



RUBICON

John Amner

COMPLETE CONSORT MUSIC
FRETWORK
DUBLIN CONSORT SINGERS
MARK KEANE

John Amner (1579–1641) was born in Ely and worked for the majority of his life at Ely Cathedral, initially as a boy chorister and subsequently as *informator choristarum*, in 1610. He succeeded some of England's finest composers such as George Barcroft, John Farrant and Christopher Tye and inherited a thriving music tradition of chorister vocal training and instrumental instruction at Ely, including the tuition of viols. Some three years after his appointment in Ely, Amner was awarded a BMus from the University of Oxford, and in 1617 he was ordained by Bishop Lancelot Andrewes before being appointed a minor canon at Ely later that year.

Amner's only publication, *Sacred Hymnes of 3. 4. 5 and 6. Parts for Voyces and Vyols*, was printed by Edward Allde in 1615. The publication is dedicated to William Bouchier, the Third Earl of Bath, and Amner acknowledges his patron for 'all goodness and studies'. The 'goodness' mentioned may refer to Amner's marriage in 1608 to Sara Striblin in Tawstock, Devon, which was the place of residence of the Bouchier household; and the 'studies' may refer to the financial support of £1 1s 0d for a 'BMus grace' in the Register of Dispensations and Graces at the University of Oxford on 12 May 1613, although no record exists to confirm who paid the fee.

The title page of *Sacred Hymnes* states the music was newly composed, but the fundamental indication of the provenance of the music arises from the final piece in the publication entitled *An Elegy in Memory of Master Thomas Hynson* who died on 18 April 1614. Hinson held the post of secretary in Bouchier's household but also enjoyed a high profile in his own right as a Member of Parliament for Barnstaple, Devon. The relationship between Hinson and Bouchier extends beyond that of an employer and employee as they were also related. Hinson married Bouchier's first cousin, Anne Spring, and it is not surprising that Bouchier would commission Amner to compose an elegy following Hinson's death. The text is a unique composite, and although the music comes after the consort anthems, the piece would undoubtedly have been sung unaccompanied.

It is also highly likely that one of the five-voice compositions in *Sacred Hymnes* was submitted to the University of Oxford for the awarding of his degree in 1613. The college statutes outline the description 'canticum quinque partium', or a song of five parts, was a required submission to fulfil the justification of awarding the degree. While some

composition titles for other music candidates are included in the college records, in Amner's case, the only details recorded are that he 'supplicated for BMus on 12 May, 1613'. It is possible that the five-voice pair *Thus sings that heavenly quire* and *The heavens stood all amazed* was submitted to the college as they are the most substantial pieces of the five-voice compositions.

Although Amner is not a celebrated composer of the Renaissance era, the music in *Sacred Hymnes* demonstrates that he was capable of writing in a number of styles, from the three-voice *canzonets* and earlier syllabic style through to the elaborate consort anthems, comprising multiple voices in the verse sections. The texts in the collection cannot be attributed to one source, and although the majority are based on paraphrasing of the psalms or excerpts from the Bible, a protestant theology of repentance and the grace of God's forgiveness is the focal point throughout. The texts give a clear insight into the piety practised by those who used the collection in a domestic setting for recreational music. While it is impossible to prove how popular *Sacred Hymnes* was in the early 17th century, the fact that excerpts are included in both the John Merro partbooks and Thomas Hamond's collection demonstrates an interest outside the residence of Amner's patron and his connections with Ely.

The collection of five partbooks MS 56-60 (c.1612-25) in Christ Church, Oxford, contains two five-voice consort anthems composed by John Amner, namely 'I am for peace' and 'Consider, all ye passers by'. The partbooks are believed to have been prepared for the use of Sir Henry Fanshawe, who was the patron of John Ward. A tentative link between Ward and Amner exists in that the same woodblock was used for the title page of their publications in 1613 and 1615 respectively. The *Bassus* book in MS 56-60 is lost and, none of the five-voice bass lines are contained in the *Sextus* book. The scores used in this recording are reconstructions by David Pinto who referenced variants of the same pieces found in the 'Batten' Organ Book. Each of the consort anthems comprises three sections. The verse in 'Consider, all ye passers by' is scored for tenor solo, and 'I am for peace' is scored for three voices in the verse sections, namely *cantus*, *quintus* and *contratenor*.

