

2024  
**YORK**  
EARLY  
MUSIC  
FESTIVAL  
6 – 13 JULY

**Rose Consort of Viols**

with

**Martha McLorian** *mezzo-soprano*

*Songs of Sweetness and Suavity*

**National Centre for Early Music**

**Tuesday 9 July 9.30pm**

**Rose Consort of Viols**  
**John Bryan, Alison Crum, Andrew Kerr, Roy Marks**  
with  
**Martha McLorian** *mezzo-soprano*

***Songs of Sweetness and Suavity***

Plusieurs regretz	<b>Josquin des Prez</b> c.1450-1521
De tous bien plen	anon. [Bologna Q18]
De tous bien plaine	<b>Hayne van Ghizeghem</b> c.144-before 1497
De tous bien	<b>Josquin</b>
De tous bien	anon. [Petrucci, <i>Odhecaton</i> ]
De tous biens	<b>Jean Japart</b> fl.1476-81
Fortuna desperata	anon. [Paris 4379]
Fortuna desperata	anon. [Petrucci, <i>Canti C</i> ]
Fortuna disperata	anon. [Bologna Q18]
Fortuna/Bruder Conrad	<b>Heinrich Isaac</b> c.1450/5-1517
Fortuna ad voces musicales	<b>Ludwig Senfl</b> 1489/9-1543
Virgo prudentissima/Fortuna	<b>Senfl</b>
J'ay prins amours	anon. [Laborde MS]
J'ay pryse amours	<b>Johannes Martini</b> c.1430/40-1497
J'ay pryse amours/De tous bien	anon. [Petrucci, <i>Odhecaton</i> ]
J'ay prins amours	anon. [Nivelle MS]
Sur tous regretz	<b>Jean Richafort</b> c.1480-c.1550
Fors seulement	<b>Jean de Ockeghem</b> c.1410-1497
Fors seulement	<b>Jacob Obrecht</b> 1457/8-1505
Fors seulement	<b>Ockeghem</b>
Fors seulement	<b>Johannes Ghiselin</b> c.1455-1511
Fors seulement	<b>Pierre de la Rue</b> c.1452-1518
Agnus dei, <i>Missa Sur tous regretz</i>	<b>Nicolas Gombert</b> c.1495-c.1560

This year's festival theme of musical metamorphosis is nowhere better heard than in the songs and instrumental pieces that flourished around 1500. The same few pan-European 'hits' crop up in the many courtly manuscript songbooks and early printed anthologies, either in their original state or in new versions. These might add extra parts, combine more than one tune in new figurations, or even turn melodies upside down, to suit the latest musical fashions.

The same songs were sometimes adapted as the basis of Mass settings, as the early sixteenth-century church seems to have had no problem with the appearance of secular tunes in its liturgy, especially when done with great artistry. Nicolas Gombert's *Missa Tous les regretz*, published in Venice in the 1540s, is based on Richafort's chanson, the Agnus Dei making oblique references to the song's musical phrases without quoting any of them extensively. The text of Richafort's chanson relates it to any number of others based on 'regretz', many of them, like Josquin's 'Plusieurs regretz', probably written for the circle of the unfortunate Margaret of Austria, who was twice married and twice widowed before the age of 24.

The earliest sources of 'De tous bien plaine' and 'J'ay pryse amours' are chansonniers copied in the Loire valley in the 1470s. They are in three parts: a superius-tenor duet that forms the nucleus of the piece, plus a contratenor that as its name suggests goes 'against' the tenor. Sometimes this part is the same range as the tenor, criss-crossing it, otherwise it supplies an underpinning bass part. Later composers often added a fourth optional *si placet* ('if you feel like it') altus part, frequently differentiated from the older parts by being more decorative and agile. The added parts might work in canon, under the original superius part, to show the composer's contrapuntal skill. Josquin does this for 'De tous bien plaine', while Martini, based in Ferrara, applies the technique to 'J'ay pryse amours'. Japart's version of 'De tous bien plaine' asks one part to play the original tenor in inversion [*antipodes*] with three new parts around it, while the Venetian printer Petrucci included an anonymous piece that managed to combine the superius of 'J'ay pryse amours' with the tenor of 'De tous bien' in a feat of some contrapuntal ingenuity.

At least 36 versions of 'Fortuna desperata' survive, not including Masses by Josquin and others that use its material. In its earliest sources it has no composer attribution though it has been suggested that it may be by Antoine Busnois. This song seems to have been particularly popular in German-speaking lands, where composers delighted in combining it with snatches of other melodies, such as 'Bruder Conrad', or in Senfl's case a Latin Magnificat antiphon for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin. Senfl's setting *ad voces musicales* uses only 'Fortuna's' original tenor part, creating a new superius from a formulaic use of the notes of the

hexachord: ut re, ut re mi, ut re mi fa, etc. Around these two parts the altus and bassus contratenors cavort with considerable élan. An anonymous four-part setting found only in a manuscript from Bologna is possibly the strangest version of 'Fortuna', the middle two parts sounding like the manic workings of a mechanical toy that eventually runs out of steam.

