

# HEAVENLY *LIGHT*

Eton Choirbook Reconstructions I

crd

Selene  
Daniel Gilchrist *Conductor*

# HEAVENLY LIGHT

## Emma Pauncefort writes...

Singing in chorus can in turns console and elate both performer and listener. When society locked down in the dark days of the Covid pandemic in 2020, videos flashed across the world showing Italians bursting into harmony from their balconies. In times of such unprecedented access to media, it was the conjoining of human voices that provided the ultimate source of comfort and joy.

If spontaneous music-making can offer this, then we are surely promised something *heavenly* in this project. Here, we have the ultimate force multiplier: the expression of composers drawn from two centuries, five hundred years apart, coming together with singers showcasing their impressive vocal virtuosity.

It is a fitting project for us as we build on our legacy as a label that

has championed hitherto unknown or rediscovered choral works – see our recording, for example, of Francisco Valls's *Missa Scala Arentina*, released two years after the first modern performance delighted audiences in Barcelona in 1978.

As darkness shrouds much of geopolitics today, this album is also a much-needed source of *light*. The works presented here are of immense cultural importance to England, but their impact happily knows no borders.

We hope, just as our editor Russell Blacker and conductor-and-tenor Daniel Gilchrist have strived to enable, that you equally find yourself transported to ethereal realms.

Emma Pauncefort *Director*  
Tom Pauncefort *Director*

## From the musical editor

*After silence, that which comes  
nearest to expressing the  
inexpressible is music*

– Aldous Huxley –

### *A national treasure*

The Eton Choirbook is recognised as one of the UK's national treasures – an extraordinary survival of the religious iconoclasm which swept away so many choral institutions and musical manuscripts as well as a great deal of beautiful art, architecture, sculpture, stone carving, stained glass, and embroidery from the colourful, pre-Reformation world.

The Eton Choirbook originally contained ninety-three works by twenty-five composers who hailed variously from Eton, Windsor, Eton's sister foundation at King's College, Cambridge, Ox-

ford, and the Royal Court. It was compiled, with great care and no expense spared, and completed around 1504/5. Robert Wylkynson (Master of the Choristers and composer at Eton College Chapel between 1496 and 1515) appears to have been instrumental in assembling the works: his own compositions are found in every level of compilation whilst his thirteen-part *Credo* and nine-part *Salve Regina* were added at the end in a different hand, quite possibly his own.

The Eton Choirbook is a large item placed high on a stand - as shown in the illustration - from which all the singers would have sung, huddled together, with the beat communicated and maintained by each singer tapping on the shoulder of the person in front (hence the musical term '*tactus*'). Singing in proximity like this would have helped greatly with ensemble which can be challenging in such rhythmically complex music.

But what makes the Eton Choirbook so special for both listener and performer is that the music it contains is hauntingly beautiful. There really is nothing like it in continental music of the time which the 'Eton' works surpass in scale (some last over fifteen minutes), number of voice parts, and use of wide vocal ranges - as well as the high degree of melodic invention and rhythmic complexity which places them beyond the reach of most choirs nowadays.

Above all, the cultural importance of the Eton Choirbook cannot be overstressed. From a musical point of view, it is the sole surviving source for many astonishingly talented English composers of the late C15th whose music would otherwise be totally unknown. One of only three surviving choirbooks from the period, the Eton Choirbook became, in 2018, the first music manuscript to be entered on the UNESCO Memory of the World register which honours documentary heritage of outstanding national significance.

Remarkably, it survives in the institution for which it was written.



Anon, Singers with scores, initial C from the codex Mátyás-Graduale, 1480-1490

### *The Eton 'style': descants and cantus firmi*

Many of the works are based around a 'cantus firmus' (typically a plainchant from the Sarum repertoire) which normally appears in the full-choir sections and provides both structure and harmonic direction. The choice of plainchant also provides additional religious 'meaning' or gloss to the principal text even though the original text of the plainchant is not used. Several of the more ambitious composers – Richard Davy, John Browne, Walter Lambe and Robert Wylkynson – employed two cantus firmi simultaneously, thereby setting themselves an additional technical challenge.

The use of a cantus firmus hints at how these monumental works might have been written: the upper voices bear all the hallmarks of an improvised descant which, as a training and performance technique, grew out the standard

practice of *discantus* or 'countering' – hence the long and seemingly wayward melodic lines which feature in the upper voice parts.

