

# CONVIVIUM MUSICUM



A VOTIVE MASS  
*for the* BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
IN ADVENT

*Music of William Byrd*

# CONVIVIUM MUSICUM

CHOIR FOR RENAISSANCE MUSIC

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## PROGRAM

MUSIC OF WILLIAM BYRD (1543–1623):  
A VOTIVE MASS FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN ADVENT  
*Ordinary of the Mass: MASS FOR FOUR VOICES (c.1592–3)*  
*Propers of the Mass from GRADUALIA I (1605)*

I

How long shall mine enemies (*Psalm 13:2–5*)  
Salve regina (*Cantiones sacrae II, 1591*)

II

*Introit:* Rorate caeli desuper  
Kyrie  
Gloria

III

*Gradual:* Tollite portas  
*Alleluia:* Ave Maria gratia plena

— *intermission* —

IV

Laetentur coeli (*Cantiones sacrae I, 1589*)

V

Credo

VI

*Offertory:* Ave Maria gratia plena  
Sanctus  
Agnus dei

VII

*Communion:* Ecce virgo concipiet  
Laudibus in sanctis (*Cantiones sacrae II, 1591*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2002 · 3PM · TRINITY CHURCH, TOPSFIELD  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2002 · 8PM · ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2002 · 4PM · ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, JAMAICA PLAIN

## NOTES

WILLIAM BYRD was an elder member of the generation that shaped Elizabethan culture, the generation whose younger members—Spenser, Raleigh, Sidney, *et al.*—laid the foundations which supported the later work of Morley, Dowland, Bacon, Shakespeare, and many others. Pupil, colleague, and close friend of the great Thomas Tallis, William Byrd was foremost in the field of English music from the 1570s into the second decade of the seventeenth century. Surveying his long career in 1622, Henry Peacham wrote in *The Compleat Gentleman*:

*For Motets and Musick of piety and devotion, as well for the honor of our Nation, as the merit of the man, I prefer above all, our Phoenix Master, William Byrd, whom in that kind, I know not whether any may equall. I am sure none excell, even by the judgement of France and Italy (who are very sparing in the commendation of strangers, in regard of that conceit they hold of themselves). His Canciones Sacrae, as also his Gradualia are meer Angelicall and Divine; and being of himself naturally disposed to Gravitie and Pietie, his vein is not so much for leight Madrigals and Canzonets.*

Byrd remained a Catholic in a time when it was a courageous political act to refuse submission to the new English church. He declared: “[May I] live and dye a true and perfect member of His Holy Catholicke Church (without which I beleeve there is noe salvation for me).” After Mary’s death and Elizabeth’s accession in 1558, Protestantism was reinstated and Catholics were prohibited from the public practice of their religion. Further restrictions were promulgated in 1581 following the discovery of a plot, and around the year 1588 with the threat of the Spanish Armada. Although acquainted with some of the Catholic plotters, like the majority of English Catholics Byrd appears to have remained loyal to Elizabeth during all of the many times of danger and instability. Both of these two strong and stubborn personalities must have trusted that somehow the composer could remain “both a stiff papist and a good subject” (as she observed of Worcester), and although cited repeatedly for his recusancy and assessed heavy fines, Byrd was never seriously threatened. Even if he had not enjoyed the protection of many powerful friends, Catholic and Protestant alike, it is clear that Elizabeth esteemed and favored him.

It is fascinating to observe the balance of temerity and circumspection with which Byrd served God and Church in one realm, Queen and country in another. For although Byrd provided excellent and original music for the Anglican service, he continued industriously to write Latin sacred music, which, in its choice of texts and prayerful tone, often reveals a yearning for deliverance and restoration for the people of God. In London Catholics could worship only secretly, ever fearful of betrayal, but the country estates of powerful Catholics were often provided with chapels in which the old faith might be properly celebrated. It was at such a secluded manor that Byrd was a visitor in 1586: “The gentleman [of the house] was also a skilled musician, and had an organ and other musical instruments, and choristers, male and female, members of his household. During those days it was just as though we were celebrating an uninterrupted Octave of [one of the] great Feasts. Mr. Byrd, the very famous English musician and organist, was among the company.” Most of the large body of sacred Latin music which he created and brought to publication was evidently intended primarily for performance in such circumstances. Our program outlines a votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Advent as it might have been imagined at a private, musically-inclined Catholic chapel in the early seventeenth century. The Ordinary of the Mass (those liturgical items of invariable text sung at every mass, the familiar *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus*) are supplied from the *Mass for Four Voices*, the Proper of the Mass (those items which varied from occasion to occasion: *introit*, *gradual*, *alleluia*, *offertory*, and *communion*) from *Gradualia I* of 1605. We also include three Latin motets, and an English anthem as preface.

