



Saturday 4 May, 3pm  
St Paul's Church

## THE 'CONTENANCE ANGLOISE'

English influencers in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Europe

### BREMFB Consort of Voices

Deborah Roberts *director*

Janet Gascoine *bass viol*

Maria Birch, Janet Gascoine, Cat Hogan,  
Liz Kelly, Naomi Law, Bibi Lees, Hannah  
Loach, Rebecca Reese, Silvia Reseghetti,  
Cathy Rowland, Natasha Stone, Liz Webb,  
Nick Boston, Nicolas Chisholm, James  
Elias, John Gillies, Dan Hodd, Tony Jay,  
Matthew Ryan, Maurice Shipsey, David  
Waterhouse *singers*

Leonel Power c.1380–1445

Ave maris stella

John Dunstable 1390–1453

Veni sancte spiritus /Veni creator spiritus

Anonymous

L'homme armé

Guillaume Dufay 1397–1474

Missa L'homme armé: Kyrie and Gloria

Dunstable

Descendi in hortum meum

Walter Frye d. c.1474

Salve Virgo mater pia

Dunstable

Gaude virgo – Virgo mater

Dufay

Missa Sancti Jacobi: Alleluia

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As many will know, national borders were profoundly different and constantly shifting in medieval Europe, and since 1066 'and all that' French language and culture had dominated the English court, while the English owned and lost several territories in what is modern day France. Long-standing political rivals France and England nevertheless enjoyed a rich cultural exchange, as musicians and artists can always see the bigger picture!

England's most influential composer was John Dunstable (c.1390-1453), more often originally referred to as 'Dunstaple'. Although little is known about his life, he is likely to have travelled in France with his patron John of Lancaster, the Duke of Bedford, and certainly owned property there. In fact, it is thanks to his fame on the Continent that any of his music actually survived following the destruction of so many music manuscripts at the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in England. The same is also true of Walter Frye, who clearly spent much of his life in France and whose music only survives in Continental sources. Another problem is that so much of the music surviving in English sources, such as the Old Hall Manuscript, is unattributed. Luckily we do have some named compositions by Leonel Power, c.1380-1445, the composer most represented in this source.

Guillaume Dufay (c.1397-1474) began his early career in Cambrai, France but spent much of his working life in various parts of Italy employed at the principal musical centres of the day before returning to Cambrai, as probably the most renowned composer in Europe. It is during this final period of his life that he wrote the *L'homme armé* mass, based on the melody of a popular song of the same name. Dufay's use of this melody as the *cantus firmus* of a mass was possibly the very first; over the next two centuries almost 40 more would be composed! See if you can pick out the melody, often most clear in the tenor part, but also woven into all of the others.

## Deborah Roberts



## The texts

Mass texts have been omitted

**Ave, maris stella,**  
Dei mater alma,  
atque semper virgo,  
Felix cœli porta.

Sumens illud «Ave»  
Gabrielis ore,  
funda nos in pace,  
mutans Evæ nomen.

Solve vincla reis,  
profer lumen cœcis,  
mala nostra pelle,  
bona cuncta posce.

Monstra te esse matrem,  
sumat per te precem  
qui pro nobis natus  
tulit esse tuus.

Sit laus Deo Patri,  
summo Christo decus,  
Spiritui Sancto  
tribus honor unus. Amen.

**Veni, Sancte Spiritus** (*upper two parts*)  
et emitte caelitus  
lucis tuæ radium.

Veni, pater pauperum,  
veni, dator munerum,  
veni, lumen cordium.

Consolator optime,  
dulcis hospes animæ,  
dulce refrigerium.

In labore requies,  
in aestu temperies,  
in fletu solatium.

O lux beatissima,  
reple cordis intima  
tuorum fidelium.

Hail, star of the sea,  
Nurturing Mother of God,  
And ever Virgin  
Happy gate of Heaven.

Receiving that "Ave"  
From the mouth of Gabriel,  
Establish us in peace,  
Transforming the name of "Eva"

Loosen the chains of the guilty,  
Send forth light to the blind,  
Our evil do thou dispel,  
Entreat (for us) all good things.

Show thyself to be a Mother:  
Through thee may he receive prayer  
Who, being born for us,  
Undertook to be thine own.

Praise be to God the Father,  
To the Most High Christ (be) glory,  
To the Holy Spirit  
(Be) honour, to the Three equally. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit,  
and send out from heaven  
the ray of your light.

Come, father of the poor,  
come, giver of gifts,  
come, light of hearts.

Greatest comforter,  
sweet guest of the soul,  
sweet consolation.

In labour, rest,  
in heat, temperateness,  
in tears, solace.

