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The Sweetest Songs

Music from the
Baldwin Partbooks III

Contrapunctus
Owen Rees Director

SHEPPARD • WHITE • MUNDY • BYRD

THE SWEETEST SONGS

MUSIC FROM THE BALDWIN PARTBOOKS III

1	Domine, non est exaltatum	Robert White (c. 1535-1574)	[8.43]
2	Tristitia et anxietas	William Byrd (1539/40-1623)	[9.35]
3	In te Domine speravi	John Mundy (c. 1555-1630)	[8.02]
4	Confitebor tibi Domine	anon.	[3.36]
5	Peccavi super numerum	William Byrd	[6.00]
6	Domine quis habitabit	Robert Parsons (c. 1535-1571/2)	[3.56]
7	Memor esto verbi tui	William Mundy (c. 1528-c. 1591)	[7.13]
8	Confitebor tibi Domine	John Sheppard (c. 1515-1558)	[6.14]
9	Ne perdas cum impiis	William Byrd	[4.52]
10	Confitebor tibi Domine	William Daman (c. 1540-1591)	[2.25]
11	Portio mea	Robert White	[6.41]
Total timings:			[67.23]

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The richest single source of Tudor polyphony, preserving almost 170 works many of which survive nowhere else, is a set of manuscript partbooks copied between about 1575 and 1581 by John Baldwin, a lay clerk at St George's Chapel, Windsor. This album is the third and final instalment in a series of recordings by Contrapunctus exploring contrasting aspects of this remarkable treasure house of sacred music covering much of the sixteenth century. Without Baldwin's efforts our knowledge of the history of the motet in England would be much the poorer, and on this third recording we open a window on a striking aspect of that history: the penchant for setting Latin psalms as motets (the so-called 'psalm motet'). The principal English composers born between the 1510s and the 1530s all contributed to this genre of motet, but to a significant extent this fascinating repertory has lain in comparative obscurity and remains unfamiliar to modern audiences. More than half of the works on this album do not appear to have been recorded before now, including such glorious motets as White's *Domine, non est exaltatum*, William Mundy's *Memor esto verbi tui*, and Sheppard's *Confitebor tibi Domine*. Because the Tenor partbook has been lost from Baldwin's set, those works that survive only in that collection require some

reconstruction before they can be performed. New editions of most of the works on this album were prepared specially for the project, and in five of these (tracks [3](#), [4](#), [6](#), [8](#), and [10](#)) the missing Tenor part has been reconstructed by Owen Rees, while the tenor of Mundy's *Memor esto verbi tui* (track 7) is adapted from that by Jason Smart.

The preoccupation with the psalm motet over the middle part of the sixteenth century was a distinctively English phenomenon, when compared with the output of Continental composers. Why was this? The great advantage of psalm texts amid the religious vicissitudes which England experienced during these decades was that they were equally acceptable to Catholics and evangelical reformers (although many reformers objected to the use of Latin in services). However, contrary to the common view over the last half-century, it may well be that many of these works originated not in the Protestant England of Queen Elizabeth I (by which time such pieces would have had no specific liturgical function), but during the preceding reign (1553–1558) of her Catholic sister Mary, or that of Mary's and Elizabeth's father Henry VIII, when the psalm motet may indeed in many cases have been a liturgical

item. During these periods when Catholic rituals were in force in England, the tradition seems to have arisen there of providing polyphonic settings of psalms for particular liturgical slots. One such was Matins (or Tenebrae) of Holy Saturday, which includes the psalm *Domine quis habitabit* of which we have numerous settings by English composers: there are no fewer than five in the Baldwin partbooks, including three by Robert White alone. Other psalm motets seem likely to have fulfilled ritual functions equivalent to those traditionally occupied by polyphonic Marian antiphons in the evening sung devotions which were ubiquitous in pre-Reformation choral establishments: in the case of the psalm motets, these devotions (or 'memorials') were to the Holy Cross or the Trinity (for example), rather than to Mary. As such liturgical and ritual 'homes' for the psalm motet disappeared during Elizabeth's reign, the psalm motet continued to be cultivated by English composers who were familiar with these musical traditions (and with the continued prominence of some of the relevant psalm texts in Books of Hours, which were major sources for Latin and English texts to set as motets and anthems) but who were too young to have written some or all of their psalm motets during Mary's reign.

