

2025
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

The Tallis Scholars

Glorious Creatures

York Minster

Saturday 5 July 7.30pm

The Tallis Scholars

Amy Haworth *soprano*
Emma Walshe *soprano*
Sarah Keating *soprano*
Victoria Meteyard *soprano*
Caroline Trevor *alto*
Elisabeth Paul *alto*
Steven Harrold *tenor*
Tom Castle *tenor*
Tim Scott Whiteley *bass*
Simon Whiteley *bass*
Peter Phillips *director*

Glorious Creatures

Sicut lilium	Sebastián de Vivanco c.1551-1622
Sicut lilium II	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina c.1525-1594
Marrow	Nico Muhly b.1981
Vinum bonum	Orlande de Lassus 1532-94
Missa Vinum bonum	Lassus

Interval

A Glorious Creature	Muhly
Descendi in hortum meum	Cipriano de Rore 1515/16-1565
Descendi in hortum meum	John Dunstable c.1390-1453
Descendi in hortum meum	Palestrina
Magnificat Octavi toni (a 8)	Vivanco

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**This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast on 15 July.
We would be grateful if you could silence mobile phones and any
electronic devices, and avoid coughing whilst the musicians are
performing – thank you!**

For this programme, Peter Phillips has chosen music about nature, and about how it beautifies and enriches our lives. Accordingly, we spend time in the idyllic garden setting of the Biblical Song of Songs, drink of the ‘good wine’, and, in Nico Muhly’s new work, bask in the glorious sunshine.

Contemplation of nature in the music of the Renaissance cannot ignore the influence of the Song of Songs, the mysterious Old Testament book of love, with its eroticism and imagery of the natural world. Spain, with its full-throated Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was particularly fertile ground for musical settings of the Song of Songs, many passages from which were by then associated with her cult. Sebastián de Vivanco’s eight-voice setting of ***Sicut lilium***, for example, lavishes considerable care on its text. The piece opens languorously, luxuriating in passing suspensions between the parts. This texture is followed by a typically Iberian passage of dense, syncopated rhythmic writing, culminating in a highly rhetorical repetition of *sic* – ‘thus’ – which introduces the final section. Palestrina also set this text, publishing it in 1569 in his first book of motets, and favoured the result sufficiently to use its music as the basis for an entire Mass setting.

American composer Nico Muhly is a regular collaborator with The Tallis Scholars. In 2017, he was asked to contribute to a project in which settings of all 150 of the Psalms of David were performed. The title of ***Marrow*** is drawn from its text, the 63rd Psalm, which describes a yearning for God in terms of real, human needs: water, food, shelter. Gently surging pleas form the backdrop to a free, ‘plainchant-like’ declamation of the text. Eventually the repetitions and shifting harmonies become almost obsessive, like the psalmist’s thoughts: ‘Have I not remembered thee in my bed: and thought upon thee when I was waking?’

The motet ***Vinum bonum*** is in some ways typical Lassus: blurring the boundaries between sacred and secular, with a side of mischief. The text is rollicking, rhyming Latin in praise of wine, though later on it piously remembers the activities of Christ at the wedding in Cana, transforming water into wine (thereby ‘thinly disguising’ itself as a motet rather than a madrigal, in the words of Jon Dixon). The composer is having fun from the off: as soon as he brings the two four-part choirs together, he springs into lively triple time in a brief, exuberant caper. The choirs trade phrases rapidly, the swinging triplets reasserting themselves as the piece whirls to a conclusion, *fiat fiat* being repeated like tankards rhythmically banging a tavern table.

It was common for composers to mine existing works for music to lend unity to a Mass setting, as is the case in the ***Missa Vinum bonum***, which shares the scoring and much of the musical material of the motet. The use of a somewhat ‘lowbrow’

model for sacred music of this kind was typical of the interweaving of sacred and secular that characterised the age, and of which Lassus was a major exponent. This being the Holy Mass, Lassus is on slightly better behaviour, with the most recognisable use of the motet material being in the opening of the movements. Indeed, he saves the distinctive 'drunken' swing of the motet until late in the Credo, where it becomes representative of the joy of the Resurrection.

