

BRIGHTON CONSORT
DIRECTOR: GREG SKIDMORE

DOUBLE OR
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NOTHING:
NOTHING:

Renaissance music for double choir

Sunday

21st January 2024, 6pm
St Paul's Church, West St.
Brighton
BN1 2RE

Saturday

27th January, 3pm
Holy Trinity Church
Hurstpierpoint
West Sussex BN6 9TT

Tickets: £12, concessions £6
under 12s free - from www.brightonconsort.org.uk
or 01273 833746 or on the door

info@brightonconsort.org.uk



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Double or Nothing
Renaissance music for double choir

Brighton Consort
Greg Skidmore, Musical Director

Sunday, 21st January 2024
6:00pm

St Paul's West Street
Brighton

Saturday, 27th January 2024
3:00pm

Holy Trinity Church
Hurstpierpoint

Saturday, 17th February 2024
6:00pm

St Nicholas' Church
Arundel

Of the many fascinating innovations in choral composition that took place during the Renaissance, one of the most striking was the development of double choir texture. Here, polyphonic lines both swirl and interweave as they always do, but also at times act like blocks or pillars as well. In this concert, Brighton Consort presents music all written in this compelling way, all for eight separate voices.

Concert Programme

Gregorio Allegri	Christus resurgens
Tomas Luis de Victoria	Missa Alma redemptoris mater Kyrie Gloria
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	Stabat mater
Giovanni Gabrieli	O magnum mysterium
Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi	O notturno miracolo
Tomas Luis de Victoria	Missa Alma redemptoris mater Credo
Claudio Monteverdi	'Nisi Dominus' <i>from Vespro della Beata Vergine (1610)</i>

- - - INTERVAL - - -

Tomas Luis de Victoria	Missa Alma redemptoris mater Sanctus & Benedictus
Jean Mouton	Nesciens mater
Alonso Lobo	Ave Maria a 8
Nicolas Gombert	Lugebat David Absalon
Sebastián de Vivanco	Veni dilecte mi
William Byrd	'Nunc dimittis' <i>from The Great Service</i>
Tomas Luis de Victoria	Missa Alma redemptoris mater Agnus Dei

Programme note

Rather than choose as our theme for this programme a composer, time, place, or a major work, we have decided to explore a musical texture, an organising principle, a compositional device. This leaves quite a lot of room for variety and we believe this programme offers us an opportunity to explore the wide range of ways that composers from the Renaissance expressed this device: double choir texture.

On the surface, this is a straightforward principle to understand. Take a choir, divide it into two smaller choirs, and give each group something different to do. Because of the standard division of voices in soprano, alto, tenor, and bass this results most often in 8 separate lines of music, but we will see that composers were able to stretch and rethink this 8-voices-in-two-groups-of-4-each limitation in various ways.

However, to more fully understand the leap forward in musical thinking that double choir writing represents, it is necessary to look at the music that preceded the Renaissance. Mediaeval music (as indeed a substantial amount of Renaissance music as well) is rooted in Gregorian plainsong, in single lines or unaccompanied melodies. The first polyphonic music was conceived of entirely as the simultaneous sounding of two or more melodies, what musicians call 'horizontal' lines of music - as that is how they are orientated on a page of music. As the Renaissance moved into the Baroque, however, and with the ever-increasing influence of instrumental music on music written for choirs, composers began to experiment with thinking about music not as melodies but as blocks of sound, or sonic textures. They began to structure music not only using the structures of the texts they were setting, or by employing complicated and impressive mathematics to give their musical creations intelligible form, but also by engaging in a more abstract understanding of the *sound* of a piece itself. They began to mould and build patterns in sound alone.

The most straightforward way of showing this technique is evident in the first piece on our programme, Gregorio Allegri's *Christus resurgens*. A piece written for Easter, it is an exciting and triumphant piece, and the layering of both choirs bouncing the words 'Vivit Deo' (God lives!) back and forth to one another is textbook double-choir composition. Allegri is most famous for his setting of *Miserere mei Deus*, but here he shows us that, in his position as a bridging composer between Renaissance and Baroque, he has mastered the exciting opportunities afforded to him by the use of this 'stereo' texture.

