

# The London Oratory School

# SCHOLA CANTORUM

In Oriel College Chapel  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 5:00pm-6:00pm



A concert performed during the conference on Virtues in the Public Sphere in the College dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Oxford.









THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL  

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SCHOLA CANTORUM

Director of the Schola: Charles Cole

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018  
Oriol College, Oxford

*Cantate Domino &  
Adoramus te, Christe  
O quam gloriosum &  
Ave Maria*

*Ave verum corpus  
O nata lux &  
Salvator mundi (I)*

*Hear my prayer  
Beati quorum via  
Hymn to the Virgin*

*Locus iste,  
Os iusti &  
Ave Maria*

*Nunc Dimittis*

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548-1611)

William Byrd (1540-1623)  
Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)  
C.V. Stanford (1852-1924)  
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)  
Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

*Please note that recording and filming  
of this performance is not permitted.*

*Please reserve applause for the end of the concert.*

# THE SCHOLA CANTORUM OF THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

The Schola Cantorum of The London Oratory School sings at London's Brompton Oratory every Saturday evening in term. Founded in 1996, the choir gives Catholic boys the opportunity of a choral education within the state education system from age 7 to 18. As well as its liturgical role, the Schola has recorded numerous soundtracks, including the *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* films, as well as CDs and programmes for television and radio. The choir has also toured widely abroad, performing throughout the USA and Europe. In 2013 the Schola sang at High Mass in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and was the first visiting choir in history to sing at Vespers there. Other recent touring destinations include Spain, Bavaria and Venice. Last October the Schola toured the East coast of the United States singing in Boston, New York and Washington DC. Recently signed by AimHigher Recordings/Sony Classical, the Schola released *Sacred Treasures of England*, a CD of English Tudor music last year and will shortly be releasing the next CD in the series.

Since 2012 the Schola has been directed by Charles Cole who began his musical training as a chorister at Westminster Cathedral. He went on to win major music scholarships to Ampleforth College, Exeter College, Oxford and Westminster Cathedral. He is also Director the London Oratory Junior Choir, and is member of the faculty for the Church Music Association of America's annual colloquium.

The current patrons of the Schola are Robert Cardinal Sarah, Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent and Sir James MacMillan CBE.

[www.londonoratoryschola.com](http://www.londonoratoryschola.com)

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# PROGRAMME

## NOTES

The two motets which open our concert were published in Venice in 1620. **Claudio Monteverdi** held a position at the court in Mantua before being appointed to the prestigious position of Maestro di Cappella at St Mark's, Venice. *Cantate Domino* draws on secular influences in the triple-time dance-like setting of the text, drawn from Psalms 95 and 97. *Adoramus te, Christe* is a powerful and devotional setting of an adapted text from the Book of Hours.

**Tomás Luis de Victoria** was born in 1548 in Avila, Spain. He sang as a chorister at Avila Cathedral before being sent to Rome to study. He became organist and chapelmaster at the German College as well as at the Roman Seminary. He was ordained priest in 1574 and joined St Philip Neri's Oratorians at the Church of San Girolamo della Carità. In 1587 he returned to Spain where Philip II named him chaplain to his sister, the Dowager Empress Maria who was living in retirement at the Monastery of Las Descalzas Reales in Madrid. He served the Empress until her death in 1603 and remained at the convent as organist until the end of his own life. *O quam gloriosum* is a freely-composed setting of a text for All Saints', while the beautiful *Ave Maria*, a setting of the Hail Mary, moves into triple-time in the mid-section.

Both **William Byrd** and his teacher, **Thomas Tallis**, were composers whose Catholicism was overlooked by Queen Elizabeth I on account of their exceptional compositional talent. This was formally acknowledged when she granted them a monopoly on the printing of music. Byrd's *Ave verum corpus* is possibly the most iconic motet of the period, an exquisite setting of a Corpus Christi text. The harmony of Tallis's *O nata lux* demonstrates the quintessential false-relations of the Tudor period, while *Salvator mundi* was the opening work in their first joint publication, a collection of sacred music entitled *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575).

**Henry Purcell** made an enormous contribution to English Cathedral music during his short life, during which he was Organist at Westminster Abbey. The magnificent eight-part *Hear my prayer* is the opening of a larger work which was never completed. In the unfolding of the extraordinary harmonic language, Purcell uses dissonance to incredible effect and stretches tonality beyond the limits of the time.

**Sir Charles Villiers Stanford** was Organist of Trinity College Cambridge and later Professor of Music at Cambridge University. The Three Motets Op.38 which were originally used as Introids and later sung in Hall at Trinity College, Cambridge as Grace on Feast Days. *Beati quorum via* is a beautifully constructed work in which the flowing crotchets at 'ambulant' suggest the steps of those who 'walk in the way of the Lord'.

**Benjamin Britten** wrote *A Hymn to the Virgin* at the age of 16. Based on a macaronic text, it employs two choirs antiphonally, the second choir here being sung by a solo quartet. Despite being an early work, the young composer's instinctive gift of word-setting is evident and the exquisite craftsmanship is already apparent. It was sung at the composer's funeral at Aldeburgh Parish Church.

**Anton Bruckner** was a chorister at the Baroque monastery of St Florian near Linz, Austria, and later Assistant Organist there. His motets for the Catholic Church, of which he was a devout member, show a concision in style yet also allude to the grandeur of his work as one of the great symphonists.

*Locus iste*, written for the dedication of the votive chapel in Linz Cathedral, contains his hallmark use of silence to dramatic effect. As a result of its beautiful simplicity it is undoubtedly Bruckner's most widely-sung choral work in the Roman Catholic Liturgy. Largely chordal, it is written in ternary (ABA) form with an inner section in which the tenors sing a rhythmic canon against the trebles and altos.

*Os iusti*, the Gradual for Feasts of Doctors of the Church, is written in ternary form, the two outer sections being largely homophonic (chordal). By contrast the contrapuntal inner section 'et lingua' is a fugue initiated by the altos, with a particularly demanding and angular version of the countersubject in the tenors. Vertical unanimity returns after the pause at 'Lex Dei', leading to a reprise of the beautiful expansive *divisi* section where the trebles and basses reach polar extremes before converging inwards to bring about a beautiful series of suspensions.

*Ave Maria* opens with a prayer-like section for upper voices which is answered by the lower voices, before they combine in three iterations of 'Jesus' which increase in range and dynamic, marking the theological apex of the prayer. The 'Sancta Maria' section juxtaposes the upper and lower voices in dialogue before arriving at a sustained chord on 'Dei'. 'Nunc et in hora' returns to the chordal simplicity of the prayer-like opening, with word-painting evident in the octave descents at 'mortis nostrae'.

**Gustav Holst** wrote his *Nunc dimittis* in 1915 at the behest of Sir Richard Terry, the first Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral. It received its first liturgical performance that year on Easter Sunday, but the manuscript was lost and the work forgotten. Imogen Holst, the composer's daughter, reconstructed it in the 1970s from a partial autograph copy, and it is this version which we sing today.









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