



Welcome to the 2022 BBC Proms



Welcome to the BBC Proms 2022. I am delighted that, in this centenary year of the BBC, we can return to the first full eight-week season since 2019, and to the scale and ambition for which the Proms is famous. We see the return of big orchestral and choral repertoire,

visits from some of the world's finest symphony orchestras, family concerts with big screens, and Relaxed Proms in a more informal environment. This is the Proms as we know and love them, and we hope you will find much to enjoy.

When in 1927 the BBC, just five years into its existence, took over the running of the Proms, the introduction of broadcasts – first on radio and then also on TV – enabled our founder-conductor, Henry Wood, to reach the widest audiences that were so central to his vision. In 2022 that partnership is stronger than ever. The BBC's own orchestras and choirs play a central role in our programme, and other BBC collaborations include the return of our hugely popular CBeebies Proms and a celebration of the remarkable work of the Natural History Unit. We also have a special new commission from the band Public Service Broadcasting that draws together material from the BBC archive to create a new work reflecting the origins of the organisation.

Mixing the familiar with the lesser-known is one of the cornerstones of the Proms. There will always be a place for the central pillars of the repertoire, but I hope you will also want to know more about Ethel Smyth, George Walker and Doreen Carwithen – composers less frequently heard on the concert platform. They sit alongside a huge range of contemporary work that embraces Oscar-winning composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, composer-performer Jennifer Walshe and Minimalist icon Philip Glass. This summer also features our first ever Gaming Prom, as well as celebrations of the legendary Aretha Franklin, singer and actress Cynthia Erivo and distinguished sarod player Amjad Ali Khan.

This year our concerts venture into all corners of the UK, as well as to other London venues. But our home remains here at the Royal Albert Hall, where so many extraordinary Proms events have taken place. Here's to a memorable summer of shared musical exploration!

David Pickard
Director, BBC Proms



BBC Proms

THE BBC PRESENTS THE 128TH SEASON OF HENRY WOOD PROMENADE CONCERTS

Tonight at the Proms

Tonight's concert finds the voice taking centre-stage, with Harry Christophers and an expanded line-up of his choir The Sixteen presenting music that spans the centuries but is linked by a mood of contemplation.

Starting with ancient plainsong, we then move through time to the Renaissance, and works that range from the modest, such as Byrd's *Diliges Dominum*, to Tallis's showstopping *Spem in alium*, in which he famously creates a motet in 40 parts. Sir James MacMillan offers a contemporary response to Tallis's motet with *Vidi aquam*, written for the same forces. In between come pieces by Tavener and Górecki, both famed for their ability to create music of powerful emotion through outwardly simple means.



Because every Prom is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 ... Please silence your mobile phones, watch alarms and other electronic devices. Please be considerate to the performers and other audience members, while also recognising that listeners may show a variety of responses to the music.



Royal Albert Hall

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For an online exhibition
relating to the 2022
BBC Proms season, scan here



PROM 50 • WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST 10.15pm–c11.30pm

Plainsong 'Salve Regina' 3'
first performance at the Proms

John Tavener Hymn to the Mother of God 3'

Thomas Tallis Spem in alium 10'

Sir James MacMillan Miserere 12'
first performance at the Proms

Christopher Tye Missa 'Euge bone' –
Agnus Dei 7'
first performance at the Proms

Henryk Górecki Totus tuus 9'
first performance at the Proms

John Sheppard Missa 'Cantate' – Agnus Dei 5'
first performance at the Proms

Sir James MacMillan Vidi aquam 10'
first performance at the Proms

William Byrd Diliges Dominum 3'
first performance at the Proms

The Sixteen
Harry Christophers *conductor*

There will be no interval



RADIO **3** SOUNDS

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TRADITIONAL

Plainsong 'Salve Regina'

first performance at the Proms

Twelfth-century worshippers who found themselves praying under the cool white stone of Burgundy's Cluny Abbey on a Marian feast day would have been among the first to hear the graceful plainsong melody of the *Salve*

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.

Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Evae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
In hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia ergo, advocata nostra,
Illos tuos misericordes oculos
Ad nos converte.

Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

O clemens,
O pia,
O dulcis virgo Maria!

Regina, with its distinctive swallow-dive opening, in the form we know it today. The anonymous hymn, which praises Mary as 'queen' and 'mother of mercy', and tenderly begs for her intercession, was later established as one of four Marian antiphons – *Salve Regina*, *Ave Regina caelorum*, *Regina caeli* and *Alma redemptoris mater* – which between them divide up the church year. Sung at the end of every day's Compline service, the final Office of the day, they are hymns that belong to candlelight and quiet, music to guard you through the night and see you safely to the next morning.

Hail, O Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail.

To you we cry, exiled children of Eve.
To you we sigh, as we mourn and weep
in this valley of tears.

Come then, as our advocate,
turn those merciful eyes of yours
upon us.

And after our exile here,
show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb.

O gentle,
O loving,
O sweet virgin Mary!



