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# Sounds for Midsummer Music of the English Renaissance



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# Sounds for Midsummer Music of the English Renaissance

performed by **Sheffield Oratorio Chorus** and  
the **Doncaster Waites**, with interludes of organ solo

Sheffield Cathedral  
Saturday 19 June 7.30pm 2010

**Conductor:** Alan East  
**Organist:** Peter Heginbotham

## **Semi-chorus:**

**Sopranos:** Lydia Lord, Veronica Malinowsky, Monica Law,  
Ruth Crowley, Alex Robinson, Rachel Fox, Gilly Cally

**Altos:** Jill Wills, Pam Mathieson, Gilly Surr,  
Margaret Peart, Janice Knibbs, Vivien Pike

**Tenors:** Robin Hughes, Philip Shergold, Geoff Ridsdale,  
David Price

**Basses:** Ron Law, Richard Thompson, Tim Greenacre,  
Bryan Robson, Thomas Li

# Tonight's Programme

<b>Chorus:</b>	Gloria in excelsis Deo	T. Weelkes
	O quam gloriosum est regnum	W. Byrd
<b>Organ solo:</b>	Voluntary: for my Lady Nevell	W. Byrd
<b>Doncaster Waites:</b>	Ballo del Gran Duca	Lupi (after Emilio Cavaleri)
	Amour me poingt	Claude de Sermisy
	Tentalora	Anon. (poss. French)
	Come follow/Picking of sticks/	J. Hilton
	Catching of quails	J. Playford
<b>Semichorus:</b>	Call to Remembrance	R. Farrant
	Almight and everlasting God	O. Gibbons
<b>Organ solo:</b>	Variations: (title to follow!)	J. P. Sweelinck
<b>Chorus:</b>	Ave Maria	R. Parsons
	Haec Dies	W. Byrd

## Interval

During the extended interval tonight Doncaster Waites will provide an informal demonstration of their period instruments.

This will begin at 8.20pm in St Georges Chapel.

Interval refreshments are available at the rear of the cathedral.

<b>Chorus:</b>	O Lord in thy wrath When David heard that Absolon was slain	O. Gibbons T. Tomkins
<b>Organ solo:</b>	Pavan: Kinborough Good	W. Byrd
<b>Semichorus:</b>	O Praise the Lord O Lord the maker of all thing	A. Batten W.Mundy
<b>Doncaster Waites:</b>	La Triquotee Jog on/Stingo/Joan's placket La bergamasca Maiden Fair/Il ballo di Colla	Anon. (French) 15th century J. Playford Gasparo Zanetti J. Playford Gasparo Zanetti
<b>Organ solo:</b>	Variations: The woods so wild	W. Byrd
<b>Chorus:</b>	O Lord, arise into thy resting place O Clap your hands together	T. Weelkes O. Gibbons

**The Oratorio Chorus always welcomes new singers**

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For more details contact

June Thompson-Graham 0114 2369786 or [june.salamis@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:june.salamis@blueyonder.co.uk)



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# Programme notes

## The Renaissance

Renaissance is a term applied across the artistic spectrum including music, art, literature, architecture; it refers to the period c.1450 – c.1620 and means, literally, 're-birth'. In cultural circles there developed the idea that the profile of art needed to be raised and the standards of artistic achievements of earlier civilizations (e.g. Greek and Roman) should be restored. This movement developed earliest and most fully in Italy where the so-called High Renaissance of the 15th and early 16th centuries witnessed the careers of such important artists and writers as Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Raphael, Cellini, Ariosto and Machiavelli.

The term came to extend to all areas of art, although, in music, there is no meaningful connection with ancient civilizations. Music in the Renaissance era was largely confined to sacred choral music (anthems, motets, masses, and passions), secular choral music (madrigals and associated forms), solo songs with accompaniment, keyboard music (harpichord, organ) and other instrumental music (viols, shawms, recorders, sackbuts and others).

