

YORK  
EARLY MUSIC  
CHRISTMAS  
FESTIVAL  
**2025**

**The Marian Consort**  
&  
**English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble**

*Looking Back to Palestrina*

**National Centre for Early Music**  
**Monday 8 December 6.30pm**

# **The Marian Consort**

**Rory McCleery** *artistic director*

**Dominique Saulnier, Elspeth Piggott** *sopranos*

**Joy Sutcliffe, Sophie Overin** *altos*

**Will Wright, Daniel Lewis** *tenors*

**Jon Stainsby, Christopher Webb** *basses*

**&**

## **English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble**

**Gawain Glenton** *director*

**Gawain Glenton, Conor Hastings, Helen Roberts** *cornetts*

**Emily White, Tom Lees, Adrian France** *sackbuts*

**Silas Wollston** *organ*

### ***Looking Bach to Palestrina***

O magnum mysterium	<b>Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina</b> 1525/6-1594
Missa Sine nomine: Kyrie & Gloria	<b>Palestrina</b> arr. <b>J.S. Bach</b>
Hodie Christus natus est	<b>Giovanni Gabrieli</b> c.1554/57-1612
Magnificat Primi toni a8	<b>Palestrina</b>
Missa Sine nomine: Credo	<b>Palestrina</b> arr. <b>J.S. Bach</b>
Komm, Jesu komm	<b>Johann Sebastian Bach</b> 1685-1750
Ein kind ist uns geboren	<b>Heinrich Schütz</b> 1585-1672
Missa Sine nomine: Sanctus, Agnus Dei	<b>Palestrina</b> arr. <b>J.S. Bach</b>
Hodie nobis caelorum Rex	<b>Ludovico Viadana</b> c.1560-1627
Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten	<b>Andrea Gabrieli</b> 1532/3-1585 arr. <b>Schütz</b>
Hodie Christus natus est a8	<b>Palestrina</b>
O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht	<b>J.S. Bach</b>

*This performance is kindly supported by a grant from Continuo Foundation*



When Johann Sebastian Bach arrived in Leipzig in 1723 to take up the post of Thomaskantor – director of music at the Thomasschule and the Thomaskirche – he inherited a long and distinguished musical tradition dating back to the fifteenth century. The post required not only the composition and performance of new music but also the maintenance and cultivation of a broad choral repertory, one that extended far beyond Bach's own compositions. Among the principal sources for this music was a collection known as the *Florilegium Portense*, a celebrated anthology of polyphonic motets published in the early seventeenth century. The *Florilegium Portense* was compiled by the composer Erhard Bodenschatz and published in Leipzig in two volumes (1603; enlarged and reprinted in 1618 and 1621). Bodenschatz was a disciple of Sethus Calvisius, himself Thomaskantor in Leipzig from 1594 to 1615, and he modelled his ambitious publication on Calvisius's unpublished anthologies. The two volumes of the *Florilegium Portense* between them contain over two hundred mostly Latin-texted motets by composers of the late Renaissance, favouring eight-voice pieces by German and Italian composers including Bodenschatz himself, Calvisius, Hans Leo Hassler, Michael Praetorius, Giovanni Gabrieli, Lodovico Viadana and Giovanni Croce.

The volumes of the *Florilegium Portense* differ from other published motet anthologies of the time, notably the *Promptuarium musicum* issued between 1611 and 1617 by Abraham Schadaeus, in not being ordered according to the liturgical year: instead, Bodenschatz seemingly intended his publication to encapsulate the breadth of repertoire performed by his choir in Schulpforta, where he was Kantor from 1600. The *Florilegium Portense* would go on to serve dual pedagogical and practical purposes, providing choirs at German schools and churches with a well-curated repertory of sacred polyphony suitable for liturgical use. The anthology was widely disseminated and became a standard source of choral repertoire for Protestant institutions across Saxony and Thuringia, including in Dresden, Bremen, Halle and Leipzig, where, by the time Bach assumed the post of Thomaskantor a century later, it had long been a fixture of the Thomasschule's library.