JOHN TAVENER (1944–2013)

Hymn to the Mother of God (1985)

For text, see page 6

The *Hymn to the Mother of God* is one half of a musical diptych. Together with its partner piece, *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*, it offers a portrait of the Virgin – luminous and elevated in glory in the former, fragile and earth-born in the latter. Composed in 1985 and dedicated to the memory of the composer's own mother, the anthem embodies the 'Holy Minimalism' with which John Tavener became synonymous: music whose intense spiritual conviction is expressed with radical concision of form and gesture.

Based on a text from the liturgy of St Basil, the *Hymn to the Mother of God* celebrates Mary as a 'mystical paradise' and 'sanctified temple'. There's an architectural quality to the piece, which is divided into three discrete sections, the first and last the same – parallel musical pillars that soar skywards in blocks of sound created by the strict canon between two choirs. It's the friction between this perpendicular precision of structure and the music's ecstatic, unbounded emotional charge that gives the work its strange power: at once absolutely still and teeming with motion.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The music of John Tavener arrived at the Proms in 1968 and made an immediate impact: the audience was balloted to determine which of the evening's first three items should be repeated in the second half and Tavener's *In alium* was chosen in preference to scores by Don Banks and Thea Musgrave. The piece was aired a third time in 1994. More widely spaced performances of *The Whale*, Tavener's early breakthrough 'cantata', took place in 1969, 1984 and 2008. *Akhmatova: Requiem* was received by a famously uncomprehending, fast-emptying hall in 1981, notwithstanding the best efforts of soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson, baritone John Shirley-Quirk and Gennady Rozhdestvensky's BBC Symphony Orchestra. The composer's pared-down idiom and audience reaction to it had moved on unpredictably by the time the two-and-a-half-hour concert version of his vast, six-hour ritual *The Veil of the Temple* premiered in 2004. The hall was packed. What was arguably Tavener's most sensational Proms success came with *The Protecting Veil*, a BBC commission which received its own unveiling here in 1989. Steven Isserlis was the solo cellist with Oliver Knussen conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra. They revisited the work in a Late Night Prom in 1995. The *Hymn to the Mother of God* was first sung here in 1992 alongside the *Hymn for the Dormition* with which it forms a pair; Bo Holten directed the BBC Singers in another Late Night mix criss-crossing the centuries.

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David Gutman is a writer and critic who since 1996 has contributed extensively to the BBC Proms programmes; his books cover subjects as wide-ranging as Prokofiev and David Bowie, and he reviews for *Gramophone* and *The Stage*.

Delve into Proms history for yourself by searching the online database of all Proms performances at bbc.co.uk/proms/archive.



An Armenian manuscript depicting St Basil the Great (c330–79), an influential figure in the early Christian church and on whose liturgy John Tavener drew for his *Hymn to the Mother of God*

In you, O woman full of grace,
The angelic choirs and the human
race,
All creation rejoices.

O sanctified temple,
Mystical paradise, and glory of
virgins.

In you, O woman full of grace,
All creation rejoices.
All praise be to you.

from the Liturgy of St Basil



“For much of his life an Orthodox Christian ... Tavener’s ideal relationship with his spirituality as it’s expressed in his music is that he should be a channel through which the music flows, with as little impediment from the predilections of his own personality as possible. ‘I wanted to produce music that was the sound of God. That’s what I have always tried to do.’ That’s language that’s liable to alienate non-religious listeners, but what it’s really about is a striving to release his music from the mundanities of his own consciousness.”

Tom Service, *The Guardian* (2013)



JOHN TAVENER

Describing music as ‘a window of sound on to the divine world’, John Tavener was a composer for whom faith and composition were one and the same. The British composer’s conversion to Russian Orthodox Christianity in 1977 was the

defining moment in a career spent creating sonic ‘ikons’, celebrating the eternal, the spiritual and the ineffable in music of radiant apparent simplicity. His choral anthem *The Lamb* typifies a composer whose artless innocence conceals intricate inner workings.

In 1968, when Tavener was just 24, his dramatic cantata *The Whale* became an unexpected cult hit, released on The Beatles’ Apple label. But despite this early foray into psychedelia and a musical world split between the cerebral avant-garde on the one hand and populism on the other, Tavener chose a third path.

Along with fellow 20th-century ‘Holy Minimalists’ Arvo Pärt and Henryk Górecki, Tavener rejected dense complexity in favour of music in which small gestures carry great weight – music in which plainchant melodies meet Eastern rhythms, music amplified by repetition and gradual layering into large-scale statements: spacious, meditative and other-worldly.

THOMAS TALLIS (c1505–85)

Spem in alium (?1567)

Much mythology has wound itself around Tallis's 40-part motet *Spem in alium*, a piece whose origins are still unknown. Some have it as a tribute to Queen Elizabeth's 40th birthday, some date it as early as Queen Mary's reign. Others see it as England's response – a musical exercise in one-upmanship – to Alessandro Striggio's *Ecce beatam lucem*, a 40-part composition Tallis might have heard during the Italian's visit to London in 1567. Hugh Keyte, whose new edition of the piece is sung by The Sixteen tonight, believes it was written for a ceremony mounted by a group of plotters who planned to assassinate the Protestant Queen Elizabeth and install the Catholic Mary Stuart in her place.

