

TALLIS

Spem in alium

Missa Salve intemerata

Oxford Camerata • Jeremy Summerly



Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)

Spem in alium · Salve intemerata (Mass and motet)

Considering that Thomas Tallis is the finest English composer of his generation, it is surprising how little we know about his life. The first time we hear of Tallis is in 1530 when he was organist at Dover Priory in Kent; by then he was clearly a respected professional musician. We also know that Tallis was described as being 'very aged' in 1577 and that he died in November 1585. Taking these three pieces of information together, the consensus is that Tallis was born around 1505 (thus placing him in his mid-twenties while working at Dover, in his early-seventies when he was described as 'very aged', and in his eightieth year when he died). Hardly conclusive, but there is not much else to go on.

The motet *Salve intemerata* is a setting of a long prose prayer to the Virgin Mary and is written for five voices in an expansively Catholic style. We know nothing of Tallis's whereabouts when he wrote this large-scale motet, but we do know that the oldest manuscript in which the motet survives was copied in the late 1520s and that the words are recorded in a Book of Hours which appeared in 1527. Yet in spite of its early date, *Salve intemerata* shows Tallis writing music of considerable fluency and invention, quite an achievement for a composer in his early twenties. With a composition portfolio that contained a work as substantial and proficient as this one, it is not difficult to see why Tallis was appointed to Dover Priory as a young man.

In 1535 Dover Priory was dissolved, and Tallis's job with it. By 1537 he was working at the church of St Mary-at-Hill in London. St Mary-at-Hill was an important musical foundation, and from there Tallis seems to have begun his association with the English royal court (in 1577 Tallis was described as 'serving your royal ancestors for forty years'). It is at this time that the *Missa Salve intemerata* may have been written. The Mass borrows heavily from the motet, particularly in the *Gloria* and *Credo*, yet it shows that Tallis's style had matured in the intervening years. More concise, direct, and vocally more pragmatic than the lengthy

motet, the Mass is his finest pre-Reformation achievement. The reason that the *Missa Salve intemerata* is not better known today is that one of the voice parts requires reconstruction (the Tenor part-book has been lost). Fortunately the missing part is the one directly above the lowest voice, the easiest one to reconstruct within this texture.

By 1538 Tallis was a senior member of the music staff at Waltham Abbey in Essex, but yet again Tallis's job dissolved along with the Abbey in 1540. Undeterred, he moved to the newly-founded secular establishment at Canterbury Cathedral, where he sang as part of the choir of twenty-two men and boys. The Reformation had a profound effect on English church music, most tangibly during the reign of Edward VI when late-medieval Latin polyphony, as exemplified by the *Salve intemerata* and its Mass, became outlawed. Tallis maintained his craft and his compositional voice, and provided the Church of England with largely homophonic music to English texts. He was, above all, a pragmatist, and he allowed the intimacy and directness of expression which this new style required to give another dimension to his compositional vision. Indeed, turbulent though this English liturgical revolution must have been to a lifelong Catholic, Tallis accepted the new musical order and learnt from it.

Some of Tallis's English-texted music was written in the Edwardian years of the Reformation, and the rest of it in Elizabethan England. *I call and cry* began life as an instrumental piece and only later did Tallis add words to it. Some time later it also became the Latin motet *O sacrum convivium*, yet the English word-setting is more fluid and convincing than the Latin version. Perhaps the reverse is true of *With all our heart* whose earliest text is clearly the Latin motet *Salvator mundi*. Most interesting of all is the 'Armada' anthem, *Discomfort them*, which acquired these English words three years after Tallis's death. Having been conceived as the Latin motet *Absterge Domine*, the belligerent English text was hurriedly wrapped around the motet's

scaffolding 'on the occasion of the Spanish invasion in 1588'.

Tallis served at court under four monarchs during his long life (Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth) as singer, organist, choir trainer, and composer. His musical genius and his years of service at court were recognised in 1573 by the granting of a license which allowed him and his supposed pupil William Byrd to maintain a monopoly over the printing and publication of music and music paper for 21 years. This extraordinary royal favour seems to have followed hard on the heels of the finest musical achievement of his career, the composition of the forty-voice motet *Spem in alium*. In 1567 the Mantuan composer Alessandro Striggio came to London; he brought with him *Ecce beatam lucem*, a motet in forty parts. According to a recollection of 1611, a music-loving Duke (possibly the Duke of Norfolk) 'asked whether none of our Englishmen could set as good a song'. Consequently, 'Tallis, being very skilful, was felt to try whether he would undertake the matter, which he did, and made one of forty parts which was sung in the Long Gallery at Arundel House'. Arundel House, off London's Strand, belonged to Norfolk's father-in-law, the Earl of Arundel, who ran a strong musical establishment. Moreover the Earl of Arundel also had a country residence, Nonsuch Palace, which had an

octagonal banqueting-hall. At Nonsuch Palace the octagonal hall would presumably have necessitated a performance of *Spem in alium* 'in the round', the octagon accommodating eight choirs of five voices each. It is unlikely that early audiences were either aware that all forty voices enter together for the first time at the fortieth semibreve, or that the piece lasts 69 longs (in the Latin alphabet, where I and J are the same letter, T=19, A=1, L=11, I=9, S=18, so TALLIS = 69). But those fortunate listeners surely shared the most impressive aural experience of their lives, and the number symbolism is a mark of the fact that when Tallis attempted something that must have seemed impossible to the average musician of his day, he still had technique in reserve.