O most blessed light,  
fill the inmost heart  
of your faithful.

Sine tuo numine,  
nihil est in homine,  
nihil est innoxium.

Lava quod est sordidum,  
riga quod est aridum,  
sana quod est saucium.

Flecte quod est rigidum,  
fove quod est frigidum,  
rege quod est devium.

Da tuis fidelibus,  
in te confidentibus,  
sacrum septenarium.

Da virtutis meritum,  
da salutis exitum,  
da perenne gaudium.

**Veni creator spiritus** (*lower two parts*)

Mentes tuorum visita,  
Imple superna gratia,  
Quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui Paraclitus diceris,  
Donum Dei altissimi  
Fons vivus, ignis, caritas,  
Et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,  
Dexteræ Dei tu digitus,  
Tu rite promissum Patris,  
Sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus:  
Infunde amorem cordibus:  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius,  
Pacemque dones protinus:  
Ductore sic te praeviso,  
Vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem,  
Noscamus atque Filium;  
Te utriusque Spiritum  
Credamus omni tempore.

Without the nod of your head,  
there is nothing in man,  
nothing that is harmless.

Cleanse what is unclean,  
water what is parched,  
heal what is wounded.

Bend what is inflexible,  
warm what is chilled,  
correct what has gone astray.

Give to your faithful,  
who trust in you,  
the sevenfold gift.

Give virtue's reward,  
give salvation's end,  
give joy eternal.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,  
Vouchsafe within our souls to rest;  
Come with Thy grace and heav'nly aid  
And fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

To Thee, the Comforter, we cry,  
To Thee, the Gift of God Most High,  
The Fount of life, the Fire of love,  
The soul's Anointing from above.

The sev'n-fold gifts of grace are Thine,  
O Finger of the Hand Divine;  
True Promise of the Father Thou,  
Who dost the tongue with speech endow.

Thy light to every thought impart  
And shed Thy love in every heart;  
The weakness of our mortal state  
With deathless might invigorate.

Drive far away our wily Foe,  
And Thine abiding peace bestow;  
If Thou be our protecting Guide,  
No evil can our steps betide.

Make Thou to us the Father known;  
Teach us the eternal Son to own  
And Thee, whose name we ever bless,  
Of both the Spirit, to confess.

**Descendi in hortum meum,**  
ut viderem poma convallium,  
et inspicerem si floruisset vinea,  
et germinassent mala punica.  
Revertere, revertere, Sulamitis,  
ut intueamur te.

**Salve Virgo mater pia,**  
Ex te carnem, O Maria,  
Verbum patris induit.  
Salve per quam nos redemit,  
Christe mortem dum peremit,  
Et nobis condoluit.  
Salve celorum Regina,  
Per quam datur medicina  
Iudeis et gentibus.  
Salve vite reparatrix,  
Facta reis imperatrix,  
Tenebris sedentibus.  
Tu fac verbum incarnatum,  
Nos sentire complacatum,  
Salva a tuis precibus.  
Nos a culpa, nos a fece,  
Munda tua pia prece,  
et a peccati sordibus.

**Gaude virgo salutata** angelicore latu,  
mox es gravida libera omni reatu;  
in te deitas humanata celesti flatu,  
virgo manens illibata re et cogitatu.

Quod mirum si paveas, dum conceptus pandit,  
quanto magis caveas, cum ad partum scandit.  
Dum virgo permanens, mens hec verba pandit;  
dicens "Ne timeas," te mulcendo blandit.

Nondum contentaris, cum dicit parituram:  
quomodo miraris fietque curam;  
nescisse virum flaris, sed semper esse puram,  
credo, quod miraris, mutasse naturam.

Angelus: "Concipies de superis celestem  
Deum et tu paries filium terrestrem.  
In te non est caries, natum habes testem.

I went down into my garden  
to see the fruits of the valley,  
and to see whether the vine flourished  
and the pomegranates budded.  
Return, return, O Shulamite,  
that we might look upon thee.

Hail Virgin, pious mother,  
From thy flesh, O Mary,  
He put on the word of his father.  
Hail, by which he redeemed us,  
while Christ has destroyed death,  
And he took pity on us.  
Hail Queen of Heaven,  
By which the medicine is given  
To Jews and Gentiles  
Hail life repairer,  
After becoming the empress of the accused,  
Sitting in the dark  
You make the word incarnate  
We feel satisfied,  
Saved by your prayers.  
We are free from guilt,  
By your holy prayer  
and from the filth of sin.

Hail virgin, greeted by the angel's report,  
pregnant yet free of all sin:  
in you deity is made human by heavenly  
inspiration, virgin undiminished by act or  
thought.

