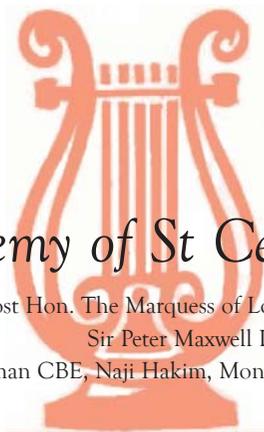


# VOX



## The Academy of St Cecilia

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*From the master*

**W**elcome to the 2007 edition of Vox - the mouthpiece of the Academy of St Cecilia.

We always welcome contributions from our members - indeed without them Vox would not exist. In this edition we announce our restructured Chapter and its new members; feature a major article on Thomas Tallis whose 500th anniversary falls at this time; and we review the Academy's most major event to date, the chant day held in June 2006.

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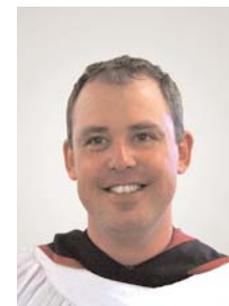


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# Advisors to the Academy

## Academic Advisor:

Dr Reinhard Strohm PhD (KU Berlin) FBA HonFASC.  
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Reinhard Strom is one of Europe's most distinguished musicologists and academics. He was born in Munich in 1942 and studied Musicology, Latin and Romance Literatures, and also plays the violin. He gained his Ph.D. in 1971 on 'Italian opera arias of the early 18th century'. From 1975-83 he was first Lecturer then Reader in Music at King's College, London. From 1983-90 he was Professor of Musicology, Yale University before returning to King's College London in 1990. In 1996 he was appointed Heather Professor of Music at Oxford University



## Education Advisor:

John McIntosh OBE MA FRSA HonFCP  
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John McIntosh was Headmaster of the London Oratory School for 29 years until his retirement on 31 December 2006. His early success at developing the Oratory school brought him to the attention of Margaret Thatcher and he was appointed to the Conservative think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies Education Group in 1982; he became a member of its Council in 2005. Between 1988 and 1991 he served on the Education Advisory Council of the Institute of Economic Affairs and on the Health Education Council between 1985 and 1988. He was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1996.



# Thomas Tallis (c.1505 - 1585)

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*Alistair Dixon, a member of the Chapter of the Academy, spent ten years studying and performing the music of Thomas Tallis. In 2005 he released the last in the series of recordings with his choir, Chapelle du Roi, of the Complete Works of Thomas Tallis in nine volumes.*

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Following the death of Thomas Tallis in 1585 William Byrd wrote in his consort song *Ye sacred muses "Tallis is dead, and music dies"* capturing the esteem and veneration in which Tallis was held by his fellow composers and musical colleagues in the 16th century and, indeed, by the four monarchs he served at the Chapel Royal.

Tallis' claim to the 'crown' of English music is justified by his lasting influence on English musical composition; his un-paralleled versatility in style of composition, craftsmanship, and intensity of expression and the sheer uncluttered beauty and drama of his music. It is surprising that hitherto so little of Tallis' music has been regularly performed and that so much is not satisfactorily published.

Tallis was appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in the early 1540s where he served for the next four decades under four monarchs and four political regimes: those of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I. He was a supreme craftsman, and unlike some of his contemporaries, his politics were that of adaptation. This contrasts with his elder contemporary John Taverner who ran into difficulties in Oxford because of his reformatory tendencies, and the younger William Byrd who was so fiercely counter-reformatory in the later years of the century.

Seeing his duty as service to the prevailing political regime, Tallis continued writing throughout; his surviving music holds up a mirror to the political changes of the English sixteenth century.

## Biography

Little information survives about Tallis' early life. His place of birth can only be a matter of speculation but, since his first and third appointments - Dover and Canterbury - were in Kent, perhaps he was born in that county or not too far away? His year of birth is generally taken as c. 1505 but as Nick Sandon has shown a date

of anything up to 1510 is quite possible. He would probably have been a chorister at a cathedral or a similar institution and here he would have received his musical grounding and presumably learnt to play the organ.

The first recorded biographical information we have is that in 1532 Tallis was the organist of Dover Priory, a small community which was a daughter house of the Benedictine monastery at Canterbury. Whilst Dover Priory was probably too small to maintain a full professional choir there may never the less have been a small choir of men's voices. In any case the Canterbury connections would have provided Tallis with some further choral contact.

Tallis' departure from Dover must have been no later than 1535 since the monastery was dissolved in the autumn of that year following a visit by the King's Commissioners.

Tallis' next appointment was at the London Church of St Mary-at-Hill in the City of London. (The proximity of St Mary's to Pudding Lane resulted in its destruction in the great fire of 1666 and it was rebuilt by Christopher Wren; remains of the old church can still be seen). Records show that Tallis was employed in 1537-8 though it is not specified in what capacity - organist or singer. This appointment was significant for the development of Tallis' career since the musicians at St Mary-at-Hill are known to have had strong connections with their counterparts at the Chapel Royal, and musicians from the Chapel were employed to augment the parish choir on special occasions. Indeed, Robert Okeland, later to be one of Tallis' colleagues in the Chapel Royal, had been organist of St Mary's in 1534-5, and William Mundy who was to join Tallis later at the Chapel Royal was also employed at St Mary's.

Tallis' next move was to take up an appointment at the Augustinian Abbey Church at Waltham Cross, nearly 20 miles north of London. From his absence in the records at St Mary-at-Hill we can surmise that this move was around the autumn of 1538.

Waltham Abbey was a wealthy institution and maintained a Lady Chapel choir of professional singers. (Musicians were not Members of the monastic communities they served and were therefore typically only allowed in the Lady Chapels of the Abbeys in which they worked)

Tallis' tenure at Waltham was short lived, however, as Henry VIII's programme of dissolution of the monasteries was now underway. In March 1540 Waltham became the last Abbey in England to be dissolved but unlike many others it was not refounded as a cathedral. Tallis' payoff was 20 shillings in lieu of wages and a similar amount as a "reward" for his services.

The Priory at Canterbury had already been dissolved and refounded as a

secular cathedral and it is evident that the music at Canterbury was given great importance. Perhaps Tallis had some connections he could use from his Dover Priory days in order to gain a position on the musical staff, or perhaps his reputation was already such that he was sought out by the cathedral?

Either way Tallis' career continued to flourish at Canterbury and it was only two years later that he was appointed a Gentleman (singer) at the Chapel Royal. In the Tudor age the Chapel Royal was the foremost musical institution in the land and having been appointed to this most prestigious post Tallis was to remain there for the next four decades until his death on 23rd November 1585.

Around 1552 Tallis married his wife, Joan, but it is evident that they had no children.

