

The Byrd Ensemble | Markdavin Obenza

MUSIC *for the* TUDORS

Tallis, Sheppard & White



SCRIBE RECORDS



THE BYRD ENSEMBLE

is a Seattle-based vocal ensemble specializing in the performance of chamber vocal music. Since 2004, the ensemble has performed medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and modern music on an international stage. Described as 'pure and radiant' (*Gramophone*), 'immensely impressive' (*Early Music Review*), and 'rich, full-voiced, and perfectly blended' (*Early Music America*), the ensemble is garnering international acclaim for its recordings of Renaissance vocal music. The Byrd Ensemble is an artist-in-residence at St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle where the group presents its concert series. The Byrd Ensemble is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The group's creative efforts are led by Markdavin Obenza.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MARKDAVIN OBENZA has dedicated his career to music. In addition to the Byrd Ensemble, Markdavin is also director and founder of Seattle-based chamber choir Vox16 and producer for Scribe Records, an independent record label. He is an active singer and has performed with the Tudor Choir and members of the Tallis Scholars. He is currently the director of Choral Music at Trinity Parish Church, Seattle.

SOPRANO

Rebekah Gilmore (1, 3, 5, 8)
Margaret Obenza (1-5, 8)
Christina Siemens (1, 3, 8)
Linda Strandberg (5)

ALTO

Sarra Sharif Doyle
Joshua Haberman
Laura Beckel Thoreson (2)

TENOR

Orrin Doyle
David Hendrix (1, 2, 7)
Kurt Kruckeberg (1, 2, 7)
Markdavin Obenza (1, 3-5, 8)
Wesley Rogers (1, 5, 8)

BASS

Peter Lifland (7)
Willimark Obenza (1, 3, 8)
Jonathan Silvia (1, 3, 5-8)
David Stutz (1-2, 8)
Thomas Thompson (1, 3-8)

CATALOG #
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PRODUCER
Markdavin Obenza

SOUND ENGINEER
Joshua Haberman

GRAPHICS
Chad Kent | Design

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MUSIC

for the TUDORS

Tallis, Sheppard & White

1. John Sheppard (1515-1558)	MEDIA VITA	23:06
2. Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)	VIDETE MIRACULUM	10:37
3. Thomas Tallis	SALVATOR MUNDI I	3:03
4. Robert White (1538-1574)	CHRISTE QUI LUX IV	5:41
5. Thomas Tallis	IN MANUS TUAS	2:28
6. Thomas Tallis	LAMENTATIONS I	8:43
7. Anonymous	SALVE RADIX	2:38
8. Thomas Tallis	GAUDE GLORIOSA DEI MATER	19:30

TOTAL TIME: 75:46

NOTES PREPARED BY
Greg Skidmore

PHOTOS BY
Charleen Cadelina Photography

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EDITIONS

Adam P. Cole (1, 6)
David Fraser (3, 5)

Charles H. Giffen (8)
Ross Jallo (4)

Edward Tambling (7)
Diana Thompson (2)

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A conversation with **MARKDAVIN OBENZA,**
JOSHUA HABERMAN, and **GREG SKIDMORE**

WHEN MARK AND JOSH ASKED ME TO WRITE PROGRAMME NOTES FOR THEIR UPCOMING CD LAST YEAR, I WAS HONOURED! These are two incredibly dedicated and exciting musicians and what they've achieved with the Byrd Ensemble is extraordinary. I met Mark in 2002 when we both attended a residential course run by the Tallis Scholars in England and I met Josh for the first time in the summer of 2014, though we were already connected through many parallel strands of our strikingly similar musical and academic interests.