The 'Eton' style therefore evolved from earlier music, but major gaps in what has survived from the 50 years prior to its compilation makes it feel like it emerges from nowhere. English music in the early C15<sup>th</sup> was written mostly in three parts; however, by the time of Horwood and Banester (the oldest composers in 'Eton'), the number of voices had expanded to five, mostly through the addition of upper parts. In the six-part pieces where the cantus firmus is normally in the tenor, there is a downwards expansion of voice parts. With each additional vocal line, the sonority of the music increases and creates a resonance which the Eton composers were clearly seeking, and which first strikes a listener today. Vocal ranges of twenty or up to even twenty-three notes are commonplace

in Eton – far wider than practiced on the continent and indicating the presence either of boys able to sing very high, or, if transposed downwards, basses able to sing very low.

### *Choral drama and 'jubilant' virtuosity*

Musical rhetoric is introduced by constant variation in the scoring. Pieces usually begin with two or sometimes three voice parts, sung as solos, later expanding to three or four parts before the full choir is brought in often in a dramatic way. The 'reduced' voice sections are often highly rhythmic and ornamented and must have been reserved for the most proficient singers. The technical demands that the 'Eton' music places on singers indicates that the choirs for whom the composers were writing were at a zenith of competence. Indeed, English choirs of the period were admired for their prowess. During his visit in 1515, the Venetian ambassador noted that the English 'voices are more

divine than human; and as to the counter bass voices, they probably have not their equals in the world'. The continental composer-theoretician, Johannes Tinctoris, also made a favourable comparison of English singing ability in a much-quoted reflection on national singing styles: 'The French sing, Italians shake, Germans wail and the English rejoice' (*Galli cantant, Italiae capriant, Germani ululant, Anglici jubilant*). It is this jubilant style of composition and singing which comes across so clearly in the works on this album.

### *Rediscovering 'Eton'*

Given the above, it is tragic that a third of the original Choirbook is now missing – lost before the remaining two-thirds were rebound in the mid C16<sup>th</sup>, probably to provide repertoire following the revival of Latin polyphony under the Catholic Queen Mary.

However, hovering in a shadowy

area between the complete and the missing are twenty-one fragmentary pieces of which twelve retain at least half of their material. With appropriate knowledge and expertise, these can be reconstructed, thereby greatly expanding the surviving oeuvre of the likes of Wylykynson, Huchyn and Horwood and representing the only known works of several outstanding composers: Sygar, Holyngbourne and Brygeman. These reconstructions are therefore true 'discoveries,' heard now for the first time in over 500 years and they represent a major contribution to English musical heritage and culture.

Each work required differing levels of intervention to complete it. Each reconstruction posed a unique challenge: looking to discover each composer's individual quirks and style, searching for the best solutions for missing passages, spending many hours trying to discover missing 'cantus firmi', all whilst mak-

ing informed was judgment calls on *musica ficta* keys and modes. Exploring these works in detail from the 'inside', so to speak, allowed me to see and admire each composers' skill and musical imagination at work; the final product, as heard here thanks to Selene is, I hope, 'glorious'.

#### *A note on pitch and parts*

Selene found settling written A at 415Hz to be the most successful option, and this is how the pieces are performed on this album.

The vocal parts in the Eton Choirbook are mostly designated:

- Triplex – usually editorially designated as *Treble* and corresponding to the modern *Soprano*.
- Medius or *Mean* – corresponding to a high *Alto*.
- Contra-tenor – meaning against the tenor, variously corresponding to a high Tenor, comfortable *Tenor* or *Baritone*,

- Tenor – either *Tenor* or *Baritone*
- Bassus – or *Bass*

#### *The rediscovered composers and their works*

*'Art and Religion are two roads by which men escape from circumstance to ecstasy. Between aesthetic and religious rapture there is a family alliance.'*

– Clive Bell –

The earliest composer on this recording – **William Horwood** – worked at Lincoln Cathedral, then at Court in London, then back at Lincoln until his presumed death in 1484, a year before the start of the Tudor dynasty. He and other older-generation composers such as Banester (died 1487) form an important stylistic bridge between the famous Dunstaple (died 1453) and the later 'Eton' composers. Horwood's five-part *Gaude Virgo Mater*

*Christi* has a lyricism familiar from his other works. Here, one fifth of this piece has been reconstructed (the Mean and Bass voices in the second half and part of Tenor 1). It is an exhilarating piece in a high tessitura, probably written in the late 1470s or early 1480s shortly after the death of Dufay and contemporaneous with Busnois and Ockeghem, though seeming to inhabit a completely different sound-world.

**Nicholas Huchyn** is thought to have been a chorister at Eton in the late 1460s before becoming lay clerk and instructor (1485-1504) at Arundel College, Sussex. Only one other work of his has survived which, given the quality of his writing, is regrettable. *Ascendit Christus*, of which the first half is now lost, is a magnificent antiphon for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. It is written in five parts but no cantus firmus is employed. In the second half, the Treble, Tenor 1 and Tenor 2 lines have been reconstructed.