As was customary for members of the Royal Household at that time, Tallis was buried in the parish church of St Alfege in Greenwich, next to the Royal Palace. His epitaph gives many clues to his personality and the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries:

*Entered here doth by a worthy wight ,  
Who for long tyme in music bore the Bell;  
His name to shew was Thomas Tallys hyght;  
In honest virtuous lyff he did excell.  
He served long tyme in Chapell with grate prayse,  
I mean King Henry and Prynce Edward's dayes,  
Quene Mary and Elizabeth our Quene.  
He maryed was, though children he had none,  
And lived in Love full three and thirty Yere,  
With loyal Spouse, whose name yclipt was Jone,  
Who here entomb'd now company him bears.  
As he did lyve, so also did he dy,  
In mild and quyet sort, O! happy man.  
To God ful oft for mercy did he cry,  
Wherefore he lyves, let Death do what he can.*



No portrait of Thomas Tallis survives from his lifetime. The familiar picture that exists in a pair with a portrait of William Byrd is in fact an 18th century engraving from a book by N. T. Haym (1679-1729). It depicts Tallis as a young man in clothes and a hairstyle that are about a hundred years too late; rather more Nicholas Hilliard than Hans Holbein!

## The Early Works

Thomas Tallis entered a musical world in England that was already well established and highly developed. Many religious institutions such as cathedrals, Monasteries and the larger parish churches were able to afford choirs of men and boys. Tallis' influences must have included Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521) and a substantial repertoire typified by the Eton Choirbook (dating from the turn of the century). In Tallis' early works we can hear echoes of this late medieval style, but by the 1530s change was in the air and Tallis was to be part of the new emerging style.

In the 1520s and 1530s a composer's main "showpiece" compositions would be settings of the mass, the magnificat for vespers and votive antiphon texts. Other liturgical texts would form the basis of smaller scale compositions. The standard forces used for festal settings were usually labelled Treble, Mean, Counter Tenor, Tenor and Bass, which in modern terms translate into Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone and Bass.

Two of Tallis' earliest surviving works for these forces are the votive antiphons **Ave dei patris filia** and **Ave rosa sine spinis**. These two works are evidently youthful but never the less demonstrate Tallis' emerging style and compositional technique. *Ave Dei patris filia* clearly takes Fayrfax's popular setting of the same text as its model.

The **Magnificat** is similarly early as evidenced by the slightly awkward writing and over-use of imaginative musical devices. The forces used - four men's voices - suggest that it might have been written for use at Dover Priory which is likely to have been too small an institution to maintain a full choir of boys and men. The structure of the magnificat is archaic, being based not on a *cantus firmus* of the magnificat plainchant - in this case tone 1 - but on a faburden; that is, a counterpoint to the tone. Tallis sets the even numbers verses only; the odd verses are sung to the tone 1 plainchant creating an *alternatim* setting.

By the time Tallis came to write his third votive antiphon - **Salve Intemerata Virgo** - his style had become poised and confident. We hear the true musical voice of Tallis - the springboard for the rest of his composing life. The text of *Salve Intemerata* poses challenges not found in the two earlier votive antiphons. It is a prose text rather than being a set of verses, making the composer's job of structuring the music far more difficult. Tallis never the less achieves a closely 'argued' composition which displays a much greater use of imitation than previously.

An attempt to date these works and place them in chronological order relating to Tallis' early appointments suggests that 1505 as his date of birth is questionable. As outlined below, Professor Nick Sandon argues that a birth date of as

late as 1510 may be more likely .

The internal evidence (that is, the music itself) would place the *Magnificat* and *Ave dei* as the earliest works, both betraying distinct signs of inexperience; *Ave rosa sine spinis* resembles *Ave dei patris* quite closely but demonstrates a somewhat stronger sense of control; *Salve intemerata* is markedly better planned and more skilfully written.

*Ave rosa* and *Salve intemerata* both appear in the Canterbury part books (now known now as the Peterhouse Partbooks) compiled at the time Tallis joined Canterbury in 1540. Tallis may well have made these two works available to the copyist on his arrival, but perhaps suppressing *Ave Dei* because of its lower quality.

The position at Dover Priory was minor, and we can see that the sequence of the London job at St Mary-at-Hill, followed by the position of seniority at Waltham demonstrates rapid career progression. A speculative attempt at placing these works could be as follows: The *Magnificat* was composed for use at Dover by the forces available there. Perhaps *Ave dei* was also composed whilst Tallis was there whilst learning his trade and with a view to gaining his next appointment. *Ave Rosa* might also fall into this category, or have been composed for use by the choir at St Mary-at-Hill. Possibly *Salve Intemerata* was also composed there and was the basis for his appointment at Waltham? Certainly the quality of *Salve Intemerata* argues against it being the work of an unknown composer in a minor appointment such as Dover. If it is the work of a man in, say his early mid-twenties, and if Dover Priory was indeed Tallis' first musical appointment as an adult, this would argue for a birth date of c.1510.

The use of Parody (where the composer uses material from an existing composition) in mass composition was less usual in England than on the continent. Fayrfax and Taverner had already pioneered the form and Tallis followed suit using his own *Salve Intemerata* as the basis for his mass *Salve Intemerata*. Little new music was needed for the gloria, but more free composition is seen as the movements progress. The English tradition of mass composition omitted setting the *Kyrie* since the Sarum Use (the English Liturgy until 1549) varies the forms of the *Kyries* used by feast and day. Setting the *Kyrie Deus Creator* for instance would render the mass unusable on a day when the *Conditor* *Kyrie* was required.

Two other pieces of mass music from this time are the *Alleluia Ora pro nobis* and *Euge celi porta*. Both are beautiful miniatures and are settings of texts from Lady Masses. In aural terms the *Alleluia* in fact sounds more like Taverner (c.1490-1545); perhaps it is a misattribution or maybe Tallis was consciously imitating the style of the more senior composer. *Euge celi porta* is a single verse (verse two) from a nineteen verse Lady Mass Sequence. If Tallis composed polyphonic verses for each even numbered

verse we indeed have lost a great deal of very beautiful music.

The last few years of Henry's reign saw a change in the English compositional style characterized by more concise writing. The old style of elaborate mellismatic word setting became more syllabic so that the words could be heard more clearly. Two works from this period are **Sancte Deus** and the **Mass for four voices**. Both are contained in the Gyffard partbooks, a collection of music for the Latin rite compiled over several decades beginning in about 1540.

*Sancte Deus* is a Jesus-antiphon; the object of the devotion is Jesus rather than the more usual Mary.

In the mass the word-setting in the first two movements is almost entirely syllabic and the words can be heard very clearly. In the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* Tallis maintains the English tradition of keeping the mass movements roughly equal in duration by using text repetition rather than mellisma.

