



Music at St John's

Tuesday 21 July, 1.10pm

St John's College Chapel

Zenobia Scholars

Rupert Damerell *director*

PROGRAMME

Cristóbal de Morales (1500–53)

Jubilate Deo

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

Agnus Dei, Missa Gaudeamus

Bernadino de Ribera (1520–80)

Rex Autem David

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Vere Languores

Super Flumina Babylonis

Antonio de Cabezón (1510–66)

Pange Lingua

Sebastián de Vivanco (1551–1622)

O Quam Suavis

Francisco Guerrero (1528–99)

In Passione Posuit Iesus

Alonso Lobo (1555–1617)

Versa Est in Luctum

Ave Maria

This year 2015, Spain is celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of St Teresa of Ávila. This programme takes Ávila as its starting point to present music from Spanish composers of her time. It is important to state Spanish composers, since, unlike the 16th-century English Chapel Royal, which had all the great English musicians of the time, the Spanish Court, starting with

the Emperor Charles V, and then his son Philip II, was staffed with singers from Flanders. This came about since Charles was brought up in that region, and when he assumed the Spanish crown in 1516, aged 16, he was more comfortable with Flemish advisors, and indeed, did not yet speak Spanish. It should also be noted that at the end of the 15th and early 16th centuries, the Flemish musicians were in high demand all over Europe, led by Josquin Desprez, and their music is found copied in manuscripts also in Spain from that time. Throughout Charles' reign, the court travelled all over Europe, being the Holy Roman Emperor, with territories in Flanders, Germany and Austria, and new members were recruited whenever the court passed through Flanders. Musicians such as Gombert, Crequillon and later Rogier were thus associated with the Royal Court choir, and the Spanish cathedral musicians led a parallel existence. However, '*ministriles*', the instrumental musicians were employed locally, the most famous being the blind organist **Antonio de Cabezón**.

Our first composer, **Cristóbal de Morales**, from Seville, held his first *Maestro de Capilla* position in Ávila cathedral in the mid 1520s. As with almost all his other positions, he did not last long, a testament maybe to a somewhat prickly character. The mid 1530s saw him in Rome as part of the papal choir of Pope Paul III who liked Spanish singers, a trait that had started earlier with the Borgia family of Valencia, who first brought castrati to Rome. Paul III had a distinguished papal reign: convening the Council of Trent in 1545, and in 1534 brokered a peace treaty between his ally against the protestants, Charles V, and the French King Francis I. For this event, Morales was commissioned to compose the motet *Jubilate Deo*. One of the tenor voices proclaims '*Gaudeamus!* (Rejoice!)' throughout the work. This theme is the basis for Victoria's *Missa Gaudeamus*, first published in 1576 when Victoria was working in Rome. Today we sing the *Agnus Dei* from this mass, which in the second part, has the *Gaudeamus* figure sung by tenor and soprano voices.

Francisco Guerrero was also from Seville, being first a choirboy and then assistant organist to Morales at the cathedral. He composed many works in Spanish for use in the cathedral – *villancicos*, as well as works in Latin. *In Passione* is an early work, published in 1556, setting phrases of Jesus in the passion. In later life he went to the Holy Land, writing a book about his travels, which was known to Cervantes. His return voyage was somewhat eventful, being attacked by pirates and held for ransom. After spending some time in a debtor's prison, he was able to return to Seville Cathedral.

Bernardino de Ribera is perhaps the least known composer of this programme, but one of great importance for his influence on the younger generation. *Maestro de Capilla* in Ávila in the mid 1550s, he was responsible for the initial training of two choirboys who would go on to greatness – **Tomás Luis de Victoria** and **Sebastián de Vivanco**. From Ávila he went to Toledo where he stayed around ten years before retiring to Murcia. His music was discovered by Michael Noone in the Toledo Cathedral archives only about 8 years ago, and his style is extremely expressive, showing influences of Morales while having ground-breaking chromaticism.