They mentioned that this CD was to be a less academic and more personal offering to their audiences. This was to be a collection of music that meant a lot to them personally, throughout their lives as developing artists and admirers of this wonderful repertory. I thought it might be an interesting approach, therefore, not to only provide historical and analytic information about the music - which is what is most often contained in CD liner material - but to present a more personal and human discussion of what this music means and how it works. Because the music is well known and already widely recorded, it is hoped that the more academically curious reader might endeavor online or to a library to gain some of the basic factual information about the music and the composers presented here, and I've included some pointers to help along the way. What follows, therefore, is a wide-ranging conversation between the three of us about this music, its history, how we interpret it, what we find fascinating about it, and how our individual stories have shaped our relationship with it.

Greg: I thought we might start with a little bit of a history lesson. Europe in the 16th century was a fascinating but dangerous place. What can you tell me about the historical background for the music you've chosen for this disc?

Josh: Where to start! The political history from this period could hardly be more captivating if it had been written by J.R.R. Tolkien himself. You have Henry VIII who altered the religious course of England forever just so he could divorce his first wife. He marries six women in all, desperately



trying to produce a male heir, and his only legitimate son from those six marriages (Edward VI) is crowned king at nine years old, only to die at fifteen. Then there are the dueling half-sisters: Mary, who presides over a five-year violent return to Roman Catholicism, is succeeded by Elizabeth, who has a long and prosperous reign that establishes the Church of England as a sustainable and stable institution. She represents the end of the Tudor story, and it's certainly a long and tumultuous one.

Mark: Definitely tumultuous. It was such a turbulent time for the Church of England, flipping back and forth between various extreme forms of Catholicism and Protestantism. Because at this time the church was really the only major patron for professional musicians and composers, this uncertainty and these quick, violent changes in how the church worked had a big effect on the music we have from this period. Composers were expected to adjust their writing styles according to which group of religious fanatics was in power at which time! They all had ideas about what sort of music they'd like to hear and what it should sound like - how to treat the words, what sorts of singers should be involved, etc. Even just music that hearkened back to an earlier time was sometimes prized and sometimes vilified. Given these demands, I am always thoroughly impressed with the number of masterpieces we have from this era, written in such a wide variety of styles, particularly by the greats Thomas Tallis, John Sheppard and Robert White. It's music by these composers that we've chosen for this disc.

Josh: Despite all the upheaval, every monarch and religious regime needed music, even if the specifics of what was asked for varied quite a lot. These musicians and composers had to weather all this change and adapt. The quintessential example of the composer who did this most spectacularly is Thomas Tallis, who served under four Tudor monarchs (all of them except Henry VII). I would love to have been a fly on the wall when Tallis got the news that he had to go from writing pieces like his eleven-minute Ave rosa sine spinis to short syllabic works, setting the vernacular English language,

such as the now much beloved *If Ye Love Me*. We recorded *Ave rosa* on our first disc, entitled 'Our Lady'. While many people know *If Ye Love Me* very well indeed, the contrast between that piece and Tallis' early works like *Ave rosa* is so marked that it is a wonder they come from the same musical mind. They are both absolutely magnificent pieces, but both so different, and this flexibility in style is Tallis' hallmark.

Greg: I believe the way people thought about religion during that time was wrapped up in everything else. Religion wasn't a part of your life, albeit a very important part, as it is for people today. Religion was everything. It was private life, it was public life, it was statecraft, it was art. It gave you a reason to live and it gave you a way to live. It makes sense to me that much of this English music is so powerful; these people were living through incredibly intense times.

Josh: Absolutely. And more specifically, I think people's individual approaches to the Catholic vs. Protestant question were very deep and genuine. Tallis and his protégé William Byrd, England's other genius composer from this period, are both reputed to have been 'unreformed Roman Catholics,' despite living under years of Elizabethan rule and the Protestant Church of England, when many of their fellow Catholics were being impoverished, persecuted, and often murdered by the state for their beliefs. Many people believe that Byrd in particular experienced deep anguish about having to live out his Catholic faith underground. These people didn't perceive the religious changes happening in their societies as mere administrative shuffles. These changes and the decisions and consequences that went with them went to the very core of their identity as religious believers - to the core of their identities as people. This was serious stuff.

