

SINGING IN SECRET

CLANDESTINE CATHOLIC
MUSIC BY WILLIAM BYRD

DELPHIAN



THE MARIAN CONSORT
RORY McCLEERY

MASS FOR FOUR VOICES | PROPERs FOR ALL SAINTS | INFELIX EGO

WILLIAM BYRD (1539/40-1623)

SINGING IN SECRET

THE MARIAN CONSORT | RORY McCLEERY

Charlotte Ashley, Lucinda Cox *sopranos*
Helen Charlston, Hannah Cooke *altos*
Rory McCleery *countertenor/director*
Edward Ross, Ashley Turnell *tenors*
Michael Craddock, Edmund Saddington *basses*

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Editions prepared by Rory McCleery.



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- | | | |
|----|---|---------|
| 1 | Miserere mei
CA, RMcC, ER, MC, ES | [3:04] |
| 2 | Gaudeamus omnes
CA, LC, RMcC, ER, ES | [5:10] |
| 3 | Mass for Four Voices – Kyrie
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [2:00] |
| 4 | Mass for Four Voices – Gloria
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [5:54] |
| 5 | Timete Dominum
CA, LC, RMcC, ER, ES | [4:28] |
| 6 | Mass for Four Voices – Credo
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [8:12] |
| 7 | Ave Maria
LC, RMcC, ER, MC, ES | [1:58] |
| 8 | Laetentur caeli
LC, RMcC, ER, MC, ES | [3:34] |
| 9 | Mass for Four Voices – Sanctus & Benedictus
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [3:40] |
| 10 | Iustorum animae
CA, LC, RMcC, ER, ES | [2:29] |
| 11 | Mass for Four Voices – Agnus Dei
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [2:51] |
| 12 | Deo gratias
CA, LC, HCh, HCo, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [0:41] |
| 13 | Beati mundo corde
CA, LC, RMcC, ER, ES | [3:01] |
| 14 | Infelix ego
CA, HCh, ER, AT, MC, ES; RMcC <i>director</i> | [13:02] |
| | Total playing time | [60:14] |

Notes on the music

The course of sacred music in England during the sixteenth century was not a straightforward one, as prevailing musical styles and genres were influenced by the innovations of individual composers, by trends imported from the Continent, and most markedly by the religious and political upheaval which punctuated the life of England at this time. This last, the process of reformation which was begun by Henry VIII and, after the brief Catholic restoration under Mary Tudor, culminated in the Elizabethan settlement, was to have an enormous impact on the lives of English Catholics, with adherence to the new Church of England enforced during Elizabeth's reign by oaths of conformity and compulsory attendance at services. Penalties for disobedience were severe and hefty fines imposed, although the laity generally fared far better than the clergy, for whom martyrdom was the likely outcome if discovered.

It was in this milieu that William Byrd – arguably the greatest of English Renaissance composers and 'Britannicae Musicae parens' ('father of British music') as one eulogist described him – lived and worked. Byrd was a devout and lifelong Catholic and as such a recusant, albeit one shielded to some extent at least from the full force of the Protestant reformers by virtue of his position as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and a favourite of Queen Elizabeth. Several commentators have suggested (not unreasonably) that Byrd's recusancy is strongly reflected in his music and

that his motets, both Latin and vernacular, which deal with subjects such as the destruction of Jerusalem, often with associated pleas for divine intervention and clemency, allude to the plight of his fellow Catholics.

What is striking, given the turbulent climate in which he lived, is that Byrd wrote and, more audaciously, had printed a huge amount of music for the Catholic rite. Joseph Kerman has argued that Byrd's musical outlook altered significantly in the early 1590s, coinciding with a marked change in personal circumstance. After publishing two volumes of motets (in 1589 and 1591) steeped in covert political and religious commentary, in 1593 Byrd and his family moved away from London to the village of Stondon Massey in Essex, seemingly to allow them to be within the orbit of Sir John Petre and his house at Ingatestone Hall.