The late 1530s and the 1540s saw the preparation for the English Reformation that was to come in 1549. Henry VIII's marital manoeuvrings resulted in the excommunication of England from the Catholic church and Henry's publication of *The Kings Primer* in 1545 was a move towards a new English Liturgy. This publication contained the **Litany**, which Tallis was to set with musical refrains responding to each invocation. Meanwhile, Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury 1532-1553) was continuing with work on the new English prayer book which was to be ready four years later. On his death in 1547 Henry was succeeded by his son, the boy King Edward VI, under the protectorate of Lord Somerset. Two years later on Whit Sunday 1549 the first English prayer book was introduced by statute and England became a Protestant nation.

By 1549 Tallis had been at the Chapel Royal for around seven years and it would have been his job, and that of his contemporaries, to work out what the musical possibilities and requirements were in the new prayer book. No guidance is given in the rubrics and so the musicians were free to start with a clean sheet of paper. It was not until 1559 that Elizabeth provided that at Mattins or Evensong, "... for the comforting of such that delight in music ... there may be sung an hymn, or such-like song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best sort of melody and music that may be conveniently devised, having respect that the sentence of the hymn may be understood and perceived". A century later the 1662 revision of the prayer book introduced the famous rubric "In Quires and Places where they sing, here followeth the Anthem".

Most of the musical forms we take for granted today in the Anglican church can be traced back to the work of Tallis and his contemporaries. Cranmer reduced the

eight office hours to two; the new Mattins he derived from the old Matins and Lauds (the first two offices of the day) and Evensong was derived from Vespers and Compline - the last two offices. Tallis devised new musical forms for these two services include the sung Preces and Responses (*O Lord open thou our lips* etc), the idea of singing paired musical settings of the canticles (for instance the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis at evensong) and what might be termed the 'Great Service' format where the four or five part choir divide into *Decani* and *Cantoris* to create ten voices singing together and *in alternatim*.

The practice of the sides of the choir singing alternate psalm verses was nothing new since it has been the usual practice in the Latin rite since antiquity. Its extension into polyphonic writing was probably a way of creating variation and providing relief from the unremitting homophony of the new English style. It does not seem to have been universally popular however. In 1572 Rev. John Field, wrote that singers "... tosse the psalmes in most places like tennice balles", and in 1583 the Separatist Robert Browne similarly observed that "Their tossing to & fro of psalms and sentences is like tennis plaie".

In his setting of the **Tunes for Archbishop Parker's psalter** we have the prototype English Hymn and in the settings of psalm 119 we can see the origins of what was to become Anglican chant. It is the invention of these new musical forms that justifies Tallis' title 'Father of English Church Music'.

Since Tallis was to continue writing Anglican music in the reign of Elizabeth, after the catholic reign of Mary, it is not always easy to identify which of his music is Edwardine and which is Elizabethan.

However, Three English anthems which must be from the earlier period are **Remember not O Lord God, Hear the voice and prayer**, and **If ye love me** since they appear in one or other of the two important Edwardine sources of early Anglican music; the Wanley and Lumley partbooks. The same is also true of the single canticle **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel** (Benedictus).

If it were not for the early version of its text, the **Te Deum for meanes** might be thought to be a somewhat later work - the "sound world" is rather Elizabethan. Tallis uses (or invents) the 'Great Service' format - the five-voice choir has two 'mean' parts (hence the designation *for meanes*) - and he uses the choir *in alternatim* and jointly to create a sumptuous texture in a very effective setting of this long and difficult text.

The death of Edward VI in July 1553 led to the accession of Queen Mary. Mary was the eldest daughter of Henry VIII and his first queen, Catherine of Aragon. She had been brought up a catholic and remained so, living in seclusion during Edward's protestant reign. The Duke of Northumberland had tried to keep England

protestant by placing Lady Jane Grey on the throne but her reign lasted only three days and ended with her execution. Mary was seen by many as a more rightful successor and she was of course welcomed by all those who regretted the protestant reformation. What Thomas Tallis' private views were is not known but as the loyal servant of the crown he and the Chapel Royal returned to the Catholic Use of Sarum.

In order to secure the catholic future of England two things were immediately necessary; a husband and a male heir. Mary married Philip of Spain in July 1554 in Winchester Cathedral. She evidently believed that she had quickly conceived a son, and excitement mounted as Christmas drew near. Tallis' response to this - probably by royal command - was to compose his mass *Puer Natus est Nobis*. The presence of Philip's 'Chapel Royal' choir - the *Capilla Flamenca* - in England meant that there were increased resources available when the two choirs joined together. Tallis took advantage of this and wrote the mass for seven voice parts. He used a *cantus firmus* in the tenor part - rather an unusual feature in a mass setting since it restricts its use to the specific feast from which the chant is taken. *Puer natus est nobis* is the introit from the main mass of Christmas day and the text "A boy is born to us, and a son is given to us whose government shall be on his shoulders" would of course have been pregnant with meaning. Alas, the pregnancy was a phantom, but it ran for eleven months before Mary gave up all hope of giving birth.

A fascinating feature of the mass is Tallis' treatment of the *cantus firmus*. He uses the introit chant twice over the course of the mass - once in the Gloria and Credo and once in the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei - and varies the note values according to the syllable that was sung to that note in the chant. He assigns the values a=1, e=2, i=3, o=4 & u=5 so that 'puer natus' for example produces the note durations 5-2-1-5.

Only a few surviving fragments of the mass were known about until the discovery in 1960 of new manuscript sources in the British Library. The *Gloria* is now complete and only a little restoration is needed in the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*. The *Credo* however is still mostly missing; all that survives is four voices of the final section.

The unusual seven-voice texture in the mass is also found in Tallis' extended motet *Suscipe Quaeso*. It is very tempting to conclude that the two works must be linked; or at least again written for the joint royal choirs. The penitential nature of the text has given rise to the suggestion by Jeremy Noble that the work might have been written for the service in November 1554 when Cardinal Pole absolved England from its schism.

The third work which is identifiably Marian is the gigantically conceived votive antiphon *Gaude gloriosa Dei mater*. As with the mass, Tallis self consciously

uses an archaic form, reminiscent of his and other composer's works from before the Reformation. Tallis uses a six voice texture, adding an extra tenor part to the traditional five voice texture - a similar combination used by Mundy and Sheppard at this time. Tallis uses the traditional alternating verse and tutti form and includes a luxurious double gymel for trebles and means; each of those parts splits into two for a passage before coming together again into single voice. *Gaude Gloriosa* is strikingly similar in conception and form to William Mundy's *Vox Patris*, which uses texts from the Song of Solomon. By 1554 Mundy had joined the Chapel Royal and so maybe both pieces were written on Mary's accession. Tallis' choice of Marian text would have served both the virgin Mary and, as an act of flattery, the queen. Mundy's text perhaps served as a fertility song?