Archival evidence shows that Bach not only used but actively maintained the *Florilegium Portense*. In 1729, six years into his Leipzig tenure, he wrote to the Leipzig Town Council requesting funds to purchase new copies of the anthology for the Thomasschule choir. His letter notes that the existing books had been used so frequently that they had been 'sung to pieces'. The *Florilegium Portense* offered the Thomasschule choristers models of vocal counterpoint in the *stile antico* – the "old style" of Renaissance polyphony epitomised by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. By the eighteenth century, Palestrina had acquired near-mythic status as the model of perfect polyphonic writing, and Bach's interest in his music, evidenced by his autograph copies of several of Palestrina's works, was part of a broader German fascination with the *stile antico*, an aesthetic associated with the ideals of order, clarity, and spiritual elevation.

Bach's musical library contains manuscripts of two complete masses by Palestrina and sections of five others. Of particular interest is that for the two complete masses, the *Missa Ecce Sacerdos Magnus* and the *Missa Sine nomine* a6. Instrumental parts were also copied alongside those for the singers and basso continuo, suggesting not only that these works were almost certainly intended for practical performance rather than purely scholarly consideration, but also that they would have been performed with instruments doubling voices. In the *Missa Sine nomine* a6, these

instruments are specified as cornetti and trombones, a particular combination which also appears in the original version of Bach's motet *O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht* and speaks to the long-standing connection between the singers of the Thomaskirche and the Leipzig Stadtpfeifer (town pipers). The groups are known to have performed together as early as 1519, when Bach's predecessor Georg Rhau combined them to provide the music at Martin Luther's Pleissenburg debate.

As with many of Bach's motets, *O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht* was written for performance as part of a funeral ceremony in Leipzig: in its unusual scoring and instrumentation (which speak to the likelihood of an outdoor, graveside performance), however, it differs from the others, a majority of which, including *Komm, Jesu, komm*, are scored for double choir, with Bach taking his cue from the antiphonal writing of the *Florilegium Portense*. A concurrent pattern of influence can also be traced from Bach's double-choir motets back to the pioneering music of Heinrich Schütz. Schütz studied in Venice with Giovanni Gabrieli ('a widely famed but rather old musician and composer. Since he was still alive, I should not miss the chance to hear him and learn something from him') and through him various aspects of Venetian polychoral writing would go on to be adopted by successive generations of German Baroque composers. Schütz's seminal *Geistliche Chor-Music*, published in Dresden in 1648, wears its Italian influence prominently, not least in the inclusion of *Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten*, a re-texted version of a motet by Andrea Gabrieli. The print is dedicated to the Leipzig town council, a testament to their reputation as patrons of the arts in the mid-seventeenth century, a reputation fuelled at least in part by the success of the Leipzig-published *Florilegium Portense* from some three decades prior. This collection, along with Bach's study, transcription and performance of music by composers of previous generations, provides a vivid glimpse into how he engaged with the musical past and integrated this very often notably Catholic repertoire into the living fabric of Lutheran worship in Leipzig.

© R McCleery, 2025

## The Marian Consort

The Marian Consort (TMC) is an award-winning vocal ensemble that presents bold and thrilling performances of music from across the centuries. Led by founder and director Rory McCleery, TMC is distinguished by its flexible, intimate approach, with a clarity of texture and subtlety of interpretation that illuminates the music for performer and audience alike. TMC features regularly on UK and international television and radio (including BBC Two's recent flagship documentary series 'Art That Made Us'), and has released fifteen recordings to critical acclaim, garnering a variety of accolades and awards including the Diapason D'Or, Presto Classical Album of the Year and the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik. Recent highlights of TMC's live performance schedule include appearances at London's Wigmore Hall, the BBC Proms, Festival Europäische Kirchenmusik Schwäbisch Gmünd (broadcast on German national radio), the Miller Theatre series at Columbia University in New York and Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan Recital Hall (filmed for Japanese television).