Greg: Going back just a little bit, tell me about the Tudor Rose on the front cover of this CD and your inclusion of the anonymous work *Salve radix* among these later composers. Is this too a work related to the English Reformation?

Josh: Not quite. *Salve radix* comes from a manuscript called British Library Royal 11 E.xi. Catchy, I know. If Elizabeth's reign was the culmination of the Tudor story, this manuscript, at least musically and symbolically, represents virtually its beginning. It was prepared in 1516 and presented as a New Year's gift to Henry VIII and his queen, the Spanish Catherine of Aragon. About twenty years later, Henry would attempt to divorce this woman and the whole business would begin. At this early time, however, Henry was still in his vigorous youth. He was not the older, larger, imposing figure we know from the famous Holbein paintings. Henry was attempting to make the English court as spectacular and cosmopolitan as his rivals' establishments in France and Spain. The manuscript in which we

find Salve radix contains music written in the most famous and international style at the time, called the Franco-Flemish style, and the preparation of such a beautiful and expensive manuscript was as much about propaganda as it was about music.

Mark: Salve radix in particular is a very unusual piece, and symbolic of the Tudor Rose itself, the heraldic symbol of the Tudor dynasty. There are two wonderful moments in which the music follows itself down a harmonic rabbit hole and ends up in a different key. Musically, this ebb and flow out of pitch centers makes a little more sense when one considers the text, which likens the germination of a rose to the coming of the Tudor dynasty. The pervading sense of suspension is what smoothly takes us from key to key, very much like a slowly growing vine, budding eventually to produce a rose.

Josh: I have to believe that the harmonic adventurousness of this piece strongly ties into the imagery of the unbroken circle that surrounds the rose in the manuscript. I'm sure that such symbols of strength and continuity would have been central to establishing the legitimacy of the Tudor dynasty. Could it be, and this is pure speculation, that this piece, being rather short and ending in a different key than it begins, was imagined as something that could be sung several times in a row, starting the next run in the key of the last ending, again becoming an unbroken symbol of dynasty and generational inheritance?

Greg: Wow! What an idea. I've not run across that before. That sounds fascinating.

Josh: This could take you full-circle and eventually bring you back to your original key. While this might be impractical to actually execute because of vocal ranges (though some judicious octave swapping might make it work), it is still an idea that could resonate in concept! In fact, I think concept and symbolism were more important to the artists and thinkers of the time than it is today.

Greg: Fantastic. What a rich collection of ideas and symbols and thoughts to draw inspiration from! The history of this time plays such an important role for all of us who love this music, but culturally speaking, is there anything else? Myself, having grown up in Canada but with family connections going back to the very earliest 17th-century American settlers, I find it interesting to think about the Tudor period as being the one that gave birth to colonialism - in a sense, this is the 'last' part of the story of England that is also 'my story' - albeit a really old bit of it! What connection do you feel to these stories culturally? How much do these stories resonate for you in the culture you experience right here and now?

Mark: While I am of course an American, I can't identify a particularly 'American' approach to English Renaissance polyphonic music in how I come to this music. Such a thing sounds a bit absurd, doesn't it? I am lucky enough to have been born at a time when it was possible to grow up listening to English Renaissance music sung by English groups on CD and this is precisely what I did. These formative experiences, part of my 'personal' culture I suppose, the cultural experiences I created for and sought out myself, ultimately shaped my aesthetic for this music. So while I don't live in England and never have, this music doesn't feel foreign or distant to me. I've tried to develop intense and meaningful relationships with the music itself, not filtered through ideas of what it means to be English or what English history means to me as an individual.



