
and springþ þe wde nu  
Sing cuccu

*Summer has arrived,  
Loudly sing, cuckoo!  
The seed is growing  
And the meadow is blooming,  
And the wood is coming into leaf now,  
Sing, cuckoo!*

Awe bleteþ after lomb  
lhouþ after calue cu  
Bulluc sterteþ  
bucke uerteþ  
murie sing cuccu

*The ewe is bleating after her lamb,  
The cow is lowing after her calf;  
The bullock is prancing,  
The billy-goat farting  
Sing merrily, cuckoo!*

Cuccu, cuccu,  
Wel singes þu cuccu  
ne swik þu nauer nu

*Cuckoo, cuckoo,  
You sing well, cuckoo,  
Never stop now.*

Sing cuccu nu; Sing cuccu.  
Sing cuccu; Sing cuccu nu.

*Sing, cuckoo, now; sing, cuckoo;  
Sing, cuckoo; sing, cuckoo, now!*

**Emendemus in melius**  
quae ignoranter peccavimus:  
ne subito praeoccupati die mortis,  
quaeramus spatium poenitentiae,  
et invenire non possimus.  
Attende, Domine, et miserere:  
quia peccavimus tibi.

*Let us amend for the better  
those things in which we have sinned through ignorance:  
lest we are suddenly overtaken by the day of death,  
we seek space for repentance,  
and be not able to find it.  
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy:  
for we have sinned against you.*

Adjuva nos, Deus salutaris noster,  
et propter honorem nominis tui libera nos.

*Help us, O God of our salvation,  
and for the honour of your name deliver us.*

### **The Canterbury Tales**

And specially from every shires ende  
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,  
The hooly blissful martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen  
whan that they they were seeke.

*And specially, from every shire's end  
Of England, down to Canterbury they wend  
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick  
To give his help to them  
when they were sick.*

**Quemadmodum** desiderat cervus  
ad fontes aquarum:  
ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.

*Like the hart longs  
after the streams of water:  
so my soul longs after you, O God.*

Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem vivum:  
quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?

*My soul thirsts for the living God:  
when shall I come to appear before the face of God?*

## Pearl

A blysfyl lyf þou says I lede;  
Pou woldes know þerof þe stage.  
Pou wost wel when þy perle con schede  
I watz ful 3ong and tender of age,  
Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þur3 Hys Godhede  
He toke myself to Hys maryage,  
Corounde me quene in blysse to brede  
In lenghe of dayes þat ever schal wage.  
And sesed in alle Hys herytage  
Hys lef is; I am holy Hysse -  
Hys pyese, Hys prys; and Hys parage  
Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse.

*Thou sayest a blissful life I know,  
And thou wouldst learn of its degree.  
Thou rememberest when thy pearl fell low  
In earth, I was but young to see;  
But my Lord the Lamb, as if to show  
His grace, took me his bride to be,  
Crowned me a queen in bliss to go  
Through length of days eternally;  
And dowered with all his wealth is she  
Who is his love, and I am his;  
His worthiness and royalty  
Are root and ground of all my bliss.*

## Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,  
He bring vs to his blysse! Amen.

*And now may he who wore the crown of thorns  
bring us to his bliss! Amen.*

**Ad Dominum cum tribularer** clamavi,  
et exaudivit me.

Domine, libera animam meam  
a labiis iniquis et a lingua dolosa.  
Quid detur tibi aut quid apponatur tibi  
ad linguam dolosam?  
Sagittae potentis acutae,  
cum carbonibus desolatoriis.

*To the Lord I cried out in my trouble,  
and he heard me.  
O Lord, deliver my soul  
from lying lips and a deceitful tongue.  
What reward shall be given or done  
to a false tongue?  
The sharp arrows of the mighty,  
with hot burning coals that lay waste.*

Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est!  
Habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar:  
multum incola fuit anima mea.  
Cum his qui oderunt pacem eram pacificus:  
cum loquebar illis, impugnabant me gratis.

*Woe is me, that my sojourning here is so prolonged!  
I have dwelt among the inhabitants of Kedar:  
my soul has long been a sojourner.  
With them that hated peace, I was peaceable:  
when I spoke to them, they fought against me without cause.*

## Biographies

---

### Alastair Borthwick

Alastair Borthwick is a composer and musicologist based at the Canterbury Christ Church University (UK), where he is a professor and Head of the School of Creative Arts and Industries. He originally trained as a physicist at Imperial College London while studying composition privately with John Lambert at the Royal College of Music. Music soon became the main focus of his activity, and a PhD in music (funded by the British Academy) from King's College London followed.