Petre, a recusant nobleman and one of Byrd's staunchest patrons, was the dedicatee of Byrd's second volume of *Gradualia*, where the composer writes that the music it contains has 'mostly proceeded from your house, which is most friendly to me and mine' and goes on to say that 'these little flowers are plucked as it were from your gardens and are most rightfully due to you as tithes'. Byrd's *Gradualia* volumes of 1605 and 1607 provide a comprehensive compendium of music for all of the services of the church year, from lengthy multi-section works to the beautiful concision of the five-

voice **Ave Maria** and functionality of the tiny four-voice **Deo gratias**; and his settings of the ordinary of the mass for three, four and five voices, which were printed between 1592 and 1595, would certainly have been intended for liturgical performance. (Tellingly the masses were published without title page, date or the name of the printer, presumably because of the dangers involved in such incendiary material: there is a report of a Jesuit arrested in 1605 with copies of the *Gradualia* in his possession, and as for the masses, there was no hiding their Catholic nature.) At this time clandestine services were being conducted in the private houses and chapels of many of the Catholic nobility by Jesuit priests trained abroad, often at the English College in Rome, and there is documentation that frequently 'the Masse was celebrated with singing, and musically instruments'.

Byrd was present at one such gathering on 14 July 1586, a meeting and mass to celebrate the arrival in England of the Jesuit missionaries Henry Garnet (who would later be executed for his complicity in the Gunpowder Plot) and Robert Southwell, documented by their fellow Jesuit Fr William Weston:

the place was most suited to our work and ministrations, not merely for the reason that it was remote and had a congenial household and company but also because it possessed a chapel, set aside for the celebration of the Church's

offices. The gentleman was also a skilled musician, and had an organ and other musical instruments and choristers, male and female, members of his household. During these days it was just as if we were celebrating an uninterrupted Octave of some great feast. Mr Byrd, the very famous English musician and organist, was among the company ...

Several of Byrd's motets set texts which appeared frequently in Jesuit pamphlets, or became well known as the final words of Jesuit martyrs from the gallows: such is the case with his **Miserere mei**, where the relative simplicity of the music allows the words supremacy, only breaking into fully fledged polyphony for the final emotional climax on 'dele iniquitatem meam'. *Miserere mei* is known to have been recited by Southwell before his execution, as well as by his colleague Alexander Briant, shortly before he was hung, drawn and quartered at the infamous Tyburn gallows, as well as during his interrogation at the Tower of London:

They caused needles to be thrust under his nails, whereat Mr Briant was not moved at all, but with a constant mind and pleasant countenance said the Psalme Miserere, desiring God to forgive his tormenters.

This piece is found in Byrd's second volume of *Cantiones Sacrae*, published in 1591, three years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, a time of increased scrutiny of, and tension with the authorities for the English

Notes on the music

Catholic community, and it is perhaps no coincidence that this collection should contain some of Byrd's most sublime and also deeply personal music. From the same collection comes what is arguably the apex of Byrd's expression of religious and personal feeling: the extraordinary tripartite motet **Infelix ego**, a six-voice setting of a meditation on Psalm 51 by the Florentine firebrand preacher Girolamo Savonarola in which Byrd recalls some of the formal devices employed by pre-Reformation English composers – namely clear sectional divisions, with each section beginning with a passage for a reduced number of voices. Savonarola's text, written in captivity prior to his execution in 1498, is full of rhetorical statements and questions, passing gradually from dejection and misery to repentance and finally hope, and this emotional journey is fully reflected in Byrd's compositional arc, with the composer employing countless subtle musical devices and gestures to colour the words before arriving at a full stop and the transformative A flat major chord for the final 'miserordiam' of the piece, a real moment of hope made manifest in music. By the late sixteenth century, Savonarola's meditation had already generated something of a musical legacy, with settings by a number of prominent Continental composers including Cipriano de Rore, Adrian Willaert and Orlandus Lassus, but it is Josquin des Prez's *Miserere* (almost

certainly itself inspired by Savonarola) which Byrd chooses to quote at his own work's emotional climax, bringing to it a degree of musical intertextuality which parallels the words he sets. John Lumley, the aristocratic bibliophile and scholar to whom Byrd dedicated the 1591 collection, was known to have particularly prized Savonarola's words, and they survive copied in his own hand in a small devotional book from his private library.