Whatever its genesis, the work is a miracle of structural and textural manipulation. Based on the earliest

Spem in alium nunquam habui
Praeter in te, Deus Israel,
Qui irascaris et propitius eris,
Et omnia peccata hominum
In tribulatione dimittis.
Domine Deus, creator caeli et terrae,
Respice ad humilitatem nostram.

Response for Matins, adapted from the Book of Judith

surviving score from 1616, Keyte's edition shows that Tallis arranged his voices essentially into four choirs of 10 (rather than eight choirs of five voices). Starting in the Choir 1 alto, the music moves in imitative waves down through to Choir 4 before the whole process repeats in reverse. The music then passes back and forth between the choirs in exchanges that find them sometimes in opposition, sometimes calling and answering one another. Colours shift, assemble and reassemble in a musical kaleidoscope of fluctuating voice-parts and textures. The midpoint falls exactly at bar 40, at which symbolically significant moment we hear all 40 voices simultaneously for the first time. The musical climax of the work, however, is the astonishing A major chord on 'respice' ('have regard') – an emotive reminder of the work as a statement of spiritual supplication from a devout Catholic composer as well as a celebration of technical mastery.

Hugh Keyte's edition, along with a lengthy ongoing preface, is available for free on the Thomas Tallis Society website.

My hope have I never put in any
but in you, God of Israel,
who will be angry, and again be gracious,
and who forgives all the sins of men
in their time of trial.
Lord God, maker of heaven and earth,
have regard for our lowliness.



PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

George Malcom directed the first Proms account of this work with the choir then known as the BBC Chorus. The year was 1961. Fourteen years passed before the group was responsible for the next performance under their Director at the time, John Poole – a Westminster Abbey Prom. In the interim the ensemble had reverted to its previous name, the BBC Singers. 1980's rendering by the Schütz Choir of London fell victim to industrial action by the Musicians' Union but *Spem in alium* returned as a highlight of 1988's Choral Day. Since then, Peter Phillips's Tallis Scholars have presented it twice, bringing performances to the Royal Albert Hall in both 2001 and 2007. And tonight, having appeared at these concerts since 1990, Harry Christophers's The Sixteen equals that tally. Suitably expanded, the choir gave us a Tallis-dominated Late Night Prom in 2005, culminating in the 40-part motet. The less reverberant acoustic of Cadogan Hall was the setting for *Spem in alium*'s most recent Proms realisation, in 2015, when The Cardinal's Musick was directed by Andrew Carwood.

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THOMAS TALLIS

The shifting style of music produced by Thomas Tallis throughout his long career serves as a touchstone of an age of unprecedented religious upheaval. Tallis, endlessly adaptable, was not only a musical giant of his day but, perhaps more importantly, a musical pragmatist, a survivor in an era where few endured.

That Tallis served in England's Chapel Royal under no fewer than four Tudor monarchs – Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I – is testimony to this creative flexibility. The traditional Catholic idiom favoured by Henry VIII gave way to the Protestant severity of Edward VI's reign, in which simple, chordal writing and vernacular texts were favoured. Mary's reign saw a return to florid Catholicism, while under Elizabeth I the composer had to tread the careful path of musical compromise, writing Catholic-style works for the monarch's private devotions while maintaining the simpler style for public liturgy. Through all these twists and turns, however, Tallis retained a recognisable musical voice of his own – a style distinguished by its harmonic sweetness and melodic grace.

SIR JAMES MACMILLAN (born 1959)

Miserere (2009)

first performance at the Proms

For text, see page 12

A musical arc from bleak E minor to radiant, affirmative E major, Sir James MacMillan's *Miserere* follows in a long tradition of choral settings of Psalm 51 – 'Have mercy upon me, O God'. The penitential text, which broods vividly on man's sin and 'blood-guiltiness' and pleads for deliverance, is treated not in the regular, repeated verses of Allegri's well-known setting but as a continuously evolving musical drama.

The music starts low in a knot of close-tangled tenors and basses – a prayer almost too shameful to be uttered. It gains in volume and conviction before passing upwards into keening sopranos, whose chant-like cries echo and dance in canon. 'Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum' ('Behold I was shapen in wickedness') brings all the voices together in a forceful shared statement that climaxes in a chorale-like prayer to be washed 'whiter than snow'. From here there's a sense of the music being stripped back to its purest form – plainchant – before being slowly rebuilt and refashioned; the music of the opening returns, but moves in new directions. The psalm ends with a ravishing hymn, echoes of Scottish folk music colouring and warming the vocal writing.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The music of Sir James MacMillan has enjoyed persistent success at the Proms since the sensational unveiling in 1990 of *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*; the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Jerzy Maksymiuk. The percussion concerto *Veni, veni Emmanuel*, another of the composer's greatest hits, has featured twice, brought to life by Dame Evelyn Glennie in 1992 and revived by Colin Currie in 2007. But *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* retains its special prominence. A fourth outing in 2019, courtesy of Thomas Dausgaard and the BBC Scottish SO, confirmed its status as a contemporary classic. In 2001 The Sixteen took part, with Vassily Sinaisky and the BBC Philharmonic, in the world premiere of *The Birds of Rhiannon*. Most recently, MacMillan's *When Soft Voices Die* for voices and orchestra, setting the poetry of Shelley, was co-commissioned by the BBC for the First Night of 2021, the first post-lockdown Prom with an audience. The Viola Concerto was performed earlier this season by its dedicatee Lawrence Power.