Josh: There's another link, and, perhaps fittingly, it's a religious one. Most of the music on this CD, and most of the music we sing in general in the Byrd Ensemble, was written for religious performance, either liturgically (to be performed as part of an actual Christian service) or devotional. I actually feel very connected to it in this way through my participation in the unbroken Anglican/Episcopal musical tradition. Most of the other singers in the group have likewise spent a lot of time making music in churches, and especially Catholic or Episcopal churches, so it feels very natural to us to perform this music. I also grew up singing in a boychoir (the American Boychoir), and while it was not a religious institution it was directed by a prominent Episcopalian musician, James Litton. Our programs reflected this; we performed the first half of each concert in very Anglican-looking vestments, and sang traditional European sacred music. These experiences happened at a formative time for me; what you do when you're a child usually ends up defining your 'normal', or at least the sorts of things you can meaningfully and authentically identify with.

Both Mark and I are also very much indebted to a dear mentor of ours, the late Peter Hallock. He studied at the College of St. Nicolas of the Royal School of Church Music in Canterbury in 1950, and was the only American enrolled there at the time. Peter introduced countertenor singing and the office of Compline to Seattle, a relatively secular city. Several of us 'came of age' in Hallock's Compline Choir, where a great deal of English Renaissance music was sung. So despite the fact that Seattle is nearly 5,000 miles from London, I feel very connected to this tradition and this music. I feel completely at home at St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, or any of the Oxford or Cambridge college chapels. The connection is primarily a musical one, but the roles played by the church music traditions we have grown up in and the important individuals who have mentored us in these traditions are also important. I guess, when you look at it closely, these are the things that actually define a cultural awareness, aren't they? People can be born and live anywhere - culture is more complicated than that.

Greg: You're absolutely right. As a Canadian living and working amongst the Westminster Abbeys and college chapels you mention, I'm a living witness to the idea that culture needn't necessarily be dictated by the colour of your passport. You have created something in the Byrd Ensemble that shows this as well, which leads me on to another topic I wanted to discuss, that being your unique approaches to the music on this disc. First, how have you chosen this music in particular?

Josh: This is quite simply some of our very favorite music. In that sense this is perhaps the most personal disc we have released so far. Our other discs have explored academically interesting themes, and we collaborated with scholars who helped introduce us to music that was new to us. That was an exciting process of discovery, and there was definitely a thrill in figuring out a compelling interpretation of music that in some cases had never been heard by modern ears. However, regardless of how much exploration you might do, you never forget the music that is dearest to you, the music you seem to be able to get right inside of, and we wanted to commit that to disc.

Mark: Exactly. While breaking new ground is exciting, we wanted a chance to just record some of our favorites. These are pieces that we have known for years and experienced in various contexts, both singing them ourselves and hearing others sing them. They are pieces that made such an impression on us that they would stick in our heads for weeks or months, and definitely at least a few of them have been on repeat in my music player at various times! An unfortunate truth for those of us who love Early Music is that they aren't making any more of it—the pieces that survive are all we get, and the most famous ones are popular for a reason. These are truly great pieces.

Greg: You're not wrong! While these are absolute masterpieces, many of them are pretty well known, perhaps for that very reason. Is there anything in particular you wanted to accomplish with this recording in terms of finding a new approach or keeping things fresh, knowing there was a good chance some of your audience may have heard this music before?

Mark: There is something incredibly dramatic and exciting about this music and I believe it doesn't matter whether a listener already knows it or not! This drama, this magic, is always there. The fact we're returning to it having known it for so many years is evidence for this. When deciding specifically to record this music, however, we took a slightly different technical approach from the established norms of how one records these pieces. We wanted to use recording techniques to help bring out the drama in the counterpoint. We tried to capture the intimate sound of one-to-a-part singing and the full, epic sound of two-to-a-part singing with twelve singers and everything between. For example, we chose to place microphones closer than usual to the singers to record the character in each singer's voice, and vary the placements of the microphones over the course of a piece to highlight its structure.

Josh: We make this music fresh by bringing ourselves and our aesthetic to it. Mark, as conductor, inspires us all to sing expressively. Each individual singer brings their vocal character and their own personal expressiveness to their individual line.

