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THE LAY CLERKS OF ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR CASTLE

LAMENTATIONS

OF JEREMIAH

TIMOTHY BYRAM-WIGFIELD

TALLIS • FERRABOSCO THE YOUNGER • PARSLEY • BYRD • MUNDY

The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Lay Clerks of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

Timothy Byram-Wigfield *conductor*

Thomas Tallis: The Lamentations of Jeremiah	
1. I	[7:46]
2. II	[13:36]
3. Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger: Lamentations	[9:17]
4. William Byrd: Lamentations	[12:20]
5. Osbert Parsley: Lamentations	[7:48]
6. John Mundy: De Lamentatione Jeremiae	[11:09]
Total playing time	[62:02]

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*Recorded in the Albert Memorial Chapel
by gracious permission of Her Majesty
The Queen*

Notes on the music

Tossed by the religious and political turmoil of the age – the to-and-fro of Reformation and Counter-Reformation that produced decades of repression and periodic bloodletting – sixteenth-century English sacred music remains to modern eyes an opaque and mysterious landscape. The various upheavals in religious and secular society inescapably politicised music and musicians and caused a constant stream of stylistic revolutions throughout the century; yet much detail remains obscure, intentionally or accidentally suppressed as new ideologies replaced old and different music was required for different purposes. For composers, the politics of religion must have been needle-fine, subject to the subtlest adjustments, revisions and rewritings in order to ensure both their own survival and that of their music: perhaps as a result, we know frustratingly little of the life, circumstances or inner convictions of even such major figures as Thomas Tallis or William Byrd, still less of the many minor composers of the time. Nor, in many cases, can we offer more than informed conjecture as to the dating of works, or explanations for the various clusters of similar settings that appear regularly across the period. Such a one is the sudden interest that appears to have developed in the 1560s for settings of texts from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, a vogue to which Tallis, Byrd, Osbert Parsley and Robert White all contributed. The present recording presents the first three of these alongside later settings by John Mundy and Alfonso Ferrabosco the

Younger, whose works seem to constitute a second flowering of the brief English Lamentations tradition.

On the Continent, the tradition of polyphonic Lamentations settings was much older and a great deal more widespread. Texts from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, bemoaning the Destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC by Nebuchadnezzar and the subsequent exile of Judah in Babylon, were used in Catholic rites during the *triduum sacrum* (the three days preceding Easter) as lessons during the services of Tenebrae. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries these emotionally charged, highly expressive verses attracted the attention of composers including Agricola, Tinctoris, Arcadelt, Crequillon, Festa, de la Rue, Carpentras and Isaac; later in the century Morales, Palestrina, Victoria and Lassus all produced settings that are among their greatest masterpieces. Was it in response to Continental settings making their way to England that native composers were provoked to attempt their own? And why should a text associated with a Catholic liturgy suddenly attract so much interest in Elizabeth's Reformed England, albeit at a time of relative religious peace? It is well nigh impossible to know for certain. Latin church music continued to flourish for decades after the Act of Settlement (1559), which re-established the Book of Common Prayer after the death of Mary I, and Latin was commonly used in Elizabeth's

chapel. But liturgical performances of the Lamentations would almost certainly only have been appropriate in a recusant context, in the private services held in the houses of the Catholic gentry. Byrd's recusancy (that is, refusal to attend Anglican service) is well known, and his Lamentations, like so many of his Latin works, may reflect a spirit of defiance on behalf of his religious beliefs; but the convictions of the other composers represented here cannot be stated with any sureness. We have little choice but to accept this flourishing as one of the many felicitous, mysterious phenomena of this fertile period of English music.

It may, of course, have been primarily an attraction to the Lamentations texts themselves, for they are in many ways particularly conducive to musical setting. Not only do they convey with great intensity the extremities of pathos, each verse full of memorable and powerful images, but their structure allows composers to divide up and pace their settings in a very interesting and satisfying way. Each verse begins with a Hebrew letter (in the original, the five chapters of the book formed an alphabetical acrostic pattern), which gives the music regular structural punctuation and provides the opportunity for more abstract musical invention to take place. Many of the most wonderful moments of Lamentations settings, from Tallis's *Aleph* and *Beth* to Byrd's *Jod* and

Parsley's *Samech*, occur in these letters. The letters also provide a strong sense of ritual and repetition to the overall structure, further intensified by the use of standard opening and closing formulae: many settings begin with the words 'Incipit Lamentatio [or 'De Lamentatione'] Ieremiae Prophetae', and end 'Ierusalem, Ierusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum' (an opportunity for a strongly declamatory climax that few composers ignore). All the composers whose settings are recorded here used the same basic disposition of voices, corresponding today to countertenor, two tenors and two basses, giving a very dark, rich timbral palette well suited to the text's attitude of deep mourning.

Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585) was the most important English composer of the mid-sixteenth century. In a career spanning most of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, his music encompassed an enormous range of genres and styles, from the most florid and extended pre-Reformation Latin polyphony to the most tersely economical English hymns. All of his music is distinguished by a complete technical mastery, honed and polished by his habitual perfectionism (he is known to have made numerous revisions to pieces) and coupled with a quite miraculously refined ear for sonority and harmonic weighting. Many of Tallis's mature works seem to be designed as *summae* of their genre, whether a votive antiphon (*Gaude Gloriosa*), a set of

English psalm tunes (*Tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter*) or a forty-part motet (*Sperem in alium*) – in each piece there is the sense of the composer definitively mastering a new challenge to his art, of setting a new standard. This is certainly so in the case of the Lamentations, arguably the greatest of all English settings. Tallis's two sets are thought to date from the later 1560s, and use the texts (with slight variations) for the first two lessons for Maundy Thursday according to the Sarum rites. Aside from the musical possibilities he must have seen in the texts, Tallis's personal motivations for writing them are not known: though he is usually described as a religious pragmatist who bent with the times in quiet pursuance of his art, it has been argued that the Lamentations indicate a recusant spirit in the aging composer. Whatever the truth, there is no mistaking the extraordinary depth of expression Tallis finds in them, achieved through his characteristic darkly burnished textures and a careful balancing of flowing polyphony and stark chordal sections.

The career of Osbert Parsley (c.1511-1585) also spanned the most turbulent years of the century, though as a 'singing-man' of Norwich Cathedral for fifty years (according to his memorial tablet) he was a little more removed from the centres of court and church than Tallis and Byrd, both of whom served as Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal for most of their careers. His are relatively short

Lamentations, using only a part of the second lesson for Good Friday. They are unusual among English settings in using part of the plainchant *tonus lamentationum* in the uppermost part, restricting this important line to just two or three different melody notes per phrase and thus giving the work a powerfully unified, monolithic quality.

As the leading English composer of his age, William Byrd's ardent recusancy seems to have been not merely an open secret (his many published volumes of Catholic church music would have seen to that) but one which was tolerated at the highest levels of power. Byrd's genius, his peerless contrapuntal technique, wide expressive range and innovative brilliance in both vocal and instrumental music ensured that he was never short of influential patrons (including Elizabeth herself) willing to protect and help him. His Lamentations probably date from his years as Organist of Lincoln Cathedral (1563-70), and like many of his early motets speak of the exile and alienation of the true believer in a way that draws unmistakable parallels with the contemporary plight of English Catholics. Byrd indulges his early penchant for dense, rich polyphonic textures, and achieves the greater emotional sweep that marks even his early works out from those of his contemporaries. This is Elizabethan Romanticism, an art intensely personal and deeply felt: in comparison to Tallis's settings, Byrd's work eschews a strong sense of proportion and balance, preferring long polyphonic paragraphs

that swell and surge, heaping the voices up in rough and plangent outcry.

John Mundy (c.1555-1630) was Organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor from 1585 until his death. The son of the composer William Mundy, he was also one of the earliest English madrigalists, wrote a small corpus of both Latin and English church music, and contributed a handful of keyboard works to the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. His five-part Lamentations have long presented difficulties of performance, one of the partbooks in which they are preserved being lost; for the present recording, this part (first bass) has been reconstructed by Jeremy Filself. The words chosen by Mundy (after an anonymous Continental model) are unusual, combining passages from Zephaniah ('The day of the Lord is at hand, it is near and exceeding swift') and Vulgate Psalm 121 ('O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee') with the more familiar Lamentations texts. Mundy's setting is also interesting for its wide tessitura, using a slightly higher top line and often a much lower bottom line than the other settings, creating moments of special vocal intensity at both extremes of the range.

