

EMMANUEL CHURCH | FRIDAY, JUNE 14 | 8PM

Queen of Muses

Elizabeth I as Monarch, Patron, and Lover

Stile Antico

Helen Ashby, Kate Ashby & Rebecca Hickey, *soprano*
 Emma Ashby, Eleanor Harries Clarke & Katie Schofield, *alto*
 Benedict Hymas, Ross Buddie & Tom Kelly, *tenor*
 James Arthur, Will Dawes & Nathan Harrison, *bass*

This sweet and merry month of May *a 6*

William Byrd (ca. 1540–1623)

An Accession Day gift – Cantiones Sacrae of 1575

Attollite portas

Byrd

Absterge Domine

Thomas Tallis (ca. 1505–1585)

Partbooks for the Queen – a gift from Erik XIV of Sweden

Madonna mia, pietà chiam'et aita

Orlande de Lassus (ca. 1532–1594)

Vecchie letrose

Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490–1562)

Doulce mémoire

Pierre Sandrin (ca. 1490–after 1560)

William Byrd – Gentleman of the Chapel and recusant Catholic

O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth

Byrd

Ne irascaris, Domine

Byrd

◀────────────────────────────────── INTERMISSION ───────────────────────────────────▶

Christe Jesu, pastor bone

John Taverner (ca. 1490–1545)

A lover's sighs – suitors' songs

Now, O now I needs must part

John Dowland (1563–1626)

Can she excuse my wrongs

Dowland

Boston Early Music Festival extends heartfelt thanks to

David Halstead and Jay Santos

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FESTIVAL CONCERT

Alfonso Ferrabosco I – musician, courtier, and spy?

Ad Dominum cum tribularer

O remember not our old sins

Exaudi Deus orationem meam

Alfonso Ferrabosco I (1543–1588)

Ferrabosco

Ferrabosco

The Triumphs of Oriana

The Lady Oriana

Fair nymphs, I heard one telling

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending

John Wilbye (1574–1638)

John Farmer (b. ca. 1570, fl. 1591–1601)

Thomas Weelkes (1576–1623)

Notes on the Program

Queen Elizabeth I was one of the most significant patrons of music in British history; her reign (1558–1603) saw an unprecedented flourishing of music and the arts, both as a result of her direct patronage and from those who used their music to gain her favor—whether courtiers, diplomats, or even suitors. The music of the present program explores some of these varied musical connections within the cultural orbit of the Elizabethan court.

Without doubt, Elizabeth's best-known court composer was William Byrd (ca. 1540–1623); throughout his long life he composed and published a wide range of music, both sacred and secular, both for Elizabeth's court and—perhaps more riskily in a Protestant regime—for the circle of recusant Catholics in which he moved. His masterful and intricate six-part madrigal *This sweet and merry month of May* opens the program, conjuring up an idyllic pastoral scene in which Elizabeth herself is joyfully “greeted with a rhyme.”

The two motets which follow are from *Cantiones, quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur*—a collection of motets which Byrd and his close friend and teacher Thomas Tallis (ca. 1505–1585) compiled and published in 1575, contributing seventeen motets each, in honor of Elizabeth's seventeen years on the throne and to commemorate her accession day, November 17, 1558. It was also the first publication to be made under a music-printing monopoly she had granted to the two composers, and it consists of pieces employing a wide range of musical styles and techniques—as it were a kind of varied demonstration of the two composers' art. Byrd's *Attollite portas* sets verses from Psalm 24 in richly expansive and varied six-part imitative counterpoint; Tallis's *Absterge Domine* is also a substantial work, albeit characterized by simpler, syllabic points of imitation in predominantly “note-against-note” polyphony, and shorter melodic phrases—perhaps demonstrating a reticent nod toward the “reformed” Protestant style of English church music.

Among Elizabeth's various suitors, Erik XIV of Sweden pursued a marriage alliance with her for a number of years,

and it has been suggested on the basis of circumstantial evidence that the fine music manuscript known as the Winchester Partbooks may have been given to her by Erik as one of the final gifts of his courtship. We perform three secular works from that manuscript here. In the villanella *Madonna mia, pietà chiam'et aita*, Orlande de Lassus (ca. 1532–1594) sets an erotically charged love poem in a declamatory, chordal style with characteristically arresting and sensuous harmonic gestures. The text of *Vecchie letrose* by the elder Netherlander Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490–1562) could—by contrast—be hardly less flattering of its subject. His music, however, is about as good-humored and light-hearted as can be, with its infectious syncopated dance rhythms. The chanson *Doulce mémoire* by Willaert's French contemporary Pierre Sandrin (ca. 1490–after 1560), though similar to Lassus's villanella in subject matter and some musical characteristics, adopts a slightly more contrapuntal approach in places, with more conventional handling of tonality, though it is likewise a piece of sublime expressivity.