The text of the anthem “How long shall my enemies triumph over me” is an abbreviated version of Psalm 13. The composition survives in several manuscripts but not among Byrd’s published works. In style it is very like the psalm settings in the two collections of 1588 and 1611 entitled *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs*. The technique is compact, almost syllabic polyphony, with melodic material well-shaped to the expressive demands of the words, but with very little hint of the stylistic mannerisms of the madrigal. Byrd paid utmost attention to the task of evoking in music the mood and meaning of sacred writings, speaking of their “profound and hidden power, [such that] to one thinking upon things divine, and diligently and earnestly pondering them, all the fittest numbers [i.e. notes] occur as if of themselves.”

The five-voice *Salve regina* was printed in the second volume of *Cantiones sacrae* in 1591. Byrd uses the middle three voices for the open-

ing salutations to the Virgin, the full five being reserved for greater effect at the appeal *“Ad te clamamus.”* Byrd’s treatment is varied and resourceful, and his melodies are strong and comprehensible, so the text is always clearly set forth. The well-known plainchant melody is not much in evidence, only alluded to obliquely.

In 1605 Byrd brought out the first volume of *Gradualia*; a second followed in 1607. The two volumes contain 100 rather brief pieces that, when selected and arranged in accordance with the Roman liturgy, supply complete sets of propers for the major feasts of the church year, for the Marian feasts, and for votive masses in honor of Mary. The veneration of Mary, which had become a central feature of Catholic worship and culture over the centuries, was considered idolatrous by the Protestant religious establishment, and the new rite had removed all of her feasts from the liturgy. Byrd here restores and preserves the old yearly cycle, openly proclaiming his adherence to the old church and its ritual. The five movements of the Proper are not to be sung consecutively, but rather interpolated among the five movements of the Ordinary, in this case Byrd’s *Mass for Four Voices*, one of his best-known works in our time, and one which we have grown accustomed to performing and hearing as a single continuously-unfolding composition.

The conditions of professional life for even so famous a Catholic composer as Byrd in Elizabethan and early Jacobean times are shown by the fact that he composed and published only three settings of the Ordinary of the Mass in his lifetime, compared to the hundred-odd masses by Palestrina, for example. The *Mass for Four Voices* was the first written of Byrd’s three, probably in 1592, and for political reasons was published without a title page. It is in the Aeolian mode twice transposed (i.e., with two flats in the signature), corresponding more or less to our G minor. Long thought to have been free-composed, that is, not based upon a plainchant melody or other pre-existing composition, it was discovered by Philip Brett in 1981 to have been carefully modeled on the *Meane Mass* by John Taverner. However, while Byrd adopts Taverner’s basic plan for the mass, it is not until the *Sanctus* that he uses Taverner’s own theme for the opening of a movement, there reworking it extensively. As Joseph Kerman points out in his article for the Grove Dictionary, it was only with Byrd that an English composer came “really to understand classical Netherlands imitative polyphony.” Even Tallis made only partial and occasional use of it as a technical resource, whereas Byrd here relies on it everywhere.

While the Marian propers from *Gradualia* are vigorous, even some-

what rugged in their brisk and fluent writing, the four-voice Mass speaks in sadder, more introverted tones, a touchstone, evidently, of the despair of the English Catholic community in that time. Especially poignant is the *Agnus Dei*, with its concluding appeal on the words *“dona nobis pacem,”* grant us peace.

If this music is notably intimate and personal, Byrd’s motets seem to speak to a larger, more public arena. *Laetentur coeli*, from the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1589, opens in an upward-surgingly triumphant mood, but each half closes with a warm evocation of pity and succor. *Laudibus in sanctis* is a setting of Psalm 150, paraphrased in elegaic Latin verse, and is entirely celebratory and joyful throughout. Byrd placed this work at the front of the 1591 *Cantiones sacrae*, and it has borne out his evident esteem in the outstanding popularity it has continued to enjoy, especially in our own time, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well.

The last of the great Renaissance composers, Byrd was more expressive than Palestrina, more profound than Lassus, more interesting than Monte, more varied than Victoria. He was conversant with the new madrigal style, but mostly uninterested in it. His mastery of the old polyphonic technique was consummate and individual, always bent to the task of finding fresh and telling resources of expression. Mature in imagination and taste, lofty in spirit, Byrd epitomized the uniquely Elizabethan fusion of heart and intellect.

