

Early Music

Masterpieces for Double Choir

The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, *director*

Saturday, December 1, 8:00 p.m.
Church of St. Mary the Virgin

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Magnificat Octavi Toni (à 8)

Sebastián de Vivanco (1551-1622)

Osculetur me

Orlande de Lassus (c. 1532-1594)

Missa Osculetur me

Lassus

INTERMISSION

I am the true vine

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Tribute to Caesar

Pärt

Sancte Deus

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)

Magnificat quinti toni

Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629)

interspersed with *Jospeh lieber*, *Joseph mein* and *In dulci jubilo*



Please note that photography and the use of recording devices are not permitted. Remember to turn off all cellular phones and pagers before this evening's performance begins.

Large print programs are available upon request. For more information or to arrange accommodations, please call 212-854-7799.

About the Program

“...the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” So writes T.S. Eliot in his *Four Quartets*, and so it is with tonight’s concert.

The evening is book-ended by two thrilling double-choir Magnificats. But while Vivanco’s setting of this joyful annunciation text leaves the story unfinished, the Praetorius Magnificat with which we close incorporates two Christmas carols among its verses. The promise of the annunciation is fulfilled in the miracle of the Virgin Birth, just as the renaissance textures of Vivanco find themselves fulfilled and transformed in the proto-Baroque music of Praetorius. This cyclical journey takes us through the whole gamut of musical emotion, moving from the sumptuous, sensuous polyphony of Orlande de Lassus to the ascetic purity of Arvo Pärt.

Though his reputation has latterly been obscured by contemporaries Guerrero and Ceballos, as well as Victoria himself, Vivanco (1551-1622) was among the leading Spanish composers of his day. His *Magnificat Octavi Toni* is written in the traditional alternatim style, alternating polyphonic verses with those of unison plainsong. Although scored for the composer’s preferred ensemble of eight voices, unusually these are treated as a single group rather than antiphonally. With the exception of a short verse section, “Et misericordia eius”, the full eight-voice texture is sustained throughout, and the effect is rich and impressively ceremonial, even if on closer inspection the imitative writing lacks the complexity of the composer’s polychoral works.

Franco-Flemish composition of the sixteenth century reached its pinnacle in the music of Orlande de Lassus (c. 1532-1594). Yet while his contemporaries, Palestrina in Italy and Victoria in Spain, each honed a distinctly and uniquely national style, Lassus is notable for the breadth and variation within his vast body of work. One major influence on the composer was the polychoral writing emerging from Italy at this time — a style whose episodic, punchy textures stood in contrast to the sustained and intricate counterpoint of the Flemish school. The *Missa Osculetur me* is one of just three double-choir settings among almost 60 masses by the composer, and here Lassus can be seen wedding contrapuntal interest to the more declamatory double-choir texture that would later come to

define Italian Baroque. The result is a mass of singular beauty, a persuasive argument against the traditional critical neglect of the composer's masses.

The musical source for the parody mass is Lassus's own motet *Osculetur me* — a setting of a particularly fervent and erotic section of *The Song of Solomon* (“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his lips: for your breasts are better than wine, fragrant with the sweetest perfumes...”) in which the heavenly bride aspires to closer union with Christ. The imploring urgency of the first phrase in the sopranos cuts against the harmonic restraint — a tension that persists exquisitely through the motet. Close imitation between parts gives the sense of a lover clinging to her beloved, shadowing his movements, and returns even more emphatically at “trahe me post te” (“draw me after you”). Starting separately, Lassus's two choirs come together increasingly, thickening the texture in long melismas to express Christ's name “poured out like oil”. The word-setting here is vivid, reaching its height at the languorous broadening of the texture and swooning melody at “memores uberum tuorum” (“remembering thy breasts”).

The nature of the *Osculetur me* text may mean that Lassus's mass was intended as a Marian feast. Its double-choir texture and expansive treatment of the text certainly gives in the stature for a grand occasion. What is most striking about this mass is the inexhaustible creativity with which Lassus treats the parody technique. Not content simply to quote or extrapolate on motifs from his motet, the composer engages the listener in an elaborate guessing game, sometimes presenting fragments complete (though out of order), as we hear in the Gloria and Credo, and at other times developing material into longer sections of variation, seen in the Kyrie. The Benedictus departs from the original altogether, offering entirely new material to the listener.