The consort performs music from the twelfth century to the present day, with a focus on bringing to light and championing marginalised and lesser-known Renaissance composers such as Vicente

Lusitano, Raffaella Aleotti and Jean Maillard. Praised for its engaging and innovative programming, TMC also works with living composers through its New Music Programme, commissioning extensively alongside mentoring developing composers through the Emerging Voices scheme. TMC has premiered over 30 works to date and in recent years has commissioned Dani Howard, David Fennessy, Anna Semple, Laurence Osborn and Electra Perivolaris. TMC joins forces with ensembles and soloists of international repute to give concerts, commission and record: recent collaborations have included Daniel Pioro, Britten Sinfonia, {oh!} Orkiestra in Poland and Illyria Consort.

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

## **English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble**

The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble is a virtuoso period instrument group with a host of distinguished recordings to its name. Now in its thirty-third year, the ensemble collaborates regularly with leading vocal ensembles such as I Fagiolini, The Tallis Scholars, Resurgam, BBC Singers, The Marian Consort, Westminster Cathedral Choir, and frequently appears at major festivals at home and abroad. ECSE is in demand as a recording ensemble, contributing to *Gramophone* Award-winning discs such as *The Spy's Choirbook*, and the monumental Striggio Mass in 40 parts *Missa ecco si beato giorno* with I Fagiolini (which scooped the *Gramophone* Award for Early Music and also the Diapason d'Or). ECSE celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2018 with a solo CD on the Resonus label entitled *Music for Windy Instruments: sounds from the Court of James I*.

Next year sees the release of a landmark recording of Monteverdi's iconic *Vespers of 1610* with I Fagiolini as well as a recording of Orlando Gibbons with the choir of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court.

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

## ○ magnum mysterium

○ magnum mysterium et admirabile  
sacramentum  
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum  
iacentem in praeseptio.  
Natum vidimus et chorus angelorum  
collaudantes Dominum. Alleluia.

Quem vidistis pastores?  
Dicite, annunciate nobis quis apparuit?  
Natum vidimus et chorus angelorum  
collaudantes Dominum. Alleluia.

## Missa Sine nomine: Kyrie & Gloria

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Christe  
eleison. Kyrie eleison.

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 nostri;  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram;  
qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere  
nostri.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus  
Dominus.

Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

○ great mystery and wonderful sacrament,  
that beasts should see the new-born Lord  
lying in a manger.  
We have seen the new-born and a chorus  
of angels  
praising God. Alleluia.

Who have you seen, shepherds?  
Speak, tell us who has appeared?  
We have seen the new-born and a chorus  
of angels praising God. Alleluia.

Glory to God in the highest  
and on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise you. We bless you.  
We adore you. We glorify you.  
We give you thanks for your great glory.  
Lord God, king of heaven, God the Father  
almighty,  
Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you who take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you who take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you who sit at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you only are holy. You only are Lord.  
You only are most high, Jesus Christ.  
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God  
the Father. Amen.

## **Hodie Christus natus est [Gabrieli & Palestrina]**

Hodie Christus natus est,  
Hodie Salvator apparuit,  
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,  
laetantur archangeli,  
Hodie exsultant iusti dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Today Christ is born,  
Today the Saviour appeared,  
Today on earth the angels sing,  
and archangels rejoice,  
Today the just exult saying:  
Glory be to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of good will.

## **Magnificat Primi toni a8**

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 progenies  
timentibus eum.  
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
dispersit superbos  
mente cordis sui.  
Deposuit potentes de sede,  
et exaltavit 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 proclaims the greatness of the  
Lord.  
And my spirit rejoices in God,  
my saviour.  
For he has looked with favour on  
the lowliness of his handmaiden:  
behold, from henceforth  
all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty has done wondrous  
things for me: and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is upon them that fear him  
throughout all generations.  
He has shown the power of his arm:  
he has scattered the proud  
in their conceit.  
He has put down the mighty from their  
seat,  
and has exalted the humble and meek.  
He has filled the hungry with good things:  
and the rich he has sent empty away.  
He has sustained his servant, Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy.  
As he promised to our forefathers,  
Abraham and his sons for ever.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

## **Missa Sine nomine: Credo**

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,  
iudicare 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,  
born of his Father before all worlds,  
God of God, light of light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten not made, 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 Spirit of the  
Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
And was crucified also for us  
under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was  
buried.  
And the third day he rose again according  
to the scriptures. And ascended into  
heaven:  
and sits on 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 in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life:  
who proceeds from the Father and Son,  
who with the Father and Son is worshipped  
and glorified: who spoke 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.