It is a serenely beautiful work which includes many examples of 'Eton style' voice-pairing between higher and lower voices.

**Robert Holyngborne** would remain entirely unknown but for this one surviving work; fortunately, only a fifth (two voices in the final section) are missing and require reconstruction. Based initially at Canterbury Cathedral and then at Oxford where he became Doctor of Theology, Holyngborne died in 1508. *Gaude Virgo Salutata* is written for four men's voices within a two-octave compass; it employs dense counterpoint in which the voices tumble over each other in a dazzling display of virtuosity. He manages successfully to sustain interest within a limited harmonic palette and drives the music forward to an exciting conclusion.

**Robert Fayrfax** was born in 1464 and seems to have spent much of his time writing for the Court. The

first half of his *Ave Lumen Gratiae* for four men's voices is included here for stylistic and tonal variety. The reconstructed second half of this work will appear on the second album.

*Gaude Flore Virginali* by **Richard Davy** (at Magdalene College, Oxford, until his departure in the early 1490s) is written on the grandest scale and calls for six voices with the Mean at one point divided into *two*. Davy employs two plainsong cantus firmi in the full sections – in Tenor 2 (*Virgo flagellatur*) and Contratenor (*O lux beata trinitas*) yet, perhaps lacking the confidence of his contemporaries, he never uses them at the same time. The first section of the work has not survived; a quarter of the remainder has been reconstructed – the missing Treble, Contratenor, Tenor 1 and Bass lines. Following Davy's lead later in the work, I re-used the cantus firmus *O Lux Beata Trinitas* in the Tenor 1 part. The work begins with a long

section for two solo voices before moving to three, then back to two before a dramatic entry of the full choir with the words '*A Jesu dulcissimo*'. Further explorations of different textures follow before a final and rich six-part Amen where rocking major/minor harmonies arising from the different key signatures are exploited.

The star of the show – **Robert Wylykynson** – is represented here by four reconstructions, representing over a doubling of his surviving oeuvre. *O Virgo Prudentissima* in six parts is unique in employing a text from a foreign source; in this case, a poem by the Florentine humanist Angelo Poliziano, written in 1493 and set by no less than the great Josquin des Prez. One wonders why Wylykynson departed from setting the normal repertoire of English religious texts? One possible scenario may be the visit in 1497 of two Italian envoys to the court of Henry VII, both of whom knew Poliziano. During

their visit to the King at Woodstock, and their reception in Oxford, Henry VII went out of his way to impress; we know that he was keen to stress his nation's Renaissance humanist credentials and it is possible that he commissioned Wylykynson – just down the road at Eton – to produce something suitable for the occasion. Wylykynson's choice of cantus firmus – *Angelus autem Domini* – also makes play on Poliziano's name.

The surviving second half of Wylykynson's setting of the poem is missing the Mean, Tenor 2 and Bass parts, which have been reconstructed. It is a bright work full of imitation and many of Wylykynson's trademark musical motifs. Although the key signature is the same in all voices, he nonetheless chooses to create harmonic ambivalence by deliberately inserting naturals versus flats.

In re-examining Wylykynson's extant compositions, I sensed that he was

a composer trying to 'outshine' previous 'Eton' composers in compositional skill and suspected that he might have used a second cantus firmus. I discovered that the nativity chant *Nesciens Mater* (heard in the second Tenor) 'fits' the remaining parts although, if correct (and another solution may yet be found), this somewhat undermines the theory of Wylkynson's commissioning since the Italians left in September.

Wylkynson's *Gaude Virgo Mater Christi* is a gentle and reflective Advent piece for four-part men's voices, of which the Countertenor 1 and Tenor voices in the first half (a quarter of the whole) have had to be reconstructed. It makes prominent use of harmonic resolutions involving the interval of a sixth which are a recognised feature of the 'Eton' style. Daniel and Selene chose to perform this work one-to-a-part.

A copy of Wylkynson's five-part *Salve Decus Castitatis* once existed

in the music library of King's College, Cambridge, indicating two-way traffic between the institutions. Half of the work has been reconstructed: the Mean and Bass parts, and the Countertenor part from halfway through. Again, Wylkynson rocks the harmony back and forth between natural and flattened thirds which, given the absence this time of a cantus firmus, must have been for purely musical effect. There is greater use of imitation in this work, typical of the later generation of 'Eton' composers, and it ends with marvellous and flowing Amen.