His compositions include music for soloists, instrumental ensembles, choirs and orchestras, which have been performed across the UK and Continental Europe, Turkey, China, Hong Kong and the USA. Commissions have been funded by organizations including Arts Council England,

Performing Rights Society, and Beijing Modern Music Festival. They have ranged from concert to liturgical and film music. His liturgical music has been performed in the USA and in various churches across the UK. His published musicological work includes writing on music theory and analysis, music and theology, and British music since 1945.

## Amy Albudri

Amy Albudri is a Lecturer of English specialising in medieval literature and language. She joined the English team at Bishop Grosseteste University in 2014 and has convened many of the department's period specialist modules. She was awarded a grant funded PhD scholarship in 2012 at the University of Hull, from which she also obtained a first-class Undergraduate degree in English literature.

Dr Albudri is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy with a previous lecturing post at the University of Hull. She is a prominent figure in global medieval events including the Kalamazoo International Congress on Medieval Studies, the Oxford Biannual Medieval Symposium, and Leeds International Medieval Congress. Her upcoming manuscript, *Morgan le Fay and Other Women*, is being published by Brepols.

## The Swan Consort

*Soprano* Rachel Haworth Ailsa Campbell  
*Countertenor* Lewis Cullen Matthew Farrell  
*Tenor* Robin Datta Dominic Wallis  
*Bass* Ben Tomlin Tim Reader

The Swan Consort is an elite vocal ensemble founded by Anita Datta in 2018. Making its debut at Beverley in East Yorkshire, the group specialises in retrieving forgotten gems from the European Renaissance and discovering new music by diverse voices in the present day. The consort has recently performed at the Brighton Early Music Festival (Young Artists 2021-2022), Ryedale Festival, and The Royal Opera House in Mumbai. Forthcoming projects include a tour of Spain in June, a collaboration with The Manchester Camerata around the works of Rabindranath Tagore, and "Birdsong", an education and performing initiative that uses avian-inspired madrigals to engage audiences of all ages with their local wildlife through early music.

## Anita Datta

Anita Datta is a conductor, organist, and soprano particularly known for her work with voices. She is founder and Artistic Director of The Swan Consort. A former Organ Scholar of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, she has held various liturgical and educational positions across the UK. She is an alumna of the Women Conductors programmes of the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Royal Opera House, and currently holds a scholarship in Orchestral Conducting at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Born in East Yorkshire into a multi-faith and multicultural household, Anita is a champion for diverse and inclusive programming, and cultural change in the Western Classical Music sector at large. She sits on the board of English Touring Opera and the National Centre for Early Music, and is a Doctoral Candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Durham.



More events this week at  
The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

**Tuesday 10 May**

5.30pm **“Cymbals and Dances”**: Organ and Dance Rush-Hour Recital

An innovative collaborative event that takes a journey into the world of music and movement, adding a fascinating new dimension to the traditional organ recital. Four groups from London Contemporary Dance School are joined by organist Paul Plummer in this presentation of new organ music submitted to the Festival’s “Call for Scores” project.

**Thursday 12 May**

1.15pm **“Retrospective”**: 20 Years of Commissioning New Music: Lunchtime Concert

Founded in 2002, the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music has been promoting and performing new sacred music for 20 years. In this lunchtime recital, Artistic Director and Festival founder Christopher Batchelor presents some of his favourite selections from the past 20 years of new sacred music at St Pancras Parish Church.

**Friday 13 May**

5.45pm **“The Clouded Heaven”**: Rush-Hour Recital

University College London Chamber Choir presents this beautiful programme of choral works by Judith Bingham to celebrate her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2022, alongside new music by Grace-Evangeline Mason, Michael Cryne, and Hugh Wood.

**Saturday 14 May**

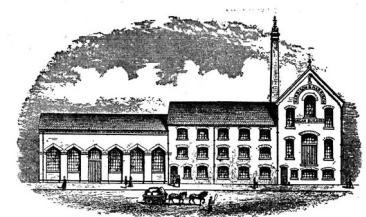
7.30pm **“Dazzling Light”**: Choral Music for 40 Voices: Concert

*This event is ticketed. Book online at [lfccm.com/tickets](http://lfccm.com/tickets)*

A stunning programme of ancient and modern repertoire for large-scale choirs performed by The Lacock Scholars, featuring the iconic *Spem in alium* by Thomas Tallis, the ethereal *Ecce beatam lucem* by Alessandro Striggio, and contemporary works for 40-part choirs by David Bednall, Gabriel Jackson, and Alec Roth.



The  
Thanet Street  
Trust



HARRISON & HARRISON  
ORGAN BUILDERS

The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music was founded in 2002  
with the aim of showcasing contemporary liturgical music  
in both service and concert.

[www.lfccm.com](http://www.lfccm.com)