Initially, in music, the Renaissance took off in the Netherlands with composers such as Ockeghem (a powerful and influential figure), Willaert and Josquin Des Pres. The dispersal of many Flemish musicians into other countries led to the development of national styles. Highly influential on church music at this time was the rise of secular music and the stylistic developments and embellishments that pertained to it; also, of enormous significance, was the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism. This led

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to newer and simpler styles of composition, along with the use of native tongue, rather than Latin. The Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation by means of the council of Trent led to a "purification" of practices and the purging of abuses and laxity. High on the council's list of abuses was the increasing complexity and embellishments that had crept into sacred music from its secular counterparts. It was left to Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina to demonstrate to the Council that its principles and polyphony could be reconciled. Palestrina's austere and technical style thus became the model for the principal composers of this period i.e. Lassus in the Low Countries, Victoria in Spain and Byrd in England. In England, the Anglican Church was established in 1534 and gradually English was substituted for Latin in its services.

The eight anthem/motets performed by the Chorus tonight display some of the finest characteristics of English Renaissance Choral music. "O Lord in thy wrath" is a superb example of a penitential anthem, with its smooth, rich, overlapping textures in a minor/modal tonality. "When David Heard" is one of two magnificent, tragic anthems composed to this text (Absolon was King David's son who rose up against his father and was crushed by David's army): the other setting is by Thomas Weelkes. Tomkins' setting is the more restrained of the two and has a tragic grandeur. Parsons' "Ave Maria" is a gentle setting in five parts and retains some elements of mediaeval harmony: the soprano line is a slow melodic strain with the lower parts weaving a web of counterpoint underneath.

The other five anthems are joyful in nature, although Weelkes' two anthems retain an element of tension and angst. "O Lord arise" contain one of the most extraordinary sequences of chromatic dissonance and resolution in all Renaissance music, and a vivid use of word painting. "Gloria in excelsis Deo" is in ternary form with the upper parts swapping places for the third section. A notable feature is the overlapping of the

parts throughout. "Haec Dies" and "O quam gloriosum" demonstrate Byrd's art at its finest with its complex rhythms, use of alternating sound blocks, fluency of line and harmonic progression, and the ease and naturalness of climax-building. "O clap your hands" is a magnificent anthem in eight parts employing all the arts of writing at this time.

**Robert Parsons** (1530 – 1570) was born in Exeter. He became Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1563 and was a composer of considerable standing in the early English Renaissance. In 1567 he was granted a Crown lease on 3 properties near Lincoln and it is thought he was on the way to visit them in 1570 when he was drowned at the then notorious flood-prone crossing of the Trent at Newark. His best music (including "Ave Maria" his best known motet) is characterized by shape, sensitivity and rich harmonic textures with much passing and suspended dissonance. Robert Daw wrote "Qui tantus primo Parsonne in flore fuisti, Quantus in autumnno in morere fores" (Parsons, you who were so great in the springtime of life, How great you would have been in the autumn, had not death intervened.)

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**William Byrd** (1543 – 16243) was brought up in London where he studied under Thomas Tallis. At the age of 20 he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral, a position for which he was paid well over the odds and he continued to be paid after moving to London in 1570 to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, following the death of Robert Parsons. In return Byrd continued to write music for Lincoln Cathedral. Two years later he became joint organist with Thomas Tallis of the Chapel Royal. In 1575 they obtained a patent from the Crown for the printing and marketing of music.

The period of 1570-1588 was when Byrd composed most of his music. His prominence and favour with Elizabeth I was remarkable in that he was a Catholic and remained so. He wrote for both the Catholic and the reformed Protestant Churches. His compositions include Masses, Services, motets, madrigals and keyboard music, and he is regarded as the father-figure of the English Renaissance.

In 1593 he moved to Standon Massey in Essex where his later years were dominated by litigation over leases of properties. Byrd is generally regarded as one of the four great international Renaissance composers (Palestrina, Lassus and Victoria being the others.)

