

# **The Pro Nobis Singers**

Conductor: Clive Walkley

with

**The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble**

Director: Gawain Glenton

## **Music from the Spanish Golden Age**

St George's Church, Kendal  
Saturday, 3 June 2023 at 7.30pm

Admission by programme £12.00  
Children 16 and under free.

[www.pronobis-singers.com](http://www.pronobis-singers.com)

## Programme

Intrada: Ecce sacerdos magnus	Sebastián de Vivanco (?1551-1622)
Motet: Deus in adiutorium meum intende	Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c.1590-1664)
Missa Ego flos campi Kyrie Gloria Magna et mirabilia (instr.) Credo Ultimi miei sospiri (instr.) Sanctus Agnus Dei	Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla  Thomas Crécquillon (c.1490-1557)  Philippe Verdelot (c.1470-c.1552)
Motet: Hortus conclusus	Rodrigo de Ceballos (c.1525-1591)
Motet: Versa est in luctum (instr.)	Sebastián de Vivanco
Motet: O bone Jesu	Pero de Gamboa (?1563-1638)
Hymn: Fortem virili pectore	Juan Esquivel (c.1560-1623)

## Ten Minute Interval

Duo Seraphim	Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)
Motet: Cantate Domino canticum novum	Francisco Guerrero
Canción à 5	Philippe Rogier (c.1561-1596)
Motet: Versa est in luctum	Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla
Motet: Super flumina Babylonis.	Sebastián Lopez de Velasco (1584-1659)
Te lucis ante terminum	Juan Esquivel
Hymn: Pange lingua	Juan Esquivel

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## Programme Notes

There can be no doubt that the period covering the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century to around the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century was a golden age for the arts in Spain and its newly conquered territories in the New World. All the arts flourished under the patronage of the church: music, in particular, occupied a special place because sacred music was at the heart of the church's daily liturgy. The sheer number of composers active in writing for the church during this period is astonishing; and what perhaps is even more surprising is the high quality of so much of what was produced for liturgical use.

Much of the music of this golden age was conservative in style in comparison with developments elsewhere in Europe, but it was by no means inferior in quality. As Spain imposed Catholicism on the indigenous populations of the new territories, many musicians left their native land to work in the new religious centres like Mexico, Puebla and Guatemala, taking the long-cherished style of sacred polyphony with them and inducting their new converts into the traditions they themselves had inherited. Padilla, the most well-known New World composer, was trained at Málaga Cathedral and first worked as a singer at Puebla cathedral before becoming *maestro de capilla* there in 1629. Puebla was clearly a wealthy establishment. Padilla had what was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century a large choir of twenty-eight men and fourteen boys and a body of instrumentalists. Many of his works, like the Mass performed tonight, are for double choir.

We open with an instrumental setting of Sebastian de Vivanco's short motet **Ecco sacerdos magnus** which honours St Gregory the Great, the late sixth-century pope, traditionally thought to be responsible for the church's repertory of Gregorian chant bearing his name. Although we do not hear the text in this performance, the plainchant melody associated with St Gregory is quoted in long note values in the second soprano (cornett 2) line, around which Vivanco weaves contrasting contrapuntal lines. The motet was published in Salamanca in 1610, by which time Vivanco was *maestro de capilla* at the cathedral and professor of music at the university.

The choir and instrumental ensemble join together for Padilla's brief Invitatorium **Deus in adiutorium meum intende**. In certain confraternities at that time in 16th century Spain, that Invitatorium text would introduce the Office of None. 'O God, reach forth to my aid; O Lord, hasten to help me.' The composer frequently alternates his two choirs writing short phrases in springy rhythms which are tossed back and forth, often at great speed, a characteristic of his style.

The centrepiece in the first half of our programme is Padilla's *Missa Ego flos campi*. Based on a pre-existent work (probably a motet), it uses the same thematic material in each movement but with considerable re-writing and ingenuity. An interesting feature in the Gloria, Credo and Sanctus is Padilla's use of textual repetition – clearly a structural as well as a rhetorical device: in the Gloria we hear the phrase *bonae voluntatis* nine times; in the Credo there are twenty statements of *Credo*; and in the Sanctus the phrase *Dominus Deus Sabaoth* is heard five times with the final phrase *in excelsis* tossed between the two

choirs. Again, this is a typical feature of Padilla's style and syncopations, frequent off-beat entries, energy and rhythmic drive all combine to make his music exciting.

Although one of the lesser-known Spanish composers of the Golden Age, Rodrigo de Ceballos' beautiful motet **Hortus conclusus** became much admired in its time and has been preserved in a number of sources. By nature of its text – a verse from the biblical *Song of Songs* – the work, with erotic undertones, seems to stray into the borderline between sacred and secular and far from the Catholic liturgy (See text and translation).

Cornetts and Sackbuts again borrow from the vocal repertoire as they perform Vivanco's beautiful motet **Versa est in luctum**. Written in six voice parts, the motet's plangent lines express the text in a masterly manner.

