

AWAKEN

Music Online for Spring

Saturday 27 March 2021 7.00 pm

NCEM, St Margaret's Church, Walmgate, York

FRETWORK

Emily Ashton, Richard Boothby, Joanna Levine, Asako Morikawa,

Sam Stadlen *viols*

Silas Wollston *organ, virginals*

IESTYN DAVIES *countertenor*

THE SKY ABOVE THE ROOF

Silent Noon

(The House of Life)

Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872–1958

Suite no. 7

(Banchetto musicale, 1617)

*Padouana – Gagliarda – Courente –
Allemande e Tripla*

Johann Hermann Schein 1586–1630

The Sky above the Roof

Vaughan Williams

Canzon super O Nachbar Roland

(Ludi musici, 1621)

Samuel Scheidt 1587–1654

Lamento

Johann Christoph Bach 1642–1703

Salve mi Jesu

(arrangement of Salve regina

by Giovanni Rovetta 1595-7–1668)

Franz Tunder 1614–67

Es war aber an die Stätte

Christian Geist ?1650–1711

It's now clear that no other country in Europe enjoyed and used multiple viols in consort as much as England did; nevertheless, second in this particular league table was certainly the German-speaking countries. And, curiously, while we have only one painting depicting an English consort, we have several fine examples of German viol ensembles.

Our recital ranges widely over the seventeenth century, from the early years with the friends Schein and Scheidt, to the most significant member of the pre-J.S. Bach family, Johann Christoph Bach; taking in Buxtehude's predecessor at the Marienkirche in Lübeck - Franz Tunder (whose daughter Buxtehude was to marry) and another north German composer who worked in Copenhagen, Christian Geist.

Then we offer two arrangements of much-loved songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams. In a way, this is rather cheeky, since RVW is known to have detested the viol and said that he would not have one in the house. I hope that these faithful and respectful arrangements of his piano accompaniments would have changed his mind.

Throughout the seventeenth-century in German-speaking lands, viols were gradually being replaced by violins, as they were elsewhere; but the process was slow and we clearly find many pieces where violins and viols were mixed together, and others where the choice of instrument was left to the performers. While the earlier composers Schein and Scheidt probably had the sound of viols in mind for their compositions, later composers such as J.C. Bach and Tunder were probably happy for either family to play their music.

Schein and Scheidt were born within a few years of one another in close physical proximity and became friends – Schein chose Scheidt as godfather to his daughter Susanna in 1623 – and they were singled out as some of the best composers of their time. Scheidt distinguished himself as an instrumental performer and the only one whose fame now rests on his instrumental music. Schein was J.S. Bach's most significant predecessor as Thomaskantor in Leipzig, and the most broad-ranging in his musical output.

Franz Tunder, of the next generation, can be grouped with the north German team, coming from the island of Fehmarn, between Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark. He studied in Copenhagen, and may have visited Florence before becoming organist of the Marienkirche in Lübeck. Also from the north came Christian Geist, who was born in Güstrow, just south of Rostock, but spent most of his life working in Scandinavia, working in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Göteborg.

Further south, in addition to Schein and Scheidt, there was the Bach family. His *Lamento*, extraordinary in its harmonic audacity, expressive breadth and melodic flexibility, could have been composed by either Heinrich Bach or his son, Johann Christoph – there are manuscripts ascribed to either man. The latter was highly rated by later Bachs, including J.S. and C.P.E., who both performed some of his music. In J.S.'s obituary notice for his uncle, J.C. is described as someone who 'was as good at inventing beautiful thoughts as he was at expressing words. He composed, to the extent that current taste permitted, in a *galant* and *cantabile* style, uncommonly full-textured ... On the organ and the keyboard [he] never played with fewer than five independent parts'.

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TRANSLATIONS OF TEXTS

Lamento (J.C. Bach)

Ach, daß ich Wassers g'nug hätte
in meinem Haupte
Und meine Augen
Tränen quellen wären,
Daß ich Tag und Nacht
beweinen konnte meine Sünde!

Meine Sünde gehen über mein Haupt.
Wie eine schwere Last sind sie mir
zu schwer worden,
Darum weine ich so,
und meine Augen fließen mit Wasser.
Meine Seufzend ist viel,
und mein Herz ist betrübet,
Denn der Herr hat mich voll Jammers gemacht
Am Tage seines grimmigen Zorns.

Oh, that I had enough water
in my head,
And that my eyes
were springs of tears,
That I could weep for my sins
day and night!

I am drowning in my sins.
They are like a heavy burden,
too heavy to bear,
That's why I weep so much,
and my eyes flow with water.
My sighs are many,
and my heart is troubled,
That the Lord has made me wretched
On this day of his ferocious wrath.

Salve mi Jesu (Tunder)

Salve me Jesu, pater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra.
Ad te clamamus exules filiae Evae,
Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes
in hac lachrimarum valle.
Eia ergo advocata noster
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte
et pacem tuam nostris temporibus concede,
o clemens, o pie Jesu, concede pacem,
o dulcis Jesu Christe, o pax vera Jesu.

Save me Jesus, father of mercy,
Our life's sweetness and hope.
To you we cry, we banished children of Eve
To you we sigh with groans and weeping
in this vale of tears.
Behold then, our advocate,
Turn your merciful eyes upon us
And grant us thy peace in our time,
O merciful, O holy Jesus, grant us thy peace,
O sweet Jesus Christ, thy true peace.

Es war aber an die Stätte (Geist)

Da nahmen sie den Leichnam Jesu,
der abgenommen war,
und wickelten ihn in ein rein Leinwand
und Bunden ihn mit Tüchern,
und mit den Spezereien
wie Juden pflegen zu begraben.

Es war aber an der Stätte,
da er gekreuziget ward, ein Garten,
und in dem Garten ein neu Grab,
das war Josephs,
welcher er hatte lassen hauen in einen Felsen,
in welches niemand je gelegen war.

Daselbst hin legten sie Jesum
umb des Rüstags willen der Juden,
daß der Sabbath anbrach
und das Grab nahe war
und wälzeten einen großen Stein
für die Tür des Grabes
und gingen davon.

O Traurigkeit! O Herzeleid!
Ist das nicht zu beklagen?
Gott des Vaters einig Kind
wird ins Grab getragen.

Then they took the body of Jesus,
that had been removed,
and wrapped it in a pure cloth,
and bound it with cloths
and with spices,
as the Jews do to prepare for burial.

Now in the place where he had been crucified
there was a garden,
and in that garden a new grave,
that was Joseph's,
which he had carved out of the rock,
in which no-one had ever been laid.

There they laid Jesus
according to the Jewish day of preparation,
because it was at the dawn of the Sabbath
and that the grave was near;
and rolled a large stone
in front of the door of the grave
and went away.

O what sadness! O what heartache!
Is this not to be lamented?
God's only child
is carried to the grave.