Of his new work, Nico Muhly writes: '**A Glorious Creature** is an ecstatic and bright setting of a particularly beautiful extract from Thomas Traherne's *Christian Ethicks or Divine Morality*. The text itself is very musical, and proposed to me a piece with both highly contrapuntal writing, unison writing. It begins with four giant *crescendi* all originating from middle C on the words "the sun" repeated over and over. I took as a prompt the text "every grain of dust, every sand, every spire of grass" to write an elusive & chromatic line which slithers through all of the voices. The text "Yet the Sun is but a little spark..." suggested an intimate quartet of voices singing in rhythmic unison, who are gradually overtaken by the same material in the first part of the piece, but here, "the soul" is the text repeated. The piece comes to a climax with canons, patterns and abstract text setting in equal measure before fading away.'

Three settings of the same passage from the Song of Songs allow us to make direct comparisons between three very different Renaissance composers. Cipriano de Rore's setting of ***Descendi in hortum meum*** was published in 1559. Its number of voice-parts is significant: seven, a Marian number. De Rore, a Franco-Flemish composer working in Italy who was hugely influential in the development of the madrigal, here shows his polyphonic chops, arriving at his seven voices by starting with four, then adding three canonic voices sharing the same material. For its final section, as the poet calls for the return of the 'Shulamite' (one of the names used in the book for Solomon's bride), the piece adopts a lilting triple-time.

The English composer John Dunstable died in 1453, making his setting of these words the earliest piece in this programme by some distance. His (hugely influential) style is at once spacious and ornate. Several generations later, Palestrina's effort comes from a collection of 29 Song of Songs motets, published together as *Canticum canticorum* in Rome in 1584 – with a completism typical of the prolific composer. Its luxuriant, flowing polyphonic style is also typical, opening with a phrase which gently droops downwards.

Vivanco, whose music bookends this programme, was a late flower of the so-called 'Golden Age' of Iberian composers. Meeting the demand for music for the evening

service of Vespers, he included no fewer than eighteen settings of the *Magnificat* in his 1607 *Liber magnificarum*. In this one, named for the eighth musical ‘mode’ in which it was written, the composer takes advantage of the grand texture of eight voices to build a polyphony which incorporates elements of plainchant, with punchy homophony providing periodic emphasis.

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Sicut lilium

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.

Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic dilectus meus inter filios.

Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow, whom I desired: and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Sicut lilium II

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.

Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum, sic dilectus meus inter filios.

Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow, whom I desired: and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Marrow

O God, thou art my God:

early will I seek thee.

My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee:

in a barren and dry land where no water is.

Thus have I looked for thee in holiness:

that I might behold thy power and glory.

My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness:

when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips.

Have I not remembered thee in my bed:

and thought upon thee when I was waking?

Because thou hast been my helper:

therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

Vinum bonum

Vinum bonum et suave, nunquam bibi vinum tale, vinum cor lætificat.

Vinum purum et germanum morbos pellit reddens sanum corpus, quod rectificat:

Vinum bonum mere sumptum senem facit mire promptum formosulis
commendans.

Christus vinum semel fecit ex aqua, quod non deficit, et bibentes saturans.

Ne mimeris semel factum, sed mirere tale factum in vite quotidie.

Ergo Christum invocemus, quod lætantes hic bibemus, tale vinum porrigat.

Fiat.

Good and sweet wine, I have never drunk such wine, wine gladdens the heart.

Pure and genuine wine drives away diseases making the body healthy which it rectifies:

Good wine, taken merely makes the old man wonderfully prompt and commends to the beautiful.

Christ once made wine from water, which does not fail and satisfies those who drink it.

Do not marvel at the one-time act, but marvel at such an act in life daily.

Therefore let us call upon Christ, that such wine, which we shall drink here joyfully, may he grant us. Let it be.

Missa Vinum Bonum

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 in earth peace, goodwill 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, Jesu 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 sittest at the right hand of God 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.

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; consubstantialem Patri; 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 judicare vivos et mortuos; cuius regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio 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.

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, the 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; 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; he suffered death and was buried.

And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe 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.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

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

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

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

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace

A Glorious Creature (Thomas Traherne)

The Sun is a glorious Creature, and its Beams extend to the utmost Stars, by shining on them it cloaths them with light, and by its Rayes exciteth all their influences.

Yet so particularly regardeth all, that every Mote in the Air, every Grain of Dust, every Sand, every Spire of Grass is wholly illuminated thereby, as if it did entirely shine upon that alone.

Yet the Sun is but a little spark, among all the Creatures, that are made for the Soul; the Soul, being the most High and Noble of all, is capable of far higher Perfections, far more full of Life and Vigour in its uses. It can exceed the Heav'ns in all its operations and run out into the infinite spaces.

Descendi in hortum meum

Descendi in hortum meum, ut viderem poma convallium, et inspicerem si floruisset vinea, et germinassent mala punica. Revertere, revertere, sulamitis, revertere, ut intueamur te.

