



Lammermuir Festival

12 September 2021, 8:00pm | St Mary's Parish Church, Haddington

The Gesualdo Six Owain Park director

Fading

Thomas Tallis Te lucis ante terminum

William Byrd Miserere mihi Domine

Jonathan Seers Look down, O Lord

Nicholas Gombert Media vita

Hildegard von Bingen O Ecclesia, oculi tui

Owain Park Phos hilaron

Alison Willis The Wind's Warning

Donna McKeivitt Lumen

Jean Mouton Salva nos, Domine

William Cornysh Ah, Robin, gentle Robin

Robert Fayrfax Somewhat musing

Luca Marenzio Potrò viver io più se senza luce

Veljo Tormis Marjal aega magada

Gerda Blok-Wilson O Little Rose, O Dark Rose

Joanna Marsh Fading

Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade Car auprès de toi

Richard Rodney Bennett A Good-Night



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Lammermuir Festival 2021

Welcome to the 12th Lammermuir Festival — we're so glad to be back!

Two years ago, when we celebrated the landmark of our 10th festival we (perhaps fortunately!) had no inkling of what would unfold only a few months later. Then last year we mounted a small online festival and were grateful for the enthusiastic support, not only of our regular audience, but of many new Lammermuir followers around the world.

This year feels like both a celebration and a rebirth — not quite 'business as usual', but very much a festival that we have yearned, through many bleak months, to bring back to this beautiful part of Scotland and to share with you.

We have made a virtue of the new reality of international travel restrictions by inviting many old friends among our distinguished artists, but there are new faces too — headed by our Artist in Residence, the American pianist Jeremy Denk, and by vocal ensemble The Gesualdo Six. We explore a rich variety of repertoire and offer unique projects such as Hugo Wolf's *Italian Songbook*, an anniversary tribute to Dennis Brain, an intriguing afternoon chez the Wagners and a recital dedicated to a great British piano duo. We are delighted to welcome Scottish Opera back and look forward to BBC Radio 3's series of live vocal recitals.

For Covid-safety reasons we have concentrated many of our events in the larger venues in order to retain social distancing of one metre in our audience seating.

We are most grateful to Creative Scotland for their continuing support and to EventScotland for generously supporting our online streaming programme which will add a new and, we hope, permanent dimension to the festival.

We are fortunate indeed to have a number of generous individual donors, trusts and sponsors who, along with the support of our Friends of the Lammermuir Festival, make the festival possible. We thank each and every supporter most warmly, for without them we simply would not exist.

Hugh Macdonald and James Waters
Joint Artistic Directors

Next year's Lammermuir Festival dates:

9-19 September 2022



Lammermuir Festival

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Our valued supporters are at the very heart of our festival, helping it flourish, prosper and reach out so that as many people as possible can enjoy it every year.

To ensure that we can continue to bring people together in celebration of beautiful music in beautiful places, we need your support and invite you to become a Lammermuir Festival Friend.

To learn more about the benefits of becoming a Festival Friend and to sign up, please visit www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk/friends.

Welcome to St Mary's Parish Church, Haddington

The Collegiate Church of St Mary the Virgin is one of the great ecclesiastical buildings of mediaeval Scotland, founded in 1380 and known for centuries as 'The Lamp of Lothian'. It was severely damaged in the 16th Century during Henry VIII's 'Rough Wooing' of Scotland, and after the Reformation only the nave was used as a parish church, with the choir and tower remaining roofless.

It was finally restored to its former glory in the 1970s, and is Scotland's longest church as well as one of its most beautiful, with a wonderfully warm, resonant acoustic.

Lammermuir Festival is grateful to the Minister and Kirk Session of St Mary's Parish Church for making the church available for this concert.

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Programme notes

Since the fourth century, the service of Compline has marked the end of the day, ushering in the darkness of the night. Much of the music here is inspired by this ancient service, evoking a contemplative atmosphere. Renaissance polyphony by **Byrd**, **Mouton** and **Gombert** that contains startling harmonic shifts and expressive word-painting, is juxtaposed with contemporary reflections by **Veljo Tormis**, **Joanna Marsh** and **Richard Rodney Bennett**.

