

2026
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

I Fagiolini

with

English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble

Monteverdi
Vespers of 1610

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall

Friday 3 July 7.00pm

I Fagiolini
with
English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble
Robert Hollingworth *director*

Claudio Monteverdi 1567-1643

Vespers of 1610

Deus in adiutorium meum

Dixit Dominus

Nigra sum

Laudate pueri

Pulchra es

Laetatus sum

Duo Seraphim

Nisi Dominus

Audi coelum

– Interval –

Lauda, Ierusalem

Sonata sopra Sancta Maria

Ave maris stella

Magnificat

Sponsored by NCEM Patrons and
I Fagiolini's Friends organisation through I Fagiolini Charitable Trust

**This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast on
8 July. Please silence mobile phones and any electronic devices.
Thank you!**

By 1610, Monteverdi was 43 and had been at the Mantuan court for about 20 years. Although he had risen to become *maestro*, he was paid less than the star singers – when he was paid at all. (He had great difficulty getting his salary out of a particularly unhelpful treasury official.)

In 1607, the year of his opera *L'Orfeo* but also the death of his wife, he had written to the Duke of Gonzaga, complaining of overwork and begging to be released. However he resumed his activities and in 1610 published a volume containing three distinct items:

A Mass (for church choirs) of the most Holy Virgin for six voices;

Vespers to be sung by more voices;

A few sacred songs for the chapels or chambers of princes.

The volume was dedicated to Pope Paul V. Monteverdi visited Rome that year, looking to secure a scholarship for his son at a seminary and perhaps also new employment for himself, which holds a clue to the collection's stylistic variety, offering three quite different styles to prospective employers. The Mass is 'stile antico': a seventeenth-century composer's take on Renaissance polyphonic style: this showed that Monteverdi *could* work in the old way, which should have gone down well in musically conservative Rome. Then the five psalms, hymn and two Magnificats (the main items of a Vespers service) for six to ten voices, described by him as 'concerto style', highly descriptive and sometimes virtuosic writing, owing much to his experience as a madrigalist but crucially (in employment terms) built around traditional and instantly recognisable plainchant tones. The third element is sacred song – four of them in the newest hyper-expressive style.

These elements are very different things, and it's important to understand this volume as a *collection* – a showcase for his talents which allowed the user to take what they wanted from it at any one time. However, while it seems not to be a single piece of music, the pieces for the service of Vespers and the solo songs have long been performed together in the sequence they were published in, which works brilliantly well in concert, the solo songs acting as a sorbet to refresh the aural palette between the richer textures of the psalms.

Choral societies rightly derive enormous pleasure from performing the 'piece' and Monteverdi would surely have been delighted that the music would have had a life after his own. But the sound-world he imagined is essentially one-voice-to-a-part, 'choir and soloists' being a modern – and slightly problematic – division. And while we love to think of the piece bouncing off the walls of St Mark's Venice – which bits of it surely did, once he started work there four years after its publication – the romantic view of this music jumping from one balcony to another doesn't generally suit the way the piece is written, with the one exception of 'Nisi Dominus'.

There are many important aspects of performance practice that affect what you hear as 'The Monteverdi Vespers'. To mention just three:

1) The Lauda Ierusalem and Magnificat(s) are written with a particular grouping of clefs that a Renaissance musician would recognise as meaning transposition down a fourth. This is an inconvenient truth which many performances still ignore, though if not transposed down, singers find that the music suddenly jumps up into a different range at those moments – most un-Renaissance. We perform it at the transposed-down pitch. (To turn the argument around, would one transpose the last movement of Beethoven 9 up a fourth because it 'made it more exciting'?)

2) The music often jumps between duple and triple time. The speed of the triple sections is generally performed fast – people have come to like it like that and to associate it with a Baroque sprightliness. The meaning of the time signatures at those changes is not conclusive but if one were seating this music in its own time and amongst other repertoire that does the same thing, slower triples are much more normal. This is an unfashionable solution but as with so much of Historically Informed Performance, sometimes we need to let a new solution sit with us a while before deciding whether we like it.

3) Pitch before modern times was different in different places and times. There are surviving organs and wind instruments from Monteverdi's north Italy as much as a tone *higher* than modern pitch. Wind instruments would have been built to match an organ in a particular church and if that overall pitch was then too high for the singers, instrumentalists would have 'simply' transposed back down (e.g. playing music notated in D major in their C major).