In addition to the Latin works already discussed, Tallis wrote Responds and Hymns for use in the Liturgy. These pieces are generally *cantus firmus* based, meaning that the Sarum plainchant that Tallis' polyphony replaces is incorporated into the musical texture. In the case of the large Responds this is in the 'tenor' part and in the case of the hymns it is in the treble part. It is not always easy to assign a period of composition to these works - many could be from either the reigns of Henry or Mary.

Tallis' choice of text was governed by what the authorities permitted to be sung as polyphony. Four of the hymns, **Salvator mundi**, **Jesu salvator saeculi** the two settings of **Te lucis ante terminum** and one Respond **In pace in idipsum** provide polyphony for Compline for most of the year.

Two further hymns **Quod chorus vatum** and **Jam Christus astra ascenderat** and three responds **Videte miraculum**, **Loquebantur variis linguis** and **Homo quidam fecit** are for first vespers on major feast days; Purification, Pentecost and Corpus Christi respectively. The remaining four responds **Hodie nobis caelorum**, **Dum transisset sabbatum**, **Honor virtus et potestas** and **Audivi vocem** are for Matins on the major feasts of Christmas, Easter, Trinity and All Saints.

The remaining hymn **Sermone blando** is for Lauds from Low Sunday until Ascension and the Respond **Candidi facti sunt** is for one or more apostles, or an evangelist, in Eastertide.

The tragedy of Mary's inability to conceive was compounded by Philip's disgust at being refused by parliament the title of 'King' and his departure from England in 1555. Mary's reign lasted only five years and she died in November 1559 knowing that she would be succeeded by Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's accession saw the reversal of Mary's catholic revival and the reintroduction of the Protestant prayer book. Composers were now once again required to write music to English texts.

We have already heard of some of the English music written for the English Prayer book during the Edwardine period. Tallis also left two sets of the **Preces and Responses** - both rather simple settings which were to be out-shone by later composers such as Byrd, Smith and Morley who seized the opportunity to write rather more elaborate settings.

Tallis' most complete set of service music is what we now know as **The Dorian Service**. This series of movements contains the three canticles needed for Mattins; *Venite, Te Deum* and *Benedictus*: music for Holy Communion; Responses to the Commandments, *Creed, Sanctus* and *Gloria*, and the two Evensong canticles; *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*.

Since the new English prayer book concatenated the eight old office hours into two, Mattins and Evensong, the opportunity for singing the psalms was reduced. Instead of cycling through the psalter over the course of a week, Archbishop Cranmer reordered the psalmody so that it was rotated once a month. The opening of the very long psalm 119 then fell on the 24th evening - the significance of which is that in December the 24th evening is Christmas Eve. With his **Psalm Sequence** Tallis set the opening verses of psalm 119 using a five voice texture with the psalm tone incorporated as a *cantus firmus*. Although now lost Tallis also set the subsequent verses ascribed to the 25th and 26th evenings - Christmas Day and the feast of St Stephen. In this setting we see the beginnings of what was to evolve into Anglican chant.

In addition to the three English anthems already identified as Edwardine a further seven come from either from the same period or from the reign of Elizabeth; **A New commandment I give unto you, O Lord give thy holy spirit, Purge me O Lord, Verily verily I say unto you, O Lord, In Thee is all my Trust, Christ Rising Again, and Out from the deep.**

One further anthem requires closer examination however. **Blessed are those that be undefiled** is not written using the closely spaced four voice texture that characterises the post reformation style. Instead it uses a wide-spaced five voice texture, and the inclusion of extended verses for reduced scorings are more typical of pre-rather than post-Reformation music. It seems quite possible that this work in fact started out as a Latin texted motet, **Beati Immaculati**, and the English version we have today is a *contrafactum*.

Of all Tallis' English works the collection of nine **Tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter** are the most remarkable. Around 1567 the printer John Day issued *The whole psalter translated into English metre*, containing psalms in metrical translations by Matthew Parker, the first Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury (1559-75). Tallis' nine settings are of Psalms 1, 68, 2, 95, 42, 5, 52 and 67, followed by a setting of The

Ordinal *Come, Holy Ghost*. Tallis' settings are preceded by Parker's description of the characteristics of Tallis' eight tunes:

*The first is meek, devout to see,  
The second, sad, in majesty,  
The third doth rage, and roughly brayeth,  
The fourth doth fawn, and flattery playeth,  
The fifth delighteth, and laugheth the more,  
The sixth bewaileth, it weepeth full sore,  
The seventh treadeth stout, in forward race,  
The eight goeth mild, in modest pace.*

Like many of her subjects, Elizabeth I must have had mixed feelings about England's reformed church and the music that accompanied the new liturgy. In common with her half sister Mary, Elizabeth had been brought up as a Catholic by her father, Henry VIII and at times she must surely have hankered after the lost colour and richness of the Sarum Use. Despite Elizabeth's reversal of the Catholic revival it would be a mistake to regard her as an arch Protestant. Her Protestantism was largely political and formed part of England's defence against the 'threat' from Europe represented by Mary Queen of Scots.

Whilst Latin was no longer used in public worship (being regarded in this context as one of the "*dregs of popery*") it was approved for use in Schools and colleges. Latin was, after all, the international language of learning and diplomacy, and Elizabeth was proficient in it. Latin was perfectly suitable for occasional musical compositions performed before an audience which could understand the language. Early in Elizabeth's reign she revised the prayer book and in 1560, Walter Haddon published a translation in Latin in the universities and public schools. Tallis appears to have been commissioned to write a setting of the Latin **Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis** for use with this publication. This paired setting uses the archaic *alternatim* technique with the polyphony replacing the plainchant in the even verses. Other features are more modern however, particularly the absence of sections with reduced voice scoring or a *cantus firmus* or *faburden*, and the imitative style. The setting is full of drama and Tallis engages closely with the text.

Elizabeth's reign was a time of increasing stability in political, artistic and religious life. It was also a time when-despite the fear of Catholic invasion, especially from Spain-England enjoyed growing cultural exchange with continental Europe. In the arts, the Elizabethan period was a golden age. England's rich, but essentially

insular and conservative, pre-Reformation heritage was infused with increasing continental influence, and in both literature and music we can trace the rise of humanism shaping new ideas and forms.

Under the influence of Josquin and the humanist movement, the continental motet had developed into a key *genre* by the end of the fifteenth century. Motets did not serve a liturgical function and so there was more scope in the choice of texts and style. This allowed composers to reinvigorate their musical language and harness it to new, expressive and personal ends.