Unsurprisingly, many psalms motets, including those which must be Elizabethan in date, retain the 'fingerprints' – in terms of scoring, textures, structure, and style – which had characterised English polyphony for decades previously: the psalm motet was thus a vehicle for continuity within English musical culture as well as for innovation, particularly in terms of expressive response to text. The psalm texts offer, indeed, rich opportunity for such response, given their special nature within the Old Testament as personal and impassioned addresses to God. As St Athanasius put it, 'it is as though it were one's own words that one read; and anyone who hears them is moved at heart, as though they voiced for him his deepest thoughts.' Referring to Athanasius in his commentary on the first fifty Psalms published in 1539, Richard Sampson (Dean of the English Chapel Royal under Henry VIII) praised them as a 'garden of delights', a cornucopia of 'the sweetest songs' which touched upon the themes of all the other books of scripture.

The distinctive English traditions of polyphonic composition are vividly apparent in the first piece on the recording, Robert White's *Domine, non est exaltatum*. As is typical, we do not know when White was born, and there is hence uncertainty

about how much of his output dates from Mary's reign rather than Elizabeth's. We catch sight of him as a singer of junior rank at Trinity College Cambridge in the mid 1550s, during Mary's reign, but there is disagreement about whether he was a boy chorister (i.e. young enough to be singing with unbroken voice) at this point, and some of his works – such as the Marian *Tota pulchra es* and *Regina caeli* included on the previous album within this series – were surely written at Trinity College during Mary's reign. Judging by its style, *Domine, non est exaltatum* surely dates from the same period, rather than from Elizabeth's reign. The essential sound-world of the piece is one that had been established by English composers over the previous century: grand sonorities encompassing an overall range of three octaves, with the distinctive English treble as the highest voice; division of the piece into two halves, the first in triple time and the second in duple; articulation of the work by alternating sections for a reduced number of solo voices and fully-scored passages, the entrances of which are often dramatic, as at 'speret Israel in Domino' ('Let Israel hope in the Lord') in the second half of White's piece; passages of 'gimell' writing, in which some of the voice parts – here the bass – are further

subdivided to produce thickly-woven textures of echoing voices; and notably florid and energetic melodic writing. Since psalm motets such as this one were not written to be used as the normal psalmody of such Office services as Vespers, they do not end with settings of the doxology (the 'Gloria'), but instead many of them – including *Domine, non est exaltatum* – culminate in monumental and climactic settings of 'amen', as did many of the great Marian antiphon settings by Tudor composers. Of the motets on this recording, other magnificent examples conclude White's *Portio mea*, William Mundy's *Memor esto verbi tui*, and *In te Domine speravi* by his son John Mundy.

John Mundy is much the youngest composer represented on the recording, and his *In te Domine speravi* demonstrates the remarkable longevity of aspects of the English tradition of psalm-motet writing just described. He was organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor, from about 1580 and so he and Baldwin were colleagues; it is therefore not surprising that most of his surviving Latin-texted works are preserved in the Baldwin partbooks. The text of Mundy's *In te Domine* is not – as was conventional within the psalm-motet genre

in England – a complete psalm or a complete section of the long Psalm 118, but is a compilation of single verses from three different psalms. However, in musical terms many of the same stylistic characteristics – such as elaborate melodic and rhythmic filigree – and architectural conventions are there as in the psalm motets of his father and others of that older generation such as White. For example, the hugely extended and mesmerising gimell section, beginning 'Vide humilitatem meam', is scored for the same voice-parts (divided means, contratenors, and basses) as in William Mundy's *Memor esto verbi tui*. Although the striking short-note declamation at 'non erubescam quoniam speravi' in the gimell of the younger composer's piece goes further than such declamatory moments in William's motet, the rhythmically lively declamation of 'peregrationis' in *Memor esto* likewise occurs during the gimell. As had his English predecessors writing in this style for many decades, John Mundy exploits tellingly the potential for dramatic alternation of soloists' and fully scored sections, adding force to the plea 'Exaudi Domine vocem meam' ('O Lord, hear my voice') in the first part of the piece, as had his father at the equivalent point in *Memor esto*, positioning this first appearance

of the full forces at a significant shift in the text's affect ('The proud acted iniquitously altogether'). By way of contrast, after the dense contrapuntal play of the gimell section in the second part of John Mundy's work a sudden turn to simple chordal declamation marks touchingly the well known prayer from the service of Compline, 'In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum', 'Into your hands O Lord I commend my spirit'.