Victoria and Vivanco, growing up in Avila would therefore have known the famous nun, St Teresa, frequently present at the masses and vespers of the cathedral. The boys' paths went very separate ways – Victoria went to Rome at 17, with a grant from Philip II, where he would stay 22 years, whereas Vivanco stayed in Spain, holding posts in Lérida, Segovia, Ávila and finally Salamanca. Until recently it was Vivanco who was held in higher esteem in his native city – a statue with names of the important figures of the city was erected at the end of the 19th century, including Vivanco's name, but not Victoria's. There seems to have been little friendship between the two men, as Vivanco declined to buy scores of Victoria's music for Avila cathedral.

Victoria hoped, on his return from Rome, to hold a good position with Philip II, if possible at the new royal monastery of Escorial. However, the religious order that ran the monastery, the Geronimos, were famous for their austerity, and did not look favourably on the new 'mannerist' style of Victoria, in the same way that El Greco also failed to make any impression there. Victoria was offered a consolation prize, being appointed personal chaplain to Philip's sister, the Empress Maria, who had retired to the convent of las Descalzas in Madrid, where he remained until his death.

Alonso Lobo also started out at the musical career as a choirboy in Seville. He was later appointed assistant to Guerrero as *maestro de capilla*, taking over when his master left for his travels. From there he went to Toledo cathedral in 1593 where he stayed 11 years before retiring to Seville. The motet *Versa est in Luctum* was composed for the funeral rites of Philip II in 1598, (Victoria's famous setting of this text would be composed 5 years later, for the funeral of Philip's sister) and the 8-voice *Ave Maria* was published in 1602.



The **Zenobia Scholars** is a chamber choir, created to train aspiring young singers especially interested in renaissance music, although from time to time baroque and contemporary repertoire is also explored. Created in its present form in 2014, it is unique among youth choirs in Spain for the training that its members receive, through courses offered by Zenobia Música (www.zenobiamusica.com), where they can benefit from the vision and advice from the principal players in the world of choral music.

In their first year, the Zenobia Scholars have worked and sung in concerts with directors such as Peter Phillips, Stephen Cleobury and David Skinner. They also attended the IV International Singing Week organised by Zenobia Musica, where they received training and Masterclasses from internationally renowned consort singers Amy Haworth, Tim Scott Whiteley and Rebecca Outram (Tallis Scholars, Alamire, The Sixteen). Their first concert took place at Magalia Castle in Las Navas del Marqués (Avila province) with Peter Phillips. In April 2015 they participated in Madrid's Royal Opera House in a pedagogical programme to much acclaim. In July 2015 they will participate in a choral course with the members of Ensemble Plus Ultra, on the tradition of the Requiem Mass in the Iberian Peninsula in the XVIth century. And in August 2015 they will once again work with Peter Phillips on music for triple choir by Tomás Luis de Victoria and Sebastián de Vivanco. The Zenobia Scholars have been invited by the Royal Academy of Spain in Rome to give the closing concert for the year of celebrations for the 500th Anniversary of the birth of St Teresa of Ávila.

Rupert Damerell is the Musical Director of Zenobia Scholars. Rupert began his musical career as a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where he commenced his organ studies



aged 10, having already started the piano at 4 and violin at 6. He went on to read music at King's College, Cambridge, where he was a counter-tenor choral scholar under the direction of Stephen Cleobury.

From childhood, he always enjoyed maintaining a wide variety of musical activities, and has continued this multi-faceted approach in his professional career. Based in Madrid since 2001, he has a well-set reputation as a conductor and singer within the Spanish choral world. He continues working as an organist, consort singer, violinist, recording producer, and director of various choirs and an instrumental ensemble.

Currently his focus is on teaching renaissance choral music, and directs popular annual summer courses in Ávila and Madrid and other seminars in this field, bringing the English performing style to Spain, with guest directors and singers for these events such as Peter Phillips, David Skinner, Stephen Cleobury, members of Ensemble Plus Ultra, Tallis Scholars and other consort singers.

*This concert by the Zenobia
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Details for both these and forthcoming courses, and our other events in
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