

PROGRAMME NOTE

The Edinburgh University Renaissance Singers start their section of the programme with a favourite piece by Claudio Monteverdi, a pioneer of Italian Baroque music. *Cantate Domino* sets a couple of verses from Psalm 95 (Vulgate numbering; Hebrew Psalm 96): ‘Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.’

Thomas Tallis was an English composer who worked for all four Tudor monarchs, especially for Queen Elizabeth 1. *Salvator mundi* was published in an anthology dedicated to that queen in 1575. Its text, ‘O Saviour of the world, save us, since by your cross and blood you have redeemed the world,’ is highly appropriate for Easter.

The longest piece in our programme is the glorious Easter motet, *Maria Magdalena* by the Spanish composer Francisco Guerrero, who was choir-master at Seville cathedral when it was the richest in the world. His motet tells the story of Easter morning, when Mary Magdalen’s anxiety at finding Christ’s empty tomb turns to joy and Alleluias when she is told the news of the Resurrection.

William Byrd also served Queen Elizabeth I and published both sacred and secular music, the latter including *Come, woeful Orpheus* in 1611. It speaks of the Greek semi-God Orpheus tuning his lyre in order to match the singer’s words. It experiments with sharps and flats and key changes in order to illustrate its text.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina was the most important composer in late-sixteenth-century Rome where he was choirmaster at St. Peter’s. *Sicut cervus* sets a verse from Psalm 40 (Hebrew Psalm 41): ‘As the deer yearns for running water, so my soul yearns for you, my God.’

James MacMillan is Scotland’s most successful contemporary composer and an alumnus of Edinburgh University. *O Radiant Dawn* was written for a church choir in Glasgow and is a highly effective setting of an Advent text which is equally appropriate to Easter.

We finish our programme with a joyous Easter motet, *Surrexit Pastor Bonus* (‘The Good Shepherd has arisen’) by the Munich-based composer Orlandus Lassus. Its repeated Alleluias will bring our recital to a resounding close.

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