And if you tremble at the miracle while the child  
develops, how much warier are you when it  
comes to be born. While you remain a virgin,  
the mind offers these words, and saying "Be not  
afraid," charms and eases you.

You do not contest it when he says you will bear  
a child, however much you wonder and are  
troubled. You are proclaimed not to have  
known a man, but to be ever pure, and – a  
thing to wonder at, surely – to have changed  
nature.

The angel: "You shall conceive the heavenly  
god from the realms on high, and bear a child  
of earth. There is no fault in you, as your son is

Leviatan insanies, hic fert tibi pestem."

ii

Gaude virgo singularis, mater nostri salvatoris,  
radix vite popularis, germen novi floris.  
Ex te sumpsit hinc tu paris ampullam liquoris  
que virtute aquas maris tenes stilla roris.

Dic, quo verbo concepisti, angeli vultui  
"Dominus tecum" audisti dicens, "fui tui."  
Presentem conclusisti, tunc naturam sui,  
Messiam invenisti de natura tui.

O celestis armonia, in hac junctioe,  
caro nostre cum sophia in unum persone;  
qualiter ex qua via studeas colone,  
hec sola mater novit pia et tu Jesu bone.

Mater heres Dei mundi redemptoris,  
pia tu memento mei in extremis horis;  
ne coartent mei rei, secum suis horis  
et presentas faciei mei plasmatoris.

*contratenor*

Virgo mater comprobatis, matrem partus  
indicat,  
claustrum ventris virginalis intactam te judicat.  
Virginem cum divinalis natus ille benedicat,  
celum, tellus, unda maris laudes tuas predicat.  
Non est partus hic penalis qui matrem letificat.  
Christus factus fraternalis sic ut exemplificat.

*tenor*

Ave gemma celi luminarium.  
Ave Sancti Spiritus sacrarium.

**Alleluia**

Hispanorum clarens stella  
Carismatum Iacob cella  
Mundi liminis sis stella  
Mare trans fretanum.

witness. You shall torment Leviathan, and he will  
plague you."

ii

Rejoice, unique maiden, mother of our saviour,  
Root of the people's life, seed of the new flower.  
He drew from you, you then bear, the flask of  
nectar, by your virtue you hold the sea's waters  
in a drop of dew.

Say by what word you conceived! You heard,  
"The Lord is with you," and answered the  
angelic countenance, "I am yours." You  
contained his presence, then his nature; you  
found the Messiah in your own nature.

O heavenly harmony in this joining,  
flesh of our person united with Wisdom:  
how and by what path you are so zealous,  
these things only the pious mother knew, and  
you, good Jesus.

Mother and heir of God, world's redeemer,  
recall me faithfully in my last hours,  
let my acts not constrain me with them in their  
hours, as you show me to the face of my maker.

*contratenor*

You are proved the virgin mother: the birth  
shows the mother, the seal of your virginal  
womb judges you untouched. When your divine  
child blesses you as virgin, then heaven, earth,  
and ocean waves preach your praises. This  
birthing is no penance, it gladdens the mother.  
Christ is made our brother, as his example  
teaches.

*tenor*

Hail, jewel of the lights of heaven!  
Hail, sacred place of the Holy Spirit!

**Alleluia**

O clear star of the Spaniards,  
James, storehouse of spiritual gifts,  
May you be the star at the end of the world  
To those hastening across the sea.

## The performers

**BREMF Consort of Voices (BCV)** is an ensemble of solo and consort singers formed from semi-professional, student and experienced amateur singers. Dedicated to giving dramatic and exciting performances of music from the Renaissance and early Baroque, the ensemble gives several concerts each year at BREMF. It has taken part in music ranging from 15th-century a cappella polyphony to the spectacular 1589 Florentine Intermedi with renaissance orchestra, great Venetian works with The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble and Purcell with Emma Kirkby and the International Baroque Players.  
[bremf.org.uk/ensembles/bcv](http://bremf.org.uk/ensembles/bcv)

**Deborah Roberts** was born in Europe and graduated from Nottingham University with an MA in editing and interpreting renaissance and baroque music. She has remained fascinated by the discovery of new repertoire and performance styles ever since. As a long-term former member of The Tallis Scholars, Deborah performed with them in over 1,200 concerts in many weird and wonderful places around the world and in countless recordings of rare and beautiful renaissance music. She also sang with many other early music ensembles as a soloist and consort singer. She took up choral direction 20 years ago, and enjoys running courses in sacred polyphony and early opera. In 2002 she co-founded Brighton Early Music Festival with Clare Norburn and remains its artistic director.