



Thomas Tallis Society Choir
Directed by Eamonn Dougan



A Summer Concert

Bach

MAGNIFICAT

With baroque orchestra

Motets by Thomas Tallis Henry Purcell

PROGRAMME

Purcell I was glad

Tallis In ieiunio et fletu
Salvator mundi
O nata lux

A Roth Sol Justitiae

Purcell Remember not, Lord, our offences
Hear my prayer

Tallis O Lord, give thy holy spirit
If ye love me

R Williams Here rolls the sea

Purcell O God, thou art my God

*** INTERVAL ***

JS Bach Sinfonia from Cantata 42
Magnificat in D

16 June 2019

Tonight's concert is a particularly special occasion for us, as we effectively offer a fond farewell to Chris Moody, a long-term member of our choir who at the end of this month retires as Vicar of St Alfege Church. Today's programme has been largely chosen by him – Bach's Magnificat, and motets by two of England's greatest composers of the past, Thomas Tallis and Henry Purcell.

Our concert also features works by two leading British composers of our time: Alec Roth (b1948) and Roderick Williams (b1965), the latter also one of our country's leading baritone soloists. Tonight we sing the world premiere of Williams's latest choral work, 'Here Rolls the Sea'.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM CHRIS MOODY

I'm very touched by the generosity of Eamonn and the committee in allowing me to suggest the programme this evening. The Anglican choral tradition has always been very close to my heart and I have been fortunate to have served all my ministry in churches in which it has been upheld, not least of course in the glorious tradition we have here at St Alfege, with Thomas Tallis as our unofficial patron saint. The first part of the concert reflects this, and I'm especially pleased we have the music of Henry Purcell from the late Stuart period, at the end of which this magnificent church was built. Bach's Magnificat represents a culmination of that same period of music history, and has always been a favourite of mine, especially when my own spirits needed a lift. But though I have sung in choirs and choral societies on and off since school and university, I have never sung it myself. So this is a most special treat for me, especially with such wonderful musicians. I am particularly grateful to Eamonn, as I know so many of us in the choir are, for teaching me how to sing properly after many years of learning bad habits! So thank you, Eamonn, and thank you all for coming, and enjoy the concert.

Please join us in the hall after tonight's concert for a farewell reception.
Everyone is welcome!

A buffet will be provided for ticket holders (contributions welcome) and there will be a pay bar serving wine and juices.

PROGRAMME NOTES by Daniel Jaffé

I was glad, Z19

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Purcell's family had strong associations with the Chapel Royal, and he himself began his musical training there as a chorister. At the age of 20 he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey, and in 1682 became in addition organist to the Chapel Royal.

This magnificent setting for five-part chorus of verses from Psalm 122 was long attributed to Purcell's one-time teacher John Blow (1649-1708), whom Purcell succeeded as organist at the Abbey in 1679. It was known that a setting of 'I was glad' by Purcell was sung at the coronation of James II in Westminster Abbey, 1685, so it was long assumed by music historians that what was performed was a verse setting known to be by Purcell for solo voices and choir. However, according to highly detailed (if sometimes inaccurate) account of James II's coronation by Francis Sandford, it was not a cut version of the Psalm as presented by that verse setting, but a "full" setting that was performed on that occasion, which certainly matches the present piece now established to be by Purcell. Even so, some scholars have objected that the present work's polyphonic passages and changes of tempo would have made it unwieldy for a very large choir to perform while processing through such a large building as Westminster Abbey; for all that, it is undoubtedly a magnificent piece of music. Purcell's vivid response to the text is evident throughout, whether the skipping dotted rhythms with which he sets "glad", or the way the various tribes of the Lord "appear" with each vocal entry and congregate "to testify unto Israel"; and the dramatic change of mood to the words "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem".