William Mundy's *Memor esto* may form a pair with the last example on this recording of the grand psalm motet using traditional English construction and style: *Portio mea* by White. This pairing is suggested by the fact that the texts of the two works are successive sections of the monumental Psalm 118. The motets open with trios for the same three voice-parts, and the endings of their first sections – the insistent repetitions of 'et consiliatus sum' in Mundy's piece and the threefold declamation of 'non sum oblitus' in White's – may be echoes of one another: this may have been prompted by a textual parallel, White's text here being 'I do not forget your law' and Mundy's 'I remembered, O Lord, your judgements of old...'. White and Mundy certainly knew one another: Mundy was a Gentleman of

the Chapel Royal during White's years as Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey, from 1569 or 1570 until his death of the plague in 1574. White's motet again shows how long-established English compositional habits were repurposed by this generation of psalm-motet composers to serve the potent expression of the impassioned psalm texts they were setting. A telling example is the beginning of the second part of *Portio mea*, which draws upon the decades-old English custom of starting a new section with a duet and then introducing a third voice 'late' when the second phrase of text is reached. White here deploys this device to make vivid the psalm's image 'in the middle of the night [or 'at midnight'] I shall arise to give thanks'. The 'nocturnal' bleakness and sobriety of the tenor and bass duet opening, with stark octaves between the voices, is dispelled by the sudden intrusion of the high treble for 'I shall arise to give thanks'.

The Baldwin Partbooks are our main source for the music of John Sheppard, containing more items by Sheppard than by any other composer, and indeed Baldwin marked his high estimation of the composer by giving him pride of place, opening the books with a group of his motets. This group comprises psalm motets except for

one work with an unusual and intriguing text, *Confitebor tibi Domine*. This text is based upon a passage from the Book of Isaiah, but this has been substantially altered in ways that would have made it particularly appropriate to the first year or so of Mary Tudor's reign, from August 1553, while she was working to restore Catholicism as the country's official faith, but before the official reconciliation with the Church of Rome and absolution of the nation in late 1554. In Isaiah's text the Lord's anger has already been turned away and the speaker has been comforted, whereas in Sheppard's version the divine forgiveness is yet to be achieved: 'let your anger be turned away and you will comfort me'. The new text inserts references to the joy brought by the return to and spreading of (true Catholic) 'doctrine', and concludes with the exultation of 'the blessed church of Christ'. Sheppard chose a style for his motet which is far from the slowly unfolding grandeur of the psalm motets by William Mundy and Robert White on this recording, and which foregrounds the dramatic delivery of text, presenting it compactly with clear-cut divisions into short musical paragraphs, using abundant chordal declamation and antiphonal exchanges between high and lower voices.

Robert Parsons's *Domine quis habitabit* stands still further away from the traditional English manner of building great polyphonic edifices from the alternation of extended solo-voice and fully scored portions, although antiphony between high and low voice-groupings is once again prominent: here the basic sound-world evokes that of the contemporary Continental motet, busy with the play of imitation between the six voice parts which produces an effect of effervescent energy. This lively imitative style, using the *lingua franca* of contemporary Continental polyphony, is heard also in the unattributed and very fine *Confitebor tibi Domine* copied by Baldwin and in the motet with the same title by William Daman, both of which are recorded here for the first time. Daman was brought from his native Italy in the 1560s to serve in the group of household musicians maintained by Thomas Sackville, and in 1579 he became one of Queen Elizabeth's musicians. An arresting harmonic swerve in his *Confitebor tibi Domine* shining a spotlight on the phrase 'you have delivered my soul from hell' is worthy of Lassus. In the anonymous *Confitebor tibi Domine* the entire final section is repeated to reflect the text 'his justice endures from age to age', a conceit common in both English and Continental works,

but the effect here is notably dynamic: the climactic ascent through successive entries of 'manet in sæculum' is extended the second time around so that the top voice peaks on the highest note in its range as the piece's final gesture.

Such works – and indeed the contents of the Baldwin Partbooks more generally – highlight how extraordinarily eclectic was the motet (including psalm settings such as these) in Elizabethan England and at Elizabeth's court. This eclecticism is encapsulated in the work of the greatest English motet composer of the age, William Byrd, whose output is (after Sheppard's) the most richly represented in Baldwin's manuscript. In the early 1570s Byrd took up the place in Elizabeth's Chapel Royal which had been occupied by Robert Parsons until his death, and he was thus a colleague of Baldwin's in that choir. The first group of works by Byrd in the Baldwin Partbooks includes two pieces recorded here – *Peccavi super numerum* and *Ne perdas cum impiis* – which Byrd never published. *Ne perdas* is either an early piece or a deliberately archaic one: although taken mainly from Psalms 25 and 139, the text is a liturgical item (a responsory for Passion Sunday), an