We cross the border into Portugal for Pero de Gamboa's short and beautiful motet **O bone Jesu**: 'O good Jesus! Illuminate my eyes, lest I sleep in death; lest my enemy say that I prevailed against him.' Little is known about the life of this composer who worked in several church centres during the Golden Age, but his music is beautifully written for choirs and deserves to be better known.

**Pange lingua and Fortem virili.** (See texts and translations below.)

Although Spanish hymn settings seldom appear today on concert programmes – or indeed on recordings – hymns were sung in churches throughout Spain and the New World at the evening service of Vespers; moreover, the **Pange Lingua** – a very ancient hymn sung to an equally ancient Spanish tune – was especially popular when it featured in the annual Corpus Christi procession. Both of Esquivel's polyphonic hymn settings have swinging tunes in triple metre: in each the original melody is sung first unaccompanied; subsequent verses alternate unison singing with polyphonic elaboration of the plainsong chant which is heard in long note values in either the top line or the tenor part.

The hymn **Fortem virili** was written for the new revised Breviary of 1602 and is set to a tune that may have been composed locally since it is not found elsewhere. It is unusual in this period to find a hymn that praises all holy women and not just the Virgin Mary!

We open the second half of our programme by two contrasting motets by the great Francisco Guerrero, *maestro de capilla* at the cathedral of Seville for many years. The text of **Duo Seraphim** reads: 'Two Seraphim cried one to the other: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.' Guerrero writes for three choirs. Two answering voice parts open, and then the threefold 'Sanctus' is repeated by each choir in turn. All twelve voices come together for the spine-tingling 'Plena est omnia ...' The phrase 'Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo' ('Three there are who give testimony in heaven') is symbolically given to three voices only. The remaining text reads: 'Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.' This is again tossed back and forth between the three choirs before the final re-statement of 'Plena est omnia'. This short motet, so

stunning in its design and effect, reveals the full extent of the composer's compositional mastery.

Guerrero draws on Psalm 98 for his text of **Cantate Dominion canticum novum**. 'Sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things.' The second half of the work is onomatopoeic as Guerrero indulges in word painting in illustration of the text: 'Sing unto the Lord with the harp and the voice of a psalm, with trumpets and the sound of the cornet.' At this point (*in voce tubae corneae*) vocal lines are turned into triadic fanfares.

The theme of mourning is central to our next two items. Padilla's setting of **Versa est in luctum** is one of several settings of this text from the Book of Job. 'My harp is turned to mourning and my organ into the voice of those that weep. Spare me, O Lord, for my days are nothing.' The setting may have been written to commemorate the death of a patron, as many others were; its plangent melodic lines expressive the text superbly.

The fine motet **Super flumina Babylonis** is a setting of Psalm 137 verses 1- 4. The captured Israelites weep as they mourn their fate in Babylon. They are asked by their captors to sing one of the songs of Zion. 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' they cry as they hang their harps on willow branches. The motet is found in Lopez de Velasco's book of Masses published in Madrid in 1628 and is attributed there to one Rugieri Ivaneli, a composer who must have been known to Velasco because a Mass by the composer himself is printed immediately after the motet in the source. Velasco was born and trained as a chorister in Segovia and became *maestro de capilla* at the cathedral before moving to Madrid and finally, after illness, to Granada where he died 1636. Given its subject matter, this is a rather joyful setting, the composer dwelling more on the idea of singing cheerful hymns (reflected in the triple rhythms of the central section, *Hymnus cantate nobis de canticis Sion*) than mourning.

As we near the close of our concert, and the ending of the day, it seems fitting to include in the programme a setting of the Compline hymn **Te lucis ante terminum** which Esquivel included in his great volume of 1613. Verses one and three are sung in plainsong with the middle verse sung in polyphony with the plainsong melody in the soprano part.

### **Instrumental music**

The Franco-Flemish composer Philippe Rogier worked at the Habsburg court of Philip II in Spain. Although a prolific composer, much of his music was held in the Lisbon court library of John IV and was destroyed in the earthquake and subsequent fire of 1755. Some of his music, however, found its way to Mexico where it is preserved in the archive of Puebla Cathedral; **Canción a 5** is one such piece.

Two of the instrumental items in tonight's programme – the two inserted into the Mass – are drawn from a manuscript originating from the court of the powerful Duke of Lerma (1553-1625). By 1601, the Duke had decided to rebuild his natal village. As part of this rebuild, he enlarged and consecrated the Church of San Pedro to serve as his ducal palace, employing choristers and five

*ministriles* (wind band of cornetts, sackbuts, shawms, bajon and recorder players). The repertoire played by this group of musicians was borrowed from the vocal repertory - motets, madrigals or chansons – mainly by composers working in Spain but also music from Germany and the Low Countries. Such borrowing of vocal music was not unusual during this period as the composition of idiomatic instrumental music was in its infancy. The *ministriles* provided instrumental music before and after services and sometimes played with the choir, or alternated with them as they do in this programme.

Listening in 2023 to the music of tonight's programme, it is astonishing to think that much of it lay buried for almost three centuries; only in the last fifty years have musicologists and performers become aware of the full extent of Spain's contribution to the art of sacred polyphony. Who knows what other treasures still remain to be discovered in the dusty archives of Spanish cathedrals and elsewhere!