In ieiunio et fletu

Thomas Tallis (c1505-1585)

In his long career, Thomas Tallis served under the very different regimes of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I, and himself played a key role in the golden age of English Renaissance music. He had particularly strong associations with Greenwich: the Chapel Royal, where Tallis spent much of his long working life, was based in Greenwich Palace during the Tudor era, and he lived in Greenwich at the latter end of his life. Tallis was buried in the chancel of St Alfege Church, as it was (since replaced by the magnificent 18th-century building designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor where this concert is taking place).

Almost certainly himself a Catholic throughout his life, Tallis thrived even after Henry VIII broke with the Pope's authority, and continued to provide music for the various liturgies used in service during this turbulent period.

'In ieiunio et fletu', which we know from the *Cantiones Sacrae* he and his fellow composer and close friend William Byrd published in 1575, is thought to be a relatively late work. Certainly it is one of Tallis's most unorthodox and expressive works. He originally wrote it in a remarkably low pitch – the edition used in this performance has transposed the work up a major sixth! Its penitential text – which tells of the priests weeping at the altar and pleading for forgiveness for their people – is intended for service in Lent.

Salvator mundi

Thomas Tallis

Again, this work is known today through its publication in the *Cantiones Sacrae* – indeed, it is the very first music in that volume. The text of *Salvator mundi* (Saviour of the World) is a prayer asking Jesus to come to the supplicant's aid. Tallis's setting begins with sopranos singing a phrase which is then sung in imitation successively by the lower voices. Eventually the music becomes more freely expressive, with the occasional piquant false relation (first heard at "redemisti" – perhaps signifying the price of Christ's agony through which his supplicant is redeemed).

O nata lux

Thomas Tallis

This setting of two verses from an anonymous tenth-century hymn is one of Tallis's most beloved choral works. Rather than make a strophic setting, Tallis wrote a 'through composed' work which travels ever onwards after its haunting opening phrase into a single great arc. It tells of the vision the disciples had of Jesus, bathed in holy light, in conversation with Moses and Elijah. Tallis use of 'false relations' here add an unearthly 'gleam' to the music.

Sol Justitiae

Alec Roth (b1948)

In 2009, when Alec Roth was composer in residence at Hatfield College, University of Durham, he was asked to set a long-lost text to music. Written in Latin by James Barmby, who had been principal of Hatfield Hall (as it then was) from 1859 to 1876, the hymn is a meditation on the journey from darkness into light. Roth made his setting during the Easter term of 2009, and it was first performed by the College Chapel Choir directed by Alexander Crawford at the Eve of Hatfield Day Service, Durham Cathedral, on 15 June 2009. As well as use of 'false relations', there is a striking moment of word painting at the words "Affulge per caliginem" – "beam out of the gloom".

Remember not, Lord, our offences

Henry Purcell

This is one of Purcell's most restrained, noble yet affecting choral works. Composed around 1680, Purcell largely follows the style of Tudor polyphony one might have heard in the previous century, yet touched with an expressive chromaticism recognisably his own.

Hear my Prayer, O Lord

Henry Purcell

One of Purcell's most celebrated funeral anthems, 'Hear My Prayer, O Lord' has survived in manuscript, bound in a volume of his church music now housed in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. It may have been originally the opening section of a larger work – possibly lost or left incomplete – or was intended as an introduction to another work. Whatever the circumstances of its composition, the result is a magnificent and powerful choral crescendo of grief. It has often been sung at funeral services, including that of Queen Mary II in 1694.

O Lord, give thy holy spirit

Thomas Tallis

It is uncertain when Tallis composed this fine setting: but the fact it follows Archbishop Cranmer's 1548 prescription less than strictly – that settings of religious texts (compulsorily in English) should have "a plain and distinct note for every syllable one" – and its ABB form (in which the music falls into two sections, the second of which is repeated) is one that was widely used by early Elizabethan anthem composers, suggests this was composed relatively late in his career. One can again hear Tallis's characteristic use of spicy 'false relations'.