—Joel van Lennep

# TEXTS

*How long shall mine enemies* How long shall mine enemies triumph over me?  
Consider and hear me, O Lord my God:  
lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.  
Lest mine enemies say, I have prevailed against him:  
for if I be cast down, they that trouble me  
will be glad and rejoice at it.  
But my trust is in thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in thy salvation.  
—*Psalm 13:2-5*

*Salve regina* Salve regina, mater misericordie:  
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Eve.  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.  
Eia ergo, advocata nostra,  
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.  
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.  
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis virgo Maria.

*Rorate coeli* Rorate coeli desuper et nubes pluant justum;  
aperiatur terra et germinet salvatorem.  
Benedixisti Domine terram tuam;  
avertisti captivitatem Jacob.  
Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto;  
sicut in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in secula seculorum. Amen.

*Kyrie* Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

*Gloria* Gloria in excelsis deo, et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis.  
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine deus, rex celestis, deus pater omnipotens. Domine fili  
unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine deus, agnus dei, filius patris.  
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.

# TRANSLATIONS

*Hail, Queen, mother of mercy:*  
*our life, our sweetness and our hope, Hail!*  
*To you we cry, we exiled children of Eve.*  
*To you we sigh, weeping and wailing in this vale of tears.*  
*Therefore, you our advocate,*  
*turn your merciful eyes upon us,*  
*and show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb,*  
*after this our exile.*  
*O merciful, O tender, O sweet virgin Mary.*

*Marian  
antiphon*

*Drop down dew, heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down the  
just one; let the earth be opened and bud forth a savior.*  
*Lord, you have blessed your land;*  
*you have turned aside the captivity of Jacob.*  
*Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the  
beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*Isaiah 45:8,  
Psalm 84:2*

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all of good will.*  
*We praise you. We bless you. We adore you. We glorify you.*  
*We give thanks to you for your great glory.*  
*Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God the Father, Lord Jesus Christ,*  
*only begotten Son, Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father.*  
*Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takes away*  
*the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sits at the right hand of the*  
*Father, have mercy on us.*  
*For you alone are holy, you alone are the Lord, the Most High, Jesus Christ,*  
*with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

*Tollite portas* Tollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini, portae aeternales;  
et introibit Rex gloriae.  
Quis ascendet in montem Domini?  
Aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?  
Innocens manibus et mundo corde. Alleluia.

*Ave Maria* Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.  
Alleluia.

*Laetentur coeli* Laetentur coeli et exultet terra. Jubilate montes laudem,  
quia Dominus noster veniet, et pauperum suorum miserebitur.  
Orietur in diebus tuis justitia et abundantia pacis.  
Et pauperum suorum miserebitur.

*Credo* Credo in unum deum, patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem celi et terre, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.  
Et in unum dominum Jesum Christum, filium dei unigenitum.  
Et ex patre natum ante omnia secula.  
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  
celis. 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 celum: sedet ad dexteram patris.  
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos:  
cujus regni non erit finis.  
Et in spiritum sanctum dominum et vivificantem, qui ex patre  
filioque procedit, qui cum patre et filio simul adoratur et  
conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas.  
Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confiteor  
unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum, et exspecto  
resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi seculi.  
Amen.

*Lift up your gates, princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates;  
and the King of Glory will enter in.  
Who will climb the mountain of the Lord?  
or who will stand in his holy place?  
The one whose hands are innocent and whose heart is clean. Alleluia.*

*Psalm 23:7,  
3-4*

*Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
Alleluia.*

*Luke 1:28, 42*

*Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult. Sing forth praise, ye moun-  
tains, for the Lord shall come, and take pity upon his afflicted people.  
There shall arise in thy days justice and an abundance of peace.  
And he shall take pity upon his afflicted people.*

*Respond for  
1st Sunday of  
Advent;  
Isaiah 49:13  
& Psalm 71:7*

*I believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father.  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.  
Begotten, not made; of one being with the Father,  
through whom all things are made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from Heaven.  
He was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
He was crucified for our sake under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge both the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom shall have no end.  
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the  
Father and the Son, who together with the Father and Son is worshipped  
and glorified; who has spoken by the prophets.  
And in one holy catholic and apostolic church. I confess one baptism for  
the remission of sins, and I await the resurrection of the dead, and the  
life of the world to come.  
Amen.*

*Sanctus* Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus deus sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt celi et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini. Osanna in excelsis.

*Agnus Dei* Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

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

*Laudibus in sanctis* Laudibus in sanctis Dominum celebrate supremum:  
Firmamenta sonent inclita facta Dei.  
Inclita facta Dei cantate, sacraque potentis  
Voce potestatem saepe sonate manus.