Winding its way through our programme is one of Tomas Luis de Victoria's most beautiful double-choir mass settings, *Missa Alma redemptoris mater*. This piece also makes use of one of the most often-used compositional techniques in the Renaissance, that of 'parody' technique. Rather than referring to anything derogatory, parody technique in the Renaissance was using one piece as a model for another, as an inspiration. Composers would pay homage to one another by doing this and also revisit earlier works they themselves had written, as was the case here. A parody motet or mass adopts passages, textures, and compositional devices from another work - or, in modern parlance, the 'look and feel' of another piece of music. A good parody mass doesn't quote *directly* from another work, but is close enough to immediately be recognisable. Victoria's mastery is here displayed in using the musical material from a motet in praise of the elegance and mystery of the virgin Mary - i.e. one idea - to express the much wider range of emotions and moods contained in the text of the Mass Ordinary (divided into Kyrie, Gloria, Credo,

Sanctus & Benedictus, and Agnus Dei movements). As Victoria is a complete genius, this is done seamlessly and effectively.

One of the most famous works of double choir music from the Renaissance is Palestrina's *Stabat mater*. No concert of double choir music would be complete without this magnificent, lengthy, 'slow burn' of a piece. Palestrina here is at his concise, elegant, and transcendent best, using the alternating format presented to him by the double choir texture to bring together long sweeps of musical time, building to perfectly judged climaxes, and always ultimately in service of the text.

Giovanni Gabrieli uses similar techniques of setting up dialogue followed by the joining together of the choirs, but takes things one step further toward the of his *O magnum mysterium* setting. Gabrieli is known, of course, for both his instrumental writing and his association with the basilica of San Marco in Venice, where he wrote music for multiple group of singers and instrumentalists who would stand in the various galleries of that splendid building and create 'Renaissance surround sound' for the awed listeners below. *O magnum mysterium* contains just a taste of this in its instrumentally-inspired rhythms at the end, leading to a grand ending worthy of the splendours of Venice!

O notturno miracolo by Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi is in many ways unique in this programme. It is firstly a secular piece of music - a love song. Secondly, while most of the rest of the music in the programme delicately plays with the combination of melodies and chords (what musicians call 'vertical' sounds), Gastoldi here is primarily concerned with the intelligibility of the text in a double choir format, meaning almost all of this piece is written in a 'homophonic' way, meaning all of the syllables of text are sung at the same time, like modern hymn singing in church. The extent to which Gastoldi adheres to this principle is remarkable in this piece and it results in the unique experience for the listener of the text being delivered as one, but with musical richness - almost like a Greek chorus. Being a late Renaissance Italian madrigal, there are also some extraordinary pictorial representations of the text in this piece, none more so than when Gastoldi sets the text 'Poi ferma il tuo viaggio' (Then stay your journey) by slowing everything down!

Bringing the first half to a close is a truly remarkable piece by a truly remarkable composer. Claudio Monteverdi defined, expanded and innovated in every musical form available to him. His *Vespro della Beata Vergine* of 1610 (the famous so-called '1610 Vespers') can be thought of as a portfolio of different ways in which Monteverdi was engaging with his musical heritage, taking forms and conventions of the past and updating them, matching the best of what his predecessors could do and bringing something new as well. In *Nisi Dominus*, not only does Monteverdi employ the approach of alternating blocks of sound perfected by Palestrina and Victoria, but also incorporates the much older technique of placing a cantus firmus plainsong melody in very long notes right into the heart of the texture. Further, this piece expands on the 8-voice convention by opening out to a full 10 voices, two groups of 5!

The second half of the programme contains its two earliest pieces. The first, and oldest, is Jean Mouton's *Nesciens mater*. This piece perhaps epitomises the mindset of the very first experiments with what would become double choir texture in that it isn't actually conceived of as blocks of sound at all but instead is an ingenious canon. Canons are conceptually the logical extreme of simplicity in polyphony; to create harmony when

writing a canon, a composer doesn't even write two separate melodies! Only one line is written and it's just sung at a different time, and sometimes at a different pitch, by another voice. Somehow it miraculously adds up and the result sounds harmonious! Canons are, of course, much more complicated to actually write, but the idea behind them is this one of utmost simplicity. Here Mouton takes this idea and expands it, making it mind-blowing. Instead of writing one melody and having it sung at a different time, Mouton writes a *full four-voice motet*, and then has another group of voices sing the same thing, transposed to a different key, and a few beats later. *Nesciens mater* is a total triumph of this sort of simplicity expressed in complexity and Mouton pulls it off here without any awkwardness or rough edges. A masterpiece.