The first half concludes with two contrasting pieces by Byrd. If it is uncharitable to say that these pieces represent split loyalties (Byrd seems to have always maintained a good relationship with his royal patron, who was willing even to intervene to protect him when necessary) they certainly represent the tensions of life as a Roman Catholic at court. First, we hear a prayer for the Queen: *O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth*. Here we find the composer at his most lush and ingratiating, alternating between five-part and even more colorful six-part counterpoint, before concluding with one of the most sublime “Amen” settings of the English Renaissance. This is followed by one of Byrd's most powerful expressions of his Catholic sympathies. The two-part motet *Ne irascaris, Domine* is from the composer's 1589 collection of *Cantiones sacrae*, one of the most politically subversive of his published collections in its choice of texts, many of which had particular significance for the recusant Catholic community of the time. One of their favorite metaphors for their own plight at the hands of a Protestant regime was the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in the early sixth century B.C.; this is the subject matter for *Ne irascaris*—surely one of Byrd's most affecting motet settings. It may seem ironic that the 1589 collection was published under Elizabeth's direct

patronage (after Tallis's death in 1585, Byrd retained their music publishing monopoly alone for the remainder of its twenty-one-year duration)—yet Elizabeth, who knew a first-rate composer when she saw one, seems to have been willing to overlook the elephant in the room.

The motet by John Taverner (ca. 1490–1545) which opens the second half is an interesting adaptation. The original work was written for the choir of Cardinal College, Thomas Wolsey's new collegiate foundation in Oxford (now Christ Church), where Taverner was the choirmaster. The original text was an antiphon in honor of Saint William of York—not so much in keeping, then, with the Christocentric focus of Elizabethan Protestant theology, where veneration of the saints was proscribed. Taverner's music, however, was clearly thought worth keeping—indeed, it displays several forward-looking “protestant” stylistic traits, not least a simple and engaging declamatory texture. Instead, the text was “mended” so as to be addressed to Christ, and to include a prayer for the Queen and her godly subjects.

The famous lutenist-composer John Dowland (1563–1626) had a somewhat difficult relationship with Elizabeth and her court. Having already been turned down once for a post, his case was doubtless not helped by the fact that an Italian journey to study with Marenzio got him accidentally mixed up in a papist plot against the Queen. He hurriedly escaped, but, upon his return, failed again to win the royal patronage he so desperately craved. He self-pityingly wrote that his religion was the reason for his failure to win Elizabeth's favor—though in reality she probably objected as much if not more to his sycophantic personality, although she was said to have dismissed him as an “obstinate papist.” It was not until after Elizabeth's death that he was finally taken on as court lutenist in 1612. Dowland's music is famed for its melancholy; this seems to have been rather true of his personality, too (though such affectations were somewhat vogueish at the time). The two songs performed here started life as songs for solo voice with lute accompaniment, but, in keeping with common practice at the time, they were published in such a way that they could be alternatively performed with a consort of viols or additional voices in the style of a madrigal (as we do here). Both songs are, ostensibly about love and loss. *Now, O now I needs must part* seems the more intimate and affecting of the two, yet it shares its tune with “The

Frog Galliard,” a popular dance which—legend has it—had its origins with the Duc d'Alençon (later Anjou), one of Elizabeth's suitors, whom the Queen notoriously referred to as her “frog.” It is hard, on the other hand, not to hear the galliard *Can she excuse my wrongs* as Dowland's personal appropriation of the poet's plea to the queen for personal, political, or—in this case—artistic recognition; the original poet is thought to have been another suitor, the 2nd Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux.

Originally from a Bolognese family, the Italian composer Alfonso Ferrabosco I (1543–1588) spent time in Rome and Lorraine before coming to England in 1562, where he was soon given a job at Elizabeth's court; indeed, a combination of factors—including his unusual status as the only Italian madrigalist in England and the uncharacteristically generous pay he received for his services—have fuelled speculation that he was a secret service agent for Elizabeth. Spy or not, he was undoubtedly influential in bringing the Italian madrigal style to England, though he also composed sacred anthems and motets. The three penitential psalm settings performed here—*Ad Dominum cum tribularer*, *O remember not our old sins*, and *Exaudi Deus orationem meam*—are of the latter category, but each in their own way demonstrate a rich cross-fertilization with the musical styles of both Tallis and Byrd.