This recording of *Spem in alium* was made using 'surround sound' (available on Naxos SACD 6.110111 and DVD-A 5.110111). The forty voices were arranged to form four sides of a huge St-Chad cross: Choirs 1 & 2 to the West, 3 & 4 to the North, 5 & 6 to the East, and 7 & 8 to the South. The recording was made to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Tallis's birth and the 21st birthday of Oxford Camerata — old members of Oxford Camerata met with their new counterparts for this performance of Tallis's masterpiece.

Jeremy Summery

Oxford Camerata

Oxford Camerata gave its first concert in Oxford on 22nd May 1984. Since then the choir has given concerts throughout Europe and has made thirty CD recordings. The core group comprises twelve singers with or without keyboard accompaniment, but for certain projects the choir has been made up of as few as four singers and as many as forty. After a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in the Snape Maltings on Good Friday 1986, Sir Peter Pears, who was at the performance, agreed to become the Oxford Camerata's first patron: sadly Sir Peter died within days and his place was taken by Baron Bullock of Leafield; this CD is dedicated to the memory of Alan Bullock who died on 2nd February 2004.

While the Camerata was initially recognised as a specifically early-music group, since the early 1990s the choir has expanded its repertory to include music from Gregorian chant to the present day. Hand in hand with this went the formation of the Oxford Camerata Instrumental Ensemble in 1992. Like the choir itself, the Instrumental Ensemble is of flexible size and can comprise from four to forty players working with either modern or period instruments. Oxford Camerata is regarded as one of the finest ensembles of its type in Europe, and in recognition of this the Camerata was awarded a European Cultural Prize by the *Födergemeinschaft der Europäischen Wirtschaft* in 1995.

Choir 1: Carolyn Sampson, Robin Blaze*, Simon Wall, Christopher Hodges, Costa Peristianis

Choir 2: Clare Dawson*, Thomas Williams, Daniel Norman, Maurice MacSweeney, Timothy Whiteley*

Choir 3: Rebecca Outram, Alison Coldstream, Steven Harrold, Jonathan Arnold, Timothy Brookes

Choir 4: Carys-Anne Lane*, Richard Wyn Roberts, Alastair Brookshaw, Nicholas Flower*, Julian Walker

Choir 5: Amy Haworth, Ian Aitkenhead*, Bene't Coldstream, Robert Rice, Stephen Rice

Choir 6: Lisa Beckley, Deborah Mackay, William Unwin, Steven Grahl, James Birchall*

Choir 7: Lisa Wilson*, Anne Jones*, David Knight*, Matthew Vine, David Buckley*

Choir 8: Abigail Boreham*, David Bates, Jeremy Budd*, Giles Underwood, Francis Steele

* singers involved in tracks [2](#)-[9](#)

Jeremy Summerly

Jeremy Summerly is Head of Academic Studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London. As well as a conductor and lecturer he is a writer/presenter for BBC Radio and an editor for Faber Music. He graduated from Oxford University with First Class Honours in Music in 1982 and thereafter undertook musicological research at King's College, London, while also working as a Studio Manager for BBC Radio. Between 1990 and 1996 he was conductor of Schola Cantorum of Oxford and he made his conducting début at the BBC Proms in 1999. He has given concert tours throughout Europe and the United States as well as in Israel, Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa, and Botswana. He has conducted Ligeti for Ligeti, Kagel for Kagel, and Pärt for Pärt.

1 Spem in alium

Spem in alium nunquam habui
praeter in te, Deus Israel,
qui irasceres et propitiu eris.
Et omnia peccata hominum
in tribulatione dimittis.
Domine Deus, creator coeli et terrae:
respice humilitatem nostram.

2 Salve intemerata

Salve intemerata Virgo Maria,
Filii Dei Genetrix,
praeceteris electa virginibus;
quae ex utero tuae matris Annae,
mulieris sanctissimae,
sic a Spiritu Sancto
tum sanctificata
tum illuminata fuisti,
munitaque tantopere
Dei omnipotentis gratia,
ut usque ad conceptum Filii tui,
Domini nostri Jesu Christe,
et dum eum conciperes,
ac usque ad partum,
et dum eum pareres,
semperque post partum,
virgo omnium
quae natae sunt
castissima incorruptissima
et immaculatissima
et corpore et animo
tota vita permanseris.

Tu nimirum universas
alias longe superasti virgines
sincera mentis
impollutae conscientia,
quotquot vel adhuc fuerunt
ab ipso mundi primordio,
vel unquam futurae sunt

I have never put my hope in another
except in you, God of Israel,
who will be angry yet become gracious.
And all the sins of man
in suffering you forgive.
Lord God, creator of heaven and earth:
look on our humility.