Magnificum Domini cantet tuba martia nomen:  
Pieria Domino concelebrate lira.  
Laude Dei resonent resonantia tympana summi,  
Alta sacri resonent organa laude Dei.

Hunc arguta canant tenui psalteria corda,  
Hunc agili laudet laeta chorea pede.  
Concava divinas effundant cymbala laudes,  
Cymbala dulcisona laude replet Dei.  
Omne quod aethereis in mundo vescitur auris  
Halleluya canat tempus in omne Deo.

*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.*

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

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

*Isaiah 7:14*

*With praises in the sanctuary celebrate the Lord most high:*  
*Let the firmament echo the glorious deeds of God.*  
*Sing ye the glorious deeds of God, and with holy voice*  
*Sound forth again and again the power of his mighty hand.*

*paraphrase of*  
*Psalm 150*

*Let the warlike trumpet sing the great name of the Lord:*  
*Celebrate the Lord with the Muses' lyre.*  
*In praise of God most high let resounding timbrels ring,*  
*Let lofty organs resound to the praise of the holy God.*

*Let melodious psalteries sing him with fine string,*  
*Him let joyful dance praise with nimble foot.*  
*Let concave cymbals pour forth divine praises—*  
*Sweet-sounding cymbals, filled with the praise of God.*  
*Let everything in the world that feeds on the air of heaven*  
*Sing Hallelujah to God for evermore.*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

*Convivium Musicum* Formed in 1987 and incorporated in 1990, *Convivium Musicum's* singing has been praised for "the almost dancing lift given to the rhythms, both musical and verbal" (*Boston Globe*). Our recent focus on late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Franco-Flemish and Spanish sacred polyphony and our experimentation with period pronunciation of Latin have revealed wonderful musical effects and emotional affects of both familiar and rarely-performed Renaissance vocal music. *Convivium* is proud of being a corporation run by its singers; we serve on the Board of Directors, manage publicity, design programs, and seek opportunities to perform Renaissance polyphony for new audiences. The musical growth of the ensemble over these last few years has been matched by the growth of an enthusiastic family of supporters and music lovers in a community that stretches across the New England area. We look forward with a mutual sense of excitement to sharing our music with longtime supporters and new listeners alike.

*Scott Metcalfe, Music Director* A conductor with a repertoire extending from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth, Scott Metcalfe is in his fifth season as music director of *Convivium Musicum*. Metcalfe enjoys a varied career in the stimulating field of early music. He founded and directs the *Cambridge Bach Ensemble* and directs the new Renaissance vocal ensemble *Blue Heron*. His conducting has been praised for "imagination, musical intelligence, clarity of purpose, and a distinctive and varied rhythmic palette" (*Boston Early Music News*). Also a violinist and violist, he is a member of *La Luna*, an ensemble of two violins and continuo specializing in seventeenth-century music, and *The King's Noyse*, a Renaissance violin consort. Mr. Metcalfe graduated from Brown University with a degree in biology and received the university's Samuel T. Arnold Fellowship for study in Europe. He has recorded for harmonia mundi usa, Wildboar, ATMA, and Dorian.

*Support Convivium!* *Convivium Musicum* is a non-profit corporation largely supported by membership dues and tax-deductible donations. This season, we have deliberately made the decision to make sure our music remains affordable, and we have maintained our low ticket prices. Please join us in our effort to bring beautiful music to life by considering a donation this season.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Convivium would like to thank the parish of St. John's Episcopal Church, Charlestown, Laurie Rofinot, rector, and Douglas Witte, organist, for our "home base." We would also like to thank our hosts at Trinity Church, Topsfield; St. Peter's, Cambridge; and St. John's, Jamaica Plain. Many thanks also to Philip "Doc" Davis for recording our concerts, to Sheila Beardslee Bosworth for publicity, to Mark Bucciarelli for assistance with our mailings, to Richard Silverman for maintaining our internet presence, and to Evan Ingersoll for brochure and program design.

*We gratefully acknowledge our contributors this season:*

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In the spring we turn to music of Spain and its overseas territories. This special concert in memory of Kathy Benforado embraces several of her great passions: Renaissance music for voices and instruments, and the culture of Latin America, as vibrant in the sixteenth century as now. The voices of Convivium Musicum will be joined by players of shawms, sackbuts, and dulcians in an exuberant celebration of sonority and rhythm. Don't miss it!

### *Spring Concert Locations:*

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838 Massachusetts Avenue · Cambridge, MA

Sunday, June 2, 2002 · 7PM · Trinity Lutheran Church  
73 Lancaster Street · Worcester, MA

Sunday, June 9, 2002 · 7pm · St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
15 St. Paul Street · Brookline, MA

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