Textual interest is sustained through the use of long phrases (with their contrapuntal possibilities) and the different characters offered by single and double choirs. Lassus shows his Flemish allegiances in the evocative simplicity of the music for four voices (the “Crucifixus”, for example), which throws into dramatic relief the sheer force and grandeur of the full sections.

In contrast to Lassus's generous writing, overflowing with motivic material and invention, the music of contemporary Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is stark indeed — an exercise in aural simplicity. Derived, mongrel-like, from his studies of Gregorian chant,

Renaissance polyphony and Russian Orthodox music, Pärt's signature technique is a reverberant choral homophony he terms 'tintinnabuli'. With any conventional sense of harmonic trajectory denied, it is by varying vocal textures (including absolute silence) that he achieves his meditative musical drama.

Both tonight's motets demonstrate distinctive variations on this tintinnabuli technique. *I am the true vine* — a setting of verses from St. John's Gospel — is framed in sections that make more than a nod to the restrained English post-reformation writing of Tallis or Byrd. Punctuated by silences and absences, it is almost as though we are hearing a historical motet sung without the lost parts reconstructed. Yet among this clean simplicity sustained pedal points emerge, blurring the harmonies and creating Pärt's signature glow and harmonic resonance to the vocal texture.

Tribute to Caesar is typical of Pärt's choral writing, using the relationships and tensions between consonance and dissonance to paint an allusive, monochromatic musical canvass. This narrative account of Jesus's encounter with the Pharisees sees Pärt's anti-dramatic approach used to paradoxically striking dramatic ends. Denied more conventional developmental structures, Pärt instead uses voice pairings and ensembles to dramatise the story, deploying his forces with expressive care. As ever with the composer there is little spare musical flesh here. Nothing extraneous or bulging deforms the pure musical silhouette that Pärt so deftly sculpts.

Aside perhaps from John Taverner, the music of Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585) offers us the best enactment of the shifting edicts, preferences and priorities of worship in Tudor England. Votive antiphon *Sancte Deus* seems to date from early in the composer's career. Not only do its textures reveal stylistic aberrations and awkwardnesses that would later disappear (including some striking false relations), but its Latin text coupled with a direct, text-driven style, suggest the period under Henry VIII leading into the reformation.

The text is a composite created from fragments of different Christian texts. Tallis deploys these into four separate sections, each contributing to a penitential invocation of Jesus — unusual in a form more usually associated with Marian works. The effect is sombre yet impassioned, as melismatic phrases plead ever more insistently for deliverance. Wistful 3/2 uncertainty gives way to more homophonic unanimity as the work progresses.



Despite their shared name, Hieronymus and the more famous Michael Praetorius are not, as far as we know, related. The elder Hieronymus (1560-1629) was part of a dynasty of musicians from Hamburg and together with his namesake is ranked among the most influential German composers of the early seventeenth century. One of the earliest German composers to employ the Venetian polychoral style in his music, this technique is showcased at its animated and expressive best in his nine Magnificat settings.

Praetorius' *Magnificat quinti toni* is unique in incorporating two carols — *Jospeh lieber*, *Joseph mein* and *In dulci jubilo* — into the traditional structure of the alternatim Magnificat. Interpolated within the polyphonic and monophonic verses we find two contrasting settings of these popular carols. Associated with the cradle ceremony of Christmas Vespers, *Jospeh lieber* (here set for two choirs of upper and lower voices) rocks the infant Jesus with the infinite tenderness of its simple phrases, while the single-choir *In dulci jubilo* rejoices with punchy rhythmic dances and syncopated energy.

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Texts and Translations

Magnificat Octavi Toni

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est : et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenie timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede; et exultavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

My soul doth magnify the Lord

and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:

as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen

um 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; consubstantiali Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt.

things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; begotten, not made: being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made.

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.

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. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris; et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos; cuius regni non erit finis.

And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

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;

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.



But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?
Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.
And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?
They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar
the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.
When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

Sancte Deus

Sancte Deus, sancte fortis, sancte et im-
mortalis: miserere nobis. Nunc,
Christe, te petimus miserere quaesumus.
Qui venisti redimere perditos: noli
damnare redemptos, quia per crucem
tuam redemisti mundum. Amen.

