



Friday 18 October, 7.30pm
St Bartholomew's Church

CONNECTIONS OF POWER

Music for the 1468 wedding of Margaret of York to Charles the Bold of Burgundy

Cappella Pratensis

Andrew Hallock *superius*

Tim Braithwaite *superius, artistic director*

Lior Leibovici *altus*

Peter de Laurentiis *tenor*

Marc Busnel *bassus*

BREMFB Consort of Voices

James Elias *director*

Josquin Desprez c.1450–1521 /
Guillaume Dufay c.1397–1474

Ave maris stella

John Dunstable c.1390–1453

Gaude virgo

Plainchant

Introitus: Rorate coeli

Dufay

Missa Ecce ancilla Domini: Kyrie & Gloria

Plainchant

Alleluia: Ostende nobis Domine

Plainchant

Alleluia: In die resurrectionis meae

Walter Frye d.1474?

Missa Flos regalis: Credo

Plainchant

Offertorium: Ave Maria

Interval

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Plainchant	Prefatio
Dufay	Missa Ecce ancilla Domini: Sanctus
Plainchant	Pater noster
Frye	Missa Flos regalis: Agnus Dei I
Dufay	Missa Ecce ancilla Domini: Agnus Dei II
Frye	Missa Flos regalis: Agnus Dei III
Plainchant	Communio: Ecce virgo concipiet
Antoine Busnoys c.1430–1492	Regina coeli laetare II
Johannes Ockeghem c.1410–1497	Ave Maria
Jean Mouton c.1459–1522	Nesciens mater

The 2024 Festival was curated and programmed by artistic director Deborah Roberts BEM who died on 9 September. We are so grateful to Deborah for her creative, innovative and fearless programming, always seeking to bring the music she loved to new audiences.

The music

In the summer of 1468, the grand wedding of Margaret of York and Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, was one of the most spectacular events of the 15th century, symbolising not only political alliances, but also a vibrant cultural exchange between England and the Continent. Representative of this culture of exchange is the renowned Brussels MS 5557 manuscript, believed by some to have been directly connected to the wedding itself. This remarkable choirbook offers a fascinating glimpse into the sort of music that may have been performed at the festivities, containing compositions by some of the finest musicians of the time.

The manuscript features works by renowned composers from both sides of the English Channel. From the Burgundian School, we encounter the likes of Guillaume Dufay and Antoine Busnoys, whose compositions epitomise the intricate polyphony and elegant musical style of the Burgundian court. However, the manuscript also includes pieces by notable English composers such as Walter Frye and Richard Cox, reflecting the cultural interplay between England and Burgundy.

This programme draws particular attention to the influence of the "contenance angloise," a musical style characterised by smooth harmonies and melodic lines. Coined by French poet Martin le Franc in 1441–2, the term refers to the distinctly English musical aesthetic

that began to spread across Europe in the early 15th century. The style, with its emphasis on thirds and sixths, offered a stark contrast to the more complex and dissonant contrapuntal textures of earlier continental music, and its influence can be heard in many of the works featured in this programme.

The convergence of English and Burgundian musical traditions, as represented in Brussels MS 5557, is a testament to the rich cultural and artistic exchanges that were taking place during the 15th century. At a time when marriage alliances such as that of Margaret and Charles helped shape the political landscape of Europe, they also facilitated the blending of musical styles, fostering innovation and creativity.

In this concert, the two ensembles bring this magnificent repertoire to life, capturing the essence of the joyous celebration that took place over 550 years ago. The music of Guillaume Dufay and Antoine Busnoys is performed alongside compositions by English masters such as Walter Frye and John Dunstable, offering a musical journey that reflects both the grandeur of the Burgundian court and the sweet, harmonious "contenance angloise" style that so captivated audiences of the time. The polyphonic works of the programme are framed by plainchant appropriate for the Annunciation, sung from a beautiful 15th-century Missal used by the Burgundian court chapel and adorned with improvised counterpoint.

Tim Braithwaite

The texts

Mass texts have been omitted

Ave maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
atque semper virgo,
felix celi porta.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore,
funda nos in pace,
mutans Eve nomen.

Vitam presta puram,
iter para tutum,
ut videntes Jesum,
semper collemur.

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

Gaude virgo salutata angelico relatu,
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 permanes, 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.

Hail, star of the sea,
dear mother of God,
and forever a virgin,
happy gate of heaven.

Receiving that "Ave"
from Gabriel's mouth,
confirm us in peace,
reversing Eva's name.