Many decades later, Alonso Lobo, in another version of parody technique, would return to this same compositional conceit in his setting of the famous prayer *Ave Maria* for eight voices. Again, Lobo only composed four of them with the other four voices sung in canon with the first four. Lobo also updated the harmonies and was able to make the structure his own through the use of chromaticism and other, later expressive gestures more representative of the high Renaissance.

Born at the very end of the 15th century, Nicolas Gombert is the second oldest composer on tonight's programme. His *Lugebat David Absalon* is less of a traditional 'double choir' piece that conceives the two choirs as blocks of sound and more of a fluid experiment with how 8 equal voices can combine in different ways. Sometimes each voice is entirely on its own while at other times, Gombert does group them into recognisable, alternating blocks like we see in later pieces. As fascinating as this is, the real hallmark of this piece is the searing intensity with which Gombert expresses this incredibly emotive text. If ever there was an argument against early Renaissance music being dry and academic, this is surely it! Gombert expresses every possible emotion felt by a grieving father (King David mourning the death of his son Absalon) in this emotional roller coaster of a piece.

Moving toward the end of the programme we present two undoubtedly modern pieces of music, at least by Renaissance standards. Vivanco's *Veni dilecte mi*, makes use of intricate rhythms in a way that prefigures Baroque treatment of text, almost in a dance-like way. This is a setting from the biblical Song of Songs, and Vivanco here doesn't shy away from the text's emotive, intimate, and sensual words. This is a piece where the sturdy feel of double choir solidity dissolves into sensuality and a flexible expression of passionate romantic love.

As a final nod to William Byrd, whose music we included in every one of our programmes last year, we include one of Byrd's only double-choir works, the *Nunc dimittis* movement from his extraordinary Great Service. Last year, 2023, was a Byrd anniversary year and we just felt we couldn't really let him go! The Great Service contains music suitable for a range of Church of England services, and the *Nunc dimittis* movement was written to be sung during Evensong. The Great Service was so named for its size rather than necessarily its quality(!), though it is a tour de force of Byrd's contrapuntal skill and management of choral forces. Like Gombert, rather than employ a constant back-and-forth between his two five-part choirs, Byrd here plays with different combinations of voices and textures. The piece is elegant and refined while also being full, and impressive. 2023 is not yet that distant of a memory and we will miss singing so much of this unparalleled genius of the English Renaissance.

But speaking of unparalleled geniuses, it is of course fitting that we end with Victoria, whose mass has threaded its way through this programme, tying all of this different music together. Double choir music is a choral composer's best opportunity to borrow from the instrumental composer's tool kit by allowing for the abstract sculpting of sound itself, while still remaining true to the text, that thing that differentiates and heightens the choral musician's art. Choirs, rather than instrumentalists or vocal soloists, are uniquely privileged here, therefore, having the opportunity to truly enjoy the best of both worlds!

*Programme notes by Greg Skidmore
January 2024*

Brighton Consort

Musical Director: Greg Skidmore

Soprano

Liza Axford
Anne Bonwit †
Zoe Carey
Sue Clough
Diana Gobel †
Kathy Holloway †
Hannah Loach
Mirella Marlow
Pamela Nickels †

Alto

Jenny Clemens
Eleanor Clapp
Belinda Dutch
Janet Gascoine
Ellie Hale †
Stella Holman
Alicia Newell †
Liz Petty
Susie Pontin
Jan Thompson-Smith *

Tenor

Maya Davis
Richard Davis
Nick Jarvis †
Hugh Jones
Paul Lane
David Waterhouse
Jan White
Stephen White
Liz Yeats

Bass

Michael Bishop
Rob Carruthers
Mike Clemens
Mark Findlay
David Game †
John Petley *
Alessio Santamaria
Mick Venebles †
Peter Wells

* indicates a singer who will not be singing in the concert on Sunday, 21 January in Brighton

† indicates a singer who will not be singing in the concert on Saturday, 17 February in Arundel

Latin & Italian Texts and Translations

Christus resurgens ex mortuis
iam non moritur:
Mors illi ultra non dominabitur;
Quod enim mortuus est,
peccato mortuus est semel:
quod autem vivit, vivit Deo.
Alleluia.
Mortuus est semel
propter delicta nostra,
Et resurrexit
propter iustificationem nostram.
Alleluia.