The music of Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger (c.1575-1628) is that of a new generation: an influential composer of viol music and court masques (he was a close friend and collaborator of the playwright Ben Jonson), his music breathes

the air of Jacobean fantasy, of instrumental virtuosity and a looser contrapuntal style more vertically than horizontally conceived. The son of the equally influential composer Alfonso the Elder, a courtier of Elizabeth from 1563-78, Alfonso the Younger seems to have based his Lamentations on those of his father. Both settings have the same number of sections and a similar harmonic plan, and it may be that he intended to pay tribute to his father (whom he had hardly known) by emulating one of his masterworks. The Lamentations, along with other Latin church music, were copied into the Tregian part-books, compiled by the Catholic recusant Francis Tregian, who was jailed in the Fleet from 1609-19; there is no evidence, however, that Ferrabosco was himself accused of recusancy. His setting has all the rhetorical clarity and eloquence of his consort music, at once more compact and more dramatic than those of his great predecessors, yet all the while looking back to the grave beauty of their examples.

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James Weeks is a composer and conductor. He is director of EXAUDI vocal ensemble and musical director of New London Chamber Choir; his music is represented by the British Music Information Centre (Bmic).

Incipit lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae.

Aleph.

Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo:
facta est quasi vidua domina gentium,
princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.

Beth.

Plorans ploravit in nocte,
et lacrimae eius in maxillis eius:
non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus caris
eius:
omnes amici eius spreverunt eam,
et facti sunt ei inimici.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

*Here begins the lamentation of the prophet
Jeremiah.*

Aleph.

*How desolate lies the city that was once
thronged with people:
the one-time queen of nations has become as
a widow.*

*Once a ruler of provinces, she is now subject
to others.*

Beth.

*By night she weeps in sorrow and tears run
down her cheeks:
of all who love her, there is none to console
her;
all her friends have spurned her, and have
become her foes.*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your
God.*

De lamentatione Jeremiae prophetae.

Ghimel.

Migravit Juda propter afflictionem ac multitudinem servitutis: habitavit inter gentes, nec invenit requiem.

Daleth.

Omnes persecutores eius apprehenderunt eam inter angustias:

Lugent eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem.

Omnes portae eius destructae, sacerdotes eius gementes, virgines eius squalidae, et ipsa oppressa amaritudine.

He.

Facti sunt hostes eius in capite, inimici illius locupletati sunt:

Quia Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum eius:

parvuli eius ducti sunt captivi ante faciem tribulantis.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

From the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah.

Ghimel.

Judah has gone into exile because of her suffering and the burden of her servitude: she is settled among the heathen and has found no rest.

Daleth.

All her pursuers have captured her between the straits:

[The streets of Zion] mourn, for there are none to attend her ceremonies.

All her gates are ruined; her priests sigh and groan; her virgins are afflicted, and she is overwhelmed with bitterness.

Heth.

Her enemies are in the ascendant, her adversaries prosper, for the Lord has passed judgment on her for the multitude of her iniquities; her children are led captive before the face of her oppressor.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your God.

3 Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger: Lamentations

Incipit lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae.

Aleph.

Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo:
facta est quasi vidua Domina gentium.
Princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.

Beth.

Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrimae eius, in
maxillis eius.
Non est qui consoletur eam, ex omnibus caris eius.
Omnes amici eius spreverunt eam, et facti sunt
illi inimici.

Ghimel.

Migravit Judas propter afflictionem, et
multitudinem servitutis:
habitavit inter gentes, nec invenit requiem.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

*Here begins the lamentation of the prophet
Jeremiah.*

Aleph.

*How does the city sit alone, that was full of
people: she has become like a widow, she that
was great among the nations: the leader of the
provinces has become a vassal.*

Beth.

*She weeps, she weeps in the night, and
her tears lie on her cheeks: there is none to
comfort her, even among all her own flesh. All
her friends have scorned her and become her
enemies.*

Gimel.

*Judah had departed because of torment
and great slavery: she has dwelt among the
heathen but has not found rest.*

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord
your God.*

4 William Byrd: Lamentations

De lamentatione Ieremiae prophetae.