The earliest known settings of the ancient Compline hymn *Te lucis ante terminum* appear as plainsong versions in Catholic liturgical books from the mid-sixteenth century. In this intimate setting by **Thomas Tallis**, included in the 1575 *Cantiones sacrae*, two verses of the chant frame a simple five-voiced middle section in which the highest voice sings the melody. Tallis's craft is reserved for the lower parts which subtly bring out the nuances of the text, a prime example of this being the wide-eyed chord that heralds the night's ghostly company ('phantasmata').

The recusant **William Byrd** gave voice to the plight of Catholics in England in many of his compositions, using his royal favour to escape punishment for his beliefs. In doing so, he wrote some of the most enduring and powerful music of the era. *Miserere mihi Domine* is a technical masterpiece, a double canon on a chant fragment which proceeds almost entirely by step. When the bass enters as the final voice to be heard, Byrd completes the chant melody that had briefly appeared in the highest part. The work was also published in the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1575, three years after Byrd was appointed Gentleman of the Chapel Royal.

Written while he was a student at St John's College in Cambridge, *Look down, O Lord* by **Jonathan Seers** sets words from the service of Compline. At the opening, cascading short motifs mark out the harmonic territory, before the voices join together on the word 'illuminate'. Two ascending melodies then begin in the lower voices, leading towards brass-like chords for 'brightness' and 'banish'. At the end of the work the voices divide into two groups as the music disappears into the night.

Known for his dense complex polyphony, **Nicolas Gombert** was one of the last exponents of the influential Franco-Flemish School, which included several generations of Renaissance composers from the region loosely known as the 'Low Countries'. In the six-voice motet *Media vita*, each phrase is worked out in slow passages of imitation. Unlike his predecessor and mentor Josquin des Prez, Gombert used irregular numbers of voice entries and avoided precise divisions of phrases, resulting in a flowing, continuous sonic landscape. Listen out for the dissonances around 'Sancte Deus' and 'Sancte fortis' —

Gombert often employed these false relations for emotional effect — as the music cries out to God for help.

Gregorian chant has run through sacred music for more than a millennium, and the earliest piece included in this programme is an example of this beautiful monody. The twelfth-century polymath and religious icon **Hildegard of Bingen** was a prolific composer of devotional pieces. In its complete form, **O Ecclesia** celebrates Saint Ursula, a martyr and leader of early Christians; in the opening section presented here, Hildegard begins not with Ursula herself, but with the greater church whose visionary faith in Christ was Ursula's calling. Some of the hallmarks of Hildegard's writing are clearly evident: phrases that begin with the leap of a fifth, and end by dropping just below the expected final note before resolving upwards.

Among the earliest known Christian hymns, **Phos hilaron** ('Gladdening light') can be dated to at least the fourth century on account of its inclusion in the Apostolic Constitutions — prescriptive texts compiled in the Syrian region in the 370s AD. Contemplating the dying light of the evening, the hymn has traditionally been associated with the ritual lighting of candles, and **Owain Park's** 2017 setting, which features a solo line accompanied by soft-grained chords, evokes both the literal and spiritual contrast between darkness and illumination. The piece was written for Compline services in Cambridge and later morphed into a larger work that has been recorded by The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, on their 2018 album of Owain Park's choral works.

The Wind's Warning by **Alison Willis** was the winning work in the 21-and-over category of The Gesualdo Six's second composition competition. Willis chose to set *The Wind*, believed to be the last poem written by Ivor Gurney. According to the editor of the collection in which the poem appears, it was written on the back of an Oxford University Press letterhead dated 6 March 1929 and signed 'Valentine Fane' by Gurney (he frequently used different names on his later manuscripts.) The poem is a bleak reflection on the passing of time and lost opportunities. Musically the piece uses vocalisations to create the sound of the wind against which are set gently dissonant clusters. Melodic motifs drift in and out until the middle section, 'At dawn a thin rain wept' which becomes more lyrical and tonal. The piece finishes with a return to the opening soundscape.