We are using this high pitch for our organ, wind and string instruments. The movements you'll hear at this higher pitch are: Duo seraphim, Ave Maris Stella, Sonata and also the multi-movement Magnificat – though that (see point 1) is after transposing it *down* a fourth! Confused?

Enjoy the sound of the rather smaller cornetts for this high pitch, which have a very distinct sound. The violins, too, feel different to play with the higher tension strings and produce an even more intense 'nose' (to speak in wine terms).

It would be easy to pass off concern for these sorts of issues as academic – a way to avoid focusing on Monteverdi's own priority of moving the listener. In fact, the opposite is the case. What such attempted unravelling *should* do is to help performers work Monteverdi's clay in a way that suits it – and as hyper-expressively as possible: to row downstream with the music rather than upstream against it.

It's a pleasure to do this – as the culmination of 40 years trying to make sense of Monteverdi's music – with such brilliant and supportive colleagues and ones who have immersed themselves over so many years in both the detail and the emotive power of *Il divino Claudio*.

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Versicle & Response: Deus in adiutorium meum

Versicle

Deus in adiutorium meum intende.

O God make speed to save me.

Response

Domine ad adiuvandam me festina.

O Lord make haste to help me.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in secula seculorum. Amen. Alleluia.

As it was in the beginning, now and for ever,
world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Psalm 109 [Anglican 110]: Dixit Dominus

Dixit Dominus Domino meo:

The Lord said unto my Lord:

sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos
tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.

sit thou at my right hand, until I make
thine enemies thy footstool.

Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus
ex Sion:

The Lord will send the rod of thy strength
out of Sion;

dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae;

Thine is the foundation in the day of thy
power;

in splendoribus sanctorum

in the beauties of holiness

ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

I have born thee from the womb before
the morning star.

Iuravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum;

The Lord hath sworn and will not repent;

tu es sacerdos in aeternum

thou art a priest for ever

secundum ordinem Melchisadech.

after the order of Melchisadech.

Dominus a dextris tuis confregit

The Lord at thy right hand has broken

in die irae suae reges.

kings in the day of his anger.

Iudicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas:

He will judge the nations, he will fill them
with ruins:

conquassabit capita in terra multorum.

he will break their heads in the populous
land.

De torrente in via bibet:

He shall drink of the torrent on the way;

propterea exaltabit caput.

therefore he shall lift up his head.

Gloria Patri, et Filio...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son.

Song: Nigra sum

Nigra sum sed formosa filia Ierusalem.

Ideo dilexit me Rex, et introduxit [me]
in cubiculum suum et dixit mihi:

Surge, amica mea, et veni.

Iam hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit,
flores apparuerunt in terra nostra;
tempus putationis advenit.

I am a black but beautiful daughter of
Jerusalem.

So the King loved me, and led me in
to his bedroom and said to me:

Arise, my love, and come away.

Now winter has passed, the rain gone,
and flowers have appeared in our land;
the time of pruning has come.

Psalm 112 [113]: Laudate pueri

Laudate pueri Dominum:

laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum,
ex hoc nunc, et usque in seculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum,
laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus,
et super coelos gloria eius.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster,
qui in altis habitat et humilia
respicit in coelo et in terra,
suscitans a terra inopem
et de stercore erigens pauperem,

ut collocet eum cum principibus,
cum principibus populi sui?

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo,
matrem filiorum laetantem.

Gloria Patri, et Filio...

Praise the Lord, ye children,
praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,
from this time forth for evermore.

From sunrise to sunset,
the Lord's name is worthy of praise.

The Lord is high above all nations
and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the Lord our God,
who dwells on high and looks down on
the humble things in heaven and earth,
raising the helpless from the earth
and lifting the poor man from the
dungheap

to place him alongside princes
with the princes of his people?

He makes a home for the barren woman,
a joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son...

Song: Pulchra es

Pulchra es, amica mea,
suavis et decora filia Ierusalem.

Pulchra es, amica mea, suavis
et decora sicut Ierusalem,
terribilis sicut castrorum acies ordinata.

Averte oculos tuos a me,
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.