Wylkynson's *Magnificat a6* is a compositional *tour de force* employing, two simultaneous cantus firmi, both of which are based on the faburden of the Magnificat chant – one of them in Tone IV (Tenor 2) and the other in Tone V (Tenor 1) unique in English settings. He makes the technical challenge all the harder by having the cantus firmi stated in

long, undecorated, note values but, to avoid inevitable harmonic clashes, he brings the second cantus firmus in two bars behind the first. Normally, cantus firmi in 'Eton' were reserved for the full choir sections; however, it became clear during reconstruction that Wylkynson decided to continue it in many of the reduced-voice sections including, unusually, the Bass voice. Half of this work has been reconstructed: the Treble, Countertenor and Tenor 1 parts in the first half, and the Mean, Tenor 2 and Bass parts in the second half. It is an exhilarating work which is as glorious to sing as to hear.

### *Acknowledgement*

I was drawn to make these reconstructions during the long period of Covid lockdowns, although their gestation began many years earlier when directing a choir in London which specialised in English pre-ref-ormation music. Over the course of some years, we performed almost all the works from the Eton Choir-

book and came to understand how these works may have been constructed and what tempi, pitch and articulations worked best.

I am very grateful in preparing these reconstructions for the guidance and wisdom I received from Professor Magnus Williamson; the reconstructions, however, are entirely my own. Each reconstruction went through several versions, indicating that there are several potential solutions to the missing sections, but the versions finally arrived at were those that worked best from a musical and stylistic point of view.

Many thanks go also to the Musica Britannica Trust / Stainer & Bell whose Volume 3 of the Eton Choirbook, edited by Magnus Williamson, began the process of exploration and led to the adoption of some existing editorial decisions alongside re-examining the original manuscript (using the facsimile published by DIAMM) and identifying some additional errata.

A second album of Eton Choirbook reconstructions will feature the only surviving works by John Sygar and William Brygeman – both of them extraordinary pieces – as well as magnificent music by Walter Lambe, William Cornyshe, and Robert Fayrfax plus extant works by Gilbert Banester and John Browne book-ending the life of Prince Arthur.

The reconstructed scores will be made available so that these works continue to delight, inspire as well as challenge singers and listeners alike.

*Russell Blacker, Cornwall,  
August 2024*

## From the Conductor

### *Re-animating the reconstructions*

I feel enormously fortunate that Dr Blacker attended a Selene concert in February 2023 and invited us to bring to life the fruits of a substantial project: the reconstruction of outstanding Eton Choirbook pieces. They are astonishing products of a labour of love, the magnitude of which I am sure humility would prevent him from expressing as fully as I can. This album is our first instalment in this endeavour.

The danger of the label 'reconstruction' is that we think immediately of familiar music (Byrd, Gibbons, Tomkins &c.) preserved in incomplete sets of partbooks, a common format in which vocal music from the late C16<sup>th</sup> and early C17<sup>th</sup> survives. A set of partbooks contains many pieces, each book carrying the music for one voice part only, and sev-

eral such sets survive with one book missing. Editors preparing their contents for modern performance must compose a new part that fits with the preserved ones. This isn't necessarily a highly creative process: a prevailing style of close imitation between parts and standard rules about types of parallel motion and chord inversions usually mean that, in any given passage, there are two or three very similar solutions for the final part. In such instances, the work is aptly named a 'reconstruction' as it is likely that the resultant part is close to the original.

The reconstructions on this album are a completely different proposition, as they come from a choirbook: a single, enormous tome around which a whole choir would gather, open at a double page spread containing all the parts for the piece with each part in its own corner or section of a page. In general, where these pieces are preserved incomplete, it is because one of the

two halves of the double page are missing, and, with it, not simply one of the voice parts, but half of them. For example, three of the five parts on the opening track of this album are entirely editorial. Meanwhile, as Russell has already noted, we do not have the luxury of widespread imitation. In the late C15<sup>th</sup> English style, imitation between voices had begun to be used as an occasional 'effect' but was not yet the basic principle of polyphonic music – in general, the voices are presenting different material simultaneously.

Together, the organisation of parts and compositional style mean that, where music is missing, rather than having a handful of options in a given passage, the reconstructor might conceivably have hundreds, and so is engaged in a much more creative task. The pieces on this album are, on one level, ancient works of art nobly restored to their former glory... looked at another way, though, they are novel results

of a creative collaboration between individuals who were alive in the 1490s and one who lives in the same part of the world about 500 years later.

I have been struck with simultaneous and equal force by two aspects of these pieces in particular: the very great demands they make on singers' vocal agility and musical awareness, and their extraordinary capacity to express unbridled joy. Here are surely examples of precisely the English rejoicing mentioned by Tinctoris (see above). The division of the tactus into (often) a swinging three, and the rhythmically complex lines formed from every conceivable combination of further twofold and fourfold divisions of this, give an irrepressible dance quality to many passages, and the sopranos tease the listener as their dazzling runs reach ever higher extremes of range, with the attainment of the highest note (generally a written B $\flat$ , sometimes B) often

saved until near the end. There is a mood of exultation achieved by this style that depends upon the virtuosic expectations placed upon the singers: its complexity a necessary precondition of its emotional and spiritual impact.

