

il Suono

O virgo miserere mei: The Vocal Music of Johannes Tinctoris

Chancellor's Hall, Senate House, University of London

Thursday 9 October 2014

6.45 p.m.

1. Mass for three voices ('Sine nomine No. 1'): Kyrie, Gloria

This mass features a remarkably low-pitched contratenor part which descends regularly to the c below gamma ut and occasionally, later in the setting, to the b flat. The mass is transmitted in only one source, Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS 755 (fols. 17v–26), where it is accompanied by a Latin inscription to King Ferrante of Naples: 'Ferdinande sacer inter divos referende | Cantica Tinctoris suscipe parva tui'. It is likely that this mass was composed during the 1470s or 80s. This performance uses William Melin's 1976 edition (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 18), as do all items in this programme unless otherwise indicated.

2. O Virgo miserere mei

3. Virgo Dei throno digna

These two motets appeared for the first time in the Mellon Chansonier (US-NH 91), which was produced in the 1470s and probably became a wedding gift to Princess Beatrice of Aragon. *O virgo miserere mei* survives uniquely as the nineteenth piece in the Mellon Chansonier, while *Virgo Dei throno digna* also appears ahead of the first main treatise text in Bologna 2573, again most likely as a dedication to Beatrice, as well as in several other sources. The edition of the first motet is by Allan Atlas and the second by Christian Goursaud.

4. Mass for three voices ('Sine nomine No. 2'): Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei

Seemingly conceived as a pairing with the low-clef mass, this setting is written in high clefs and hence is performed today by soprano, countertenor and tenor voices. It is transmitted uniquely in Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS 759 (fols. 25v–31r), which was copied in Verona in the 1480s or 90s, and also features numerous masses, magnificats, motets and other sacred repertory, most of which is without ascription in the source. This mass is one of the eleven ascribed pieces; other named composers in the source include Barbingant, Dufay, Josquin, Martini and Ockeghem.

5. Beatissima Beatrix

6. O Deus Princeps

7. Qui regnans in celestibus

These three short motets are presented as examples by Tinctoris in his *Liber de arte contrapuncti*. *Beatissima Beatrix* demonstrates a theoretical point relating to the correct duration of dissonances and is in Book 2, Chapter 25, *O Deus Princeps* features in Chapter 34 of the same book, demonstrating the (non-) avoidance of chromatically altered perfect concords, while *Qui regnans in celestibus* appears in Book 3, Chapter 6, and provides exemplification of the use of repeated notes for specific sonic effects: in this case, the sound of bells and trumpets. The editions for this performance have been prepared by Adam Whittaker.

8. Lamentationes Jeremie prophete

The only source of this setting is Petrucci's 1506 printed collection of settings of the Lamentations. It probably dates from rather late in Tinctoris's career, perhaps the 1490s or 1500s, presents a shortened version of the text, setting only Aleph, Beth and Ghimel.

9. Vostre regart

10. O invida fortuna

11. Helas

12. Le souvenir

Vostre regart and *O invida fortuna* are possibly the earliest surviving compositions by the composer, most likely from the 1460s, before his move to Naples. The edition of *Vostre regart* that we are using today is based on the Laborde Chansonnier (Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case, fols. 79v–80), while the setting also survives in Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517 (fols. 20v–21r), the Pixérécourt Chansonnier (Paris, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds français 15123, fols. 120v–121r), the Seville Chansonnier (Seville, Biblioteca Colombina, MS 5-I-48, fols. 85v–86r), and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XIX, 176 (fols 3v–4r), which also contains the only surviving transmission of *O invida fortuna* on fols. 86v–87r). This performance of *Helas* is based on an edition made from Petrucci's 1501 *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton* (fols. 57v–58r), while the work also survives in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XIX, 59 (fols 214v–215r), Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Panciatichi 27 (fols. 47–48), Das Glogauer Liederbuch (Berlin, Preussische Staatsbibliothek, MS 40098, No. 269), the Seville Chansonnier (fols. 44v–45r), Zwickau, Ratsschulbibliothek, MS 12, No. 21, and Segovia, Cathedral bibl., unnumbered MS (fol. 184), where it is ascribed to Compère. The latter source also transmits uniquely Tinctoris's four-part *Le souvenir* on fols. 116v–117r.

13. Mass for four voices ('Sine nomine No. 3'): Gloria, Credo, Sanctus

Surviving only in Milan Cathedral, Archivio della Cappella Musicale del Duomo, Librone 2 (olim 2268) (fols. 37v–43r), this four-part mass for ATBB omits both the Kyrie and Agnus Dei, in accordance with contemporary Milanese practice, and has a shortened Credo. Ronald Woodley has suggested that a Milanese provenance 'may indicate that its composition relates in some way to Tinctoris's acquaintance with Franchino Gafori in Naples during the late 1470s'.

Soprano: Philippa Murray
Countertenor: Jonathan Darbourne
Tenor: William Petter
Baritone: Christian Goursaud
Bass: Nick Ashby