Byrd's music was widely circulated in manuscript throughout the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and his music features prominently in the partbooks of the Elizabethan amateur and calligrapher Robert Dow, who wrote: 'You who are a glory to our race, and a nightingale to our people, Byrd, I pray that you may make music with voice and hand for a long time.' Byrd drew compositional inspiration from the Italian madrigal, a genre which became popular in England following the publication of Nicholas Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* in 1588. **Laetentur caeli**, a setting of texts from the book of Isaiah and Psalm 72 preserved in Dow's collection, displays this madrigalian influence as Byrd evokes the ebullient joy of the words, which tell of God's imminent return and the ensuing peace and prosperity on earth, a common theme of recusant literature.

Dow, who was bursar of laws at All Souls College, Oxford, also included music by Continental composers in his lovingly collated set of partbooks, several of whom were an influence on Byrd: a number of his works are modelled on compositions by the Italian Alfonso Ferrabosco and Netherlandish Philip van Wilder. The lineage of Byrd's music also stretches back to the earlier generation of John Taverner, and this is particularly true of his **Mass for Four Voices**, which is partly modelled on the older composer's *Mean Mass*. Byrd's setting is remarkable for the care with which he navigates the text: in the dedication to the first volume of the *Gradualia*, he remarks that

In the very sentences (as I have learned from experience) there is such hidden and concealed power that to a man thinking about divine things and turning them over attentively and earnestly in his mind, the most appropriate measures come, I know not how, as if by their own free will, and freely offer themselves to his mind if it is neither idle nor inert.

The concluding Agnus Dei is a masterclass in simple sectional division, and Byrd saves the dissonance in this movement for the poignant suspensions of 'dona nobis pacem', in doing so highlighting the urgent contemporary relevance of this request to his religious community.

The feast of All Saints was of particular importance to English Catholics, not least

because of their rather immediate relationship with martyrdom and also the precarious nature and small size of their community. This latter caused Henry Garnet to write to his Roman superior Claudio Acquaviva in 1596 after the death of Jesuit priest John Nelson:

I pray your Lordship to remember him in your prayers and to commend his soul to the prayers of ours. I hope they will be all the more generous to this fellow-warrior of theirs in proportion as we are fewer here and deprived of the fraternal assistance of our communities.

All Saints was nevertheless a celebratory feast, and for his setting of the Propers for the day in the 1605 *Gradualia*, Byrd was inspired to employ two high sopranos and a distinctively bright F modality to express the joy of these texts, typified by the resolutely upbeat Introit **Gaudeamus omnes**. When considering the set as a whole, however, this joy is not uncomplicated, as the labour and burden of the Gradual **Timeete Dominum** and the suffering of persecution in the Communion **Beati mundo corde** are depicted by Byrd through the use of complex contrapuntal writing and increasingly jarring false relations respectively. Intricate filigree part-writing is a general trait of Byrd's *Gradualia* music, making his employment of homophonic writing all the more striking, as at the opening of the beautifully serene Offertory **Iustorum animae**. Madrigalian gestures are also in evidence throughout

Notes on the music

these four pieces, notably in the musically refreshing setting (in *Timete Dominum*) of 'et ego reficiam vos' and the questing individual lines at 'inquirentes autem Dominum', which show the mature Byrd as master craftsman, finding the 'most appropriate measures' with which to illuminate these words which were so close to his heart.

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Texts and translations

1 Miserere mei

Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam: et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam.

Psalm 51 (50): 1

2 Gaudeamus omnes

Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem festum celebrantes sub honore sanctorum omnium: de quorum sollemnitate gaudent angeli, et collaudant Filium Dei.

Exsultate iusti in Domino: rectos decet collaudatio. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen. Gaudeamus omnes ...

Introit at Mass for All Saints; verse text from Psalm 33 (32): 1

3 Mass for Four Voices – Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Have mercy on me, O God, in accordance with your great mercy: and in accordance with the multitude of your mercies wipe out my wrongdoing.

Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a feast day in honour of all the saints: at whose festival the angels rejoice and join in praise of the Son of God.

Exult, you righteous ones, in the Lord: his praise is becoming for the virtuous. Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen. Let us all rejoice ...

*Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.*

4 Mass for Four Voices – Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe;
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria
Dei Patris. Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men of good will.
We praise you. We bless you.
We worship you. We glorify you.
We give you thanks for
your great glory.
Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father:
Who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Who takes away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Who sits at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For only you are Holy, only you are Lord,
only you are Most High, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of
God the Father. Amen.*

5 Timete Dominum

Timete Dominum omnes sancti eius: quoniam nihil deest timentibus eum. Inquirentes autem Dominum non deficient omni bono. Alleluia.
Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis: et ego reficiam vos. Alleluia.

Fear the Lord, all his saints: for they lack nothing who fear him. And those who seek the Lord lack for no good thing. Alleluia.

Come to me all you who are toiling and carry burdens: and I will refresh you. Alleluia.

Gradual & Alleluia at Mass for All Saints; text from Psalm 34: 9–10 (33: 10–11) and Matthew 11: 28

6 **Mass for Four Voices – Credo**

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine; et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas, et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris, et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum, et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

7 **Ave Maria**

Ave Maria, gratia plena, benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui. Alleluia.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven. He sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. And his Kingdom shall have no end. I believe in the Holy Ghost, Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Alleluia.

8 **Laetentur caeli**

Laetentur caeli et exultet terra. Jubilate montes laudem quia Dominus noster veniet, et pauperum suorum miserebitur.

Orietur in diebus tuis iustitia et abundantia pacis, et pauperum suorum miserebitur.

Processional respond for Advent in the Use of Sarum; text from Isaiah 49: 13 and Psalm 72 (71): 7

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult. Sing joyful praise, you mountains, for our Lord will come and he shall have mercy on his poor ones.

In your days justice will arise, and overflowing peace, and he shall have mercy on his poor ones.

9 **Mass for Four Voices – Sanctus & Benedictus**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.
Dominus Deus Sabaoth:
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini:
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he that comes
in the name of the Lord:
Hosanna in the highest.*

10 **Iustorum animae**

Iustorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos tormentum mortis. Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori, illi autem sunt in pace.

Offertory at Mass for All Saints; text from Wisdom 3: 1–3

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they appear to die, but they are in peace.

Texts and translations

11 **Mass for Four Voices – Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, who take away the sins
of the world, have mercy upon us.*

*Lamb of God, who take away the sins
of the world, have mercy upon us.*

*Lamb of God, who take away the sins
of the world, grant us peace.*

12 **Deo gratias**

Deo gratias.

Thanks be to God.

13 **Beati mundo corde**

Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum
videbunt. Beati pacifici quoniam filii Dei
vocabuntur. Beati qui persecutionem
patiuntur propter iustitiam quoniam ipsorum
est regnum caelorum.

*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see
God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall
be called the children of God. Blessed are those
who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Communion at Mass for All Saints;
text: Matthew 5: 8–10

14 **Infelix ego**

Infelix ego, omnium auxilio destitutus, qui
caelum terramque offendi. Quo ibo? Quo
me vertam? Ad quem confugiam? Quis mei
miserebitur? Ad caelum levare oculos non
audeo, quia ei graviter peccavi;
in terra refugium non invenio, quia ei
scandalum fui.

Quid igitur faciam? Desperabo? Absit.
Misericors est Deus, pius est Salvator meus.
Solutus igitur Deus refugium meum; ipse non
despiciet opus suum, non repellet imaginem
suam.

Ad te igitur piissime Deus tristis ac maerens
venio, quoniam tu solus spes mea, tu solus
refugium meum. Quid autem dicam tibi,
cum oculos levare non audeo? Verba doloris
effundam, misericordiam tuam implorabo
et dicam: Miserere mei Deus secundum
magnam misericordiam tuam.

Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498)

*I am wretched, destitute of the help of all, for I
have sinned against heaven and earth. Where
shall I go? Where shall I turn? To whom shall I fly?
Who will take pity on me? To heaven I dare not
raise my eyes, since I have sinned gravely against
it; on earth I find no refuge, since I have been a
disgrace to it.*

*What then shall I do? Shall I despair? Be it not so.
God is merciful, my Saviour is loving. Therefore
God alone is my refuge; he will not look down
upon his own work, nor will he drive his own
likeness away from him.*

*So to you, most loving God, sorrowful and
grieving I come, for you alone are my hope, you
alone are my refuge. But what shall I say to you,
when I dare not raise my eyes to you? I shall
pour out words of sorrow, I shall beg your mercy
and I shall say: Have mercy on me, O God, in
accordance with your great mercy.*

Biographies

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Rory McCleery, 'a countertenor and academic as well as conductor ... combining boyish geniality with quite startling erudition' (*Sunday Times*), is the founder and director of Gramophone Award-

nominated vocal ensemble The Marian Consort, with whom he performs across the UK, Europe, North America and the Far East. Under his direction, The Marian Consort has become renowned for its compelling interpretations of a wide range of repertoire, particularly the choral music of the Renaissance and early Baroque, but also works by contemporary British composers.

Rory began his musical career as a chorister in the choir of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh. He gained a double first in Music and an MSt in Musicology with Distinction from Oxford University, where he was organ scholar of St Peter's College. As a countertenor, he greatly enjoys performing as a soloist and consort singer in concert and recordings with other ensembles including The Dunedin Consort, Contrapunctus, The Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, The Gabrieli Consort, Le Concert d'Astrée, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and The Cardinal's Musick.

Rory is much in demand as a guest conductor and workshop leader, and has led singing

courses, study days and choral workshops across the UK, Germany, Spain and the USA. He is a passionate believer in the importance of music education and singing for young people and is director of choral music at City, University of London and Artistic Co-Director of Dunster Festival.

The Marian Consort is a Gramophone Award-nominated vocal ensemble, recognised for its innovative presentation of a broad range of repertoire. Led by founder and director, Rory McCleery, The Marian Consort performs across the UK, Europe and North America, and features regularly on BBC Radio 3. Praised by *The Scotsman* for 'performances that glow with golden purity and soul', the group is composed of the very best singers performing one to a part, allowing clarity of texture and subtlety of interpretation that illuminates the music for performer and audience alike.

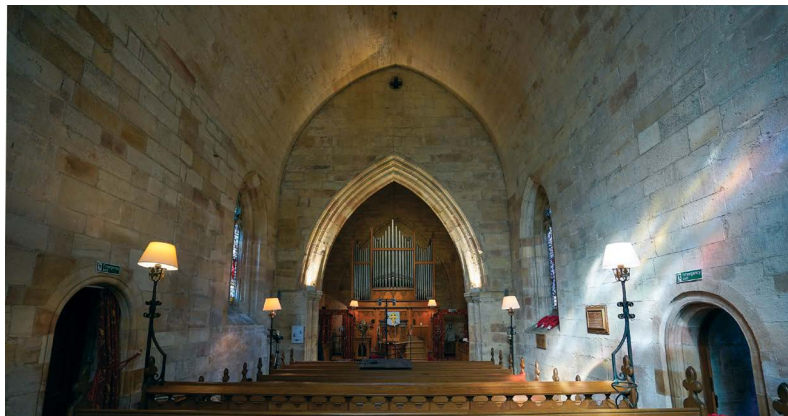
The Marian Consort's repertoire encompasses music from the fifteenth century to the present day, with a particular focus on exploring lesser-known works. It is committed to creating new music; not only by commissioning leading British composers including Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Gabriel Jackson, Cecilia McDowall and Matthew Martin, but in pioneering projects which move beyond the confines of the traditional concert, bringing music of the past to today's audiences. The Marian Consort has toured *Breaking the Rules* by musician

and playwright Clare Norburn, a concert drama exploring the life and crimes of Carlo Gesualdo, to LSO St Luke's and the Lichfield, Buxton, Cheltenham, Bath and Lammermuir festivals, garnering five-star reviews.

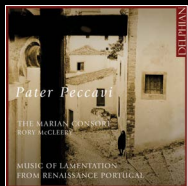
The Consort collaborates with ensembles including the Carducci Quartet, Berkeley Ensemble, Rose Consort of Viols, Illyria Consort and the Choir of Merton College, Oxford, in repertoire ranging from Byrd and Monteverdi to Arvo Pärt and Michael Berkeley. It has released ten recordings on Delphian Records to critical acclaim, praised for 'precision and pellucid textures' (*The Times*) and for 'drawing

the listener in by quiet persuasion and musical intelligence of the highest order' (*The Guardian*).