If ye love me

Thomas Tallis

Here, in this lovely setting Tallis follows rather more strictly Cranmer's injunction, turning the prescription of one syllable per note to advantage. The result is touchingly intimate and candid, and even Tallis's use of polyphonic imitation does not obscure the clarity of the words he sets.

Here rolls the sea (World Premiere)

Roderick Williams (b1965)

As well as being one of today's most acclaimed baritones, Roderick Williams is a much respected composer in his own right. He has written several choral works including 'O Saviour of the World', which the Thomas Tallis Society premiered in 2015. This is his second work written specially for this choir.

'Here rolls the sea' was commissioned in memory of Hilmary Quarmby, a long term supporter of the Thomas Tallis Society who died suddenly last year. It sets words by the Bengali writer and artist Rabindranath Tagore, known to be a favourite of Hilmary's since she first saw the words engraved on the entrance to Dartington Hall (the founder of Dartington having had strong links with Tagore).

Tagore spent much time living by the sea, and wrote evocatively and extensively of its nature and motion. The text set by Williams's new piece, though, is more metaphysical in character; Williams captures its quality by evoking the ebbing of the sea and also its ever present yet subtly changing character to suggest 'the everlasting present'.

O God, thou art my God

Henry Purcell

This anthem dates from the early 1680s, very shortly after Purcell had taken the position of organist at Westminster Abbey. It starts in time-honoured Tudor style, one which Purcell would have been very familiar with from his time as a chorister in the Royal Chapel; but with the verse "My soul thirsteth for thee" the rhythm becomes more dance-like, reflecting Purcell's characteristically vigorous response to the English language. There are several other points of 'word painting', such as the rising scale setting of "and lift up my hands in thy Name"; but perhaps the most memorable moment is the final setting of "Hallelujah", in which the two halves of the choir pass phrases back and forth. So well received was this final section that it was subsequently made into a hymn tune ('Westminster Abbey'), usually sung to the words "Christ is made the sure foundation".

Sinfonia from Cantata 42

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Though now known as the opening movement of Bach's Cantata No. 42, completed in 1725, this Sinfonia started life as a movement from a now lost birthday serenata composed for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen (BWV 66a). Its noble character, though, serves a cantata concerned with the risen Christ equally well. The music itself is effectively a concerto in which strings are in dialogue with the woodwind (two oboes and a bassoon).

Magnificat in D

Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach's much-admired Magnificat in D major, performed this evening, is again a reworking of an earlier work, though this time creating what might be called a 'new, improved' version of the same work. He had composed his earlier E flat major setting of the Magnificat in late June 1723, just over a month after his first service in Leipzig. In that earlier version, following a custom recently established by his predecessor, Johann Kuhnau, Bach had included four Christmas interpolations in the form of settings of hymns with German and Latin texts. The practice of mixing texts of different language and character, though apparently relished by Bach himself who responded with a variety of musical styles, was one which was not universally approved in theological circles; by the time Bach reworked his setting of the Magnificat, almost ten years later, the practice appears to have died out. In any case, Bach removed the Christmas interpolations and transposed his Magnificat setting down to D major, a key much more congenial for the trumpets to which he now gave a prominent role. As well as rewriting the instrumental parts accordingly, Bach also reworked the choral parts to make them more straightforward to perform (perhaps prompted by what may well have been a less than immaculate premiere performance!).

Even that familiar 'simplified' version is a spectacular choral showpiece, with so much coloratura writing in the opening 'Magnificat anima mea' to challenge the chorus's ability to pitch accurately at speed. Bach adds to the general glorious effect with pealing trumpets.

In the two arias that follow, respectively for second and first soprano soloist, the voice of the multitude gives way to that of Mary herself. The upward rising arpeggio on which the first aria is based, coupled with its graceful minuet-like lilt, suggest Mary's sense of exaltation. Then follows a tender and much admired colloquy for soprano and oboe d'amore, in which the Virgin reflects upon her lowly state; before she reaches her final cadence, the chorus dramatically intervenes, their hectic music graphically illustrating the words "omnes generationes" ("all generations [shall call me blessed]").