In this mould, Tallis' Latin motets number around fifteen and are based on a mixture of liturgical and non-liturgical texts. **Absterge Domine** and **Miserere Nostri** are both 'devotional' settings with non-liturgical prayerful or confessional texts. **Mihi autem nimis** is based on an introit text, whereas all other settings are on texts from the offices. **Salvator mundi** (two settings), **O sacrum convivium**, **In manus tuas**, **In ieiunio et fletu**, **Derelinquat impius** and **Spem in alium** are all responds. **O nata lux de lumine** is a hymn text, **O salutaris hostia** is an antiphon and **Laudate Dominum** and **Domine, quis habitabit** are both psalm texts.

The celebrated **Lamentations** are similar in that they are again motet-style settings of liturgical texts. Their style dates them as Elizabethan and, indeed, there was a brief fashion in England during the later 1560s for setting the Holy Week readings from the Book of Jeremiah. Tallis' richly expressive first setting of the Lamentations sets the text of the First Lesson at Matins on Maundy Thursday according to the Sarum Use (Chapter 1, verses 1-2), while his longer second setting uses the text of the Second Lesson (verses 3-5). The translators of the *Vulgate* retained the acrostic nature of the original Hebrew (where each verse opened with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet) by prefacing each of the five verses by the words *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Gimel*, *Daleth* and *Heth* respectively. In each of his two settings Tallis follows traditional practice in providing music not only for the Lesson's formal opening (*'Incipit lamentatio [or De lamentatione Ieremiae prophetae]*) but also for the concluding refrain *'Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum'* (from Hosea 14.1). In common with other composers Tallis also supplies highly melismatic settings of the initial Hebrew letters, which stand in contrast to the generally syllabic treatment of the Lamentation texts as a whole.

With the exception of *Spem in alium* and *Miserere nostri*, all Tallis' motets are scored for five voices. *O salutaris hostia* apart, the vocal ranges are more limited than in his pre-Reformation music. The ranges tend to be closer to one octave and a third rather than one octave and a fifth, which raises the possibility that they might have been written for performance at more than one pitch. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that at a lower pitch they could be performed by an ATTBaB combination,

perhaps in a private chapel service, whereas if transposed upwards three or four semitones they are performable by an SAATB combination, perhaps domestically where ladies could take the top line.

Some support to this theory is lent by the fact that most of the motets appear in *Cantiones Sacrae*, the publication of 1575 in which Elizabeth commissioned her two senior Chapel Royal musicians, Tallis and Byrd, to publish 34 motets (17 each) in part book form. *Cantiones Sacrae* marked Elizabeth's determination that England should be put on the musical map and the intention was almost certainly that sets of part books would be purchased by domestic households as well as finding their way into churches and chapels on the continent. The only motets that do not appear in *Cantiones Sacrae* are *O salutaris hostia*, the two psalm motets and (for obvious reasons) *Spem in alium*. The widening of the 'market' for sacred music to include amateur performers may also partly explain the shrinking of the vocal ranges.

*O sacrum convivium* appears to have its origins as an instrumental fantasia and then to have been re-written as a vocal piece. An English-texted version, *I call and cry*, may also date from the mid-1570s; both texts fit the music equally well, giving rise to doubt about Tallis' original intentions. It is a beautifully crafted motet whose cogency is achieved by means of pervading imitation and climactic sequential repetition.

*Miserere nostri* follows a continental tradition of complex canonic demonstrations of technical skill; it is partnered in the *Cantiones Sacrae* collection by Byrd's double canon *Miserere mihi Domine*. The setting is a canon six in two; six voices are used to create a simultaneous or double canon. The first is a canon at the unison, between the two highest voices. Superius 1 is the antecedent-the first sounding voice-by one semibreve. The second is a mensuration canon of four voices, all beginning simultaneously. The Discantus part is the antecedent with the Contra tenor in canon in double augmentation, meaning that the notes are four times longer. The two Bassus parts are in canon '*per Arsin et Thesis*', that is, they are inverted so that upward intervals in the antecedent are downward in the consequent (the answer). Bassus 2 is augmented-so that the note values are doubled-and Bassus 1 is triple augmented; the note values are eight times longer. The seventh voice is a 'free' tenor part, though only in one place is its presence required to complete the harmonies.

*In ieiunio et fletu* and *Derelinquat impius* are almost certainly among the last works that Tallis composed. They are markedly experimental settings of Lenten, penitential texts, which can be read as especially apposite to the plight of the recusant Catholic community. *In ieiunio* tells of weeping priests who beg to save their heritage from destruction whilst *Derelinquat impius* is a plea for the sinful to return to the Lord. In the second work Tallis was clearly preoccupied with the expressive possibilities of

modulation and of denying the gravitational pull of a 'tonal centre', a concern signalled at the outset by an imitative exposition in which voices enter on unexpected degrees of the scale. The work is harmonically conceived, with much of its interest achieved by chromatic means. *In ieiunio* takes this tendency further, dispensing with standard imitative techniques altogether and replacing them with canon and repeating blocks of texture; in addition the nominal 'tonal centre', G, is not established until the closing bars, thereby creating a disorientating aural effect. Both motets take their texts from the Tridentine Matins on the first Sunday of Lent. They are the third and fifth responds respectively, and it is surely no coincidence that in *Cantiones Sacrae* they appear with William Byrd's setting of the fourth respond, *Emendemus in melius*. Perhaps the two composers intended them for use by the recusant Catholic community.

*Spem in alium* is surely not just the greatest of all Thomas Tallis' musical achievements, but one of the great musical compositions of all time. Written for 40 independent voices, this is a noble and monumental edifice which in the course of its 69 longs makes creative and imaginative use of the extensive musical palette.

Tallis groups his singers into eight choirs of five voices (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass) and it seems most likely that he intended them to stand in a horseshoe shape. The piece begins with a single voice from the first choir; gradually the voices enter in imitation and, as the earlier voices fall silent, the sound moves around the line from choir one to choir eight. At the fortieth breve, all forty voices enter simultaneously for a few bars, and then the process happens in reverse with the sound moving back from choir eight to choir one. After another brief full section the choirs sing in pairs alternately throwing the sound across the space between them until finally all voices join for a full culmination to the work.

Clearly *Spem in alium* is an occasional piece despite being based on a liturgical text; '*Spem in alium*' is a respond from Sunday Matins during the reading of the history of Judith. Various theories have been put forward concerning the purpose for which *Spem in alium* was written and the significance of the number of voices. Of these, Paul Doe's suggestion that the first performance took place in 1573, the fortieth year of Elizabeth I's reign, was originally the most plausible explanation.

However, as Denis Stevens later pointed out, a near contemporary account from 1611 describes how Tallis was commissioned to compose the work-probably by Thomas Howard, fourth duke of Norfolk-as an answer to Striggio's 40-part *Ecce beatam lucem*. This may place the first performance in the long gallery at Arundel House on the Strand, perhaps in 1570, after Norfolk was released from prison (he was executed in 1572).