Christ, rising from the dead,
is no longer dead:
Death will no longer rule him;
For because he died,
He died for sin only once:
But because he lived, he lives in God.
Alleluia.
He died once
because of our sins,
And he rose again
for our salvation.
Alleluia.

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens,
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis ;
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will towards men.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee
for thy great glory,
O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sits on the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.
Cuius animam gementem
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.

The grieving mother stood
Next to the cross, in tears
While her son hung there.
Through her heart, lamenting
Sorrowful and grieving
A sword plunged itself.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater unigeniti!
Quae mærebat et dolebat
Pia mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.

O how sad and beset
Was that blessed
Mother of the only-begotten!
She mourned and wept
That holy mother, as she saw
The punishment of her remarkable son.

Quis est homo qui non fleret
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari
Piam Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

What human could not weep
If he were to see Christ's mother
In such distress?
Who could not share her grief
Or empathise with the blessed mother
Sharing her son's pain?

Pro peccatis sui gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis
Et flagellis subditum:
Vidit suum dulce natum
Morientem desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.

She saw Jesus in torment
for the sins of his people,
And undergoing scourging.
She saw her sweet son
Dying alone
As he gave up the ghost.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris,
Fac ut tecum lugeam.
Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Hail, Mother, fount of love,
Let me to feel the force of your grief;
Grant that I can mourn with you.
Grant that my heart may burn
With love for Christ the Lord
And that I may be pleasing to him.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.
Tui nati vulnerati
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum divide.

Holy Mother, may you do this;
Fix the blows of your crucified son
Firmly in my heart.
Share with me the punishment of your
wounded son, who thought it worth
suffering this for me.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere
Donec ego vixero.
Juxta crucem tecum stare
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

Grant that I may weep piously with you
And share your grief for the crucified Christ
For as long as I shall live.
To stand with you next to the cross
And to be by your side
As you weep – that is my desire.

Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihi iam non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac ut portem Christi mortem
Passionis fac consortem
Et plagas recolare.

Most distinguished Virgin among virgins,
Do not any longer be harsh towards me,
Grant that I may lament with you.
Grant that I may bear Christ's death,
Grant that I may share in his passion
And re-experience his suffering.

Fac me plagis vulnerari
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.
Flammis ne urar succensus
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die iudicii.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire
Da per matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriae.
Quando corpus morietur
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.

O magnum mysterium

et admirabile sacramentum
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
Jacentem in praesepe.
Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum. Alleluia

O notturno miracolo soave,
Ne già sognando il veggio:
Al lume della luna il sol vagheggio.
Luna cortese ond' io
Godo quel ben che mi contend' il giorno,
Mentre lampeggi intorno,
All'amata beltà dell'idol mio.
Portami tu col luminoso raggio,
Ch'il suo bel viso tocca
Un bacio sol dalla soave bocca;
Poi ferma il tuo viaggio,
Sì ch'il suo non m'involesse
L'importuno tuo sole.
Ah, ah, potrò mai
Stender le braccia ove tu stendi i rai?

Credo in unum Deum
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium 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

May I be wounded by the blows he suffered,
May I be inspired by the cross
And the blood of the Son.
May I not be consumed by the flames,
May I be defended through you, Virgin,
On the day of judgement.

Christ, when my time comes to leave here
Grant through your mother that I may attain
The prize of victory.
When my body dies
Grant that my soul may be given
The glory of Paradise.

O great mystery
and wondrous sacrament
That animals should see the new-born Lord
Lying in a manger.
Blessed Virgin, whose womb deserved
To carry the Lord Christ. Alleluia.

O sweetest nocturnal miracle,
I behold it now, 'tis not a dream:
By the light of the moon I court the sun;
Kindly moon, whereby I enjoy
That delight which the day contests with me,
While you shine roundabout,
For the cherished beauty of my beloved.
Transport me with your luminous ray,
Such that the fair visage be touched
By a single kiss from that sweet mouth;
Then stay your journey
So that your importunate sun
Not steal its own from me.
Ah, will my arms ever succeed
In reaching to where your rays extend?