Ockeghem's 'Fors seulement' is probably the earliest piece in this programme, composed around 1460, but with a large number of reworkings taking its course well into the sixteenth century. Obrecht takes Ockeghem's superius part, transposes it down a fourth and makes it the altus, with new parts around it. Ghiselin's version is a freer reworking that hints at the contrapuntal fantasia style so suited to viols, while Pierre de la Rue restores the original superius but creates an altogether richer five-part piece, full of contrapuntal filigree and artifice, including a canon between the lowest two parts. In all these various reworkings we can hear the many different ways in which 'old' musical material could be metamorphosed and rejuvenated by later composers, bringing the music up to date, or simply using it as a vehicle for their virtuosity and artistry.

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### **Plusieurs regretz**

All the world's regrets and the sufferings that pain both men and women are but light-hearted pleasures next to mine, that torment me in such heartless ways that my spirits know no longer what to do.

### **De tous bien plaine**

My mistress is full of such great merit that everyone owes her a tribute of honour, for she is as perfect in virtue as ever was any goddess. When I see her, I feel such joy that there is paradise in my heart. I do not care for any other riches than to be her servant, and because there is no better choice I will always carry as my motto: 'My mistress is full of such great merit ...'

### **Fortuna desperata**

Desperate Fortune, unjust and cursed, who has defamed the reputation of so noble a lady.

O pitiless death, hostile and cursed, who has so humbled one who was higher than the stars.

Wretched and pitiless, I may well now cry and desire to end all my woes.

### **Virgo prudentissima**

Virgin most wise, where are you going, shining out as brightly as the dawn?  
Daughter of Sion, you are most comely and merciful, beautiful as the moon,  
excellent as the sun.

### **J'ay pryse amours**

I have taken love as my motto in order to win happiness: I shall be happy this summer, if I achieve my goal. If anyone thinks badly of me for this, they have my pardon. It seems to me that love is the fashion; he who has none is spurned everywhere, and no one pays him any honour.

### **Fors seusement**

Except in waiting for death, no hope dwells in my faint heart, for my misfortune torments me so greatly that there is no pain I do not feel on your account, because I am so certain of losing you. Your severity pursues me so surely that I convince myself that nothing can content me in this state. Alone I lament my distress, cursing at all times my loyalty which has made me so full of sorrow. Alas, I am hardly content to live, since I am left with nothing from you.

### **Agnus dei**

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

### **The Rose Consort of Viols**

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. 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 has made frequent appearances at the London International Exhibition of Early Music. It has performed at festivals in Canada and the USA and also featured as a guest ensemble at the Pan-Pacific Gamba Gathering in Hawaii. It has also performed with cathedral choirs in UK and at Oslo Cathedral, as well as at festivals in Bratislava, Nuremberg, Cologne and in Austria. The consort's 21 recordings on Naxos, Deux-Elles and Delphian use three different sets of instruments to cover repertory from the late fifteenth-century origins of consort music to the music of Henry Purcell. *What Joy so True*, its recording of music by Thomas Weelkes with the Choir of Chichester Cathedral, was issued in 2023 by Regent Records. The

Consort has appeared at Dartington International Summer School, giving concerts and coaching ensembles, activities it now continues at Benslow Music in Hitchin.

[roseconsort.co.uk](http://roseconsort.co.uk)

### **Martha McLorinan**

Martha McLorinan trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where she held a scholarship with the BBC, won the Margaret Tann Williams Prize, and graduated with first class honours. She has been the recipient of numerous prizes including the Thelma King Award and the ensemble prize at the Royal Over-Seas League. She is a versatile singer and enjoys a varied career of oratorio, opera, consort work, session work and recitals. Career highlights include her BBC Proms debut singing Second Witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with La Nuova Musica directed by David Bates, and recording this role with them. She also appeared as a soloist at the Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, singing Handel's *Messiah* with the Academy of Ancient Music directed by Nigel Short. Martha enjoys chamber music, and is in demand as a consort singer. Her work with Tenebrae has taken her to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where she sang in a quartet of female voices for Joby Talbot's ballet *Alice in Wonderland*. She has also toured *Betrayal: A Polyphonic Crime Drama* (a fully staged show of Gesualdo with six singers and six dancers) and *How Like an Angel* (a show with seven acrobats and nine singers) with I Fagiolini. She also regularly sings with Ensemble Plus Ultra and Alamire.

[marthamclorinan.com](http://marthamclorinan.com)

# YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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York Early Music Festival is administered by the National Centre for Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation (charity number 1068331)

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