Polyphony is really special in this way. All of the voice parts have equal weight and importance. Particularly for the one-to-a-part singing, you aren't hearing a 'choir' but rather a group of soloists playing off each other, interacting with each other, being inspired by each other, totally in the moment. The magical results that come out of this interplay rely so much on the character, musicality, and expressiveness of the individual singers. So the music is fresh by virtue of being sung by a different group of singers than have ever recorded it before and we concentrate on that and bring it out.

Mark: Familiarity means a listener might come to the music with a set of expectations about how it should be performed. I consider this fact actually one of the best reasons for recording well known music! There is an opportunity here to play with these expectations, and maybe even to confound them.

Greg: I love that you relish the challenge of creating something new with music that is well known! In my experience, we need more of this. Especially with Renaissance polyphonic music, and perhaps because of the heavy cultural and academic baggage that comes with it - the very issues we started out by talking about - I often find performers, and even some audiences, relate to this music as merely

a component part of a bigger, historical whole. We are encouraged so much to think of this music as 'historical' or 'religious' or in some other way 'contextualised' that I fear it sometimes goes too far and we lose sight of the music itself. Liturgical function, for instance, or indeed the bigger issue of original performance context, is a good example of something we as performers are meant to think about a lot. What is your approach to these 'historically informed performance' concerns?

Mark: To be honest I don't consider liturgical function at all when deciding how to interpret the music. We decide on the feel based on the writing itself. As singers, we focus on bringing out the melodic nature of each line through legato singing, naturally singing louder as the notes get higher and quieter as the notes get lower. It sounds like a simple approach, but really it's the best way to make obvious the structural detail of a composition. It reveals ideas about phrasing, momentum, feel, dynamics, speed, articulation and all that expressive good stuff.

It may disturb some that I haven't cited text as a consideration in interpretation. While there are some pieces that are deliberately connected to the text, I generally don't find text to have a particularly strong connection with the music in this period. If I'm stumped on how to interpret a piece I'll look at the text for clues, but it's a small consideration. Often text just sounds like syllables to break up long lines of almost instrumental polyphonic counterpoint.

Josh: While I do find it interesting to contemplate how the music would have been used originally, ultimately I don't think of that original function as being a significant factor in how to interpret it. This is especially true given that we, now, are using this music in a different way from how we assume it was originally used. We are aware of this and we make no apologies for it. The music is more than good enough, just on its own, to be introduced into modern and perhaps 'foreign' circumstances without losing any of its power.

For example, I have to believe that pieces as long as John Sheppard's *Media Vita*, which we've recorded on this disc, were used to some extent as 'background music', sung by the choir while the clergy were performing other parts of the service. It just seems hard for me to believe that the service would come to a full stop for twenty minutes while everyone paid complete attention to the music. But we, on this disc and in most modern performances of it, are using it as foreground music, and in our performances the music itself is the focus for those same twenty minutes. I believe this could very well lead to a different interpretation. Perhaps ours is more intense than what Sheppard would have heard. Perhaps it's faster or slower or has more variation in it or a hundred other possible differences. I believe this is in fact very likely and that's OK. If our singing brings satisfaction and

meaning to our audiences in a different way than it might for Sheppard's original audience, I'm not worried about that. We won't ever have the chance to sing to Sheppard's original audience and our audiences deserve to hear this wonderful music. They demand a present, intense, meaningful, and emotionally relevant rendition of it - not a trip in a time machine.

Greg: I agree completely. I think we need first ask ourselves what the benefit of a performance that seeks complete fidelity to the past would be. Are we convinced that we would like what we heard if we entered a cathedral 450 years ago and heard some singing? As you say, we also just don't have that option and it seems a strange thing to put effort into. However, can we approach learning about the people behind the music as individuals in a different way? Can we gain a psychological insight, perhaps, as opposed to a factual historical one, and can that aid us? Tallis and Sheppard definitely knew one another, for instance, being employed in the same institutions. Robert White, on the other hand, may never have come across the other men, as he was slightly younger and never spent time employed at the Chapel Royal, the private musical establishment of the monarch. Do these biographical details allow you to relate more viscerally to the music?