The next aria, taking its cue from the words 'For he that is mighty hath magnified me', is given to a bass soloist: note how Bach gives an extensive melisma on the words "qui potens". Then follows 'Et misericordia', set as a duet for alto and tenor, its gentle melancholy very characteristic of Bach. The chorus returns with 'Fecit potentiam', involving quite vigorous coloratura which Donald Tovey, a notable commentator on Bach and choral music in general, likened to "brandishing a mighty fist". After a dramatic pause, signifying that the proud have indeed been scattered, that movement ends with a triumphant Adagio.

More vivid word painting appears at the orchestral opening of the following aria, 'Deposuit peotentes' – a splendidly dismissive gesture signifying the fate of the mighty, while the meek are raised with ever rising coloratura. In a lighter vein is the setting of 'Esurientes implevit bonis', set for alto accompanied by a pair of flutes, whose punchline comes with the final line "et divites dimisit inanes" ("and the rich he has sent empty away").

In 'Suscepit Israel' the two soprano lines twine with the alto in another of Bach's gently melancholic movements, which effectively provides a foil to the more forthright chorus 'Sicut Iocutus est'. Its short-breathed periods in turn set the scene for the more expansive 'Gloria Patri', where Bach effectively sets up a state of eternity by making a musical pun on the phrase "sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum" – "as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end". You'll recognise the theme!

EAMONN DOUGAN



Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational conductor and renowned baritone. He is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen and founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices. Informed by his singing, Eamonn is an engaging communicator with a particular passion for Bach, the French Baroque, and 16th- and 20th-century English repertoire.

Forthcoming conducting engagements include his debut with the Danish National VokalEnsemble and return visits to work with the KoncertKor and Danish National Symphony Orchestra. Further collaborations with violinist Harriet McKenzie include a new commission by Julian Joseph and a specially curated programme, *'Sun, Moon and Sky'*, for Salisbury Festival including Deborah

Pritchard's double concerto for violin and harp which includes projections and was inspired by Maggi Hambling's series of paintings 'EDGE' about global warming and the melting of the polar icecaps. Return visits to ORCAM, the Jersey and Corinthian chamber orchestras and chamber opera for Ryedale Festival beckon alongside his continued work with The Sixteen, Britten Sinfonia and educating choral groups across the world including conducting his own Thomas Tallis Society and Genesis Sixteen.

Eamonn recently conducted the world premiere of James MacMillan *All the Hills and Vales Along* at the Cumnock Tryst Festival ("*Eamonn Dougan conducted a moving, tight-knit performance*" – Scotsman), *Messiah* with Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León and Capella Amsterdam, and made his Paris debut at the La Seine Musicale with renowned ensemble Accentus. He recently assisted Sir Mark Elder for Opera Rara's next recording and its premiere performance at Royal Festival Hall.

He has directed many orchestras and choirs including Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Corinthian Chamber Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Trondheim Barokk, Opera Rara, BBC Singers, Accentus (Paris), Wroclaw Philharmonic Choir (Poland), and Coro de la Comunidad, Madrid (ORCAM). Programming highlights have included curating and conducting 'A Weekend of Excessively Good Taste' (French Baroque) at Kings Place, London.

THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR

The Thomas Tallis Society, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in the 2015-16 season, takes its name from the 16th century composer who worked in the Royal Court in Greenwich and is buried in the crypt of the Parish Church of St Alfege.

The choir was founded by Philip Simms, who was organist and choirmaster at the church from 1964 to 2000, and our links with the church continue to the present.

Philip was succeeded by Stephen Dagg, Director of the Centre for Young Musicians at Morley College, London and organist at St Alfege Church, in 2006. During our 50th anniversary year we were delighted to appoint Eamonn Dougan as our new Musical Director.