**Thomas Weelkes** (1576 – 1623) first came to prominence when he became Organist of Winchester College in 1598. Four years later he became Organist and Informator choristorum of Chichester Cathedral, and initially things went well. His decline into alcoholism and debauchery was a gradual process and the authorities at Chichester showed remarkable tolerance of his drunken behaviour and irreverent outbursts, which continued even though he assured the authorities time and time again that he would reform; even after his dismissal in 1616 he was allowed to retain a minor position. His death in 1623 was almost certainly by his own hand.

His music is noted for the boldness and tension of his harmonies and expressive beauty. His motets and madrigals are amongst the finest composed during this period.

*Footnote:* His strength lay in the vividness of his very calculated musical imagery: he had a fully-developed contrapuntal technique whose roots were more English than Italian. "For imaginative brilliance sonorous counterpoint applied to majestic utterance and a capacity for broad musical thinking, Weelkes is unsurpassed by any of his English contemporaries" (Grove).

**Orlando Gibbons** (1583 – 1625) was a chorister at Kings College Cambridge where his brother was Master of the Choristers. In 1603 he became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and at the same time organist and senior organist. In 1606 he gained a BMus at Cambridge and in 1623 he became organist of Westminster Abbey. In 1625 he was part of Charles I's entourage of musicians who went to Canterbury with the King to meet Henrietta Maria. Whilst waiting Gibbons had an apoplectic fit and died. He composed Services, motets and madrigals and his music was notable for its expressive and dramatic qualities (in the words of Thomas Morley his music "carried majesty."

**Thomas Tomkins** (1572 – 1656) was born at St David's (Pembrokeshire) where his father was vicar-choral. In 1596 he became instructor choristorum at Worcester Cathedral. He became known in London and at some time became a Gentleman of the Chapel royal. In 1621 he became organist of the Chapel Royal and senior organist in 1625 on the death of Orlando GHibbons.

Much of his time was spent at Worcester where he remained active in spite of some highly unpleasant episodes involving the conservative cathedral chapter and some of the more radical townsfolk. In 1646

Worcester surrendered to the parliamentary forces, the cathedral organ was demolished and choral services discontinued.

He was the longest-lived and the last representative of the English Renaissance school, and his output included motets, madrigals and services. A large amount of his music survived because of his son Nathaniel who collected, catalogued and edited it.

**Richard Farrant** (1525-81) became Master of the Choristers at St. George's Chapel, Windsor in 1564, having been a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. In 1569 he became Master of the Chapel Royal choristers, a position he retained until his death. He also created and ran a Drama Company at Windsor producing a play for Elizabeth I every winter. He wrote little liturgical music but "Call to Remembrance" is conceived in choral terms, revealing a sensitive and restrained feeling for words and accentuation. He was an important figure in the development of the verse-anthem.

**William Mundy** (1530 – 91) was Head Chorister at Westminster Abbey (1543), and became a Vicar-choral at St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1564 he is recorded as being a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. He was the father of John Mundy, who also composed music of a similar nature. William Mundy composed several settings of Evening services and anthems. "O Lord the Maker" was written for the service of Compline.

**Adrian Batten** (1591 – 1637) was a chorister at Winchester Cathedral., becoming a lay vicar of Westminster Abbey (1614) and Vicar-choral at St. Paul's Cathedral (1626). He composed a large number of services and anthems but no secular or instrumental music. He is described by Grove as "a competent craftsman, writing in a style which was devotional and restrained".

## **Gloria in excelsis Deo** T. Weelkes

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Glory to God in the highest

Sing my soul to God the Lord, all in glory's highest key.

Lay the Angels' choir abroad in their highest holy day.

Crave thy God to tune thy heart unto praises highest part.

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Amen.

## **O quam gloriosum** W Byrd

O quam gloriosum est regnum  
in quo cum Christo gaudent  
omnes sancti, amicti stolis  
albis, sequuntur agnum quo  
cunque ierit, laudantes Deum  
et dicentes:

Benedictis et claritas et  
sapientia et gratiarum action,  
honor virtus et fortitude Deo  
nostro in saecula saeculorum,  
Amen.