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
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:

per quem omnia facta sunt.
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.
Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum scripturas.
Et ascendit in caelum,
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos
et mortuos:
cuius regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum et vivificantem
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit,
simul adoratur et conglorificatur,
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et unam sanctam catholicam
et apostolicam ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.
Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere:
surgite postquam sederitis,
qui manducatis panem doloris;
cum dederit dilectis suis somnum.
Ecce haereditas Domini,
filii, mercedem fructus ventris.
Sicut sagittae in manu potentis
Ita filii excussorum.
Beatus vir
qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis:
Non confundetur
cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper
Et in saecula saeculorum, amen.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus sabaoth.

by whom all things were made.
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: suffered, and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures.
And ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father
And He shall come again with glory to judge
the living and the dead:
His kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the Lord and giver of life:
Who proceedeth from the Father and Son.
And with them is worshipped and glorified:
Who spake by the Prophets.
And 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.

Unless the Lord builds the house,
Those who build it labour in vain.
Unless the Lord guards the city,
Its watchman stands on guard in vain.
It is useless for you to rise before dawn:
Rise after you have sat at table,
You who eat the bread of sorrow;
after he has granted sleep to his loved ones.
Behold the inheritance of the Lord –
children, the reward and fruit of the womb.
Like arrows in the hand of the powerful,
so are the children of the uprooted.
Blessed is the man
who has fulfilled his heart's desire from them:
He will not be overwhelmed
when he speaks to his enemies at the gate.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now and always
And for time everlasting. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Nesciens mater virgo virum
peperit sine dolore
salvatorem saeculorum,
ipsum regem angelorum.
Sola virgo lactabat
ubere de caelo plena.

The virgin mother, not knowing a man,
Gave birth without pain
to the saviour of the world,
the king of angels himself.
The Virgin alone suckled her son
with a breast filled from heaven.

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you,
You are blessed among women
And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners
Now and in the hour of our death.
Amen.

Lugebat David Absalon,
pius pater filium,
tristis senex puerum.
'Heu me, fili mi Absalon,
Quis mihi det ut moriar,
Ut ego pro te moriar,
O fili mi Absalon!'
Rex autem David filium
cooperto flebat capite:
'Quis mihi det ut moriar, O fili mi !'
Porro rex operuit caput suum
Et clamabat voce magna:
'Fili mi Absalon, O fili mi.'

David was mourning Absalon,
The dutiful father mourning his son,
A sad old man mourning his child.
'Woe is me, my son Absalon
Who will grant that I may die,
That I may die for you,
O my son Absalon.'
But indeed King David
With covered head, wept for his son.
'Who will grant my wish to die, o my son?'
Furthermore, the king covered his head
And began to cry in a loud voice:
'My son Absalon, O my son.'

Veni, dilecte mi, egrediamur in agro,
commoremur in villis.
Mane surgamus ad vineas,
videamus si floruit vinea,
si flores fructus parturiunt,
si floruerunt mala punica.
Ibi dabo tibi ubera mea.
Mandragorae dederunt odorem suum;
in portis nostris
omnia poma, nova et vetera,
dilecte mi, servavi tibi.

Come, my love, let us go out into the fields,
Let us linger in the farmland.
In the morning, let us go up to the vineyard,
Let us see whether the vine has bloomed,
If the flowers have given birth to fruit,
If the pomegranates have ripened.
There I will give you my breasts.
The mandrakes have released their scent.
Within our gates
All our orchard fruits, both new and old,
I have kept for you, my love.

Nunc dimittis

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.

Agnus Dei,

qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
give us peace.

Biographies

Brighton Consort was formed by the late Daphne Elston in 1971 and is best known for its ambitious exploration of the rich repertoire of renaissance and early baroque music. Its Musical Directors have included Deborah Roberts, Katie Thomas, James Dixon and the present director Greg Skidmore. Several choir members are also closely involved in the running of the Brighton Early Music Festival. Brighton Consort's programmes have included collaborations with Ensemble Reza, the Paul Nieman Brass Ensemble and Nick Houghton, and the choir has performed in the Voices of London Festival and at various events in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. Although our core repertoire mainly consists of Renaissance choral music, in order to offer variety to audiences and singers alike, our programmes sometimes include contemporary pieces and items from other musical periods too.