You are beautiful, my love, a sweet
and comely daughter of Jerusalem.

You are beautiful, my love, sweet
and comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as the sharp lines of an army's
camp.

Turn your eyes from me,
because they have put me to flight.

Psalm 121 [122]: Laetatus sum

Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi:
in domum Domini ibimus.

Stantes erant pedes nostri in atriis tuis
Ierusalem;

Ierusalem, quae aedificatur ut civitas
cuius participatio eius in idipsum.

Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus,
tribus Domini, testimonium Israel
ad confitendum nomini Domini.

Quia illic sederunt sedes in iudicio,
sedes super domum David.

Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Ierusalem
et abundantia diligentibus te.

Fiat pax in virtute tua
et abundantia in turribus tuis.

Propter fratres meos et proximos meos
loquebar pacem de te.

Propter domum Domini Dei nostri
quaesivi bona tibi.

Gloria Patri, et Filio...

I was glad when they said unto me:
we shall go into the house of the Lord.

Our feet were standing within thy gates,
O Jerusalem;

Ierusalem, which is built as a city
that is compact together.

For thither ascend the tribes,
the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there are the seats of judgment,
the seats over the house of David.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem
and prosperity for those who love thee.

Peace be within thy strength,
and prosperity within thy towers.

For my brothers and my neighbours
I will ask for peace for thee;

for the house of the Lord our God
I have sought blessings for thee.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son...

Motet: Duo Seraphim

Duo Seraphim clamabant alter ad
alterum:

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus

Dominus Deus Sabaoth:

plena est omnis terra gloria eius.

Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo:

Pater, Verbum et Spiritus Sanctus:
et hi tres unum sunt.

Sanctus...

Two Seraphim were calling one to the
other:

Holy, holy, holy

Lord God of Hosts:

the whole earth is full of his glory.

There are three who give testimony in
heaven:

the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit:
and these three are one.

Holy...

Psalm 126 [127]: Nisi Dominus

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.

Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.

Unless the Lord build the house,
they labour in vain that build it.

Unless the Lord keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain.

Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere:
surgite postquam sederitis,
qui manducatis panem doloris.
Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum;
ecce hereditas Domini, filii:
merces, fructus ventris.
Sicut sagittae in manu potentis:
ita filii excussorum.
Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum

ex ipsis: non confundetur
cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.
Gloria Patri, et Filio...

Motet: Audi coelum

Audi coelum verba mea,
plena desiderio
et perfusa gaudio.

Audio.

Dic, quaeso, mihi: Quae est ista
quae consurgens ut aurora
rutilat, ut benedicam?

Dicam.

Dic, nam ista pulchra ut luna,
electa ut sol replet laetitia
terras, coelos, maria.

Maria.

Maria Virgo illa dulcis,
praedicata de prophetis Ezechielis
porta orientalis,

Talis.

illa sacra et felix porta
per quam mors fuit expulsa,
introducata autem vita,

Ita.

quae semper tutum est medium
inter homines et Deum,
pro culpis remedium.

Medium.

It is vain for you to rise before dawn:
rise when you have sat down,
ye who eat the bread of sorrow,
when he has given sleep to his beloved,
behold the Lord's inheritance, children,
a reward, the fruit of the womb.
As arrows in the hand of the mighty,
so are children of the vigorous.
Blessed is the man who has fulfilled this
longing
by them: he shall not be perplexed
when he speaks to his enemies at the gate.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son...

Hear, O heaven, my words,
full of desire
and suffused with joy.

I hear.

Tell me, I pray: who is she
who rising like the dawn,
shines, that I may bless her?

I shall tell (you).

Tell (me), for she is as beautiful as the moon,
exquisite as the sun which fills with joy
the earth, the heavens and the seas.

Mary.

That sweet Virgin Mary,
foretold by the prophet Ezekiel,
gate of the rising sun,

Such is she!

that holy and happy gate
through which death was driven out,
but life brought in,

Even so!

who is ever a sure mediator
between man and God,
for the remission of our sins.

A mediator.

Omnes hanc ergo sequamur,
quae cum gratia mereamur
vitam aeternam. Consequamur.

Sequamur.

Praestet nobis Deus Pater
hoc et filius et Mater,
cuius nomen invocamus,
dulce miseris solamen.