The import of the Italian madrigal, however, was to have a huge impact on English composers, and, by the last decade of the sixteenth century, all the significant English composers were writing madrigals in an Italianate style—some almost exclusively so. One collection of madrigals is of particular interest to our program: *The Triumphs of Oriana* was a collection assembled in 1601 by Thomas Morley containing twenty-five madrigals by twenty-three of the leading composers of the day. The collection was almost certainly made in honor of Queen Elizabeth (to whom the phrase “long live fair Oriana”—the second half of a couplet which concludes each of the madrigals in the collection—surely refers). Three of those madrigals are performed here: *The Lady Oriana* by John Wilbye (1574–1638), *Fair nymphs, I heard one telling* by John Farmer (b. ca. 1570), and *As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending* by Thomas Weelkes (1576–1623). ▀

—Stile Antico

Texts & Translations

This sweet and merry month of May,
while nature wantons in her prime,
And birds do sing, and beasts do play,
For pleasure of the joyful time,
I choose the first for holy day,
And greet Eliza with a rhyme.
O beauteous Queen of second Troy:
Take well in worth a simple toy.

*Attollite portas, principes, vestras,
et elevamini, portae eternales:
et introibit Rex gloriae.
Quis est ipse Rex gloriae?
Dominus fortis et potens in praelio.
Quis est ipse Rex gloriae?
Dominus virtutum ipse est Rex gloriae.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

Psalm 24:7-8, 10

*Absterge Domine delicta mea quae inscruenter iuvenis feci
et ignosce poenitenti:
nam tu es Deus meus, tibi soli fidi anima mea,
tu es salus mea. Dolorem meum testantur lacrimae meae:
sis memor Domine bonae voluntatis tuae.
Nunc exaudi preces meas, et serviet per aevum tibi
spiritus meus. Amen.*

Anonymous

*Madonna mia, pieta chiam'et aita,
Ch'io moro e stento a torto, e pur volete.
Io grido e nol sentete,
"Acqua madonna al foco,
Ch'io mi sento morire, a poco a poco".*

*Vostra altiera beltà, sola infinita,
È causa ch'io me abbruscia, e'l consentete.
Io grido...*

*Hormai le scema l'affanata vita,
Nol credi, e con vostri occhi lo vedete.
Io grido...*

*Di chiedervi mercè son quasi roco,
Sol della pena mia prendete gioco.
Pur grido in ogni loco
"Acqua Madonna..."*

Anonymous

*Vecchie letrose, non valet niente
Se non a far l'aguaito per la chiazza.
Tira, tira, tir'alla mazza,
Vecchie letrose, scannaros'e pazze!*

Anonymous

Lift up your gates, O ye princes,
and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates:
and the King of Glory shall enter in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord who is strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of power, he is the King of Glory.
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.

O Lord, wipe away my faults which I in ignorance
committed in my youth, and forgive the penitent one:
for thou art my God, my soul hath faith in thee alone.
Thou art my salvation. My tears witness my grief.
Remember, O Lord, thy good will.
Hear now my prayers, and my spirit shall serve thee
throughout all ages. Amen.

My lady, I'm calling for mercy and help,
Because I'm wrongfully half-starved, yet who allows it.
I cry out and you don't listen,
"Water the fire, lady,
For I feel myself dying, little by little."

Your lofty beauty, unique and boundless,
Is what causes me to scorch, and you permit it.
I cry...

Now my troubled life is waning;
You don't believe it, yet you can see it with your own eyes.
I cry...

I'm nearly hoarse begging for your mercy,
Yet you only make fun of my suffering.
Still I cry out wherever I go
"Water the fire, lady..."

Spiteful old hags, you are good for nothing,
Only for lying in wait in the thicket.
Beat, beat, beat with your canes,
Spiteful old hags, murderous and mad!

*Doulce mémoire en plaisir consommé,
O siècle heureux qui cause tel sçavoir.
La fermeté de nous deux tant aymée
Qui à nos maux a su si bien pourvoir.
Or maintenant a perdu son pouvoir
Rompant le but de ma seule espérance,
Servant d'exemple à tous piteux a voir.
Fini le bien, le mal soudain commence.*

Attributed to Francis I of France

Sweet memory consummated in joy,
O happy time of such understanding;
The loving steadfastness of our united love,
Which knew so well how to attend our ills.
But now alas has lost its former strength
Severing the thread of my only hope.
A sad example all afflicted see,
Cease therefore joy, for sudden evil comes.