Luca Marenzio wrote twenty-three books of madrigals, and his 1581 setting of **Potrò viver io più se senza luce** is an excellent example of his style. The text questions whether life has any meaning without 'light', perhaps indicating that the protagonist's beloved has died. The speaker now longs for death and to be with God, the 'true light'. Marenzio emphasizes the expressive details of the text with surprising chromatic twists embedded in a dense network of motifs — a musical tapestry also found in the early Baroque works of Monteverdi.

Veljo Tormis was a lifelong evangelist for his country's folk-song tradition, as evidenced by his Four Estonian lullabies, all largely unembellished settings of traditional tunes. *Marjal aega magada* ('It's time for the little berry to sleep') has the quality of a lament, with the emphasis placed on the second beat of each bar, so the music never quite settles.

O little rose, O dark rose by Canadian composer **Gerda Blok-Wilson** sets a poem by another Canadian, Charles Roberts. The words express a mutual love that cannot be: one is free-spirited and 'Carmenesque', the other is from the 'other side of the world' and yearns to be with this 'little rose'. Blok-Wilson was attracted to this poem for both its sweet and dark elements, each of which are brought out through sensitive and delicate writing, creating a piece with the timeless quality of a folk song.

Joanna Marsh is a British composer who has been living in Dubai since 2007. She is currently Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. *Fading* comes from her *Arabesques*, a set of four pieces composed for The King's Singers in 2015. These are settings of short but highly evocative poems by contemporary male Arab poets, each telling the story of a woman they have known. *Fading* sets words by the Iraqi poet Abboud al Jabiri, who likens an ageing woman to a bird shedding plumage. To achieve this image, Marsh constantly shifts the voice groupings and harmonies so that the music rarely feels still.

Car auprès de toi was commissioned in 2019 by the women's voices choir, Aurora Nova, and its director Patrick Craig. The text celebrates the spiritual light that radiates from God. **Ninfea Cruttwell-Read**'s work oscillates between two states: some passages drift freely while others come into focus at points of cadence. The technical treatment of the voices is inspired by the artistic technique of pointillism, in which tiny bursts of pure colour are blended to form a luminous, brilliant whole. The composition explores subtle fluctuations in modal harmony and savours the sounds of the French words. Tenuto markings are used to coordinate subtle variations of sound, and in the context of this work they represent a soft yet positive attack on a given note. An important device used across the piece is that of stretto, whereby vocal entries occur in quick succession: here it is used with a view to creating a dappled, radiant sound world.

Richard Rodney Bennett composed *A Good-Night*, a setting of prose by the seventeenth-century writer Francis Quarles, in 1999 as his contribution to *A Garland for Linda*, a collaborative series of works written in memory of Linda McCartney (to which John Tavener also contributed). Bennett had known Linda McCartney, and this touching tribute is remarkable for its harmonic warmth and melodic simplicity.

Texts and Translations

Te lucis ante terminum

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator; poscimus,
Ut pro tua clementia,
Sis praesul et custodia.

Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata:
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum.
Amen.

Miserere mihi Domine

Miserere mihi Domine,
et exaudi orationem meam.

Media vita in morte sumus

Media vita in morte sumus
Quem quaerimus adiutorem nisi te, Domine?
Qui pro peccatis nostris juste irasceris
Sancte Deus, Sancte fortis,
Sancte et misericors Salvator,
Amaræ morti ne tradas nos.

O Ecclesia

O Ecclesia,
oculi tui similes saphiro sunt,
et aures tue monti Bethel,
et nasus tuus est
sicut mons mirre et thuris,
et os tuum quasi sonus
aquarum multarum.

Thee, Lord, before the close of day,
Maker of all things, Thee we pray
For Thy dear loving kindness' sake
To guard and guide us in Thy way.