Mark: Unfortunately for me, the sorts of details of the 'real mark' behind the music that I want aren't often contained in history books. These are emotional details, artistic details, as you say, psychological details. It's hard not to feel closer to the composers themselves in some way, just simply by performing and recording their music. Each composer has a fairly unique compositional voice and I like to imagine what kind of people they are based on that. Sheppard wrote very sonorous and consonant music, though I sometimes wonder if he was a happy person, given how plangent and yearning - almost resigned - the end result often is. Even though Tallis had to change his writing style several times, he always wrote dramatic music while still maintaining his spicy harmonic signature throughout. Was he an emotional person? Hard to deal with? Or was he calmly calculating, taking everything in his stride? It is fun to speculate sometimes. At the end of the day, I confess that these biographical details do not have a huge effect on my interpretation of the music, nor do I really think they should. I think the interpretative decisions I take should reflect how I as an individual relate to the music itself.

Josh: I sometimes find thinking about biographical details to be a satisfying way to feel more connected to the music. The best example of this for me is knowing about William Byrd's repressed Catholicism. This knowledge can actually heighten the emotional experience of delivering his intense motets on themes such as persecution or oppression, such as *Ad dominum cum tribulatione* or *Ne irascaris*, both of which we recorded on our disc 'In the Company of William Byrd'. Knowing, for

instance, that Europe was experiencing a pretty destructive plague at the end of Sheppard's life, and that he may have himself died from it, certainly affects how I would sing the words 'Media vita in morte sumus' (which translate as 'In the midst of life we are in death.'). How can it not? However, I don't generally find biographical details to be significant in actually interpreting the music. I generally feel that this music stands really well on its own. That's part of the beauty of Early Music to me. It was written at a time before composers felt the need to clutter their scores with highly specific dynamic and expressive markings. The notes give the music shape, and the interpretation follows from that.

Greg: Thank you both for being so candid and giving me access to these sorts of personal and intimate ideas. I believe knowing about the people making the music is just as valuable as knowing about the music itself. You both have strong convictions which come across powerfully in the music you create and it has been a pleasure exploring them with you. It is my hope that our readers will listen to this disc with a greater understanding of what they're hearing and the decisions that have gone into its creation.

FURTHER READING:

There is a wealth of information on all of the topics discussed here available for free on the internet.

Wikipedia is, of course, a wonderful source of basic factual information, and many happy hours can be spent following leads, citations, and references, gaining a surprisingly broad understanding of musicological topics.

More and more, other artists are posting their CD liner notes online. The record label Hyperion allows users to download 'digital CD booklets' and their catalogue is truly impressive for this repertory (and many others!), both in what they themselves offer on their label and also because they provide access to the entire Tallis Scholars back catalogue (on the Gimell label), as well as access to other record labels' liner notes. It can all be accessed at hyperion-records.co.uk

There is a very detailed and musicologically rigorous article online about the manuscript British Library Royal 11 E.xi. For the adventurous among you: cmme.org/database/projects/1
The Royal School of Church Music has a website as well: rscm.com

Again, for the academically minded among you, the main online repository of academic literature, JSTOR, allows readers free access to articles three at a time when you sign up for a myJSTOR account: jstor.org

The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians is the basic reference encyclopedia resource for academic music. It is behind a paywall, but its website is govemusic.com. Oxford University Press, which publishes the Grove, has relationships with most global research institutions, and many public libraries, to allow free access.