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“I think that James [MacMillan] ranks among a trio of truly great composers of sacred music, the other two being Tomás Luis de Victoria and Francis Poulenc. They have a common focus in their total commitment to the Catholic faith, but, for me, what makes them so exceptional is their intensely personal approach to the Scriptures. Of course, it is always said that penitential texts bring out the best in composers and, as with Victoria and Poulenc, that is true of MacMillan. I defy even the strongest atheist not to be moved by James’s *Miserere* or his *Tenebrae Responsories*.”

Harry Christophers



SIR JAMES MACMILLAN

Leading Scottish composer Sir James MacMillan’s career took flight at the BBC Proms in 1990 when his orchestral work *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* was premiered. Inspired by the many women executed for

witchcraft in 17th-century Scotland, the piece’s fierce, agonising beauty caught the attention of an audience numbed to the provocations of new music, establishing MacMillan at the forefront of his generation – a composer at once accessible and uncompromisingly direct.

‘Far from being a spent force, religion has proved to be a vibrant, animating principle in modern music,’ declares a composer whose Catholic faith has been a constant through a prolific and wide-ranging career that has taken him from the percussion concerto *Veni, veni Emmanuel* (composed for Dame Evelyn Glennie), five symphonies and a significant body of chamber music to numerous liturgical works, including multiple Mass-settings and large-scale motets.

Catering to both amateur and professional ensembles, MacMillan’s music exists as much in the community as in the concert hall. Modernism and Minimalism meet in music that draws on Scottish folk music and plainchant to create its distinctive voice: a heady blend of rhythmic urgency, emotional openness and spiritual contemplation.



TEXT

SIR JAMES MACMILLAN

Miserere

Miserere mei, Deus:
Secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

Et secundum multitudinem miserationem tuarum,
Dele iniquitatem meam.

Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea:
Et a peccato meo munda me.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco:
Et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

Tibi soli peccavi,
Et malum coram te feci:
Ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis,
Et vincas cum judicaris.

Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum:
Et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti:
Incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.

Asperges me hyssopo, et mudabor:
Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.

Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam:
Et exultabunt ossa humiliata.

Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis:
Et omnes iniquitates meas dele.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
after thy great goodness;

according to the multitude of thy mercies
do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness;
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults;
and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee only have I sinned,
and done this evil in thy sight;
that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear
when thou shalt judge.

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness;
and in sin hath my mother conceived me.

But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts;
and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness;
that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Turn thy face from my sins;
and put out all my misdeeds.



Cor mundum crea in me, Deus:
Et spiritum rectum innova, in visceribus meis.

Ne proiecias me a facie tua:
Et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.

Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui:
Et spiritu principali confirma me.

Docebo iniquos vias tuas:
Et impii ad te convertentur.

Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus,
Deus salutis meae:
Et exultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.

Domine, labia mea aperies:
Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedessem utique:
Holocaustis non delectaberis.

Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus:
Cor contritum, et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias.

Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion:
Ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem.

Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae,
Oblationes et holocausta:
Tunc imponenet super altare tuum vitulos.

Psalm 51

Make me a clean heart, O God;
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence;
and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again;
and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked;
and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God,
thou that art the God of my health;
and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord;
and my mouth shall show thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee;
but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion;
build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of
righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations;
then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

CHRISTOPHER TYE (c1505–73)

Missa ‘Euge bone’ – Agnus Dei

first performance at the Proms

Christopher Tye was a contemporary of Tallis, and his career – spanning much of the 16th century – saw him riding the same shifting waves of religious change and musical style. Admired by Henry VIII, who once declared ‘England one God, one truth, one doctor hath for musick’s art, and that is Dr Tye’, he was tutor to the young Edward VI and remained an influential musical figure at court until giving up music as a profession in favour of the church in 1560.

Along with most of Tye’s Latin church music, the six-part *Missa ‘Euge bone’* – often regarded as the composer’s

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

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

masterpiece – probably dates from the reign of Henry VIII. The work’s mixed style places it at the junction of two musical worlds. The Mass retains something of the spaciousness of the earlier generation of Eton Choirbook composers, but its greater simplicity and textual clarity, as well as passages of imitation between the voices, look ahead to the next. The ‘Agnus Dei’ brings the Mass to a rapt, meditative close. A stern three-voice opening broadens to a lyrical, blooming conclusion by the final ‘Dona nobis pacem’.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The *Missa ‘Euge bone’* would seem to be previously unrepresented at the Proms although Tye’s extraordinary ‘*Western Wind*’ Mass was performed by the Choir of St John’s College, Cambridge, under George Guest at the satellite venue of St Augustine’s Church, Kilburn, in 1975.