The only extant instrumental pieces by Amner for viol consort is found in MSS 30862-8 in the British Library. His five-part *Pavan and Galliard* is the only paired set in this collection,

which features 13 English composers, seven of which are connected to East Anglia or specifically Cambridgeshire. Only three of the partbooks survive: *Canto*, *Alto* and *Basso*. This recording has used scores with clever reconstruction of the missing parts by Ian Payne. The set of dances represents an indication of a broader compositional output of instrumental music by Amner.

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John Amner (1579–1641) wurde in Ely geboren und war die meiste Zeit seines Lebens an der dortigen Kathedrale tätig, zuerst als Sängerknabe, dann ab 1610 als *informator choristarum*. Er war der Nachfolger einiger der besten englischen Komponisten wie George Barcroft, John Farrant und Christopher Tye und übernahm eine blühende Musiktradition in der Chorausbildung und im Instrumentalunterricht (darunter Gambe) in Ely. Etwa drei Jahre nach seiner Anstellung in Ely wurde Amner ein Bachelor für Musik von der Universität Oxford verliehen, und 1617 wurde er von Bishop Lancelot Andrewes geweiht, bevor er später im selben Jahr zum Kanonikus in Ely ernannt wurde.

Amners einzige Veröffentlichung, *Sacred Hymnes of 3. 4. 5 and 6. Parts for Voyces and Vyols*, erschien 1615 bei Edward Allde im Druck. Die Ausgabe ist William Bourchier, dem dritten Earl of Bath, gewidmet, und Amner dankte seinem Gönner für „alle Güte und Förderung“. Die „Güte“ könnte sich auf Amners Heirat mit Sara Striblin 1608 in Tawstock, Devon, beziehen, wo sich der Sitz der Familie Bourchier befand; die „Förderung“ könnte mit der finanziellen Hilfe von £1 1s 0d für einen „BMus grace“ im Register der Zuteilungen und Gnadengelder an der Universität Oxford vom 12. Mai 1613 zusammenhängen, obgleich nicht belegt ist, wer den Beitrag geleistet hat.

Die Titelseite von *Sacred Hymnes* gibt an, dass die Musik neu komponiert war, doch der grundlegende Hinweis auf die Herkunft der Musik findet sich im letzten Stück der Veröffentlichung mit dem Titel „An Elegy in Memory of Master Thomas Hynson“, der am 18. April 1614 gestorben ist. Hinson war Sekretär im Hauswesen von Bourchier, trat aber auch als Abgeordneter für Barnstaple, Devon, hervor. Die Beziehung zwischen Hinson und Bourchier reicht über die von Arbeitgeber und Angestellten hinaus, da beide auch miteinander verwandt waren. Hinson hatte Anne Spring geheiratet, eine Kusine ersten Grades

von Bourchier; so erstaunt es nicht, dass Bourchier nach Hinsons Tod Amner den Auftrag für die Komposition einer Elegie erteilte. Der Text ist ein einzigartiges Gemisch; obgleich die Musik auf die Consort-Anthems folgt, wurde das Stück sicherlich unbegleitet gesungen.

Höchstwahrscheinlich wurde auch eine der fünfstimmigen Kompositionen in *Sacred Hymnes* 1613 an der Universität Oxford für die Verleihung seines akademischen Grades eingereicht. Die College-Satzung besagt, dass ein „canticum quinque partium“ (fünfstimmiger Gesang) als Voraussetzung dafür vorgelegt werden musste. Während sich einige Kompositionstitel für andere Musikkandidaten in den Collegeunterlagen erhalten haben, ist für Amner nur belegt, dass er „am 12. Mai 1613 um den BMus ersucht habe“. Möglicherweise wurden die beiden fünfstimmigen Stücke „Thus sings that heavenly quire“ und „The heavens stood all amazed“ am College eingereicht, da es sich um die gehaltvollsten seiner fünfstimmigen Kompositionen handelt.

Obgleich Amner nicht zu den berühmten Renaissance-Komponisten gehörte, zeigt die Musik in *Sacred Hymnes*, dass er verschiedene Stile beherrschte, von dreistimmigen Kanzonetten und dem früheren syllabischen Stil bis zu kunstvollen Consort-Anthems mit vielfachen Stimmen in den Strophenabschnitten. Die Texte in der Zusammenstellung können nicht einer einzigen Quelle zugeschrieben werden, und obgleich die meisten auf Psalmen- oder Bibelzitate beruhen, steht eine protestantische Theologie von Buße und Vergebung durch die Gnade Gottes im Mittelpunkt. Die Texte geben einen deutlichen Einblick in die Frömmigkeit derjenigen, die die Sammlung als erbauliche Musik im häuslichen Umfeld nutzten. Wie beliebt die *Sacred Hymnes* zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts waren, lässt sich zwar nicht belegen, doch die Tatsache, dass Ausschnitte daraus in John Merros Stimmenbücher wie in Thomas Hamonds Sammlung enthalten sind, zeigt, dass auch außerhalb des Wohnsitzes von Amners Gönner und seiner Verbindungen mit Ely ein Interesse daran bestand.