Not every piece or section is so extroverted, and the album opens with a quieter joy: part two of *Ascendit Christus*, in 'four-square' duple time throughout, is a masterclass in slow development and ethereal beauty, painting the entrance into the heavenly realm of the Blessed Virgin Mary to join her Son. The music at the end is self-descriptive: we, the singers, being those who remember her by creating a poor echo of her heavenly beauty here on Earth. Next, *O Virgo Prudentissima*, takes us straight into full-blown 'anglici jubilant' territory, beginning with the best setting of the word 'O' I have ever encountered.

Mary, to whom Eton College Chap-

el is dedicated, is the subject and focus of praise in all the pieces here represented, a reminder of how significantly the nature of English devotion changed in the following centuries. The texts (apart from the *Magnificat* and *Ascendit Christus*) are lovely examples of Medieval Latin lyrics that trip along in short rhyming stanzas, a style most familiar through texts like *dies iræ* and *stabat mater*, here refreshingly turned to happier subjects.

I am fascinated by the Eton composers' approach to setting these texts. Initially noticing a tendency to pick a syllable apparently at random and extend it for bars and bars (purists may substitute longs and longs and longs), building up and taking to a conclusion a polyphonic musical idea while just singing one vowel, I thought the principal mode of engagement with the words was highly abstract – basically 'instrumental' writing tuned to a roughly similar

affect. In fact, this isn't the whole picture at all and there are just as many passages where text setting is completely song-like. Herein lies the rationale for Selene to take on this repertoire – one of the group's founding tenets was that our initial repertoire of late C16th polyphony is susceptible to the same song-like treatment of text, line and drama as, say, Schubert. It has been a joy to discover that the same is true a century before and we have been, in turn, unashamed in bringing this out in these performances.

One of my favourite moments of text setting on the album are the words '*a Jesu dulcissimo*' in Davy's *Gaude Flore Virginali*. Following a sublime passage for reduced forces that we expect to cadence onto an F, the full choir joins singing the word *A* on the loveliest B $\flat$  major chord. A '*Jesu*' is then sung in smooth quasi-homophony, and then we get to the first syllable of '*dulcissimo*' (sweetest). I fully expect

the legato knife to just keep twisting more intensely here – and instead, the treble part skips down and up in a light dotted rhythm, totally changing the mood. It turns out it is an innocent sweetness – strawberries rather than golden syrup – and it is a moment of genius!

Incidentally, *Gaude Flore* is quite wild harmonically. The top two parts do not have the B $\flat$  in the key signature that the others do, which produces an interesting effect that composers of the time evidently enjoyed playing with. Where there happen to be a few bars' consistency in whether the note B is a flat or natural version, Davy seems to use some harmonic progressions that just happen to sound surprisingly familiar from C18<sup>th</sup>-common-practice harmony. This is a stylistic feature that is consistent (of course) between the reconstructed parts of the music and the pre-existing end section. The resultant combination of oddly modern sounding

sequences with very un-modern, directionless see-sawing between F-based and G-based modes is fascinating to the C21<sup>st</sup> ear.

The most text-heavy piece on the album, and in my opinion a brilliant feat of musical storytelling, is Holyngbourne's *Gaude Virgo Salutata*, which races through lines and lines of tetrameter describing most of the key episodes in the life of the Blessed Virgin. I will be curious to hear how it strikes a listener on first meeting. Given the somewhat involved polyphonic writing, I suspect even the most accomplished Latinist might not catch all the narrative details the first time through and really very little happens harmonically and texturally other than changes between double and single voices. Having been fully inside it (I was singing in this one) I find it particularly compelling: it retains my full attention and a strong forward motion for the first seven minutes or so, when at the final couple of

stanzas it allows itself to be more expansive, and gradually ramps up the pressure again to a really excellent Amen.

If any reader only has time to listen to one track, please make it the *Magnificat* setting in six parts by Wylkynson. It combines all the qualities of virtuosity, text setting and harmonic variety at the composer's disposal in the greatest measure of all the pieces, and is a glorious piece of music, with local brilliance unified by a grand and entirely compelling architecture. I feel undeserving of the honour of making the first recording of this piece.