The earliest surviving manuscript of this great work, the Egerton manuscript, is laid out with an English contrafactum, *Sing and glorify heavens high majesty*. This version was evidently produced for the coronation as Prince of Wales of Prince Henry - the eldest son of James I and Anne of Denmark - in 1610. Following his untimely death from typhoid in November 1612 it was repeated - in 1616 - at Charles' coronation. In the manuscript Harry's name is clearly written in each part-then crossed out and Charles' name substituted. The English words are not a translation of the Latin, but a new poem written as a syllable-for-syllable replacement. Evidently the authorities decided that musically *Spem in alium* was fitting for such an impressive occasion as a coronation, but that the Latin words were too sombre.

An interesting feature is that its total length is 69 longs (a long being two breves). This is a cryptogram; the same number is arrived at by taking Tallis' name, ascribing each of the letters of the Latin alphabet a number (A=1, B=2 etc.) and summing the values. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to imagine that Tallis 'signed' the work in a way that ensures he is indivisibly bound with his *summa* for perpetuity?

Although the statutory introduction of the First Book of Common Prayer on Whitsunday, 9 June 1549 was merely the culmination of a gradually unfolding process that went back many years, it nevertheless precipitated an urgent need for a repertory of service music in the vernacular. One straightforward solution to this predicament was to adapt existing Latin motets to English texts, a category of composition that has come to be known as *contrafactum*. While the Latin-texted motets may have been intended for private use, their musical success is demonstrated by the large number of *contrafacta* that seem to have been made from them. Cathedral musicians in the new Anglican liturgy fitted English words to the motets-sometimes a translation but more often new, unrelated, words. *Absterge Domine* seems to have been particularly popular since four English versions survive.

## Keyboard Music

Tallis' surviving output of written keyboard music is small in relation to his reputation and output of vocal music. Much of what survives is based on plainchant melodies and could well have been used liturgically. Almost all of it has survived in a manuscript anthology known as the 'Mulliner Book' which was copied by Thomas Mulliner in the late 1550s and early 1560s.

In the case of the five **Organ Hymns** Tallis follows the English tradition of composing organ versets which replace alternate verses of plainchant in the same way as his vocal hymn settings work.

Three **Organ Antiphons** survive, but in two of these cases the organ was unlikely to have been used in at this point in the service the pieces are probably occasional.

Three pieces survive using chant from the mass. The **Alleluia Per te Dei genitrix** is for Masses in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The two settings of **Felix namque**, are based on chant performed at Mass during the offertory - again in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There was a long tradition of supplying organ music at the Offertory of the Latin Mass, but the late dates of these settings, and their considerable length means they are probably not liturgical.

#### **Secular Instrumental and Vocal Music**

A very small amount of secular music survives. As a church musician Tallis concentrated his compositional efforts towards sacred music. However there was an impressive staff of secular musicians - keyboard players, lutenists, consorts of instrumentalists, a small vocal ensemble - at the Tudor court and his secular music was probably written for use there. There was also a Chapel Royal tradition, which was later to flourish with the verse anthem, of composers writing music for the boy choristers to perform in a theatrical context.

Tallis was one of the first composers to contribute to the **In Nomine** tradition and two four part settings for viol consort survive. Written in a somewhat Flemish style is the five part **Solfing Song** - it seems that Tallis was either acknowledging the style of Van Wilder or that this is possibly a misattribution.

The five-voice **Fantasia** survives incomplete. Only the two upper voices exist in an early Elizabethan manuscript where the piece has no title or attribution. However, there are sections that contain the same music that is found in *O sacrum convivium* and *Absterge Domine*. John Milsom has suggested that the Fantasia precedes both of those pieces, and was subsequently carved up for use in the two motets.

Two further original secular pieces for keyboard survive. The most striking of these is **Lesson of Mr Tallis: two partes in one**. Here the right hand plays the canon which (unusually for Tallis since his other canons are all unison or at the octave) resolves at the lower fifth. Against it, the left hand plays a fast-moving accompaniment. Apart from **A Point** the remaining works by Tallis in the Mulliner Organ Book are arrangements of his other works. Also surviving in the Mulliner book are the three **Secular Part Songs** all of which require their texts to be located elsewhere and fitted to the music.

## Gregorian Chant Symposium 17 June 2006

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*A personal account by Sr Cecilia Cavenaugh*

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**A**fter an early departure from our monastery at Slough, Fr Mark Hartley and I took a train and tube journey to Lambeth North. Following the instructions to St George's Cathedral, we registered and immediately found friends - and made many more during the day.

St George's Cathedral is a magnificently arched building with beautifully coloured stained glass of biblical scenes, leading the eye up to a splendid roof. My immediate impression was that it would have an excellent acoustic, and this was confirmed as soon as I heard singing and organ playing there.

The day was organised by the Academy of St Cecilia, which was founded some 8 years ago to promote early music. There was a Convocation of the Academy at the beginning of the afternoon session and I was proud to see that Fr Peter Allan, with his old Panel of Monastic Musicians links, had been elected an Honorary Fellow. Fr Peter contributed two sessions to the day: "Chant in the Anglican Liturgy" and "Chant in English.

Enough of descriptions, as we were soon at work! Dom Daniel Saulnier of Solesmes, one of the leading contemporary chant scholars, was invited to speak to all present for 40 minutes on Gregorian semiology (the study of the rhythmic signs in medieval manuscripts) and used chironomy (hand gestures) in showing us what he meant while demonstrating with his voice. Then we broke up into group workshops, which lasted the rest of the day, except for an hour off for lunch, prepared by the parents of the Cathedral choir.

The choice of subjects and speakers was tantalizing, and I found it hard to choose what would be most useful for me. Eventually I decided to hear Martin Baker on "Chant in the Conciliar Liturgy", Dom Daniel Saulnier on "The New Method of Solesmes" and Mark Johnson giving a "Practical Workshop". Fr Mark went to Professor Nick Sandon's session on the "Sarum Rite" which he greatly enjoyed.

The climax of the day was Pontifical Vespers and Benediction in Latin, confidently sung by the combined choirs (boys, girls and lay clerks) of St George's and Arundel Cathedrals. This was supplemented marvellously by the organists Nicholas O'Neill and Dr Naji Hakim from *La Trinité* in Paris, who outshone, if possible, the

magnificent choral singing with a final burst of sound - an improvisation on the solemn 'Salve Regina'. We left mesmerized by the beautiful music we had been lucky enough to hear and pray with, and the whole day was entirely enjoyable.