Ensure a pure life,
grant a safe journey,
so that we may see Jesus
and always rejoice together.

Praise to God the Father,
glory to Christ in the highest,
to the Holy Spirit,
one honour to all three.
Amen.

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 – to have changed nature.

The angel: "You shall conceive the heavenly
god from the realms on high, and bear a child

In te non est caries, natum habes testem.
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 comprobaris, 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.

of earth. There is no fault in you, as your son is
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!

Rorate coeli desuper,
et nubes pluant justum:
aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem.
Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei:
et opera manuum eius annunciat firmamentum.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

Alleluia: Ostende nobis Domine
misericordiam tuam et salutare tuum da nobis.

Alleluia: In die resurrectionis meae
dicit Dominus praecedam vos in Galilaeam.

Ave Maria gratia plena,
Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus ventris tui.
Jesus Christus,
Amen.

Prefatio

V. Per omnia secula seculorum.
R. Amen.
V. Dominus vobiscum.
R. Et cum spiritu tuo.
V. Sursum corda.
R. Habemus ad Dominum.
V. Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.
R. Dignum et justum est.

Vere dignum et justum est, equum et salutare,
nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere,
Domine sancte pater omnipotens eterne Deus,
et te in assumptione beate Marie semper
virginis, collaudare benedicere et predicare.

Que et unigenitum tuum
sancti spiritus obumbratione concepit,
et virginitatis gloria permanente

Drop down like dew, O heavens above,
and let the clouds rain down righteousness:
let the earth open and bring forth a saviour.
The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

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.

Alleluia. Show us thy mercy, O Lord:
and grant us thy salvation.

Alleluia. On the day of my resurrection,
saith the Lord, I will go before you into Galilee.

Hail, thou that art highly favoured,
the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Preface

Throughout all ages of ages.
Amen.
The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is fitting and just to do so.

It is truly fitting and just, right and salutary, that
at all times and everywhere we should give you
thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God,
and to praise you, bless you and tell forth your
greatness in the assumption of the Blessed
Mary, ever Virgin.

Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit,
she conceived your only-begotten Son, and
with the glory of her virginity untouched,

lumen eternum mundo effudit,
Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.

she poured out on all the world the eternal light,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Per quem maiestatem tuam laudant angeli
adorant dominationes tremunt potestates, celi
celorumque virtutes ac beata seraphim socia
exultatione concelebrant.

Through whom the angels praise your majesty,
the dominations adore it, the powers tremble at
it, and the heavens and the forces of the
heavens and the blessed Seraphim magnify it
with shared exultation.

Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti iubeas
deprecamur supplici confessione dicentes:

We pray that you may bid our voices also to be
admitted with them as we say in humble
acknowledgement:

Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium, et
vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel.
Alleluia.

Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and his name shall be called Emmanuel.
Alleluia.

Regina coeli laetare, Alleluia,
Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia,
Iam resurgens sicut dixit, Alleluia,

Queen of heaven, rejoice, Alleluia,
For today you are worthy to bear, Alleluia,
Him who has risen again as he promised,
Alleluia,

Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.

Pray to God for us, Alleluia.

Nesciens mater virgo virum
peperit sine dolore
salvatorem saeculorum.
Ipsum regem angelorum
sola virgo lactabat,
ubere de caelo pleno.

Knowing no man, the Virgin mother bore,
without pain,
the Saviour of the world.
Him, the king of angels,
only the Virgin suckled,
breasts filled by heaven.

The performers

For almost 40 years, **Cappella Pratensis** has been renowned for its innovative approach to the performance of Renaissance polyphonic music, being one of only a handful of professional ensembles in the world who perform directly from historical notation, as opposed to transcriptions in the form of a modern choral score.

Cappella Pratensis performs regularly at leading international festivals and concert series throughout Europe, North America, South America and Japan, including the Boston, Berkeley, Utrecht and York Early Music Festivals. The ensemble's recordings have met with critical acclaim and distinctions from the press, including the Diapason d'Or, the Prix Choc and Gramophone Editor's Choice. Gramophone magazine recognised the ensemble's recording of the Ockeghem Requiem as the best out of more than 20 recordings made over the last 40 years. In 2022, Cappella Pratensis won the prestigious REMA-EEMN Heritage Project of the Year Award with the CD recording *Apostola apostolorum*. In October 2024, the ensemble's recording of Obrecht's *Missa Maria zart* won a Gramophone Classical Music Award in the category of Early Music, perhaps the most prestigious international award in Classical Music.

cappellapratensis.nl

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