Heth.

Cogitavit Dominus dissipare murum filiae Sion:
tetendit funiculum suum, et non avertit manum
suam a perditione.

Teth.

Defixae sunt in terra portae eius:
perdidit, et contrivit vectes eius:
regem eius et principem eius in gentibus.
Jod.

Sederunt in terra, conticuerunt senes filiae
Sion,
conspererunt cinere capita sua.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

From the lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet.

Heth.

*The Lord has thought to destroy the wall of the
daughter of Zion: he has stretched out a line
and has not turned his hand from destruction.*

Teth.

*Her gates are sunk into the earth: he has
destroyed and broken her bars: her king and
prince are among the Gentiles.
Jod.*

*They sat upon the ground, the elders of the
daughter of Zion have remained silent, they
have thrown ashes upon their heads.*

O Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your God.

Lamentations 2: 8–10

5 **Osbert Parsley:** Lamentations

Mem.

Cui comparabo te, vel cui assimilabo te, filia
Jerusalem?

Cui exaequabo te, et consolabor te, virgo, filia Sion?

Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua; quis
medebitur tui?

Nun.

Prophetae tui viderunt tibi falsa et stulta;
nec aperiebant iniquitatem tuam, ut te ad
poenitentiam provocarent;
viderunt autem tibi assumptiones falsas, et
eiectiones.

Samech.

Plauserunt super te manibus omnes
transeuntes per viam;
sibilaverunt et moverunt capita sua super
filiam Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

Mem.

*With what shall I compare thee, to what shall
I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what
shall I equate thee, that I may console thee,
virgin daughter of Zion? For thy grief is great
like the sea; who will heal thee?*

Nun.

*Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things
for thee, neither have they laid bare thine
iniquity, to rouse thee to repentance; yet they
have seen for thee false prophecies and exiles.*

Samech.

*All that have passed by have clapped their
hands at thee; they have hissed and wagged
their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem.*

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord thy God.

6 **John Mundy:** De Lamentatione Jeremiae

De lamentatione Jeremiae prophetae.

Daleth.

Juxta est dies Domini, et velox nimis,

rogate que ad pacem sunt, Jerusalem,

et ecclesiam iam dolentem confortate, iam

errantem informate,

iam divisam integrate, naufragantem ad
portum reducite,

ne fiat illud schisma magnum, quod
praeambulum erit antiChristi.

Lamed.

In cuius adventu de ecclesia verificabitur illud
Jeremiae prophetae:

omnes porte eius destructe, sacerdotes eius

gementes, virgines eius squalidae,

et ipsa oppressa, amaritudine,

tunc petri navicula, schismatico turbine diutius
agitata, dissipatur in proximo submergenda.

Zephaniah 1: 14, Psalm 121 [122]: 6;

Jean de Bruges, De veritate astronomiae

(incl. Lamentations 1: 4)

From the lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet.

Daleth.

*The day of the Lord is at hand, it is near and
exceeding swift.*

*O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall
prosper that love thee;*

*and comfort thy Church that is now grieving;
instruct it, that is now in error;*

*put it back together that is now divided; lead it
back to port that is now shipwrecked,*

*so that this should not lead to a great schism,
which will herald the coming of the Antichrist.*

Lamed.

*At whose coming the saying of the prophet
Jeremiah about the Church shall be made true:*

*all her gates are ruined, her priests groan, her
virgins are in rags, and she is overwhelmed
with bitterness.*

*Then the little ship of Peter, tossed about for
too long in the storm of the schism, is split
apart, ready soon to sink.*

With thanks to Jean Hill

Lay Clerks of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

The Lay Clerks of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, form the adult voices of the Chapel Choir. The office of Lay Clerk has been in existence in Windsor since the year 1348, the foundation of the original Chapel, and, with the exception of the Commonwealth period (1649-60), today's successors continue a tradition of sung services in the Chapel unbroken since its foundation.

The Choir sings three services on Sundays, and one service every weekday except Wednesday; in this way it is able to draw upon a large repertoire of music from all ages and traditions. Members of the public are always welcome to hear the Choir at these regular services; details can be found on the Chapel's website.