element of the rituals swept away in Elizabeth's reign. Byrd maintains the English tradition of setting such items by laying out the plainchant as a cantus firmus in semibreves: here the chant is hidden from the listener in the outer sections of the piece by being placed in a lower voice, but surfaces in the topmost voice for the verse (the middle section). *Peccavi super numerum* is a fine early example of Byrd's mastery of setting penitential texts in a deeply affective manner, the text in this case being partly from the Prayer of Manasseh, an apocryphal ode appended to the Book of Psalms. But it is markedly surpassed in expressive power by another of the Byrd motets in Baldwin's anthology and one of his greatest masterpieces: *Tristitia et anxietas*. Here we see Byrd's powers as a musical orator at their most potent and compelling. The emotive power is intensified by the expansiveness of the canvas on which each element of the text is depicted, such as the doleful and mesmerically repetitive intoning of the opening word 'tristitia', the steadily mounting anguish of the successive statements of 'in dolore', the urgently paced cries of 'consolare', and the concluding pleas of 'miserere mei'.

Contrapunctus's project which ends with this recording has cast a spotlight on three contrasting aspects of the vast collection of polyphony bequeathed by John Baldwin: works concerned with mortality, pieces in honour of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child, and settings of the psalms. Through the thirty works selected we have revealed the extraordinary chronological and stylistic reach of his anthology, providing a history of Latin polyphony in England from the early sixteenth century to the motets of his admired contemporary William Byrd. It might seem as though all the archaeology required for us fully to know the Tudor sacred repertory has long ago been completed, given the enduring fascination with this period and the long traditions of editing, studying, and performing its music. But a project such as this one vividly reveals how much fine music lingers still in obscurity and awaiting rediscovery.

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TEXTS

1 Domine, non est exaltatum

Robert White

Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum, neque elati sunt oculi mei, neque ambulavi in magnis, neque in mirabilibus super me.

Si non humiliter sentiebam, sed exaltavi animam meam, sicut ablactatus est super matre sua ita retributio in anima mea.

Speret Israel in Domino ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

Amen.

Psalm 130

2 Tristitia et anxietas

William Byrd

Tristitia et anxietas occupaverunt interiora mea. Mæstum factum est cor meum in dolore, et contenebrati sunt oculi mei. Væ mihi, quia peccavi.

Sed tu, Domine, qui non derelinquis sperantes in te, consolare et adjuva me propter nomen sanctum tuum, et miserere mei.

Text adapted from Clemens non Papa's setting, itself partly adapted from Lamentations 5:17

TRANSLATIONS

O Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes raised, nor do I occupy myself with great matters, nor in wonders that are beyond me.

When I was not humble in thought, but lifted up my soul, like a weaned child upon his mother so was I recompensed in my soul.

Let Israel hope in the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.

Sorrow and anxiety have overtaken my soul. My heart has become sorrowful with grief, and my eyes have become dim. Woe is me, for I have sinned.

But you, O Lord, who does not forsake those who trust in you, console and help me for your holy name's sake, and have mercy on me.

3 In te Domine speravi

John Mundy

In te Domine speravi: non confundar in æternum; in iusticia tua libera me.

Respice in me, et miserere mei, quia unicus et pauper sum ego.

Exaudi Domine vocem meam qua clamavi ad te; miserere mei, et exaudi me.

Vide humilitatem meam et laborem meum, et dimitte universa delicta mea.

Legem pone mihi Domine in via tua, et dirige me in semita recta propter inimicos meos.

Custodi animam meam et erue me: non erubescam quoniam speravi in te.

In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum: redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis.

Amen.

Psalm 30:1; Psalm 24:16 ; Psalm 26:7, Psalm 24:18; Psalm 26:11; Psalm 24:20; Psalm 30:6

4 Confitebor tibi Domine

anon.

Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo, in consilio iustorum et congregatione.

Magna opera domini, exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus.

In you O Lord have I trusted: let me never be confounded; deliver me in your righteousness. Look upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

O Lord, hear my voice with which I cry to you; have mercy on me, and hear me.

Behold my humility and my labour, and forgive all my sins.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me in the right path, because of my enemies.

Keep my soul and deliver me: let me not be ashamed for I have trusted in you.

Into your hands O Lord I commend my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

Amen.

I shall acknowledge you O Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the just and the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, sought out by all that delight in him.

Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus, et justitia
ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

Psalm 110:1–3

5 Peccavi super numerum

William Byrd

Peccavi super numerum arenæ maris,
et multiplicata sunt peccata mea:
et non sum dignus videre altitudinem cœli,
præ multitudine iniquitatis meæ.

Responsory, Office of the Dead, and partly from the Prayer
of Manasseh

6 Domine quis habitabit

Robert Parsons

Domine quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo, aut quis
requiescet in monte sancto tuo?
Qui ingreditur sine macula, et operatur justiciam,
qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo, qui non egit
dolum in lingua sua,
nec fecit proximo suo malum, et opprobrium non
accepit adversus proximos suos.

Psalm 14:1–3

*Faith and magnificence are his work, and his
justice endures from age to age.*

*I have sinned beyond the number of the sands of
the sea,
and my sins have multiplied:
and I am not worthy to see the height of heaven,
because of the multitude of my iniquities.*

*Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle, or who
shall rest upon your holy hill?
He who walks without sin, and acts justly,
who speaks the truth in his heart, who has no
slander on his tongue,
who does his neighbour no wrong, and casts no
slurs on his neighbours.*

7 Memor esto verbi tui

William Mundy

Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo in quo mihi spem
dedisti.
Hæc me consolata est in humilitate mea quia
eloquium tuum vivificavit me.
Superbi inique agebant usquequaque, a lege
autem tua non declinavi.
Memor fui iudiciorum tuorum a sæculo Domine,
et consiliatus sum.
Defectio tenuit me pro peccatoribus
derelinquentibus legem tuam.
Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuæ in loco
peregrinationis meæ.
Memor fui nocte nominis tui Domine, et custodivi
legem tuam.
Hæc facta est mihi quia justificationes tuas
exquisivi. Amen.

Psalm 118:49–56

8 Confitebor tibi Domine

John Sheppard

Confitebor tibi Domine, quoniam iratus es mihi.
Avertatur ira tua et consolaberis me.
Ecce Deus salus mea; confidam in eo et non
timebo,

*Remember your word to your servant by which you
have given me hope.
This has comforted me in my humiliation because
you word has enlivened me.
The proud acted iniquitously altogether, but I did
not depart from your law.
I remembered, O Lord, your judgements of old,
and I was comforted.
Fainting has taken hold of me because of the
sinners that forsake your law.
Your justifications were the subject of my song in
the place of my pilgrimage.
In the night I remembered your name, O Lord, and
have kept your law.
This happened to me because I sought after your
justifications. Amen.*

*I will praise you O Lord, for you were angry
with me.
Let your anger be turned away and you will
comfort me.*

quoniam fortitudo mea et canticum meum.
Dominus Deus factus est mihi in salutem.
Haurietis doctrinam cum summo gaudio de
fontibus salutis,
et dicetis in die illa:
Confiteamini Domino, invocate nomen ejus, nota
facite in populis studia ejus;
in memoriam reducite quia exaltatum est nomen
ejus.
Psallite Domino, quia magnificam fecit scientiam
hanc in omni terra.
Canta et exulta felix Christi ecclesia, quia
magnus in medio tui Sanctus Israel.

Adapted from Isaiah 12

9 Ne perdas cum impiis

William Byrd

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, cum
viris sanguinum vitam meam.
Redime me Domine.
Eripe me Domine ab homine malo; a viro iniquo
libera me.
Redime me Domine.

Responsory, Passion Sunday (derived mainly from Psalm 25:9,
and Psalm 139:2)

*Behold God is my salvation; I will trust in him and
not be afraid,
for he is my strength and my song.
The Lord God is become my salvation.
With great joy shall you draw learning out of the
wells of salvation,
and on that day you shall say:
'Praise the Lord, call upon his name, make his
devotions known among the peoples;
restore them to mind, for his name is exalted.
Sing to the Lord, for he has magnified this
knowledge in every land.
Sing and exult, O blessed church of Christ, for
great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst.'*

*Do not take away my soul along with sinners, O
God, or my life with bloodthirsty men.
Redeem me Lord.
Save me Lord from the evil man; free me from the
iniquitous man.
Redeem me Lord.*

10 Confitebor tibi Domine

William Daman

Confitebor tibi Domine Deus meus in toto
corde meo,
et glorificabo nomen tuum in æternum,
quia misericordia tua magna est super me,
et eruisti animam meam ex inferno.
Alleluia.