Amen.

Benedicta es, Virgo Maria,
in seculorum secula.

Psalm 147: Lauda, Ierusalem

Lauda, Ierusalem, Dominum:
lauda Deum tuum, Sion.
Quoniam confortavit seras portarum
tuarum:
benedixit filiis tuis in te.
Qui posuit fines tuos pacem,
et adipe frumenti satiat te.
Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae:

velociter currit sermo eius.
Qui dat nivem sicut lanam:
nebulam sicut cinerem spargit.
Mittit crystallum suum sicut bucellas:
ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit?
Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea:
flabit spiritus eius, et fluent aquae.

Qui annuntiat verbum suum Iacob:
iustitias et iudicia sua Israel.
Non fecit taliter omni nationi:
et iudicia sua non manifestavit eis.

Gloria Patri, et Filio...

Sonata sopra Sancta Maria

Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.

So let us all follow her
by whose grace we gain
eternal life. Let us seek her!

Let us follow!

May God the Father grant us
this, and the Son and the Mother,
on whose name we call,
sweet comfort for the afflicted.

Amen.

Blessed art thou, Virgin Mary,
world without end.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem:
praise thy God, O Sion.
For he hath strengthened the bars of
your gates:
he hath blessed thy children within thee.
He maketh peace in thy borders,
and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
He sendeth forth his commandment upon
earth:
this word runneth very swiftly.
He giveth snow like wool:
he scattereth the cloud like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like morsels:
who will stand before his cold?
He will send out his word and melt them:
he will cause his wind to blow and the
waters will flow
He sheweth his word unto Jacob,
his statutes and judgments unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation:
and he has not shown his judgments to
them.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son...

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Hymn: Ave maris stella

Ave maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
Atque semper virgo,
Felix coeli porta.

Sumens illud ave
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace
Mutans Evae nomen.

Solva vincla reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cunctis posce.

Monstra te esse matrem:
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus,
Tulit esse tuus.

Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpis solutos
Mites fac et castos.

Vitam praesta puram,
Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Iesum
Semper collaetemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritus Sancto,
Trinus honor unus. Amen.

Magnificat

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.

Hail, star of the sea,
life-giving mother of God
and perpetual virgin,
happy gate of heaven.

Receiving that 'ave'
from the mouth of Gabriel,
keep us in peace,
reversing the name 'Eva'.

Loosen the chains from the guilty,
bring forth light to the blind,
drive out our ills,
ask for blessings for all.

Show yourself to be his mother:
may he receive through you our prayers
who, born for us,
deigned to be yours.

Peerless virgin,
gentle above all others,
when we are pardoned for our sins,
make us gentle and pure.

Grant us a pure life,
prepare a safe journey,
so that seeing Jesus
we may rejoice for ever.

Praise be to God the Father,
glory to Christ most high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
triple honour in one. 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.

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 secula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper
et in secula seculorum. Amen.

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 shewed 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 has holpen
his servant Israel,

as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.

as it was in the beginning, now and for ever,
world without end. Amen.

I Fagiolini

Amy Wood (*Pulchra es*) soprano

Ciara Hendrick (*Pulchra es*), Martha McLorinan mezzo sopranos

Nicholas Mulroy (*Nigra sum*), David De Winter (*Duo seraphim*, tenor 3) tenors

Matthew Long (*Duo seraphim*, tenor 2), Jacob Ewens tenors

Greg Skidmore (*Audi coelum*), Sam Gilliatt baritones

Charles Gibbs, Frederick Long (*Quia fecit*) bass

Toby Carr, Eligio Quinteiro chitarrone

Aileen Henry harp

Catherine Pierron organ

Kinga Ujszászi, Persephone Gibbs violins

Rachel Byrt, Julia Black violas

Sarah McMahan bass violin

William Hunt violone

William Lyons dulcian/recorder

In an age of AI, I Fagiolini is a hand-painted original. The group celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2026/27 and its innovative work is now as much online as it is live, including collaborative cross-art projects on stages around the world and multi award-winning music videos with Polyphonic Films: search *Goosed!* and *The Stag Hunt*. The group's YouTube series, **SingTheScore**, combines serious analysis with off-the-wall humour, while *Choral Chihuahua*, presented by Robert Hollingworth, Nicholas Mulroy and Eamonn Dougan, is the top UK choral podcast and is now in its twelfth season.