With around 45 auditioned voices TTS presents four or five concerts a year in the beautiful setting of St Alfege Church. Although many of the choir members live locally in Greenwich, TTS attracts musicians from all over London owing to the high standards it maintains. All singers are required to have very good sight-reading abilities as the choir works on a few concentrated rehearsals before each concert.

We are always keen to recruit new voices. If you are interested, please contact our membership secretary Kathryn Strachan strac157@ntlworld.com.

Follow us on Twitter: @TTSoc. Look out for updates on facebook.com/ThomasTallisSociety.

Sopranos Eleanor Caine, Phoebe Clapham, Alana Clark, Imogen Clark, Julia Corfe-Press, Imogen Faris, Harriet Gunstone, **Emily Jennings**, Ellie Jestico, Philippa Kent, Rachel Lethbridge, Jill Pollock, Becky Ryland-Jones, Ley Spicer, Kathryn Strachan, Jenny Wegg, **Emma Wilkins**

Altos Caitlin Brooks, Rosemary Burch, Joanna Clark, Miriam Coe, Susan Dean, Sian Evans, Moira Fitzgerald, Bryony Ford, Sally Hughes, Emma Humphries, Emily John, Philippa John, Katherine Pile, **Angharad Rowlands**, Alice Shelton, Ruthie Smith

Tenors Justin Eeles, Andrew Greene, Larry Howes, **Chris Huggon**, Alan Jolly, Andrew Lang, Chris Moody, Paul Renney, **Will Searle**, Graham Voke

Basses Richard Brooks, Cyril Cleary, Quentin Evans, Simon Gallie, Daniel Jaffé, Jonathan Louth, Peter Lunzer, Michael Paine, Nigel Press, Geoff Woodhouse

Bold denotes TTS Choral Ambassadors

THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Catherine Martin*

Jenna Sherry

Flora Curzon

Katie Holmes

Violin 2

Naomi Burrell

Christiane Dahl

Federika Domenika

Viola

Katie Heller

Victoria Bernath

Cello

Sarah McMahon

Camilla Morse Glover

Double Bass

Hannah Turnbull

Flute

Katy Bircher

Rachel Helliwell

Oboe

Nicola Barbagli

Amy Roberts

Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin

Trumpet

Robert Farley

Chris Piagram

Howard Rowntree

Timpani

Tom Lee

Organ

Pawel Siwczak

* **Leader**

Rehearsal Pianist Douglas Tan

FRIENDS AND PATRONS



We are very grateful to our faithful group of Patrons and Friends that have been loyally supporting us for a number of years. Their generosity and support have really helped the Society to keep going. A reliable yearly income is a huge benefit in planning programmes and means we can budget more accurately.

We are very keen to increase the number of Patrons and Friends to help us go forward in a sustainable manner and we would love your support as either a Patron or Friend.

A Friend contributes £30 per year and this special relationship with the choir is recognised by:

- A newsletter with early notification of concerts
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party
- Recognition of support in TTS programmes.

As a Patron of the Society you receive additional benefits in recognition of an annual donation of £150:

- A complimentary top price ticket to all concerts
- Free concert programmes
- Separate interval or pre-concert complimentary drinks table
- Acknowledgment of support of the Society in the programme
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party.

Please consider whether you could support TTS by becoming a Patron or a Friend of the Society. Speak to Carole tonight or contact her at carolelowe@rocketmail.com.

We would like to recognise the important contribution of the following TTS Patrons:

Mrs Daphne Barnett
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Dr T C Stokes

FOR YOUR DIARY - All in St Alfege Church, Greenwich

Sunday 6 October 2019 - Pledges of Heav'n's Joy - Music for the Heavens
Including Parry Blest Pair of Sirens and Duruflé Requiem

Saturday 9 November 2019 - Greenwich International Early Music Festival - Conflict and Resolution
JC and JS Bach Cantatas with soloist Nicholas Mulroy

With thanks to Chris Moody and the Churchwardens of St Alfege for their continued unremitting and enthusiastic support.