I went down into my garden to see the fruit of the valleys and to see if the vine was in bloom and the pomegranate in bud. Return, return, O shulamite, return that we may look upon you.

Magnificat Octavi Toni

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est : et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenie timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede; et exultavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, forever.*

*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.*

The Tallis Scholars

The Tallis Scholars were founded in 1973 by their director, Peter Phillips. Through their recordings and concert performances, they have established themselves as the leading exponents of Renaissance sacred music throughout the world. Peter Phillips has worked with the ensemble to create, through good tuning and blend, the purity and clarity of sound which he feels best serves the Renaissance repertoire, allowing every detail of the musical lines to be heard. It is the resulting beauty of sound for which The Tallis Scholars have become so widely renowned.

The Tallis Scholars perform in both sacred and secular venues, giving around 80 concerts each year. In 2013 the group celebrated the 40th anniversary with a World Tour, performing 99 events in 80 venues in 16 countries. In 2020 Gimell Records celebrated 40 years of recording the group by releasing a remastered version of the 1980 recording of Allegri's 'Miserere'. In 2023/24 as they celebrated their 50th Birthday, the desire to hear this group in all corners of the globe was as strong as ever. They have now performed well over 2500 concerts.

2024/25 season highlights include performances in Japan, the USA, East Asia and a number of appearances in London as well as their usual touring schedule in Europe and the UK.

Recordings by The Tallis Scholars have attracted many awards throughout the world. In 1987 their recording of Josquin's *Missa La sol fa re mi* and *Missa Pange lingua* received *Gramophone* magazine's Record of the Year award, the first recording of early music ever to win this coveted award. In 1989 the French magazine *Diapason* gave two of its Diapason d'Or de l'Année awards for the recordings of a Mass and motets by Lassus and for Josquin's two Masses based on the chanson 'L'Homme armé'. Their recording of Palestrina's *Missa Assumpta est Maria* and *Missa Sicut lilium* was awarded *Gramophone*'s Early Music Award in 1991; they received the 1994 Early Music Award for their recording of music by Cipriano de Rore; and the same distinction again in 2005 for their disc of music by John Browne. The Tallis Scholars were nominated for Grammy Awards in 2001, 2009 and 2010. In November 2012 their recording of Josquin's *Missa De beata virgine* and *Missa Ave maris stella* received a Diapason d'Or de l'Année and in their 40th anniversary year they were welcomed into the *Gramophone* 'Hall of Fame' by public vote. In a departure for the group in Spring 2015 The Tallis Scholars released a disc of music by Arvo Pärt, *Tintinnabuli*, which received great praise across the board.

A 2020 release including *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* was the last of nine albums in The Tallis Scholars' project to record and release all Josquin's Masses before the

500th anniversary of the composer's death. It was the winner of the *BBC Music Magazine's* much coveted Recording of the Year Award in 2021 and the 2021 *Gramophone* Early Music Award. Their latest Gimell release in November 2024 is of music by Robert Fayrfax and was made Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*.

Peter Phillips

Peter Phillips has dedicated his career to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony, and to the perfecting of choral sound. He founded The Tallis Scholars in 1973, with whom he has now appeared in over 2,500 concerts world-wide, and made over 60 discs in association with Gimell Records. As a result of this commitment Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars have done more than any other group to establish the sacred vocal music of the Renaissance as one of the great repertoires of Western classical music.

Peter Phillips also conducts other specialist ensembles. He is currently working with the BBC Singers (London), the Netherlands Chamber Choir (Utrecht), the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (Tallinn), The Danish Radio Choir (Copenhagen) and El Leon de Oro (Oviedo). He is Patron of the Chapel Choir of Merton College Oxford.

In addition to conducting, Peter Phillips is well-known as a writer. For 33 years he contributed a regular music column to *The Spectator*. In 1995 he became the publisher of *The Musical Times*, the oldest continuously published music journal in the world. His first book, *English Sacred Music 1549-1649*, was published by Gimell in 1991, while his second, *What We Really Do*, appeared in 2013. During 2018, BBC Radio 3 broadcast his view of Renaissance polyphony, in a series of six hour-long programmes, entitled *The Glory of Polyphony*. He is a regular reviewer on music for the *London Review of Books*.

In 2005 Peter Phillips was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture. In 2008 Peter helped to found the chapel choir of Merton College Oxford, where he is a Bodley Fellow; and in 2021 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of St John's College, Oxford.

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