© David Gutman

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

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

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.



CHRISTOPHER TYE

As in the case of his younger contemporary John Sheppard, we know little of Christopher Tye's origins. His earliest documented life is in East Anglia: studying for his music degree at Cambridge in 1536 (he would later earn his doctorate), becoming a lay clerk at King's the following year and subsequently being appointed Master of Choristers at Ely.

It was probably at Ely that Tye encountered Dr Richard Cox, later tutor to Edward VI, who seems to have drawn Tye into the Royal household. Tye's only published work during his lifetime, *Actes of the Apostles*, is dedicated to Edward, and Tye seems later to have served in some capacity in the Chapel Royal, before his ordination in 1560.

Where Byrd and Tallis's private sympathies lay with Catholicism, Tye's leanings were Protestant. But, like his contemporaries, the composer adapted to the shifting liturgical climate, moving from elaborate Latin polyphony under Henry VIII (including three surviving Mass-settings) to Anglican anthems during the reign of Edward – works distinctive for their textual clarity and rhetorical directness – as well as writing a substantial number of instrumental works: chamber music of the earliest kind.

HENRYK GÓRECKI (1933–2010)

Totus tuus, Op. 60 (1987)

first performance at the Proms

Opening with a shout and ending with a whisper, Henryk Górecki's *Totus tuus* ('I am yours wholly, Mary') draws all its power from its simplicity. The same echoes of Russian Orthodox church music that run through Tavener's *Hymn to the Mother of God* are even more evident here in Górecki's thick vertical writing – its consonant

affirmation so different from the composer's earlier avant-garde style.

Composed in 1987 to celebrate Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage to Poland and addressed to the Virgin Mary, the country's patron saint, the work seems designed to reflect its subject: simplicity is transformed into grandeur, beauty into ecstasy, small gestures are amplified into grand spectacle through repetition – both of text and of music. Gradually repetitions become tighter, music is fragmented ever smaller, until the work drifts into silence in a lulling litany of a single word: 'Maria!'



Huge crowds gathered in Kraków on 10 June 1987 for a visit by Pope John Paul II to his homeland; it was for this pilgrimage that Górecki composed *Totus tuus*, setting words addressed to Poland's patron saint, the Virgin Mary



PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Henryk Górecki arrived at the Proms in 1993 when his *Old Polish Music* launched a mixed programme given by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Jerzy Maksymiuk, then completing his decade as the ensemble's Chief Conductor. The next work scheduled, at a Late Night Prom in 2001, was the cantata *Salve, sidus Polonorum*, performed by the BBC Symphony Chorus together with an instrumental group, directed by Stephen Jackson. His most famous composition, the 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs', followed in 2005, the sole item in a Late Night Prom in which the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra was conducted by David Atherton, one of the work's long-term advocates; the soprano was Susan Bullock. The piece was heard again in 2013 when Osmo Vänskä and the BBC Symphony Orchestra were joined by Ruby Hughes. In 2021 it was the turn of the Harpsichord Concerto, played by Mahan Esfahani with the Manchester Collective.

© David Gutman



HENRYK GÓRECKI

Although a leading figure of the Polish avant-garde in the 1950s and 1960s, his serialist compositions influenced by Webern, Stockhausen and Nono, Henryk Górecki was all but unknown in the West until the fall

of communism in Poland in 1989. The 1990s brought sudden fame and unprecedented commercial success with the release of his Third Symphony, 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs', recorded by soprano Dawn Upshaw and the London Sinfonietta under David Zinman, a work exploring parental loss and political conflict that, the composer believed, tapped into something society was 'missing'.

The Third Symphony was the product of a pronounced shift in style through the 1970s – a rejection of earlier complex dissonance in favour of a simpler idiom, whose consonant harmonies and quasi-ritual repetitions were influenced both by Polish folk music and by medieval Polish chant. The composer's Catholic faith was the driving force behind a quest for greater clarity and directness of expression. Górecki's later works, in common with those of John Tavener and Arvo Pärt, build simple musical elements into monumental structures whose power lies in their expressive immediacy.

Maria, Maria!
Totus tuus sum, Maria,
Mater nostri Redemptoris,
Virgo Dei, virgo pia,
Mater mundi Salvatoris.

Maria!

Maria Bogustawska (1868–1929)

Mary, Mary!
I am yours wholly, Mary,
mother of our redeemer,
virgin of God, holy virgin,
mother of the world's
saviour.
Mary!



JOHN SHEPPARD (c1515–58)

Missa ‘Cantate’ – Agnus Dei

first performance at the Proms

A slightly younger contemporary of both Tallis and Tye, John Sheppard also enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the Chapel Royal during his comparatively short life. As with Tye, there are many details of Sheppard’s career that remain unknown, though we do know that he submitted his work – unsuccessfully – for a doctorate from Oxford University, where he both studied and worked over some two decades.