GREG SKIDMORE is one of the leading consort singers of his generation, based in London, England. He specialises in the performance of Renaissance polyphonic music and works regularly with groups such as The Tallis Scholars, The Sixteen, The Gabrieli Consort, I Fagiolini, and Alamire—with whom he recently won a Gramophone Early Music Award for their disc 'The Spy's Choirbook'. Greg was also cast as one of six singers in I Fagiolini's recent dramatic collaboration with contemporary dancers, 'Betrayal'. Before moving to London, he undertook doctoral studies in musicology at the University of Oxford while singing in the cathedral choir at Christ Church Cathedral. Greg conducts his own consort in London called The Lacock Scholars and has helped many come to Renaissance music by giving workshops in the UK, France, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. You can follow what he's up to on his website: gregskidmore.co.uk





1) JOHN SHEPPARD (1515-1558): MEDIA VITA

Media vita in morte sumus. Quem quaerimus
adjutorem nisi te, Domine, qui pro peccatis nostris juste
irasceris?

Sancte Deus, sancte fortis, sancte et misericors Salvator,
amarae morti ne tradas nos.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine, secundum
verbum tuum in pace. Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare
tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum.
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis
tuae Israel. Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in saecula
saeculorum. Amen.

Ne projicias nos in tempore senectutis; cum defecerit
virtus nostra ne derelinquas nos Domine.

Noli claudere aures tuas ad preces nostras.

Qui cognoscis occulta cordis, parce peccatis nostris.

In the midst of life we are in death. From whom may we
seek help except you, Lord, who, on account of our sins,
are justly angry?

Holy God, holy and strong, holy and merciful Saviour, do
not hand us over to the bitter pains of death.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy
salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all
people. To be a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the
glory of thy people Israel. 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.

Do not cast us away in old age; when our strength fails, do
not abandon us, Lord.

Do not close your ears to our prayers.

You who know the secrets of our hearts, forgive our sins.

2) THOMAS TALLIS (1505-1585): VIDETE MIRACULUM

Videte miraculum matris Domini:
concepit virgo virilis ignara consortii,
stans onerata nobili onere Maria;
et matrem se laetam cognosci,
quae se nescit uxorem.
Haec speciosum forma prae filiis hominum
castis concepit visceribus,
et benedicta in aeternum
Deum nobis protulit et hominem.
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

Behold the miracle of the mother of the Lord:
a virgin has conceived though she knows not a man,
Mary, who stands laden with her noble burden;
knowing not that she is a wife,
she rejoices to be a mother.
She has conceived in her chaste womb
one who is beautiful beyond the sons of men,
and blessed for ever,
she has brought forth God and man for us.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

3) THOMAS TALLIS: SALVATOR MUNDI I

Salvator mundi, salva nos, qui per
crucem et sanguinem redemisti nos;
auxiliari nobis te deprecamur, Deus
noster.

O Saviour of the world, save us, thou who hast
redeemed us by thy cross and blood; help us, we
beseech thee, our God.

4) ROBERT WHITE (1538-1574): CHRISTE QUI LUX IV

Christe qui lux es et dies,
Noctis tenebras detegis,
Lucisque lumen crederis,
Lumen beatum praedicans.

Christ, who art the light and day,
You drive away the darkness of night,
You are called the light of light,
For you proclaim the blessed light.

Precamur Sancte Domine,
Defende nos in hac nocte,
Sit nobis in te requies,
Quietam noctem tribue.

We beseech you, Holy Lord,
Protect us this night.
Let us take our rest in you;
Grant us a tranquil night.

Ne gravis somnus irruat,
Nec hostis nos surripiat,
Nec caro illi consentiens,
Nos tibi reos statuat.

Let our sleep be free from care;
Let not the enemy snatch us away,
Nor flesh conspire within him,
And make us guilty in your sight.

Oculi somnum capiunt,
Cor ad te semper vigilet,
Dextera tua protegat
Famulos qui te diligunt.

Though our eyes be filled with sleep,
Keep our hearts forever awake to you.
May your right hand protect
Your willing servants.

Defensor noster aspice,
Insidiantes reprime,
Guberna tuos famulos,
Quos sanguine mercatus es.

You who are our shield, behold;
Restrain those that lie in wait.
And guide your servants whom
You have ransomed with your blood.