Banish the dreams that terrify,
And night's fantastic company:
Keep us from Satan's tyranny;
Defend us from unchastity.

Protect us, Father; God adored,
Thou too, co-equal Son and Lord,
Thou, Holy Ghost, our Advocate,
Whose reign can know nor bound nor date.
Amen.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord,
and hearken unto my prayer.

In the midst of life we are in death:
Of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee,
O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?
Holy God, Holy and strong,
Holy and our most merciful Saviour,
Deliver us not into the bitter pains of death.

O Ecclesia,
your eyes are like sapphire:
your ears the mount of Bethel,
your nose
like a mountain of myrrh and incense,
and your mouth is like the sound
of many waters.

(Lumen) Nunc dimittis

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace:
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum
Quod parasti ante faciem
omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium,
et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the
glory of thy people Israel.

Salva nos

Salva nos domine vigilantes
custodi nos dormientes
ut vigilemus cum Christo
et requiescamus in pace.

Save us, O Lord, waking,
and guard us sleeping,
that we may watch with Christ,
and rest in peace.

Potrol` viver io piu` se senza luce

Potrol` viver io piu` se senza luce
Rimasto son e se altrove riluce
Del mio bel sol la sua lucente luce?
Ahi, non fia ver; ma copri d'ogni intorno
Oscure nubbi il giorno
E a me la luce cara di questa vita sia per sempre
amara,
Finche d'un giorno piu` serena luce
Non meni a gli occhi miei la vera luce.

Would I be able to live any longer
if I were left without light, and the shining light
of my beautiful sun were to shine elsewhere?
Ah, let it not be true, but cover
the day with dark clouds,
and the dear light
of this life will be forever bitter to me,
until one day a more serene light
will open my eyes to the real light.

Marjal aega magada

Maka, maka, marjaken,
uinu, uinu, ul'liken!
Marjal aigu magada,
ul'lil aigu uinuda

Sleep, sleep, little berry,
doze, doze, deary!
Time for the little berry to sleep,
time for my deary to doze.

Kunas sii kud'u kodo tulop,
kunas sii tibu tüühle lät,
kunas sii mari magama jääs,
kunas sii ul'li uinus jo?

When will the cock come home,
when will the chick go to work,
when will the little very go to sleep,
when will deary doze off?

Car auprès de toi

Car auprès de toi et la source de la vie;
Par ta lumière nous voyons la lumière.

For with thee is the fountain of life,
in thy light shall we see light.

The Gesualdo Six

Owain Park • director and bass

Guy James countertenor • **Joseph Wicks** tenor • **Josh Cooter** tenor

Michael Craddock baritone • **Sam Mitchell** bass

The Gesualdo Six is an award-winning British vocal ensemble comprising some of the UK's finest consort singers, directed by Owain Park. Praised for their imaginative programming and impeccable blend, the ensemble formed in 2014 for a performance of Gesualdo's *Tenebrae Responsories* in Cambridge and has gone on to perform at numerous major festivals across the UK, Europe, North America and Australia. Notable highlights include a concert as part of the distinguished Deutschlandradio Debut Series, and collaborations with the Brodsky Quartet, London Mozart Players, Luxmuralis, William Barton and Matilda Lloyd.

The ensemble integrates educational work into its activities, regularly holding workshops for young musicians and composers. The Gesualdo Six has curated two composition competitions, with the 2019 edition attracting entries from over three hundred composers around the world. The group has recently commissioned new works from Joanna Ward, Kerensa Briggs, Deborah Pritchard, Joanna Marsh, and Richard Barnard alongside *coronasolfège for 6* by Héloïse Werner.

Videos of the ensemble performing a diverse selection of works filmed in Ely Cathedral have been watched by millions online. The group released their debut recording *English Motets* on Hyperion Records in early 2018 to critical acclaim, followed by a festive album of seasonal favourites in late 2019, Christmas and an album of complaine-themed music entitled *Fading*, which was awarded Vocal & Choral Recording of the Year 2020 by *Limelight*.



Lammermuir Festival

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