*Holy God, holy and strong, holy and im-
mortal, have mercy upon us. Now, O
Christ, we pray thee: have mercy upon us,
we beg thee. Thou, who comest to
redeem the lost, do not condemn those thou
hast bought, for because of thy
cross thou hast redeemed the world. Amen.*

Magnificat quinti toni

Joseph, lieber Joseph mein,
hilff mir wiegen das Kindelein,
Gott, der wird dein Löhner sein,
im Himmelreich,
der Jungfraw Kind Maria.
Eya, eya.
Virgo Deum genuit,
Quem divina voluit clementia.

*Joseph, my dear Joseph,
Help me rock my little child,
God, who will recompense you
In heaven,
Is the Virgin Mary's child.
Oh yes, yes!
The Virgin has given birth to God
Whom the divine mercy willed.*

Omnes nunc concinite,
Nato regi psallite,
Voce pia dicite:
Sit gloria Christo nato infantulo.
Hodie apparuit, apparuit in Israel,
Quem praedixit Gabriel,
Est natus Rex

*Now sing all together,
Sing to the newborn King,
Saying with devout voice,
"Glory be to Christ our Babe!"
Today the one whom Gabriel predicted
Has appeared in Israel,
Has been born King.*

Magnificat: anima mea Dominum.
Et exultavit spiritus meus: in Deo salutari
meo.

*My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.*



About the Artists

The Tallis Scholars

Janet Coxwell, *soprano*
Amy Haworth, *soprano*
Amy Wood, *soprano*
Rebecca Hickey, *soprano*
Patrick Craig, *alto*
Caroline Trevor, *alto*
Mark Dobell, *tenor*
George Pooley, *tenor*
Robert Macdonald, *bass*
Timothy Whiteley, *bass*
Peter Phillips, *director*

The Tallis Scholars were founded in 1973 by their director, Peter Phillips. Through their recordings and concert performances, they have established themselves as the leading exponents of Renaissance sacred music throughout the world. Peter Phillips has worked with the ensemble to create—through good tuning and blend—the purity and clarity of sound which he feels best serve the Renaissance repertoire, allowing every detail of the musical lines to be heard. It is the resulting beauty of sound for which The Tallis Scholars have become so widely renowned.

The Tallis Scholars perform in both sacred and secular venues, giving around 70 concerts each year across the globe.

In 2012-2013 the group will tour the USA twice and Japan once, as well as visiting festivals and venues across the UK and Europe. They will continue their association with the Choral at Cadogan series, of which Peter Phillips is Artistic Director, giving two performances in the hall. The group celebrates their 40th anniversary in 2013 with two commissions from Gabriel Jackson and Eric Whitacre, extensive touring and special CD releases. They will also be giving a unique celebratory performance of Tallis' *Spem in alium* in St Paul's Cathedral, London on 7 March 2013.

The Tallis Scholars' career highlights have included a tour of China in 1999, including two concerts in Beijing; and the privilege of performing in the Sistine Chapel in April 1994 to mark the final stage of the complete restoration of the Michelangelo frescoes, broadcast simultaneously on Italian and Japanese television. The ensemble have commissioned many contemporary composers during their history: in 1998 they celebrated their 25th Anniversary with a special concert in London's National Gallery, premiering a Sir John Tavener work written for the group and narrated by Sting. A further performance was given with Sir Paul



McCartney in New York in 2000. The Tallis Scholars are broadcast regularly on radio (including performances from the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in 2007, 2008, and 2011) and have also been featured on the acclaimed ITV program *The Southbank Show*.

Much of The Tallis Scholars reputation for their pioneering work has come from their association with Gimell Records, set up by Peter Phillips and Steve Smith in 1980 solely to record the group. In February 1994 Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars performed on the 400th anniversary of the death of Palestrina in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, where Palestrina had trained as a choirboy and later worked as Maestro di Cappella. The concerts were recorded by Gimell and are available on both CD and DVD. Recordings by The Tallis Scholars have attracted many awards throughout the world. In 1987 their recording of Josquin's *Missa La sol fa re mi* and *Missa Pange lingua* received *Gramophone* magazine's Record of the Year award, the first recording of early music ever to win this coveted award. In 1989 the French magazine *Diapason* gave two of its critical Diapason d'Or de l'Année awards for the recordings of a mass and motets by Lassus and for Josquin's two masses based on the chanson *L'Homme armé*. Their recording of Palestrina's *Missa Assumpta est Maria* and *Missa Sicut liliium* was awarded *Gramophone's* Early Music Award in 1991; they received the 1994 Early Music Award for their recording of