O how glorious is the kingdom  
wherein all the saints rejoice in  
Christ; clothed in white robes  
they follow the lamb  
withersoever he goeth, praising  
God and saying:

Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might be unto  
our God for ever and ever,  
Amen.

## **Call to Remembrance** Richard Farrant

Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercy and thy loving  
kindness which hath been ever of old.

O remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but  
according to thy mercy think thou on me, O Lord, for thy  
goodness.

Psalm 25: 5,6

## **Almighty and everlasting God** o. Gibbons

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Ave Maria** R. Parsons

Ave Maria gratia plena;  
Dominus tecum: benedictatu  
in mulieribus, et benedictus  
fructus ventris tui, Amen.

Hail, Mary, thou that art  
highly favoured, the Lord is  
with thee: blessed art thou  
among women and blessed be  
the fruit of thy womb. Amen.

## **Haec Dies** w. Byrd

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus.  
Exultemus et laetetur in ea.  
Alleluia

This is the day which the Lord  
hath made: we will rejoice and  
be glad in it.  
Alleluia

## **O Lord, in thy wrath** o. Gibbons

O Lord, in thy wrath rebuke me not: neither chasten me in thy displeasure. Have mercy, upon me, O Lord, for I am weak:

O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore troubled: but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me? O save me for they mercy's sake.

## **When David heard that Absolon was slain** T. Tomkins

When David heard that Absolon was slain he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept, and wept: and thus he said:  
O my son, Absolon my son, would God I had died for thee.

## **O Praise the Lord** A. Batten

O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.  
For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

## **O Lord the maker of all thing** W. Mundy

O Lord, the maker of all thing,  
We pray thee now in this evening  
Us to defend through thy mercy  
From all deceit of our enemy.

Let neither us deluded be,  
Good Lord, with dream or fantasy;  
Our hearts waking in thee thou keep  
That we in sin fall not on sleep.

O Father, through thy blessed Son,  
Grant us this our petition,  
To whom, with the Holy Ghost always,  
In heaven and earth be laud and praise.

## **O Lord, arise into thy resting place** T. Weelkes

O Lord, arise, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength. Save thy people, good Lord, and bless thine inheritance. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and thy saints sing with joyfulness. Alleluia.

## **O Clap your hands together** o. Gibbons

O clap your hands together, all ye people; O sing unto God with the voice of melody.

For the Lord is high and to be feared; He is the great King of all the earth.

He shall sub-due the people, the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

He shall choose out an heritage for us, ev'n the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.

God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.

O sing praises, unto our God: O sing praises unto the Lord our King.

For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with the understanding.

God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat.

For God, which is highly exalted doth defend the earth, as it were with a shield.

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

# Programme notes

## Organ solos

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck is the most important of Dutch composers, important not only because he combined the styles of the previous schools of importance, but also because he was essentially the father of the North German and Dutch Schools, whose later exponents included Buxtehude and JS Bach.

He was born in May 1562, and seems to have been taught by his father, the organist at the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam. His style of writing led some to believe that he had studied in Venice with Gabrieli, but there is no evidence for this. He succeeded his father at the Oude Kerk by 1580, and might have done so earlier. He travelled extensively, meeting John Bull in Antwerp, and teaching virtually all of the important 17th century organists – Scheidt, Praetorius and Scheidemann to name but three.

Sweelinck's set of keyboard variations on the tune *Mein junges Leben hat ein End* (My young life hath an end) is preserved for posterity in a single manuscript copy and may represent the kind of public improvisation that made him famous.

The German song – though the German words do not actually fit the tune - upon which he wrote this set of six variations is a stylized lament in minor mode, and Sweelinck milks it for all its harmonic riches from the outset. His setting of the first variation, in a fairly straightforward four-voiced style, bristles with harmonic cross-relations, small syncopations, and descending musical lines. The second follows a similar harmonic pattern, but adds richer, more complex countermelodies. The third and fourth are more "instrumental" in character, the first a toccata-like version

encrusted with running passages in several rhythms and the other an exploration of even more diverse rhythmic elaborations and figurations. The fifth continues Sweelinck's romp through the gamut of keyboard figurations, alternating passages of parallel notes and arpeggiations. Finally, the sixth variation distills a few of the previous techniques and places them in inner voices such that new contrapuntal relationships between the soprano melody and the bass – a bass line first strongly rising through the entire octave, then giving inverted imitations of a second theme, and the superimpositions of different melodies – may be more evident.