Memento nostri Domine
In gravi isto corpore,
Qui es defensor animae,
Adesto nobis Domine.

Remember us, O Lord,
Who bear the burden of this mortal form;
You who are the defender of the soul,
Be near us, O Lord.

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Eiusque soli Filio,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

Glory be to God the Father,
And to his only Son,
With the Spirit, Comforter,
Both now and evermore. Amen.





5) THOMAS TALLIS: IN MANUS TUAS

In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Redemisti me Domine, Deus veritatis.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

6) THOMAS TALLIS: LAMENTATIONS I

Incipit lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae:

Here begins the Lamentations over Jerusalem of Jeremiah the Prophet:

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

Aleph. How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow: the princes of provinces made tributary!

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.

Beth. Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her: all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.

7) ANONYMOUS: SALVE RADIX

Salve radix varios producens germine ramos
quos inter ramus supereminet altior unus,
cuius et ex summo purpura rosa micat,
qua stant unanimes pax et Iustitia septe,
claudunturque foras dissona corda senum.

Hail, Root, bringing forth varying branches from the bud,
Among which one branch rises above,
From whose top the purple rose gleams;
By which Peace and Justice stand enclosed and united;
And the dissonant hearts of old men are closed outside.



8) THOMAS TALLIS: GAUDE GLORIOSA

Gaude gloriosa Dei Mater, Virgo Maria vere honorificanda, quae a Domino in gloria super caelos exaltata adepta es thronum.

Gaude Virgo Maria, cui angelicae turmae dulces in caelis resonant laudes; iam enim laetaris visione Regis cui omnia servantur.

Gaude concivis in caelis sanctorum, quae Christum in utero illaesa portasti: igitur Dei Mater digne appellaris.

Gaude flos florum speciosissima, virga iuris, form morum, fessi cura, pes labentis, mundi lux, et peccatorum refugium.

Gaude Virgo Maria quam dignam laude celebrat ecclesia, quae Christi doctrinis illustrata te Matrem glorificat.

Gaude Virgo Maria, quae corpore et anima ad summum provecta es palacium: et, ut auxiliatrix et interventrix pro nobis miserimis peccatoribus, supplicamus.

Gaude Maria intercessorum adiutrix et damnandorum salvatrix celebranda.

Gaude sancta Virgo Maria cuius prole omnes salvamur a perpetuis inferorum suppliciis et a potestate diabolica liberati.

Gaude Virgo Maria Christi benedicta Mater, vena misericordiae et gratiae: cui supplicamus ut nobis pie clamantibus attendas, itaque tuo in nomine mereamur adesse caelorum regnum. Amen.

Rejoice, O glorious Mother of God, Virgin Mary truly worthy of honor, who, exalted by the Lord in glory above the heavens, hast gained a throne.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, to whom the hosts of angels in heaven sweetly sing praises: for now thou doest enjoy the sight of the King whom all things serve.

Rejoice, fellow citizen of the heavenly saints, thou who without blemish bore Christ in thy womb: wherefore thou art justly called the Mother of God.

Rejoice, most beautiful flower of flowers, rod of justice, mould of virtues, succour of the weary, a firm foothold for those who fall, light of the world, and refuge of sinners.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, who art worthy of the praise the Church celebrates, which, enlightened by the teachings of Christ, glorifies thee as Mother.

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, who in body and soul are borne to the highest palace: and to whom, as Strength and Advocate for us miserable sinners, we make our supplication.

Rejoice, O Mary, celebrated as help of those who intercede and savior of the damned.

Rejoice, holy Virgin Mary, by whose offspring all are saved from the perpetual torments of Hell and freed from the power of the devil.

Rejoice, Virgin Mary, blessed Mother of Christ, channel of mercy and grace: to whom we pray that thou wouldst give ear to our devout cry so that in thy name we may deserve to enter the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

The Byrd Ensemble | Markdavin Obenza