### **The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble**

Gawain Glenton, Connor Hastings – cornetts

Nicholas Perry – tenor cornett and bajon

Emily White, Martin Sanderson, Adrian France – sackbuts

Organist: Ian Pattinson

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### **Text and Translations**

#### **Hortus conclusus**

Hortus conclusus soror mea,  
sponsa mea  
hortus conclusus et fons signatus.

A garden enclosed is my sister,  
my bride,  
a garden enclosed and a fountain  
sealed.

Aperi mihi, o soror mea, amica mea,  
columba mea, immaculata mea.  
Surge propera, amica mea, et veni.

Open to me, my sister, my love,  
my dove, my undefiled.  
Arise, my love, and come.

Veni speciosa mea, ostende mihi  
faciem tuam.

Come my fair one, let see  
your face.

Favus distillans labia tua,  
mel et lac sub lingua tua.

Your lips distil nectar,  
honey and milk are under  
your tongue.

Veni sponsa mea, veni coronaberis.

Come, my bride, come and you  
shall be crowned.

#### **Fortem virili**

1. Fortem virili pectore

Let us praise the strong woman,

Laudemus omens feminam,  
Que sanctitatas gloria  
Unique fulget inlcylta.

with manly heart, the illustrious glory  
of whose holiness shines  
and is famous everywhere.

2. Haec Christo amore saucia,  
Dum mundi amorem noxium  
Horrescit ad caelestia  
Iter peregit arduum.

This woman pierced with love for Christ,  
while still she spurns the foul love of the  
the world, has accomplished her arduous  
journey to the heavens.

3. Carnem domans ieiuniis,  
Dulcique mentam pabulo  
Orationis nutriens,  
Caeli potitur gaudiis.

Mastering the flesh with fasting,  
and nourishing her mind with sweet  
food of prayer, she gains  
the joys of heaven

4. Rex Christe, virtus fortium,  
Qui magna solus efficis,  
Huius precatu, quaesumus,  
Audi benignus supplices.

King Christ, strength of the strong,  
you alone bring about great things,  
by her prayer, we ask,  
kindly hear us suppliants.

5. Deo Patri sit Gloria,  
Eiusque soli Filio,  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,  
Nunc, et per omne saeculum. Amen.

To God the Father glory be,  
And to the Son of him alone,  
with the Spirit, the Comforter,  
now and forevermore. Amen.

(Translation by Philip Gruar)

### **Pange lingua**

1. Pange lingua gloriosi  
Corporis mysterium,  
Sanguinisque pretiosi,  
Quem in mundi pretium  
Fructus ventris generosi,  
Rex effudit gentium.

Of the glorious Body telling,  
O my tongue, its mysteries sing,  
And the Blood, all price excelling,  
Which the world's eternal King,  
In a noble womb once dwelling  
Shed for the world's ransoming.

2. Nobis datus, nobis natus  
Ex intacta Virgine  
Et in mundo conversatus,  
Sparso verbi semine,  
Sui moras incolatus  
Miro clausit ordine.

Given for us descending,  
Of a Virgin to proceed,  
Man with man in converse blending,  
Scattered he the Gospel seed,  
Till his sojourn drew to ending,  
Which he closed in wondrous deed.

3. In supremae nocte coenae.

At the last great Supper lying

Recumbens cum fratribus,  
Observata lege plene  
Cibus in legalibus,  
Cibum turbae duodenae  
Se dat suis manibus

Circled by his brethren's band,  
Meekly with the law complying,  
First he finished its command  
Then, immortal Food supplying,  
Gave himself with his own hand.

4. Verbum caro, panem verum  
Verbo carnem efficit:  
Fitque sanguis Christi merum,  
Et si sensus deficit,  
Ad firmandum cor sincerum  
Sola fides sufficit.

Word made Flesh, by word he maketh  
Very bread his Flesh to be;  
Man in wine Christ's Blood partaketh:  
And if senses fail to see,  
Faith alone the true heart waketh  
To behold the mystery.

5. Tantum ergo Sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui:  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui:  
Praestet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.

Therefore we, before him bending,  
This great Sacrament revere;  
Types and shadows have their ending,  
For the newer rite is here;  
Faith, our outward sense befriending,  
Makes the inward vision clear.

6. Genitori, Genitoque  
Laus et iubilatio,  
Salus, honor, virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio:  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.  
Amen.

Glory let us give, and blessing  
To the Father and the Son;  
Honour, might, and praise addressing,  
While eternal ages run;  
Ever too his love confessing,  
Who, from both, with both is one.

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### **Acknowledgements.**

We acknowledge the generous financial support of:

**The Westmorland Arts Trust**

**The Hadfield Trust**

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### **A date for your diary**

Sadly, our concert **In Tranquility** which was to have taken place on Saturday 1 April had to be cancelled because of illness. The concert has now been re-arranged for Saturday October 7. For further information, please visit our website:

[www.pronobis-singers.com](http://www.pronobis-singers.com)