*Sr Cecilia Cavenaugh.*



## *Newly conferred Honorary Fellows of The Academy of St Cecilia*

**W**e have conferred several new Honorary Fellowships to distinguished musicians and academics from the UK, Ireland and the USA. This reflects the international membership of our society. All were delighted to receive this award in recognition of their important contributions to early music. It also reflects the increasingly high esteem in which the Academy is held, especially after our extremely successful Chant Symposium held last year, attracting many more delegates than we had anticipated.

**Mr Ralph Allwood BA (Dunelm) Hon FASC**

*Precentor and Director of Music at Eton College.*

**Dr Margaret Bent MA MusB PhD (Cantab.) Hon DMus (Glasgow) Hon DFA (Notre Dame) FBA FRHS FSA Hon FASC.**

*Senior Research Fellow of All Souls at Oxford University and Co-Director of the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music. ([www.diamm.ac.uk](http://www.diamm.ac.uk))*

**Professor John Butt MA (Cantab) PhD Hon FASC.**

*Gardiner Chair of Music at Glasgow University.*

**Mr Timothy Byram-Wigfield MA FRCO Hon FASC**

*Organist and Master of the Choristers at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.*

**Professor John Caldwell BMus MA D.Phil. (Oxon) FRCO Hon FASC**

*Emeritus Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford. General Editor of the series Early English Church Music and composer.*

**Professor Paul Elliott MA (Oxon) CMVT Hon FASC.**

*Professor of Music at the Early Music Institute, Indiana University, USA.*

**Mr Paul Esswood Hon RAM Hon FASC.**

*Internationally renowned counter tenor and vocal tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, London*

**Mr Stephen Farr MA MPhil (Cantab) FRCO FTCL ARCM FRSA Hon FASC**

*Organist and Master of the Choristers at Guildford Cathedral and active freelance performer in the UK and abroad.*

**Professor Iain Fenlon MA (Cantab) PhD FSA Hon FASC.**

*Professor of Historical Musicology at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow and Senior Tutor of Kings College.*

**Dr Fabrice Fitch PhD (Manchester) MMus (McGill) Hon FASC.**

*Composer and Senior Lecturer in Music and member of the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Durham University.*

**Mark Lee MA FRCO Hon FASC**

*Organist and Master of the Choristers at Bristol Cathedral.*

**Professor Michael McCraw MA BM Hon FASC.**

*Director of the Early Music Institute, Indiana University, USA.*

**Rev`d Graham Oliver Dip F/D NSM LGMS Hon FASC.**

*Former Social Secretary of The Academy of St Cecilia.*

**Professor Sir Curtis Price KBE, AM, PhD, Hon RAM, FKC, FRNCM Hon FASC.**

*Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, London.*

**Dr David Price Hon DMus GMus (TCL) Hon FASC**

*Organist and Master of the Choristers at Portsmouth Cathedral.*

**Mr David Russell MA KSS (Papal Knighthood) Hon FASC**

*Director of Music at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia and former lecturer in Choral Pedagogy and Music Education at the University of Sydney.*

**Mr Christopher Shoebridge BA FGMS Hon FNMSM Hon CIL Hon FASC.**

*Former Registrar and Treasurer of the Academy, and now South American Representative of The Academy of St Cecilia.*

**Mr Roger Sayer Hon FASC**

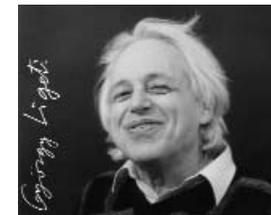
*Organist and Director of Music at Rochester Cathedral.*

**Prof Harry White MA BMus PhD (DUBL) MA (TORONTO) MRIA Hon FASC.**

*Professor of Music and former Head of School at University College, Dublin. Inaugural President of the Society for Musicology in Ireland (2003-6).*

## Obituary: György Ligeti 1923-2006

**T**he composer György Ligeti was born in 1923, in the town of Tarnaveni in Romania, although at that time it was largely under Hungarian influence, and it was in this culture that the young composer was brought up, moving to Cluj at the age of six. Ligeti's early musical training took place at the conservatoire in the city, but the onset of World War II changed his life radically. As a Jew, he was pressed into forced labour by the Nazis, while his parents, brother and other relatives were deported to the concentration camp at Auschwitz, his mother being the only one to survive. After the war he continued his studies, at the Budapest Academy of Music, where he eventually became a lecturer, working there until the Hungarian uprising of 1956. The uprising temporarily disturbed attempts to block Western radio stations, meaning that Ligeti was for a brief period able to listen to the pioneering electronic works of Karlheinz Stockhausen. Shortly after the uprising's suppression, he fled to Austria, becoming an Austrian citizen, also working with Stockhausen in the studios of WDR in Cologne.



Although many of his works up to this point had been in a musical language similar to that of Bartok (such as in the accessible and quirky *Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet*), his arrival in Austria, his work at the electronic music studio of West German Radio in Cologne, and his exposure to new influences and composers such as Boulez and Messiaen broadened his musical experiences considerably and played a large part in shaping his own personal idiom. He was particularly drawn to Boulez's serial works *Le Marteau sans Maître* and *Structures*, analysing the latter "like police researcher" (sic), to the extent that "I discovered some mistakes [in his serial procedure] and Boulez didn't like that somebody see that he did some".

He completed three electronic works during this period, but, after their completion, he returned to the instrumental field, bringing the sounds and textures of the artificial medium with him. To the early 1960s, therefore, belong some of his most strikingly individual works, and those which made his name: *Atmosphères*; *Aventures*; *Nouvelles Aventures*; *Volumina* (for solo organ, famously blowing the fuses at the Albert Hall); *Poème symphonique* (for 100 metronomes, an unusual work in his output); *Requiem*; *Lux Aeterna*. The first and last two pieces were responsible for bringing Ligeti's music, if not his name, to a worldwide audience, as they were used by

Stanley Kubrick in the soundtrack for *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The story goes that these works, along with all the others on the film, were merely being used as guide music, while the score proper was being composed by Alex North. North arrived for the film's première unaware that Kubrick had rejected his score... Kubrick went on to use more of Ligeti's music in films such as *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, and although this was useful in bringing the composer's music to a new audience, his reputation had already been established through the quality and originality of his writing. The works of this period demonstrate quite clearly Ligeti's interest in sound for sound's sake, and the appearance in his work of what is termed "micropolyphony". In short, this involves constantly moving lines, usually so narrow in terms of interval and so fast in terms of rhythm, that, for the listener, the effect can be of a shimmer in a seemingly static chord which is, in fact, slowly changing. It was defined by Ligeti as follows: "The complex polyphony of the individual parts is embodied in a harmonic-musical flow, in which the harmonies do not change suddenly, but merge into one another; one clearly discernible interval combination is gradually blurred, and from this cloudiness it is possible to discern a new interval combination taking shape." The characteristic musical "blurring" achieved by this technique, alongside Ligeti's rhythmic complexity, developed during the 1970s, remain two of the most recognisable facets of his music.