I hope that every listener finds themselves positively moved by the music on this album, which I really think is quite an amazing thing: a set of collaborative compositions by a group of brilliant musicians born in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and one born in the 20<sup>th</sup>, given voice by twelve brilliant singers and a very grateful con-

ductor, almost none of whom have any conscious memory of a century before the 21<sup>st</sup> – and many of whom still earn their daily bread as singing men and women in the same chapels where the Tudor composers were likewise employed.

*Daniel Gilchrist, Hatfield,  
August 2024*

## Texts

*Accepted translations amended where appropriate by Russell Blacker*

### *Ascendit Christus*

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*Ascendit Christus* super caelos et praeparavit suae castissimae matri immortalitatis locum et haec est illa praeclara festivitas omnium sanctorum festivitatis incomparabilis - in qua gloriosa et felix mirantibus caelestis curiae ordinibus ad aethereum pervenit thalamum quo pia sui memorium immemor nequaquam existat.

*Christ ascended above the heavens, and prepared for His most chaste Mother the place of immortality; and this is the splendid festivity, beyond comparison with the feasts of all the Saints, in which she in glory and rejoicing, as the orders of the heavenly courts beheld in wonder, came to the heavenly bridal chamber; that she in*

*her benevolence may ever be mindful of those that remember her.*

### *O Virgo Prudentissima*

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*O Virgo prudentissima,*  
quam caelo missus Gabriel  
supremi regis nuntius  
plenam testatur gratia.

Cuius devota humilitas  
Gemmis ornata fulgidis  
Fidentis conscientiae  
Amore Deum paruit.

Te sponsam factor omnium,  
Te matrem Dei Filius,  
Te vocat habitaculum  
Suum beatus Spiritus.

Per te de tetro carcere  
Antiqui patres exeunt;  
Per te nobis astriferae  
Panduntur aulae limina...

*O Virgin most wise whom Gabriel, sent from heaven as messenger of*

*the most-high king, affirms as full of grace. Whose devout humility decorated with glittering jewels conscientious faith gave birth to God in love. The maker of everything called you wife, the Son of God called you mother, the blessed Spirit calls you his home. Through you the ancient fathers are freed from their foul prison; through you are opened to us the gates of the starry palace...*

### *Ave, Lumen Gratiae*

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*Ave, lumen gratiae,*  
Fons misericordiae  
Virgo fecundata,  
Radix pudicitiae,  
Spes aeterne gloriae,  
Regina beata.  
Ave venerabilis,  
Mater admirabilis  
Per quam lux est orta  
Flos incomparabilis,  
Splendor ineffabilis,  
Felix caeli porta.  
Ave novum gaudium,

Salutis exordium,  
Lumen veritatis  
Caeli luminarium,  
Languoris remedium,  
Forma sanctitatis.  
Ave, lucis speculum,  
Christi tabernaculum,  
Virgo benedicta,  
Que salvasti populum  
Pariendo parvulum  
Per quem mors est victa.

*Hail, light of grace  
wellspring of mercy  
virgin most fruitful,  
root of chastity,  
hope of eternal glory,  
blessed Queen.*

*Hail, venerable and,  
admirable mother  
from whom sprang the light;  
flower beyond comparison,  
indescribable splendour,  
blessed gate of heaven.*

*Hail, new joy,  
the beginning of salvation,*

*the light of truth;  
luminary of heaven,  
remedy for sickness,  
a form of holiness.*

*Hail, mirror of light  
tabernacle of Christ  
blessed virgin,  
you saved your people  
by giving birth to a small child  
through whom death has been con-  
quered*

### *Magnificat*

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**Magnificat** anima mea Dominum  
et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo,  
salutari meo.  
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ  
suæ: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me  
dicent omnes generationes.  
Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens  
est, et sanctum nomen eius,  
et misericordia eius a progenie in  
progenies timentibus eum.  
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dis-

persit superbos mente cordis sui.  
Deposuit potentes de sede et exal-  
tavit humiles;  
esurientes implevit bonis et divites  
dimisit inanes.  
Suscepit Israel puerum suum recor-  
datus misericordiæ suæ,  
sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,  
Abraham et semini eius in sæcula.  
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sanc-  
to:  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et  
semper, et in sæcula sæculorum.  
Amen.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord:  
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my  
Saviour.  
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of  
his handmaiden.  
For behold, from henceforth: all gen-  
erations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath magnified  
me: and holy is his Name.  
And his mercy is on them that fear  
him: throughout all generations.  
He hath showed strength with his  
arm: he hath scattered the proud in*

*the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from  
their seat: and hath exalted the hum-  
ble and meek.  
He hath filled the hungry with good  
things: and the rich he hath sent  
empty away.  
He remembering his mercy hath hol-  
pen his servant Israel: as he promised  
to our forefathers, Abraham and his  
seed, for ever.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### *Gaude, Virgo Mater Christi*

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**Gaude, virgo mater Christi**  
Quae per aurem concepisti,  
Gabrielis nuntio.