Psalm 85:12–13

11 Portio mea

Robert White

Portio mea Domine: dixi custodire legem tuam.
Deprecatus sum faciem tuam in toto corde meo:
miserere mei secundum eloquium tuum.
Cogitavi vias meas, et converti pedes meos in
testimonia tua.
Paratus sum et non sum turbatus ut custodiam
mandata tua.
Funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me, et legem
tuam non sum oblitus.
Media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi, super
judicia justificationis tuæ.
Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te, et
custodientium mandata tua.
Misericordia tua Domine plena est terra;
justificationes tuas doce me. Amen.

Psalm 118:57–64

*I shall praise you O Lord my God with my
whole heart,
and I shall glorify your name for ever,
for your mercy unto me is great,
and you have delivered my soul from hell.
Alleluia.*

*You are my portion, O Lord: I have promised to
keep your law.
I have made my supplication in your presence
with my whole heart: have mercy on me according
to your word.
I pondered my ways, and I turned my feet to your
testimonies.
I am prepared and do not delay to keep your
commandments.
The congregations of sinners have encircled me,
and yet I do not forget your law.
At midnight I shall arise to give thanks to you,
because of your righteous judgements.
I am a friend to all who fear you, and keep your
commandments.
The earth is full of your mercy, O Lord; teach me
your statutes. Amen.*

CONTRAPUNCTUS

Director
Owen Rees

Soprano
**Esther Brazil, Amy Haworth, Alice Hulett*,
Ruth Provost***

Alto
David Gould*, Rory McCleery

Coupling powerful interpretations with path-breaking scholarship, Contrapunctus presents music by the best known composers as well as unfamiliar masterpieces. The group's repertoire is drawn from England, the Low Countries, Spain, Portugal and Germany, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The scholarly facet of the group's work – including the discovery of long-lost music and reconstructions of original performing contexts – allows audiences to experience the first performances of many works in modern times. Since its foundation in 2010, the group has appeared in the AMUZ Festival in Antwerp, the Utrecht Early Music Festival, the Festival van Vlaanderen in Mechelen and Averbode, the Music Sacra Festival in Maastricht, the Festival

Tenor
Guy Cutting, Ashley Turnell

Bass
Nick Ashby#, Greg Skidmore, Giles Underwood

*Tracks 3, 6 & 7

#Track 1

de Música Antigua de Úbeda y Baeza in Spain, the Eboræ Musica Festival and Setúbal Festival in Portugal, the concert series at De Bijloke in Ghent, and the Martin Randall Festival of Spanish Music (Seville Cathedral). The ensemble's first two recordings, *Libera nos* and *In the Midst of Life*, were both shortlisted for the Gramophone Early Music Award. As Vocal Consort in Residence at the University of Oxford, the group is a collaborator in the *Tudor Partbooks Project*, the aim of which is to study the Baldwin partbooks and other sets of Tudor partbooks, to restore the missing voice parts of the repertoires they contain, and to broaden public knowledge of this repertoire.

www.contrapunctus.org.uk



OWEN REES

Owen Rees is both performer and scholar, his scholarship consistently informing his performances. Through his extensive work as a choral director, he has brought to the concert hall and recording studio substantial repertoires of magnificent Renaissance and Baroque music, including many previously unknown or little-known works from Portugal and Spain. His interpretations of these repertoires have been acclaimed as 'rare examples of scholarship and musicianship combining to result in performances that are both impressive and immediately attractive to the listener', and he has been described as 'one of the most energetic and persuasive voices' in this field.

He has been Director of Music at The Queen's College, Oxford, since 1997, and is Professor in Music at the University of Oxford. He began his conducting career while studying at Cambridge, and after graduating directed the Cambridge Taverner Choir from 1987 and A Capella Portuguesa from 1990. He has conducted at festivals worldwide, and is in demand as a leader of workshops on performance of Renaissance polyphony. His numerous CD recordings encompass a wide variety of choral repertory

from the Renaissance to contemporary music, and his work has three times been shortlisted for the *Gramophone* Early Music Award.



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Editions by David Mateer (track 1), David Fraser (tracks 2, 11), Owen Rees (tracks 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10), Jason Smart (tracks 5, 7), and Warwick Edwards (track 9).

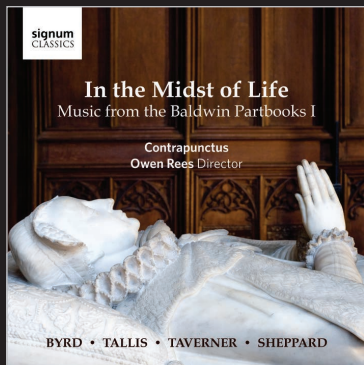
Producer and Editor – Adrian Peacock
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