Of Sheppard’s five surviving Masses, the six-voice *Missa ‘Cantate’* is easily the grandest – a lavish festal setting

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

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

whose sequence of movements is unified by a shared ‘head motif’, clearly heard at the start of each. Although written in Sheppard’s signature six parts, the work lacks the distinctive pair of high treble lines we often associate with the composer’s music. Instead, we get a lower sonic centre of gravity from split tenors and basses, giving the music a more muscular, rooted quality. Sheppard separates each of the three intercessions that make up the ‘Agnus Dei’ into discrete sections – the last the most elaborate, a fitting climax to this large-scale piece.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The exultant *Verbum caro* is the only example of Sheppard’s Tudor polyphony to have surfaced at the Proms, the penultimate item in a mixed Late Night programme given by Stephen Cleobury and the BBC Singers in 1997.

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

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

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.



JOHN SHEPPARD

That we cannot be certain either of his date of birth or of the spelling of his surname tells us much about John Sheppard, a younger contemporary of Thomas Tallis whose life and career are still dominated by gaps, speculation and uncertainty.

Employed at Magdalen College, Oxford, as Master of Choristers in the 1540s, Sheppard subsequently served as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where he sang and composed under both Edward VI and Mary I, dying in December 1558 before he could perform at the coronation of Elizabeth I.

A career straddling both the Protestant years of Edward VI and the Catholic restoration of Mary yielded a substantial body of English and Latin church music including five surviving Mass-settings, Magnificats and anthems, including his masterpiece *Media vita* – a work in which polyphony takes on almost symphonic scope and ambition.

At its best in intricate six-part writing, with a distinctive pair of high treble parts, Sheppard's music blends the ornate style of the Eton Choirbook composers with the later clarity of Tallis and Taverner.

SIR JAMES MACMILLAN

Vidi aquam (2019)

first performance at the Proms

Commissioned in 2019 to write a companion piece to Tallis's mighty *Spem in alium*, Sir James MacMillan produced *Vidi aquam* – a piece that echoes not only the 40-part forces of the original but also its essence of spiritual and musical wonder. The text is an antiphon



The premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Vidi aquam* took place in the most dramatic of settings – the iconic Turbine Hall in London's Tate Modern – given by the ORA choir in a socially distanced performance in 2021



(‘I saw water flowing out of the Temple’), traditionally sung to accompany the sprinkling of the congregation with water at the start of Mass, and you can hear droplets tumbling and sparkling through the voices.

MacMillan divides his singers as Tallis does, into separate choirs; and, as with the older composer, he uses the full vocal range – particularly the upper extremes of the soprano register. He also structures his anthem similarly, growing from a single voice up to the full 40.

Vidi aquam egredientem de templo, a latere dextro,
Alleluia:
Et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista, salvi facti sunt,
Et dicent: Alleluia, Alleluia.
Confitemini Domino, quoniam bonus,
Quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula
saeculorum. Amen.
Vidi aquam egredientem de templo, a latere dextro,
Alleluia:
Et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista, salvi facti sunt,
Et dicent: Alleluia, Alleluia.

What starts with both feet in Tallis’s world of Tudor church music quickly pushes polyphony into contemporary territory as both harmony and melody become ‘smudged’, edges obscured in both imitation and celebration of echoing cathedral acoustics. The landscape morphs into musical abstraction, a new theme – a simple rising scale – catching the ear and leading us into stranger and more distant territory. The work ends with hallelujahs that transform that scalic theme into musical fireworks, exploding upwards in thrilling celebration.

I saw water flowing out of the Temple, from its right side,
Alleluia:
and all to whom this water came have been saved,
and they will say: Alleluia, Alleluia.
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good
for the world is in his mercy.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.
I saw water flowing out of the Temple, from its right side,
Alleluia:
and all to whom this water came have been saved,
and they will say: Alleluia, Alleluia.

WILLIAM BYRD (c1540–1623)

Diliges Dominum

(pubd 1575)

first performance at the Proms

If *Spem in alium* represents mathematical and musical craftsmanship at its grandest, then the tiny anthem *Diliges Dominum* by Tallis's pupil and protégé William Byrd is surely the pinnacle of that same skill in miniature. Just a few minutes long, the anthem is a miracle of construction – a cryptic crossword or sudoku puzzle worked out in sound.

Against each of the four lines in the original source is written 'Due partes in una recte et retro' ('Two parts in one, forward and in retrograde'). Translated, it means that Byrd has created a perfect musical palindrome. Four lines of music give us eight different vocal parts when each one is sung simultaneously forwards and backwards. If you were to play any recording of the piece in reverse, it would (or should, at least) sound identical to a performance the 'right' way round. What's striking, though,



A painting of St Matthew, from whose gospel Byrd took the text for *Diliges Dominum*, from the workshop of El Greco, created in the early years of the 17th century

is how little of this intricacy is evident aurally in the work's smooth unfolding; there may be frantic creative paddling beneath, but the musical surface remains still and unruffled.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