music by Cipriano de Rore; and the same distinction again in 2005 for their disc of music by John Browne. Released on the 30th anniversary of Gimell Records in March 2010, The Tallis Scholars' recording of Victoria's *Lamentations of Jeremiah* received critical acclaim, and to further celebrate the anniversary, the group released three 4 CD box sets of "The Best of The Tallis Scholars", one for each decade. The ongoing project to record Josquin's complete cycle of masses, when completed, will run to 9 discs.

These accolades and achievements are continuing evidence of the exceptionally high standard maintained by The Tallis Scholars, and of their dedication to one of the great repertoires in Western classical music. For the latest opportunities to hear The Tallis Scholars in concert, or for more information on how to purchase CDs or DVDs of the group, please visit their website: www.thetallissscholars.co.uk.

Peter Phillips has made an impressive, if unusual, reputation for himself in dedicating his life's work to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony. Having won a scholarship to Oxford in 1972, Peter Phillips studied Renaissance music with David Wulstan and Denis Arnold, and gained experience in conducting small vocal ensembles, already experimenting with the rarer parts of the repertoire. In 1973 he founded the Tallis Scholars, with whom he has now appeared in over 1,750 concerts



and made over 50 discs, encouraging interest in polyphony all over the world. Apart from the Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips continues to work with other specialist ensembles. He has appeared with the Collegium Vocale of Ghent and the Netherlands Chamber Choir, and is currently working with the Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Intrada of Moscow, Musica Reservata of Barcelona and the Tudor Choir of Seattle. Peter also works extensively with the BBC Singers with whom he gave a Promenade concert, in collaboration with the Tallis Scholars, from the Royal Albert Hall in July 2007. He gives numerous master-classes and choral workshops every year around the world—in Rimini (Italy), Evora (Portugal) and Barcelona (Spain)—and is also Artistic Director of The Tallis Scholars Summer Schools: annual choral courses based in Uppingham (UK), Seattle (USA) and Sydney (Australia) dedicated to exploring the heritage of renaissance choral music, and developing a performance style appropriate to it as pioneered by The Tallis Scholars. In addition to conducting, Peter Phillips is well-known as a writer. For 29 years he has contributed a regular music column to *The Spectator*. In 1995 he became the owner and publisher of *The Musical Times*, the oldest continuously published music journal in the world. His first book, *English Sacred Music 1549–1649*, was published by Gimell in 1991, while his second, *What We Really Do*, an unblinking account of what touring is like, alongside insights about the make-up and

performance of polyphony, was published in 2003. A revised edition is planned for publication in 2013.

Peter Phillips has made numerous television and radio broadcasts. Besides those featuring The Tallis Scholars (which include live broadcasts from the 2001, 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2011 Proms, the 2007 Edinburgh Festival, the Aldeburgh Festival and the Bath Festival), he has appeared several times on the BBC's *Music Weekly* and on the BBC *World Service*, on *Kaleidoscope* (BBC Radio 4), on *Today* (BBC Radio 4), National Public Radio in the U.S. and on German, French, and Canadian radio, where he has enjoyed deploying his love of languages. In 1990 ITV's *The South Bank Show* featured Peter's "personal odyssey" with The Tallis Scholars; and in 2002 a special television documentary was made for the BBC about the life and times of William Byrd.

Peter has recently been appointed a Reed Rubin Director of Music and Bodley Fellow at Merton College, Oxford, where the new choral foundation he helped to establish began singing services in October 2008. They gave their first live broadcast on BBC Radio Three's *Choral Evensong* in October 2011. In 2005 Peter Phillips was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture, a decoration intended to honour individuals who have contributed to the understanding of French culture in the world. Peter's personal website is at www.tallisman.wordpress.com.

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Thursday, December 6, 8:00 p.m.

COMPOSER PORTRAITS

Olga Neuwirth

International Contemporary Ensemble

Jayce Ogren, *conductor*

Tuesday, December 11, 6:00 p.m. (doors at 5:30 p.m.)

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Zorn for Strings

Jennifer Choi, David Fulmer, and Stefan Jackiw, *violins*

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