The Choir sings regularly in the presence of the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. Significant recent occasions have included the Service of Blessing following the Marriage of TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, celebrations to mark HM The Queen's 80th birthday, and the wedding of Peter Philips and Autumn Kelly.

Recent concerts, tours and recordings have continued to bring the sound of St George's to wider audiences. The Choir has worked with orchestras including the Russian National Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Southbank Sinfonia, the London Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in projects both in Windsor and in London. It

has also toured to a number of countries, most recently Switzerland, Norway, France, and twice to the USA, where it travelled to New York to take part in the fifth annual commemoration of the September 11 terrorist attacks, at the British Memorial Garden in the presence of HRH The Duke of York.

www.stgeorges-windsor.org

Altos

Stephen Burrows
Jeremy Filsell
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Tim Wilson
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Tenors

Ben Alden
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Rónan Busfield
Tom Cockett
Nick Madden
David Manners

Basses

Gareth Dayus-Jones
John Heighway
Giles White
Simon Whiteley

Timothy Byram-Wigfield



Timothy Byram-Wigfield has been Director of Music at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle since September 2004, in which capacity he directs the famous choir of men and boys in its schedule of daily services, as well as providing music for occasions of royal and national significance.

As a choral conductor he has worked with a number of large-scale and symphony choruses. From 1993-98 he trained the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus, preparing works for performances conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, Ivor Bolton, Nicholas Kraemer and Markus Stenz, amongst others. Alongside his work in Cambridge from 1999, as Director of Music at Jesus College, he was Conductor of the Northampton Bach Choir. He has deputised for rehearsals of many other choruses, including the Bach Choir in London.

As an organist Tim has given recitals in many cathedrals in the UK, and toured to the USA, France and the Netherlands. A regular recording artist for Delphian Records, his recordings have consistently met with critical acclaim, including a disc of transcribed overtures performed on the celebrated Lewis organ in the Kelvingrove Hall, Glasgow (DCD34004) and a disc of music by the Edwardian Alfred Hollins (DCD34044).

He has contributed two volumes to Delphian's survey of Messiaen's complete organ music, performing *La Nativité du Seigneur*, *L'Ascension*, *Messe de la Pentecôte* and other works from the first half of the composer's career at the organ of St George's Chapel (DCD34024 & DCD34078). During 2009 he will record a disc of organ music by his predecessor at Windsor, Sir William Harris, for Regent Records, and a second volume of overtures at the organ of Rochdale Town Hall for Delphian.

He is also active as a pianist, singer, composer and choral arranger. He is currently the Associate Conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir, teaches piano and organ at Eton College, and is a regular examiner for the diploma examinations presented by the Royal College of Organists.

Also available on Delphian



O How Glorious is the Kingdom

Choir of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

Timothy Byram-Wigfield *conductor*

(DCD34048)

The Choir of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, offers a sumptuous programme of jewels from the anthem tradition whose repertoire spans five centuries. Under the luminous direction of Timothy Byram-Wigfield, and in the luxurious resonance of St George's Chapel, the choir resounds with exhilarating energy, at once arresting and awe-inspiring.

'The items range from characteristic works from the Anglican repertory to popular choral works by Brahms and Mendelssohn; from Tudor and Elizabethan items to 20th-century anthems by Britten and Rutter. ... The choir, most atmospherically recorded in the Chapel, demonstrates its current health, with the trebles in particular wonderfully bright.' – Gramophone, September 2006



William Turner (1651–1740): Sacred Choral Music

Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

Yorkshire Baroque Soloists

Geoffrey Webber *conductor*

(DCD34028)

It is easy to forget that our great English choral tradition was once silenced by Act of Parliament. The Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 subsequently ushered in one of the finest periods in English music, though the road to recovery for church music was a slow and difficult one. Turner, in 1660 a precocious nine year-old, went on to become one of the best known composers and singers of his day. This premiere recording presents a cross-section of Turner's sacred music, ranging from small-scale liturgical works to one of his grandest creations, the Te Deum and Jubilate in D.

'The Choir of Gonville & Caius show themselves once again as one of Cambridge's most accomplished' – Gramophone

'Geoffrey Webber's choir sings with greater passion than most of its Oxbridge rivals' – Classic FM Magazine