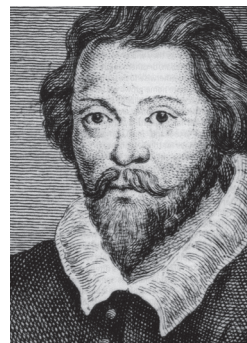
Diliges Dominum may be new to these concerts but Byrd's music is unusual in having been represented in the years before the presence of choirs could be taken for granted at the Proms, let alone the existence of 'early music'. Programme planning has always evolved unpredictably. Introduced as long ago as 1925, when a regular Thursday night second-half slot was reserved for The English Singers, a group recently embarked on a series of pioneering 78rpm recordings for His Master's Voice, Byrd's *Ave verum corpus* was heard in two guises in 2021. One was a reimagined tribute by Roderick Williams. Both formed part of a continuous playlist from Sofi Jeannin's BBC Singers with experimental composer and turntablist Shiva Feshareki.

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Diliges Dominum
Deum tuum,
Ex toto corde tuo,
Et in tota anima tua,
Et in tota mente tua:
Diliges proximum tuum,
Sicut te ipsum.

Thou shalt love
the Lord thy God
with all thy heart
and with all thy soul
and with all thy mind.
Thou shalt love thy
neighbour
as thyself.

Matthew 22, 37 & 39



WILLIAM BYRD

Along with his sometime teacher, friend, business partner and colleague Thomas Tallis, William Byrd was one of the pre-eminent English composers of the Renaissance, described at his death in the records of the Chapel Royal as 'A father of musick'. Generating almost 500 surviving works during his long career, Byrd created a prolific output that ranged across all major genres – both sacred and secular – blending a distinctive English character and style with continental models and influence.

Byrd received early musical training as a chorister in the Chapel Royal under Tallis, showing early promise both at the keyboard and in composition. After taking up his first professional appointment at Lincoln Cathedral, in 1572 he was appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where he worked as singer, organist and composer for the next two decades, taking advantage of Elizabeth I's moderate Protestantism to produce parallel outputs of English and Latin church music – the latter a vehicle for his own Catholic convictions.

In 1575 Byrd and Tallis were granted an exclusive patent by the monarch for the printing of music. The result, the *Cantiones sacrae*, is a monument to the ingenuity and stylistic breadth of both composers.

Programme notes and profiles © Alexandra Coghlan

Alexandra Coghlan is a music journalist and critic who contributes regularly to *The Spectator*, *Prospect*, *The Independent*, *Gramophone* and *Opera*; she is the author of *Carols from King's* (BBC Books, 2016).



The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting a range of this summer's Proms themes, presenter **Tom Service** takes a wide-angle view of each theme in this weekly column



Week 6 Brahms – behind the beard

Brahms's popularity is one of the most mystifying things about classical music. I'm not disputing his unique brilliance in summing up the traditions of three centuries of music that came before him, and neither am I suggesting there's anything less than a reverberating revelation in the darkly dazzling complexity of his music, the sense that his music speaks a language of many conflicting emotions, all at the same time.

What's weird is that music of this churning contrapuntal and poetic density is so irresistible. Because the surfaces of Brahms's music, its tunes and its climaxes, are the opposite of crowd-pleasing. He could write unforgettable melodies, like the oboe tune in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto or the mandala of melancholy the cellos play in the third movement of the Third Symphony. Yet Brahms knew he wasn't a tunesmith in the same league as Johann Strauss. He said he wished he could have written the *Blue Danube* Waltz, and who wouldn't be jealous of that unfurling river of melody?

In fact, Brahms's tunes are a kind of deception, because instead of indulging them as repeated musical pleasures, he mines them with a mania that's forensic and obsessive. He splits them into fragments and shards, he twists them upside down and inside out, and layers them on top of one another. It's the same with his sense of rhythm, in which so often – as in the outer movements of the Third Symphony – he plays with the music's pulse so it wrong-foots his listeners and his performers, sliding out of your grasp just when you think

you know where you are in the bar, in the phrase. Time, for Brahms, is relative, multiple, malleable.

Brahms's clinching climaxes are never as obviously gratifying or conclusive as comparable moments in Bruckner, Wagner, Mahler or Strauss. He doesn't even let violin virtuosos enjoy the biggest moment of his Violin Concerto: the soloist stops playing after setting up a huge cadence in the first movement, whose resolution the orchestra enjoys without them.

So why do we like this ambiguous, pleasure-creating but just as often pleasure-defying music so much? Maybe it's because we recognise that Brahms's music voices an essential truth: that our lives are lived in perennial shades of grey, in which our triumphs are never quite complete, our sadnesses never the whole story. Brahms's brilliance is that he gives coherence to that state of perpetual irresolution.

Which makes his paradoxical popularity an ultimately hopeful mystery, because it suggests we are capable of acknowledging that nothing in life, or music, is a binary yes or no, black or white. Brahms's music is made in an imaginative land that's defiantly, definitively in between, where we join him with simultaneous joy and melancholy whenever we listen to and love his music.

Brahms also features at the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 21, Tuesday 23 and Thursday 25 August at 7.30pm, and at St George's Hall, Liverpool, on Monday 22 August at 1.00pm.