### **Komm, Jesu komm**

Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde.  
Die Kraft verschwind't je mehr und mehr,  
ich sehne mich nach deinem Friede;  
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!

Komm, komm, ich will mich dir ergeben.  
Du bist der rechte Weg, die Wahrheit und  
das Leben.

Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände  
und sage: Welt, zu guter Nacht!  
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende,  
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.  
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,  
weil Jesus ist und bleibt  
der wahre Weg zum Leben.

### **Ein kind ist uns geboren**

Ein Kind ist uns geboren, ein Sohn ist uns  
gegeben,  
welches Herrschaft ist auf seiner Schulter,  
und er heißt Wunderbar, Rat, Kraft, Held,  
Ewig-Vater, Friede-Fürst;  
auf daß seine Herrschaft groß werde  
und des Friedens kein Ende  
auf dem Stuhle David und seinem  
Königreiche,  
daß er's zurichte und stärke mit Gericht  
und Gerechtigkeit von nun an bis in  
Ewigkeit.  
Solches wird tun der Eifer des Herren  
Zebaoth.

Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary.  
My strength fails more and more,  
I long for your peace;  
the bitter path becomes too hard.

Come, come, I will yield to You;  
You are the right path, the truth and the  
life.

So I give myself into Your hands  
and say: World, good night!  
Just as my life's course is hurrying towards  
its end,  
the spirit is opportunely healthy.  
It hovers next to its creator,  
as Jesus is and remains  
the true way to life.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
whose governance is upon his shoulders,  
and he is called Wondrous, Counsel,  
Power, Hero,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace;  
and his rule will become great,  
and there will be no end to the peace  
upon the throne of David and in his  
kingdom,  
since he will judge and conquer with justice  
and righteousness from henceforth to  
eternity.  
So shall it be done by the zeal of the Lord  
Sabaoth.

## **Missa Sine nomine: Sanctus, Agnus Dei**

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus  
Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.

Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Osanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nostri.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
Dona nobis pacem.

## **Hodie nobis caelorum Rex**

Hodie nobis coelorum rex, de virgine nasci  
dignatus est,

in quo clare videmus salutare nostrum.

Gaudeamus omnes in Christo redemptori  
nostro,

et gloriose simul jubilantes cantabimus:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax  
hominibus verae fidei et bonae voluntatis,  
Alleluia.

## **Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten**

Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten:

Ich verkündige euch große Freude,  
denn euch ist heute der Heiland geboren,  
welcher ist Christus, der Herr, in der Stadt  
Davids.

Und er heißt: Wunderbar, Rat, Kraft, Held,  
Ewig-Vater, Friede-Fürst. Alleluja.

## **O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht**

O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht,  
Mein Hort, mein Trost, mein Zuversicht,  
Auf Erden bin ich nur ein Gast,  
Und drückt mich sehr der Sünden Last.

Lord Jesu Christ, my life and light,  
My strength, my stay, my day-star bright,  
On earth I have no home or rest,  
By all my grievous sin oppressed.

Holy, holy holy Lord God of Sabaoth  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

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

Lamb of God, you who take away the sins  
of the world, give us peace.

Today the king of heaven is born to us,  
worthy to be born of a virgin,  
in whom we may plainly see our salvation.  
Let us all be glad in Christ our saviour,  
and all sing together rejoicing:  
Glory to God in the highest and on earth  
peace to all men of true faith and good will.  
Alleluia.

The angel said to the shepherds:  
I announce great joy to you,  
for today a saviour is born to you  
who is Christ, the Lord, in the city of David.  
And he is called: Wondrous, Counsel,  
Power, Hero,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Alleluia.

**YORK EARLY MUSIC CHRISTMAS 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)

National Centre for Early Music  
St Margaret's Church  
Walmgate  
York YO1 9TL

[ncem.co.uk/yemcf](http://ncem.co.uk/yemcf)