Hail, pure Virgin Mary,
Mother of the Son of God,
elected above other virgins;
who, from the womb of your mother Anne,
most holy of women,
was by the Holy Spirit
first sanctified
then illuminated,
and was so greatly strengthened
by the grace of almighty God,
that, before the conception of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
and while you conceived him,
and up until the birth,
and while you gave birth to him,
and always after the birth,
of all virgins
who were born, you have remained
most chaste, most incorruptible,
and most immaculate
in body and in spirit
for your whole life.

You have truly surpassed
all other virgins,
by the blamelessness
of your unpolluted mind,
as many as have existed
from the beginning of the world,
or ever shall

usque in finem mundi,
per haec nos praecellentissima
gratiae caelestis dona tibi,
Virgo et Mater Maria,
praeceteris omnibus
mulieribus et virginibus
a Deo singulariter infusa.

Te precamur,
quae miseris mortalibus
misericors patrona es,
ut pro peccatis nostris
nobis condonandis
intercedere digneris
apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem
eiusque Filium Jesum Christum,
secundum divinitatem
quidem ex Patre
ante omnia saecula genitum.

Secundum humanitatem
autem ex te natum,
atque apud Spiritum Sanctum,
ut peccatorum nostrorum
maculis tua abstersis intercessione,
tecum, sancta Virgo,
semper congaudere,
teque in regno caelorum
sine fine laudare mereamur.
Amen.

③ Missa Salve intemerata: Gloria

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.

until the end of the world,
infused with this most excellent
gift of heavenly grace,
Virgin and Mother Mary,
above all other
women and virgins,
by God specifically to you.

We pray you,
who of unhappy mortals
are merciful protector,
that in order for our sins
to be pardoned
you might deign to intercede
with almighty God the Father
and his Son Jesus Christ,
according to the divinity
of one who was begotten by the Father
before all worlds.

According to his humanity
because he was born of you,
and with the Holy Spirit,
that when the stains of our sins
have been removed by your intercessions,
with you, holy Virgin,
we may be worthy always to rejoice
in the kingdom of heaven,
and to praise without end.
Amen.

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace to those of goodwill.
We praise you; we bless you;
we worship you; we glorify you.
We give thanks to you
for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly king,
God the Father almighty.
O Lord the only Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, lamb of God, son of the Father.

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.

You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

You take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.

You sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are holy,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the highest:

Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

④ Missa Salve intemerata: Credo

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 exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

I believe in one God.

Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of God.

And born of the Father eternally,
God of God, light of light,
true God of true God;

begotten not made,
of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;

he who for mankind
and for our salvation
descended from heaven.

And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

He was crucified even for us
under Pontius Pilate;
he died and was buried.

And he rose again on the third day
according to the scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father.

And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

5 Missa Salve intemerata: Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

6 Missa Salve intemerata: Agnus Dei

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.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us,
Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

7 With all our heart

With all our heart and mouth we confess, praise, and bless thee:
God, the Father unbegotten; and thee, the Son, only begotten; with the Holy Ghost, the comforter.
Holy and unseparable Trinity, to thee be glory for evermore. Amen.

8 Discomfort them, O Lord

Discomfort them, O Lord, that trust in their own multitude and strength, and forget not that thou art even he, our
God, which destroyest wars from the beginning; for the Lord is thy name.
Lift up thine arm, and in thy power bring their power to nought; cause thy might to fall in thy wrath.
There was never proud person that pleased thee, but in the prayer of the meek hath thy pleasure been evermore.

9 I call and cry to thee, O Lord

I call and cry to thee, O Lord: give ear unto my plaint.
Bow down thine eyes and mark my heavy plight and how my soul doth faint.
For I have many ways offended thee: forget my wickedness, O Lord, I beseech thee.

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Playing Time
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Along with his pupil William Byrd, Thomas Tallis was the finest composer of the English Renaissance. This recording, released to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Tallis's birth, features his largest compositions for the church. The motet *Salve intemerata*, written when Tallis was a young man, is one of the longest single movements of the entire 16th century. Scored for forty independent voices, *Spem in alium*, a work of Tallis's maturity, dwarfs any other English work of the period. Symphonic in its proportions and conception, it is Tallis's greatest masterpiece.

Thomas TALLIS

(c.1505-1585)

Spem in alium • Missa Salve intemerata

1	Spem in alium (40-voice Motet)	12:14
2	Salve intemerata (Motet)	23:10
Missa Salve intemerata		
3	Gloria	6:41
4	Credo	7:56
5	Sanctus	7:47
6	Agnus Dei	5:27
7	With all our heart	3:15
8	Discomfort them, O Lord	6:38
9	I call and cry to thee, O Lord	4:12

Oxford Camerata • Jeremy Summerly

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Producer: Andrew Walton (K&A Productions Ltd.) • Engineer: Mike Clements

Post-production: Emma Stocker and Andrew Walton • Booklet Notes: Jeremy Summerly

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Cover Picture: *Panel from a diptych depicting the Angel of the Annunciation, the Donor and a Female Saint, possibly St Mary Magdalene* by Master of the Rohan Hours (fl.1420-40)

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