Signature projects include the fully immersive *The Full Monteverdi* and *Betrayal* (director, John La Bouchardière); *Tallis in Wonderland* (with live and recorded voice); *Simunye*, the South African collaboration; and *How Like An Angel* with Australian contemporary circus company CIRCA for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and also at Perth International Arts Festival, Lincoln Center, New York and in cathedrals across Europe. The group's French twentieth-century *Amuse-Bouche* included the first recording of Jean Francaix's 12-voice *Ode a la Gastronomie* (also on YouTube). Monteverdi programmes include *L'Orfeo* (director, Tom Guthrie) with masks and puppets, and *1610 & 1641 Vespers*. *Leonardo – Shaping The Invisible* used projections of Leonardo's art and designs and was co-presented with Professor Martin Kemp.

I Fagiolini's large-scale recording projects include world premieres of Striggio *Mass in 40 Parts*, Viadana, *Vespers*, works by the Gabriellis and now three albums of Benevoli's *Colossal Baroque* multi-choir Masses. Consort premieres include Byrd, Tomkins, Croce, Striggio, Francaix, Milhaud and Joanna Marsh.

I Fagiolini is an Associate Ensemble at the University of York and celebrates its 40th anniversary with *We're not Dead Yet*, Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610* (including a new album release), Purcell *Dido and Aeneas* and Monteverdi *L'Orfeo!* I Fagiolini is managed worldwide by Percius.

English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble

Gawain Glenton, David Brutti, Helen Roberts *cornetts*

Peter Thornton, Hilary Belsey *tenor sackbuts*

Adrian France *bass sackbut*

The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble is a virtuoso period-instrument group with a host of distinguished recordings to its name. Now in its 32nd year, the ensemble collaborates regularly with leading vocal ensembles such as I Fagiolini, The Tallis Scholars, Resurgam, BBC Singers, The Marian Consort and frequently appears at major festivals at home and abroad. ECSE has had a busy twelve months with

visits to Galway, the USA (in collaboration with The Tallis Scholars at the Boston Early Music Festival), plus performances in Florence and Rome with Vox Medicea celebrating the Papal Jubilee. ECSE has also marked a new collaboration with the choir of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court with a recently-released recording of sacred music by Orlando Gibbons.

Highlights of the busy year ahead include performances of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* and *I'Orfeo* with I Fagiolini in Venice, York, Stour and London, plus further visits to Galway and Florence with the vocal ensembles Resurgam and Vox Medicea.

Robert Hollingworth

Robert founded I Fagiolini in 1986 and has since spent much of his life thinking about how audiences receive music, instead of just how performers want to deliver it. Aside from his work with I Fagiolini, he is a conductor, broadcaster, educator, editor and festival director. Robert has conducted orchestras including the English Concert, Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Concert Orchestra, Irish Baroque Orchestra and directed some of the world's finest chamber choirs including Accentus, NDR Chor, RIAS Kammerchor (Berlin), Netherlands Chamber Choir, National Chamber Choir of Ireland, BBC Singers, Danish National Vocal Ensemble and Capella Cracoviensis. Robert is Artistic Director for Stour Music Festival and the new Fairest Isle Festival on the Isle of Wight.

At the University of York, Robert directs two choirs and the UK's only MA in Solo-Voice Ensemble Singing, now in its thirteenth year. He has written and presented programmes on BBC Radio 3 and created over 30 episodes of the YouTube choral series *SingTheScore* as well as co-founding and presenting the UK's top choral podcast series, Choral Chihuahua, with Eamonn Dougan and Nicholas Mulroy, now in its twelfth season. Both are made by Polyphonic Films (Greg Browning).

Flourish at 50



We celebrate our 50th Festival with this fanfare commissioned from Sam Meredith for our 2026 Ensemble-in-Residence, the historic wind band **Hanse Pfyfferey**. The fanfare will be shared on the opening night of the Festival and on other occasions across the opening weekend.

With thanks to The Marchus Trust

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AT 40

Monteverdi

1610 VESPERS



**I Fagiolini's new recording of
Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers
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YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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Friday 2 – Friday 9 July

**Guest artists include the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment,
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