

The Tallis Scholars: Pärt & Palestrina

Fri 28 Mar, 7pm

The 500th anniversary of Palestrina's birth gives us the perfect opportunity to celebrate this most consummate of renaissance composers. From his time to ours he has come to represent an entire epoch of music, and to influence some of the greatest names from later centuries - among them Handel and Beethoven, though perhaps the greatest compliment was paid by J S Bach, who made his own edition of Palestrina's *Missa Sine nomine a 6*, with embellishments, to learn the style.

There would be many different ways of acknowledging Palestrina's achievement. I decided to showcase an outstanding mass setting from the 107 he wrote; include one or two of his greatest motets; and make a comparison with one of his peers. In this context, perhaps the most intriguing is with **Arvo Pärt**. Although Pärt doesn't write polyphony in the way Palestrina exemplified, he can create an atmosphere in his music which sits well alongside that of the renaissance master. In *Da Pacem*, for example, he takes up the standard renaissance technique of deploying a chant melody, and surrounding it with other contrapuntal lines. And their two views, old and contemporary, of the *Nunc dimittis* text are fascinating.

c. Peter Phillips, 2025

Texts & Translations

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/6-1594): *Surge illuminare*

Surge, illuminare Jerusalem: quia venit lumen tuum, et gloria Domini super te orta est. Quia ecce tenebrae operient terram, et caligo populos: super te autem orietur Dominus, et gloria eius in te videbitur.

Et ambulabunt gentes in lumine tuo et reges in splendore ortus tui. Leva in circuitu oculos tuos, et vide: omnes isti congregati sunt, venerunt tibi: filii tui de longe venient, et filiae tuae de latere surgent. Tunc videbis et afflues, et mirabitur et dilatabitur cor tuum, quando conversa fuerit ad te multitudo maris, fortitudo gentium venerit tibi. Inundatio camelorum operiet te, dromedarii Madian et Epha: omnes de Saba venient, aurum et thus deferentes, et laudem Domino annunciantes.

Arise, shine, O Jerusalem: for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you.

The people shall walk in your light and the kings in the splendour of your rising. Look all around you and see: all men have gathered there and have come for you; your sons will come from afar and your daughters will arise from all sides. Then you will see, you will be fruitful and your heart will be amazed and astonished when the mass of the sea is turned towards you and the courage of nations will come to you. A vast number of camels will overwhelm you, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha; All they from Sheba shall come, bringing gold and incense and proclaiming the praises of the Lord.

Palestrina: Missa Brevis

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.
Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te; benedicimus te; adoramus te; glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram; qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus; tu solus Dominus; tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise thee; we bless thee; we worship thee; we glorify thee. We give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father almighty.

O Lord the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art Holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo; Lumen de Lumine; Deum verum de Deo vero; genitum, non factum; consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus et sepultus est.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris; et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos; cuius regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per prophetas; Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; begotten, not made: being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made.

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

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

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

---INTERVAL----

Palestrina: Lamentations III for Holy Saturday

Incipit oratio Jeremiae prophetae:

Recordare Domine quid acciderit nobis; intueri et respice opprobrium nostrum. Haereditas nostra versa est ad alienos, domus nostrae ad extraneos. Pupili facti sumus absque patre, matres nostrae quasi viduae. Aquam nostram pecunia bibimus: ligna nostra pretio comparavimus. Cervicibus nostris minabimur, lassis non dabatur requies. Aegypto dedimus manum, et Assyriis, ut saturaremur pane. Patres nostri peccaverunt, et non sunt: et nos iniquitates earum portavimus. Servi dominati sunt nostri: non fuit qui redimeret de manu eorum. Ierusalem, Ierusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Here begins the prayer of Jeremiah the prophet:

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows. We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us. Our necks are under persecution: we labour and have no rest. We have put ourselves into the hands of Egypt and the Assyrians to have our fill of bread. Our fathers sinned and are no more, but we bear the burden of their wickedness. Slaves have

become our masters and there is no one to deliver us from them. Jerusalem, Jerusalem return to the Lord your God.

Arvo Pärt (b.1935): Da pacem, Domine

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris
quia non est alius
qui pugnet pro nobis
nisi tu Deus noster.

*Grant peace, O Lord, in our time
because there is no one else
who will fight for us,
if not you, our God.*

Palestrina & Arvo Pärt: Nunc dimittis

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace:
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen*

Arvo Pärt: ...Which was the Son of...

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim,
which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph,
which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of
Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz,
which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of
Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham,
which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec,
which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of
Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of
Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam,
which was the son of God.

Peter Phillips Director

Peter Phillips has dedicated his career to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony, and to the perfecting of choral sound. He founded The Tallis Scholars in 1973, with whom he has now appeared in over 2,500 concerts world-wide, and made over 60 discs in association with Gimell Records. As a result of this commitment Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars have done more than any other group to establish the sacred vocal music of the Renaissance as one of the great repertoires of Western classical music.

Peter Phillips also conducts other specialist ensembles. He is currently working with the BBC Singers (London), the Netherlands Chamber Choir (Utrecht), the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (Tallinn), The Danish Radio Choir (Copenhagen) and El Leon de Oro (Oviedo). He is Patron of the Chapel Choir of Merton College Oxford.

In addition to conducting, Peter Phillips is well-known as a writer. For 33 years he contributed a regular music column to *The Spectator*. In 1995 he became the publisher of *The Musical Times*, the oldest continuously published music journal in the world. His first book, *English Sacred Music 1549-1649*, was published by Gimell in 1991, while his second, *What We Really Do*, appeared in 2013. During 2018, BBC Radio 3 broadcast his view of Renaissance polyphony, in a series of six hour-long programmes, entitled *The Glory of Polyphony*. He is a regular reviewer on music for the London Review of Books.

In 2005 Peter Phillips was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture. In 2008 Peter helped to found the chapel choir of Merton College Oxford, where he is a Bodley Fellow; and in 2021 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of St John's College, Oxford.

The Tallis Schollars

Amy Haworth soprano
Emma Walshe soprano
Daisy Walford soprano
Victoria Meteyard soprano
Elisabeth Paul alto
Anna Semple alto
Steven Harrold tenor
Simon Wall tenor
Tim Scott Whiteley bass
Rob Macdonald bass
Peter Phillips director