

YORK
EARLY MUSIC
FESTIVAL

Rose Consort of Viols

Elizabethan Encounters

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Rose Consort of Viols

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Elizabethan Encounters

The treasures of English consort music survive in manuscript copies made for avid Elizabethan collectors. Many of these manuscripts show a lively engagement with diverse cultural styles, containing pieces by composers from continental Europe. Here we find a wonderful array of motets, chansons and madrigals, often copied without their original texts, and so making ideal repertory for the viol consort. This programme explores a wealth and variety of continental music, including pieces by Gombert, Clemens and Lassus, rubbing shoulders with consorts by native composers such as Tallis, Parsons and Byrd.

Salvator Mundi	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585)
O dulx regard	Philip Van Wilder (c. 1500–1553)
Si vous voules	Van Wilder
Madonna somm'acorto	Philippe Verdelot (c. 1480–c. 1532) or Giacomo Fogliano (1468–1548)
Angelus ad pastores ait	Orlande de Lassus (1532–1594)
La gamba in basso & soprano	Vincenzo Ruffo (c. 1508–1587)
Duo Alphonso	Alfonso Ferrabosco senior (1543–
Ascendo ad Patrem	88) Jean Maillard (fl. 1538–70)
In nomine <i>Rounde</i>	Christopher Tye (c. 1505–1572)
Fantasia I a3	William Byrd (c. 1540–1623)
De la court	Robert Parsons (c. 1535–1572)
Triste départ	Nicolas Gombert (c. 1495– c. 1560)
Frais et gaillard	Jacobus Clemens non Papa (c. 1510-15–1555/6)
Domine ne in furore a4	Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-55–1521)
Fantasia Two in one	Byrd

It is all too easy to think of Tudor England as an isolated island state, frequently under threat of attack from enemies on the continent of Europe. Henry VIII was alternately at war with France or seeking alliances with the French against the Holy Roman Empire. Elizabeth's almost constant fear of invasion by Catholic forces became reality with the appearance of the Spanish Armada in her coastal waters. So it is also easy to think of Tudor culture as being separated from that of its neighbours, ploughing its own furrow, oblivious of ideas from abroad. Yet London in the sixteenth century was one of Europe's greatest trading centres, with merchants and craftsmen from all over the world establishing businesses or visiting to sell their latest goods from home. The cosmopolitan atmosphere was reflected in the arts: painters and sculptors from Italy and Germany worked at the Tudor court; manuscript books of hours and music anthologies arrived from France and the Low Countries; exquisitely decorated armour came from Germany and expensive leather goods from Spain.

Music and musicians from continental Europe travelled to England too. One of the most influential figures at the court of Henry VIII was Philip Van Wilder, who rose to become the director of a group of singing boys and men and string players who worked in the King's privy chamber, a position that would later come to be known as 'Master of the King's Musick'. Van Wilder hailed from the South Netherlands and brought with him the skill of writing imitative counterpoint, where several voices in a composition share the same melodic material woven together to create a rich polyphonic fabric, that was new in England. Van Wilder's music was still being copied well into the Elizabethan period, usually shorn of its original words, and attributed to 'Mr. Phillips'.

A later visitor, this time from Italy, was Alfonso Ferrabosco, who worked as a lutenist for Elizabeth I from 1562. Despite frequent visits to the continent, either to deal with family affairs in Bologna or possibly to act as a spy for Elizabeth, he was employed by the queen until finally returning to Italy in 1578. His music was influential on that of his English contemporaries such as William Byrd, with whom he was said to have entered a 'friendly emulation' in setting the same madrigal text. He is represented here not by one of his more learned motets or madrigals, but by a tiny playful duet which is to be found in a manuscript from around 1570 now in York Minster Library.

Other Tudor manuscript music anthologies also include a good number of pieces by continental composers jostling up against pieces by indigenous composers. The copyists, such as the Oxford-based Robert Dow, were not always very accurate in attributing the overseas music: he puts the name 'D[r]. Tye' against *Madonna*

somm'acorto which in reality is a madrigal variously attributed in continental prints to either Verdelot or Fogliano. As with Dow's copies of Van Wilder's chansons, these pieces are copied without text, so were either sung to the syllables of the hexachord, or, more likely, played on the viols that were becoming fashionable among the wealthier classes of English music lovers.

One composer who is not well represented in Elizabethan sources is Josquin des Prez who we remember this year, 500 years after his death. However, one piece by Josquin, his motet *Domine ne in furore* is depicted in an anonymous English painting from around 1560. It is a portrait of four unidentified children by the 'Master of the Countess of Warwick': the oldest boy holds in his hand a copy of the bass part of a 1538 print containing Josquin's motet, probably regarded as something of a status symbol. We include the motet here, alongside works by some of Josquin's famous successors such as Gombert, Clemens and Lassus, performing these works in the same way that they were collected by their Tudor copyists: sharing space with examples of the best native music by Tallis, Byrd and Parsons.

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The **Rose Consort of Viols** takes its name from a famous family of sixteenth-century viol makers, whose instruments coincided with the growth of English consort music. With its unique blend of intimacy, intricacy, passion and flamboyance, this music ranges from Taverner and Byrd, to Lawes, Locke and Purcell, and forms the nucleus of the Rose Consort's programmes. For nearly four decades the Rose Consort has been delighting audiences across the UK, Europe and further afield. It has performed in London's Wigmore and South Bank Halls, is heard regularly on the BBC, including a Prom concert from Cadogan Hall, and makes frequent appearances at the London International Exhibition of Early Music. It has performed at Festivals in Canada (Festival Vancouver) and the USA (Boston, New York, Boulder, Portland, and Seattle), and also featured as a guest ensemble at the Pan-Pacific Gamba Gathering in Hawaii. It has also performed with the choirs of Chichester Cathedral and Oslo Cathedral, as well as at festivals in Bratislava, Nuremberg, Cologne and in Austria. The consort has received awards for research and performance of specially devised programmes, and has also commissioned and performed new pieces for voices and viols by Judith Bingham, John Woolrich and Ivan Moody. The Consort has appeared at Dartington International Summer School, giving concerts and coaching ensembles, activities it now continues at Benslow Music in Hitchin.

YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL is directed by Delma Tomlin MBE and administered by the National Centre for Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation (registered charity number 1068331)

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