Recent performance highlights include concerts in the Bascule Chamber underneath London's Tower Bridge; a debut performance in Estonia at the 24th Kuressaare Chamber Music Days; a Wigmore Hall recital presented in partnership with BBC Radio 3; a residency at the Cambridge Early Music Festival; a concert at the Misteria Paschalia Festival, broadcast on Polish National Radio; and a UK tour to celebrate the group's tenth anniversary. The Marian Consort made its debut tour of the US and Canada in October 2018, and of Japan in spring 2020.



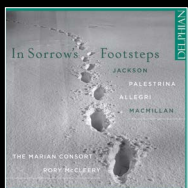
Also available on Delphian



Pater Peccavi: Music of Lamentation from Renaissance Portugal
The Marian Consort / Rory McCleery
DCD34205

Biblical texts of lamentation were embraced by composers of the late Renaissance for their artistic and expressive potential. But in Portugal – a kingdom without a king, its people governed by a foreign power – such settings gave life, as well, to a rich expression of covert political commentary. Rory McCleery's ongoing interest in this field of polyphony bears fruit for the first time in a groundbreaking programme. Many of these Portuguese composers are known, if at all, for a very few pieces. Once again, McCleery and his Consort make a clarion call for music that deserves, and with their advocacy should now receive, far wider recognition.

'The singers perform with a yearning intensity ... exquisite'
— Gramophone, December 2018, EDITOR'S CHOICE



In Sorrows' Footsteps: Jackson – Palestrina – Allegri – MacMillan
The Marian Consort / Rory McCleery
DCD34215

Celebrating its tenth anniversary with its tenth recording on Delphian, The Marian Consort plays to its twin strengths in a lovingly conceived programme coupling two pillars of Renaissance polyphony with twenty-first century settings of the same texts, including a newly commissioned *Stabat Mater* by Gabriel Jackson. A range of subplots – Palestrina's influence on Wagner, Charles Burney's collecting of Allegri and Palestrina – make this truly a story of interconnections: a path on which the present's footsteps constantly overlay the past's. At the centre is Allegri's *Miserere*, whose convoluted reception history itself becomes part of the story and whose performance here fully exploits the world-famous acoustic of Merton College's chapel.

'Wonderfully controlled, electrifying performances'
— Choir & Organ, June 2018, FIVE STARS

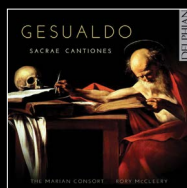


Music for the Queen of Heaven: contemporary Marian motets
The Marian Consort / Rory McCleery
DCD34190

The Marian Consort originally made its name with the music of the Renaissance. But the group has also worked regularly with living composers for a number of years. This programme of contemporary Marian anthems – many of them commissioned by the ensemble – celebrates a living, developing tradition where the new is always informed by the old, casting fresh, vital light on these ancient words.

'An outstanding, memorable disc ... Tuning, ensemble and balance are immaculate. That would be no mean achievement in polyphonic music but here where the composers' demands can be even greater it's particularly impressive'

— MusicWeb International, November 2017, RECORDING OF THE MONTH



Gesualdo: Sacrae Cantiones
The Marian Consort / Rory McCleery
DCD34176

Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa and Count of Conza, has become notorious for the eccentricities and excesses of both his life and his music. The gruesome murder of his first wife and her lover in flagrante, his mistreatment of his second wife, his isolation at his family seat and his penchant for masochism and flagellation have all fuelled the myth of Gesualdo as madman, deviant and tortured pariah, qualities seen to be replicated in his rule-defying music. Yet his compositional talent was prodigious, and this idiomatic and committed reading of his five-voice motets – marking the composer's 450th birthday year – invites us to marvel at their pictorial immediacy, surprising chromaticism, and unique blend of melisma and homophony, in music that betrays his obsession with his own personal sin, remorse and need for absolution.

'These are impeccable performances, easily the finest on record'
— Gramophone, October 2016