Die Sammlung fünfstimmiger Bücher MS 56-60 (ca. 1612–25) in Christ Church, Oxford, enthält zwei von John Amner komponierte fünfstimmige Consort-Anthems: „I am for peace“ und „Consider, all ye passers by“. Die Stimmenbücher sollen zur Verwendung durch Sir Henry Fanshawe, dem Gönner von John Ward, ausgearbeitet worden sein. Eine mögliche Verbindung zwischen Ward und Amner lässt sich daraus ableiten, dass für die

Titelseiten ihrer Veröffentlichungen im Jahre 1613 bzw. 1615 der gleiche Druckstock verwendet wurde. Der Band *Bassus* in MS 56-60 ist nicht erhalten, und im Band *Sextus* findet sich keine der fünfstimmigen Basslinien. Die für diese Aufnahme benutzten Partituren sind Rekonstruktionen von David Pinto, der Varianten der gleichen Stücke aus dem „Batten-Orgelbuch“ heranzog. Jedes Consort-Anthem ist dreiteilig. In „Consider, all ye passers by“ ist die Strophe für Tenor solo gesetzt, und für die Strophenteile in „I am for peace“ sind drei Stimmen vorgesehen, nämlich *cantus*, *quintus* und *contratenor*.

Die einzigen noch erhaltenen Instrumentalstücke Amners für Gambenconsort finden sich in MSS 30862-8 in der British Library. Seine fünfstimmige *Pavan and Galliard* ist die einzige paarweise angelegte Vertonung in dieser Zusammenstellung mit Werken von 13 englischen Komponisten, von denen sieben mit East Anglia oder speziell Cambridgeshire verbunden sind. Erhalten sind nur drei Stimmenbücher: *Canto*, *Alto* und *Basso*. Dieser Aufnahme liegen Partituren mit den von Ian Payne geschickt rekonstruierten fehlenden Stimmen zugrunde. Die Tänze könnten darauf hinweisen, dass Amner weitere Werke im Bereich der Instrumentalmusik komponiert hat.

Mark Keane

Übersetzung: Christiane Frobenius

Texts from *Sacred Hymnes*

1

Love we in one consenting,
Each other's heart contenting.
Alleluia.
Our heavenly Lord that bought us,
This holy lesson taught us.
Alleluia.

2

Let false surmises perish,
True Faith true Love doth cherish.
Alleluia.
Let envy be removed,
Who loves shall be beloved.
Alleluia.

3

Awake with weak complainings,
And all unkind disdainings.
Alleluia.
Sith he who us redeemed
Hath all for good esteemed.
Alleluia.

4

O come thou spirit divinely,
That sweetly hearts combinest.
Alleluia.
Unite our minds for ever,
That we in love persevere.
Alleluia.

5

O love beseeching well the God of love.
Alleluia.
He made that good which ill was grown,
He bought the good that was his own.
Alleluia.
He begs the good that he hath bought,
He crowns the good that he hath wrought.
Alleluia.
O depth of love.
Alleluia.

6

Distressed soul, and thou deceitful eye,
Cease not to moan my misery,
Cease not to mourn,
Sith you cease not to sin,
Better else you had never been,
For now no hope, no help for you is left,
But grief for that whereof you are bereft,
Aye me, poor wretch forlorn,
That ever I was born, aye me.

7

Sweet are the thoughts that harbour
full content,
Delightful be the joys that know no care,
Such those sweet thoughts that on heaven's
joys are bent,
And on celestial bliss still thinking are;
These joys delight, these thoughts content
do send,
All earthly thoughts and joys in sorrow end.

8

Come let's rejoice unto our Lord,
Let us make joy to God our Saviour.
Let us approach to his presence in confession,
And in Psalms let us make joy to him.
Alleluia.

9 Part 1

Saint *Mary* now, but erst the worst of many,
When with dishevelled hairs
She wiped the feet that she with tears
Had washed before,
With knees full lowly bent,
And many a grievous groan to heaven sent.