Born in Canada, **Greg Skidmore** arrived in England as an undergraduate at Royal Holloway College, University of London. After graduating with First Class Honours in Music, his post-graduate Choral Scholarship at Wells Cathedral led him to Lay Clerkships at Gloucester Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. He now lives in London and pursues a varied career as a consort, choral, and solo oratorio singer alongside work as a conductor and workshop leader. He has appeared with *The Tallis Scholars*, *The Sixteen*, *The Cardinall's Musick*, *I Fagiolini*, *Tenebrae*, *Gabrieli Consort*, *Alamire*, *Contrapunctus*, *Collegium Vocale Ghent*, *Cappella Amsterdam*, *La Grand Chapelle* (Madrid), and the *Tafelmusik Baroque Chamber Choir* (Toronto). He can be heard on recordings released by Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Harmonia Mundi USA, and Gimell Records. In February 2022, Greg made his hundredth appearance with *The Tallis Scholars*. While at Christ Church in Oxford, he began a course of doctoral research in Musicology at the University of Oxford and started his own men's voices consort, *I Dedicati*. More recently he was appointed Musical Director of *The Lacock Scholars*, one of the UK's premier amateur vocal consorts. Greg recently completed major coaching projects with students at the University of York and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and also has worked as a freelance vocal coach and conductor at the Royal Academy of Music. He has given workshops and masterclasses in the UK, France, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia in association with *The Sixteen*, *I Fagiolini*, and on his own and he is increasingly engaged in Canada as a guest conductor, clinician, and record producer, founding *The Canadian Renaissance Music Summer Schools* in 2018. He has been published in *Early Music* and his writing has appeared in programmes and CD liner notes for *The Tallis Scholars*, *The Sixteen*, *The Cardinall's Musick*, *The Gabrieli Consort*, *Tenebrae*, and *Ex Cathedra*.

Interested in joining us?

Brighton Consort performs mainly Renaissance and early Baroque choral music but programmes sometimes include contemporary pieces and items from other musical periods too. We normally present three concert programmes per year, usually with two performances of each. We rehearse on Wednesday evenings (7:45pm-9:45pm) at St George's Church, Kemptown. Rehearsals take place throughout the year, with a break during July and August. We are always looking to hear from enthusiastic new singers in all voice parts and the best way to inquire about joining us is to get in touch. We'll ask you a little bit about your experience and suitability for what we do, but we are a welcoming and flexible bunch! We're very open to meeting new people and can't wait to hear from you.

To reach us, please email info@brightonconsort.org.uk

More Information

For more information about **Brighton Consort**, to browse through our past projects, and learn more about the choir and our musical director, please [visit our website](#):

brightonconsort.org.uk

or [email](#):

info@brightonconsort.org.uk

We can also be found on [social media](#):

facebook.com/BrightonConsort

twitter.com/BrightonConsort

Next Concerts

Brighton Consort next appears in a programme entitled

'Prima le parole'
***La Bella Italia* in words and music**

There will be two concerts of this programme:

Saturday, June 22nd 2024

and

Sunday, June 23rd 2024

Venue and timing details are still being decided.

Make sure you [check our website](#) for more details.

The beauty of the Italian language is well known. It is 'the singers' language' and sometimes considered to be 'The Language of Love'. Italy was also the birthplace of the Renaissance and even though Renaissance music was truly international, many leading composers from across the continent lived and worked in Italy, and spoke Italian. Our title comes from a letter written by Claudio Monteverdi defending his new approach to writing music and translates as 'The words come first'. This concert will revel in the Italian language itself, with the music being either sung in Italian or inspired by Italy and Italian-ness! Interspersed with beautiful, lyrical music from Renaissance Italy will be readings in Italian (and English) about music, beauty, and *la bella vita!*

Brighton Consort is also appearing in the following events later this year:

St George's Kemptown 200th Anniversary Concert

Saturday, 6th of July, 2024

Brighton and Hove Arts Council Combined Choirs Concert

Saturday, 13th of July, 2024

St Bartholomew's Brighton 150th Anniversary Series: Visiting Choir

Sunday, 14th of July, 2024

Read about what's coming up at:

brightonconsort.org.uk/next-concert