O Lord, make thy servant Elizabeth our Queen to rejoice in thy strength:
Give her her heart's desire and deny not the request of her lips;
But prevent her with thine everlasting blessing.
And give her a long life, even for ever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from Psalm 121 for Elizabeth I

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

Be not very angry, O Lord,
and remember no longer our iniquity:
Behold, see we are all thy people.

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

Isaiah 64:9–10

The city of thy sanctuary is become a desert,
Sion is made desert, Jerusalem is desolate.

◆ INTERMISSION ◆

*Christe Jesu, pastor bone,
Mediator et patrone,
Mundi nobis in agone,
Confer opem et depone
Vitae sordes et coronae
Celestis da gloriam.
Et Elizabetham nostram
Angliae reginae serva
Et ecclesiam piorum
Tueare custos horum,
Et utrisque concedatur
Eternae vitae praemium.*

Compline antiphon

Jesus Christ, good shepherd,
Mediator and patron,
To us in the trials of the world
Grant help and remove
Life's baseness, and give us
The joy of a heavenly crown.
Save our Elizabeth
Queen of England
And watch over the church
O protector of these the devout;
And allow both
The reward of eternal life.

Now, O now I needs must part,
Parting though I absent mourn.
Absence can no joy impart,
Joy, once fled, cannot return.
While I live I needs must love,
Love lives not when hope is gone:
Now, at last, despair doth prove,
Love divided loveth none.

Sad despair doth drive me hence,
This despair unkindness sends.
If that parting be offence,
It is she which then offends!

Dear, when I from thee am gone,
Gone are all my joys at once.

FESTIVAL CONCERT

I loved thee and thee alone,
In whose love I joyed once.
And, although your sight I leave,
Sight wherein my joys do lie,
Till that Death do sense bereave,
Never shall affection die.
Sad despair...

Dear, if I do not return,
Love and I shall die together.
For my absence never mourn,
Whom you might have joyed ever.
Part we must, though now I die,
Die I do to part with you;
Him despair doth cause to lie,
Who both lived and dieth true.
Sad despair...

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 reasons will that love should be just.
Dear make me happy still by granting this,
Or cut off delays if that die I must.

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

*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.*

Psalm 120:1–4

When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord:
and he heard me.
Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips:
and from a deceitful tongue.
What reward shall be given or done unto thee,
thou false tongue:
even mighty and sharp arrows, with hot burning coals.

O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon: for we are come to great misery. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name.

Psalm 79:8–9

*Exaudi Deus orationem meam,
et ne despexeris deprecationem meam:
intende mihi, et exaudi me.
Contristatus sum in exercitatione mea, et conturbatus sum
a voce inimici, et a tribulatione peccatoris.
Quoniam declinaverunt in me iniquitates,
et in ira molesti erant mihi.
Cor meum conturbatum est,
et formido mortis cecidit super me.
Ego autem ad Deum clamavi,
et Dominus salvabit me.*

Psalm 55:2–5, 17

Hear my prayer, O God:
and hide not thyself from my petition.
Take heed unto me, and hear me:
how I mourn in my prayer, and am vexed.
The enemy crieth so, and the ungodly cometh on so fast:
for they are minded to do me some mischief;
so maliciously are they set against me.
My heart is disquieted:
and the fear of death is fallen upon me.
As for me, I will call upon God:
and the Lord shall save me. ▮

The Lady Oriana

Was dight all in the treasures of Guiana;
And on her Grace a thousand graces tended:
And thus sang they, fair Queen of peace and plenty;
The fairest queen of twenty:
Then with an olive wreath, for peace renowned,
Her virgin head they crowned:
Which ceremony ended,
Unto her Grace the thousand graces bended.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana.

Fair nymphs, I heard one telling,
to beautify the place,
The fawns are running,
The shepherds their pipes tuning
To show their cunning.
The lambs amazed leave off their grazing
And blind their eyes with gazing,
Attended by the Muses and the Graces.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana
Long live fair Oriana.

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,
She spied a maiden Queen the same ascending,
Attended on by all the shepherds' swain,
To whom Diana's darlings came running down amain,
First two by two, then three by three together,
Leaving their goddess all alone hasted thither;
And mingling with the shepherds of her train,
With mirthful tunes her presence entertain.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana! ▮