→ Next week: **What counts as 'classical music'?**

Join Tom Service on his Proms-themed musical odysseys in *The Listening Service* on BBC Radio 3 during the season (Sundays at 5.00pm, repeated Fridays at 4.30pm). You can hear all 200-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series is now available, published by Faber.





Harry Christophers *conductor*

Harry Christophers is the founder and conductor of The Sixteen, an ensemble he founded over 40 years ago, as well as a regular guest conductor for many orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has directed The Sixteen throughout

Europe, America and Asia, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th- and 21st-century music. He was also Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, USA, for 13 years and is now its Conductor Laureate.

Recent highlights with The Sixteen include an Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Fifth Symphony and a performance of his *Stabat mater* for Pope Francis in the Sistine Chapel, as well as a return to Australia during The Sixteen's 40th anniversary tour in 2019.

He has overseen a transformation in The Sixteen's work since the launch of their annual Choral Pilgrimage in 2000, which have introduced many newcomers to unfamiliar sacred compositions and composers, drawing capacity audiences to the cathedrals, churches and other venues within The Sixteen's national touring circuit. He was inspired by the success of this venture to commission new scores for The Sixteen, and develop Genesis Sixteen, a young artists' scheme designed to nurture the next generation of professional ensemble singers.

He has made more than 190 recordings, gaining numerous accolades, including the *Gramophone*, Classical BRIT and MIDEM Classical awards.

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The Sixteen

Founded by Harry Christophers in 1979, The Sixteen has a special reputation for performing early English polyphony and Renaissance masterpieces, for bringing fresh insights to Baroque and early Classical music and for performances of a wide range of 20th- and 21st-century music.

The Sixteen is an Associate Artist at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall and at Kings Place, London, and has an ongoing Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall. The group also undertakes an annual Choral Pilgrimage, touring UK cathedrals with the aim of bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written. The BBC television series *Sacred Music* also featured performances by the ensemble. The group has toured throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia, including its first tour of China in 2017, followed by debut concerts in Estonia and Lithuania. It has appeared regularly at leading concert halls, including Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw, Cité de la musique, Paris, the Barbican here in London and Sydney Opera House. The group's long-standing relationship with Sir James MacMillan has continued to flourish, giving the world premiere of his Fifth Symphony at the 2019 Edinburgh Festival.

The Sixteen also comprises a period-instrument orchestra, and both ensembles have taken part in acclaimed performances of Purcell and Monteverdi operas, as well as an ongoing series of Handel oratorios.

The Sixteen has made over 190 recordings which have won numerous awards. In 2011 the group launched Genesis Sixteen, the UK's first fully funded choral training programme for singers aged 18 to 23, designed to help participants navigate the transition from student status to life as professional performers.

Conductor

Harry Christophers CBE

Associate Conductor

Eamonn Dougan

Sopranos

Charlotte Ashley
Lisa Beckley
Emma Brain-
Gabbott
Amy Carson
Sam Cobb
Julie Cooper
Lucy Cox
Sally Dunkley
Angharad Gruffydd Jones
Kirsty Hopkins
Alexandra Kidgell
Rebecca Lea
Margaret Lingas
Charlotte Mobbs
Emilia Morton
Emma Walshe

Altos

Robin Blaze
Nancy Cole
Daniel Collins
Martha McLorinan
Edward McMullan
Elisabeth Paul
Simon Ponsford
Kim Porter

Tenors

Tom Castle
Mark Dobell

Philippe Durrant
Steven Harrold
Nicholas Madden
George Pooley
Tom Robson
Nick Todd

Basses

Jonathan Arnold
Ed Ballard
James Birchall
Freddie Crowley
Ben Davies
Robert Davies
Tim Dickinson
Eamonn Dougan
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Handel's Messiah

6 Dec, 7pm
St Martin-in-the-Fields

This intimately-scaled, historically-informed performance celebrates the 280th anniversary of Handel's masterpiece and features a line-up of acclaimed young soloists.

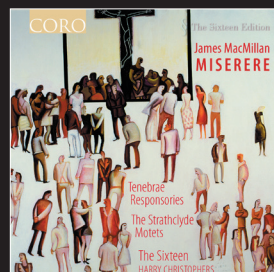
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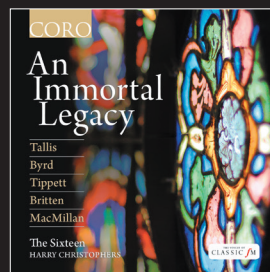
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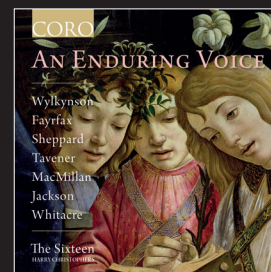
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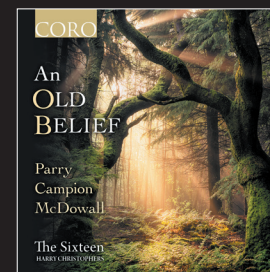
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