One could argue that, for all his influence, an article about Ligeti does not belong in *Vox*, but despite having written only three pieces for the instrument, he is one of the most important modern composers for the harpsichord. All three of his pieces are firmly planted in the repertoire, and make rigorous technical demands on the performer. The first of these works, *Continuum*, belongs to the very end of the 1960s, and relies on extremely fast repeated notes in order to give the impression of stasis, a sideways take on micropolyphony. In characteristically quirky style, Ligeti explained the piece as follows: "I thought to myself, what about composing a piece that would be a paradoxically continuous sound, something like *Atmosphères*, but that would have to consist of innumerable thin slices of salami? A harpsichord has an easy touch; it can be played very fast, almost fast enough to reach the level of continuum, but not quite (it takes about eighteen separate sounds per second to reach the threshold where you can no longer make out individual notes and the limit set by the mechanism of the harpsichord is about fifteen to sixteen notes a second). As the string is plucked by the plectrum, apart from the tone you also hear quite a loud noise. The entire process is a series of sound impulses in rapid succession which create the impression of continuous sound."

The major works of the 70s include *Clocks And Clouds* (for 12 female voices, a title often used to refer to Ligeti's output as a whole) and his opera *Le Grand Macabre*,

premiered in Stockholm in 1978. His two other harpsichord works, *Passacaglia ungherese* and *Hungarian Rock* also come from this year, and mark a return to a more tonal style, although still highly chromatic. The *Passacaglia* also demonstrates Ligeti's interest in tuning systems other than the equally tempered scale. *Hungarian Rock* uses an extremely short rock-inspired rhythmic pattern as the basis of its chaconne, superimposing a melodic line inspired by the organ solos of late 60s and 70s prog rock music.

The major works of his last period are the concerti for piano and violin (1988 and 1992 respectively), and the three books of *Piano Etudes* (1985, 1994, 2001), extraordinary visions of sound and texture which provide a worthy summing up of Ligeti's achievements.

There are several stylistic strands and influences which run through Ligeti's music from his Bartok-like early works through to his unique and fascinating latter compositions. Firstly, and probably most importantly, Ligeti is anything but the pofaced composer. He has an impish and witty sense of humour, and a sense of the absurd, which can surface at the most unexpected moments. He admired early black and white comedy films, the more absurd, it seems, the better, and the books of Lewis Carroll, and was always prepared to try "crazy, stupid things" ("there is a tradition that so-called high-culture music concert is a serious something. I personally deeply like Charlie Chaplin films and Marx Brothers - more Marx Brothers than Karl Marx. And this black humour, British films, with Alec Guinness, a lot of people - Agatha Christie. All this murder and funny at the same time."). *Le Grand Macabre* is the strongest example of this in his output, both in its subject matter and in its treatment of the orchestra - the prelude is scored for 12 car horns, for example. Even the famous *Poème symphonique* for 100 metronomes may be part of this absurdist thought, whatever archmodernists might like to think.

In musical terms, however, as mentioned above, the technique most often associated with Ligeti is that of 'micropolyphony'. Alongside this, especially in his later works, there is his fascination with different tuning systems, and by the characteristics of the harmonic series, especially when set against our compromised chromatic scale. *Passacaglia ungherese*, referred to above, specifies different combinations of pure major and minor thirds on the two manuals of the harpsichord, while the extraordinary second movement of the *Violin Concerto* combines horns playing in natural harmonics, ocarinas, and a brass chorale containing mistuned harmonics. Throughout this same work a violin and a viola are tuned to the harmonics played by the double bass. The result is unsettling, as if 'standard' tuning is within the listener's grasp, but almost out of reach. By any standards, this is an extraordinary movement,

befitting a composer who often thought first in terms of pure sound, and then laboriously worked out how to transcribe this to the page ("For my piano concerto there are many hundred first pages. It takes time until...it's something which I cannot explain, because it's just a feeling...the cogs have to mesh.").

As time passes, of course, composers' music falls in and out of favour and fashion. Frequently there is a dip in their reputation before a significant anniversary prompts what is euphemistically termed a "reappraisal". It seems that the originality, intellectual rigour and sheer intoxicating sound of Ligeti's music will ensure that he does not suffer this fate. For many people Ligeti was, quite simply, the world's greatest living composer. He died on June 12th, 2006.

*Nicholas O'Neill - Composer in Residence.*



## Summer Convocation 30 June 2007

**M**any of our society braved the weather, bomb scares and traffic, to attend the Academy summer Convocation in the wonderful setting of St Michael's Abbey in Farnborough on the 30th June. Early that morning, driving against torrential rain along the M4, I was a little worried about the attendance on such a miserable day, and with Farnborough being our first venue outside London, but I need not have worried. Well in advance of the 1.30pm guided tour of the Abbey by the Rt Rev Dom Cuthbert Brogan OSB, Abbot of Farnborough, Fellows started arriving, and by the start of Convocation the glorious French Abbey church seemed full of people. As Honorary Fellows and Chapter assembled outside the west door Mr Stephen Farr, Organist and Master of the Choristers at Guildford Cathedral, played the procession in to their seats in front of the sanctuary on the magnificent Cavaille-Coll organ.

Having started a little later than usual because of the awful weather I missed out my address and Professor John Caldwell HonFASC from the Faculty of Music of the University of Oxford, gave a short lecture on plainchant which was both illuminating and amusing. He stood in at very short notice for Dr Fitch from Durham University who was unable to attend due to an unexpected problem at the University.

After a short break the concert commenced. 'The Fantini Consort' under the direction of Simon Desbruslais gave us one of the best performances we have heard at Convocation so far. 'The Fantini Consort' is a small chamber ensemble consisting of trumpet, two violins, viola, cello and harpsichord, with the addition of Sarah Bushfield, soprano, for Bach Cantata no.51. The playing in Purcell's Sonata for trumpet and strings, Z850 and Torelli's Trumpet Concerto, 'Estienne Roger' was simply electrifying. The precision, vitality and beauty of ensemble, especially the effect of the clarion trumpet in that favourable acoustic, were stunning. JS Bach's Violin Sonata in A Minor, BWV1003, also blossomed in that lush acoustic but still maintained, through brilliant playing, an intimate and intensity of sound. Bach Cantata BWV 51 finished the programme. With driving rhythms and virtuosic soprano writing it was a popular choice to finish the concert, especially in the closing fugal choral where all forces come magnificently together in the closing 'alleluia'.

An excellent and extensive buffet was provided at the local pub and members old and new were able to mingle, relax and socialise together before returning home whence they came. Altogether I feel it was an excellent and very successful Convocation and I hope members had a safe journey home.

*Mark Johnson, Master*