Gaude, quia Deo plena  
Peperisti sine poena,  
Cum pudoris lilio.

Gaude, quia tui nati  
Quem dolebas mortem pati,  
Fulget resurrectio.

Gaude Christo ascendente,  
Et in caelum te vidente,  
Motu fertur proprio.

Gaude quod post ipsum scandis,  
Et est honor tibi grandis,  
In caeli palatio.

Ubi fructus ventris tui,  
Per te detur nobis frui,  
In perenni gaudio.  
Amen.

*Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ who  
has conceived through hearing, Ga-  
briel being the messenger. Rejoice,  
for full of God you gave birth without  
pain, with the lily of chastity. Rejoice,  
for the resurrection of your Son now  
shines, whose suffering of death  
you mourned. Rejoice, as Christ as-  
cends, and, in your sight, is carried  
into heaven by his own will. Rejoice,  
for after this you ascended and you*

*receive great honour in the palace of heaven where, through the fruit of your womb, is granted to us to enjoy in perpetual rejoicing.*

### *Gaude, Flore Virginali*

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#### *Gaude, flore virginali*

Te benignam et felicem  
Jesu dignam genitricem  
Veneratur in gloria.

Gaude nexu voluntatis  
Et amplexu caritatis  
Juncta sic altissimo,  
Ut ad votum consequaris  
Quicquid virgo postularis  
A Jesu dulcissimo.

Gaude mater miserorum  
Quia pater saeculorum  
Dabit te colentibus  
Congruentem hic mercedem  
Et felicem poli sedem  
Regnis in celestibus.

Gaude virgo mater Christi

Quia sola meruisti,  
O virgo piissima,  
Esse tantae dignitatis  
Quod sis sanctae trinitatis  
Sessioni proxima.

Gaude virgo mater pura  
Certa manens et secura  
Quod haec septem gaudia  
Non cessabunt, nec decrescent,  
Sed durabunt, et florescent  
Per aeterna secula. Amen.

You, most gentle and blessed, the worthy mother of Jesus, worships in glory.

Rejoice in the binding of will and the embrace of love thus joined in the highest, that you are faithful to your vow whatever, O virgin, is asked of you by sweetest Jesus.

Rejoice, mother of mercy, for the father of the ages will give those who worship you appropriate reward here and the blessed throne of the

world to rulers in the heavens.

Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ, for you alone were worthy, O most holy virgin, to be of such worthiness that you may be to the holy trinity seated nearest.

Rejoice, pure virgin mother, and of this be certain and secure, that these seven joys will neither end nor decrease but will last and flourish through eternal ages. Amen.

### *Salve decus castitatis*

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#### *Salve decus castitatis.*

Fons, origo pietatis.  
Flos et gemma virginum.  
Mater Christi.

Templum Dei Via vite,  
porta spei Vita salus hominum.  
Flos spineti, rosa mundi  
Nos impuri, nos immundi.

Tendentem in invium  
Revocemur tua prece  
Ne damnemur dira nece  
nobis sis remedium. Amen

Hail the jewel of chastity. The fountainhead of piety. The flower and gem of virgins. Mother of Christ. The temple of God, the way of life, the door of hope, life, and salvation of mankind. Flower among thorns, the rose of the world. We are impure and unclean, mired in iniquity, may we benefit from your intercession lest we be damned. May you be our remedy. Amen.

### *Gaude, Virgo Salutata*

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#### *Gaude, virgo salutata,*

Cui soli intimata  
Dei est sententia,

salutat primum angelus  
quid ait tunc archangelus?  
Ave plena gratia

Gaude quia tu Maria  
concepisti virgo pia  
sine viri semine

Jesus Christum novo more  
absque poena vel labore  
obumbrante flamine.

Gaude quam et salutavit  
Elizabeth quae portavit  
praecursorem filii;

illa statim prophetavit  
proles ventre quae saltavit  
vir magni consilii.

Gaude cum post nati partum  
Reges magni est compartum  
inspirato veniunt

natum tuum honorarunt  
tria magna quae portarunt  
ac Herodem fugiunt.

Gaude mater cum fugisti  
in Egyptum quae inisti  
ne periret filius;

tecum Joseph commigravit  
missus Deo hoc mandavit  
ut iretur citius.

Gaude templo Salomonis  
quae vidisti cum patronis  
disputantem filium

admirantum sapientes  
tui nati sunt dicentes  
divinum ingenium.