10 Part 2

At length to Christ her saddest eyes upheaving,
Deign holy Lord, said she,
To cast thine heavenly eye on me,
The sinful'st wretch,
With that she fell to ground
And wept as if with tears she would have
drowned.

11 Part 3

But he the God of love and mercy's wonder,
Seeing the plight she's in,
Though nothing less he loved then sin,
And many crimes had brought her into thrall,
Because she loved much forgave her all.

12

Woe is me, that I am a stranger so long,
And that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.
My soul hath too long dwelt in a strange place.
O that I had wings like a dove,
Then would I fly away and be at rest.

13

Remember not, Lord, our offences,
Nor the offences of our forefathers;
Neither take thou vengeance of our sins:
Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people,
Whom thou hast redeemed with
thy precious blood,
And be not angry with us for ever.
Amen.

14 Part 1

Thus sings that heavenly quire
With zeal, burning like fire.
Alleluia.
And all the Saints with purest robes attending
Upon the *Lamb*, with knees full lowly bending.
Alleluia.

15 Part 2

The heavens stood all amazed,
The earth upon them gazed.
Alleluia.
At length both heaven and earth for joy
confounded,
With voice as loud as thunder sweetly
resounded.
Alleluia.

16

Now doth the city remain solitary that was
full of people.

For these things I weep, and mine eye,
even mine eye casteth out water.

O Jerusalem, how often would I have
gathered thy children together

As the hen gathereth her brood under
her wings,

O that thou hadst even known at the least in
this thy day,

Those things which belong unto thy peace.

17

He that descended man to be
Is now ascended God on high.

Alleluia.

The trumpets sound, the *Angels* sing
The glorious triumphs of our King.

Alleluia.

18

I will sing unto the Lord,

For he hath triumphed gloriously:

The horse and him that rode upon him

Hath he overthrown in the sea.

Alleluia.

19 Part 1

O ye little flock, O ye faithful shepherds,

O ye hosts of heaven, give ear unto my song.

The shepherds were a-watching of their
flocks by night,

And behold, an *Angel*.

And the glory of the Lord shone round
about them,
And they all quaked for fear.

20 Part 2

Fear not, for unto you is born a Saviour,
And not to you, but to all people,
Which is Christ the Lord.

And suddenly, an host of heavenly *Angels*
sung and praised God, and said,

'Glory be to God on high, peace be on earth,
goodwill to men.'

Alleluia.

21 Part 3

And they cry one to another

'Holy is the Lord of hosts.

All the world is full of his glory.'

Alleluia.

22 Part 1

Lo, how from heaven like stars the *Angels*
flying,

Bring back the day to earth in midnight lying,
Up shepherds, up, this night is born your King,

You never heard the *Spheres* such *Musique*
sing.

23 Part 2

I bring you tiding of joys aye bidding,

The *Prince* of Light is born this night,

So up he sprang and all heaven sang,

'Joy to the sorry, to God be glory'.

Alleluia.

24

A stranger here, as all my fathers were,
That went before, I wander to and fro,
From earth to heaven is my pilgrimage,
A tedious way for flesh and blood to go.
O thou that art the way, pity the blind,
And teach me how I may thy dwelling find.
Amen.

25

My Lord is hence removed and laid.
But where? O where? An *Angel* said,
'He is on here, himself did raise,
Himself, God, Man, to him be praise.'
Alleluia.

26

With mournful *Musique* now remember him
That while he lived did oft remember thee,
And filled his *Musique's* Fountain to the brim,
With thy sweet songs and pleasant harmony,
Who was to Master, Children and to friend
So faithful, kind and true as no man more,
So wise, so learned, so careful of his end,
As graced his living actions, and therefore
His death, with sobs and sighs, I will deplore,
And wish to die, to live in heavenly bliss,
Where worthy *Hynson* through God's mercy is.

Finis

29

Consider, all ye passers by,
Regard ye not with pitying eye
Oh see if ever grief or pain
Were like the sorrows I sustain,
Which in the day of wrath are done
By God on me, his only Son.
Melt oh my soul, oh break thou heart,
And in his sorrowing sigh a part,
To see the king of kings neglected
And for our sins of all rejected.
Witness his 'Eli, Eli' crying
In the last agony of his dying,
Come let us mourn and mourning sing
Our thanks with tears for his suffering.

30

I am for peace
But when I speak they are for war.
It grieveth me to behold such transgressors.
Rivers of waters run down mine eyes
Because they forget thy law.
O look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,
As thou usest to do unto those that fear
thy name.
Amen.

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