Gaude cum post mortem petit  
celos natus et decrevit  
ornare sedem tuam,

quam cum vitam hanc egisti  
tu Maria mater Christi  
haberes perpetuam.

Gaude cui preces dantur  
quae cum audes relevantur  
apud tuum filium.

Fac amemur te rogamus  
ne post mortem pereamus  
da sedes caelestium.  
Amen.

Rejoice, o much-greeted virgin, to whom alone is made known God's purpose. First, an angel greeted you. What did the archangel say on that occasion? 'Hail, O lady full of grace.' Rejoice, because you, Mary, a pious virgin, without the seed of a man conceived Jesus Christ in a new manner without penalty or suffering when the spirit overshadowed you. Rejoice: you were also greeted by Elizabeth, who carried the forerunner of your son; that child at once prophesied, by jumping in her womb, a man of great wisdom. Rejoice, that after your son's birth great kings, on learning by divine inspiration, came to you; the three great gifts which they brought honoured your son; and they fled from Herod. Rejoice: when as a mother you fled, you entered Egypt, so that your son should not perish. Joseph travelled with you; on being sent, he trusted God to give you a quick and safe journey there. Rejoice: in Solomon's temple you saw your son debating with the experts in the law;

these wise men were amazed, declaring that your son's intelligence was divinely inspired. Rejoice, that after death your son ascended to the heavens and decided to prepare a dwelling for you Mary the mother of Christ, to have for ever when you had completed this life. Rejoice: to you prayers are offered, and when you hear them they are lifted up into the presence of your son. We ask you to grant that we are loved; so that we may not perish after death, give us dwellings in heaven.

Amen.



© Daniel Gilchrist

## Conductor

**Daniel Gilchrist** (b. 1999) is a conductor and tenor based in the UK. A first-study cellist as a teenager, his musical home shifted to the arena of vocal music while studying at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge between 2017 and 2020. Since then, he has enjoyed a varied career at home and abroad singing music from the C12<sup>th</sup> to the C21<sup>st</sup>. He co-founded the group Selene in 2022 whilst working as a Lay Clerk at New College, Oxford, and is its musical director. He is also in nominal control of the liveliest parish choir in the Home Counties at St Etheldreda's, Hatfield.

**Selene** (*suh-LEE-knee*) was conceived in January 2022 by Daniel Gilchrist, Joy Sutcliffe and Sebastian Hill, and gave its first concert in Magdalen College chapel the following month, featuring Tallis' *Lamentations*. The twin foci in terms

of repertoire were initially sacred choral music of the late C16<sup>th</sup> and early C21<sup>st</sup>, and the aim to sing these mostly one to a part in concert in a manner which engaged the audience in the drama of the music with such ferocity as to leave no hope of escape.

The group has since gone from strength to strength, expanding its roster of singers and its repertoire. A recent performance at the Three Choirs Festival of a wonderful passion setting by Stölzel, a contemporary of Bach, was favourably reviewed. Following an encounter with Cornwall-based polymath Russell Blacker in 2023, Selene has developed a significant focus on the music of the Eton Choirbook, and is engaged in a long-term project to record and perform reconstructions by Dr Blacker of incomplete pieces from it.



*Sopranos*

Ailsa Campbell  
Áine Smith

*Baritones*

Simon Grant  
Benjamin Watkins

*Altos*

Will Prior  
Joy Sutcliffe

*Basses*

Piers Kennedy  
Henry Saywell

*Tenors*

Jack Granby  
Sebastian Hill  
Archie Inns  
James Robinson

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1	Nicholas Huchyn	<i>Ascendit Christus a5</i> (secunda pars)	4:41
2	Robert Wylkynson	<i>O Virgo Prudentissima a6</i> (prima pars)	4:39
3	Robert Fayrfax	<i>Ave, Lumen Gratiae a4</i> (prima pars) †	4:01
4	Robert Wylkynson	<i>Magnificat a6</i>	12:52
5	Robert Wylkynson	<i>Gaude, Virgo Mater Christi a4</i> †	7:15
6	Richard Davy	<i>Gaude, Flore Virginali a6</i> (secunda pars)	8:07
7	William Horwood	<i>Gaude, Virgo Mater Christi a5</i>	7:52
8	Robert Wylkynson	<i>Salve Decus Castitatis a5</i>	5:36
9	Robert Holyngborne	<i>Gaude Virgo Salutata a4</i> * †	10:28
Total time			65:32

\* Conductor Will Prior

† Tenor Daniel Gilchrist

Front image York Minster Chapter House Roof  
Recorded 4-6 January, 2024, St Martin's, East Woodhay, England  
Executive Producers Emma Pouncefort, Tom Pouncefort  
Producer Adrian Hunter  
Sound Engineer Adrian Hunter