William Byrd wrote the three pieces included here tonight around 1591, when the composer was nearly 50. They all appear in the manuscript "My Lady Nevell's Book" which contains 42 keyboard pieces by Byrd. Some of the pieces were written for inclusion in the book, whilst others appear to have been selected for inclusion, perhaps by Byrd himself or his copyist, a lay clerk at St Georges Windsor. As a whole, the music demonstrates the inventiveness and extraordinary diversity of Byrd's mature keyboard style.

The first piece – *Voluntary for My Lady Nevell* – is dignified in mood and well suited for organ performance. It is a gentle work that builds in intensity and complexity to the end.

*Pavan: Kinborough Good* is a slow dance, named after the daughter of Dr James Good of Surrey and probably included as a favour to a benefactor.

*The Woods so Wild* is a set of variations on an English folk tune. This is the only dated keyboard piece – 1590 – and bears comparison with the Sweelinck also heard tonight. Variations 12 and 13 were probably added later, appearing only in a later source. It is set as one work with shifts between modes that seem rather abrupt today. The theme is presented in a harmonised version before ornamentation is deployed to great effect.

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# The Doncaster Waites

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Doncaster Waites reproduce music as it may have been heard and seen in Doncaster around 1600. Over the years they have performed in Doncaster Mansion House, Bolsover Castle, Gainsborough Old Hall, Doncaster Minster with Doncaster Choral Society, at numerous events both inside and out, and for the York Mystery Plays. They are members of The International Guild of Town Pipers attending all their festivals. This year they will be returning to Den Bosch in the Netherlands for the 4th International Festival and to York for the Mystery Plays in July.

The Waites have recently completed their first recording, a compilation of music that may have been heard in and around the Angel Inn at Doncaster.



Peter Walker, Roger Offord, Charlie Wells, Lynn Harvey, Andrea Offord and Norma Sharp

## Director of Music

# Alan East



Alan was born in London in 1952 and educated in Essex. He began to learn the piano at the age of five and the organ at the age of nine. At fifteen, he became one of the youngest ever Associates of the Royal College of Music. He read Mathematics and Music at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he gained an MA degree.

After obtaining a Cert. Ed., he moved to Sheffield, to a post as Assistant Music teacher at King Edward VII School. In 1980, he was promoted to Head of the Music Department. Since 1987, he has worked as a freelance musician and teacher. He teaches piano at Sheffield University and is on the staff of the Sheffield Music School. He accompanied the City of Sheffield Girls Choir in winning the Sainsbury's 'Choir of the Year' in 1984, the Llangollen International Eisteddfod in 1986 and the Vienna International Youth Music Festival in 1987. He also appeared in concert with the National Youth Choir.

He has been the conductor of the Sheffield Oratorio Chorus since 1986 and was appointed its Director of Music in 2005. He is also the conductor of Doncaster Choral Society.

Organist

## Peter Heginbotham



Peter Heginbotham was born in 1976, and was educated at Solihull School, where he was a Music Scholar. In 1994, he was appointed to the Organ Scholarship of Truro Cathedral, also acting as an Assistant Housemaster at Polwhele House School, and a visiting teacher at Truro School.

In September 1995, he moved north to become the Sir Henry Coward Organ Scholar at Sheffield Cathedral and University, where he gained the degree of B.Mus. His three years were extremely busy, including an appearance at the Edinburgh Festival, conducting the Student Orchestra and playing for the Cathedral choirs on tour in the UK and Germany.

Following a year at Chester Cathedral, he moved back to Sheffield as Assistant Master of the Music at Sheffield Cathedral in November 1999, during which time, the choir made visits to Paris, Washington DC, Boston, Philadelphia, Germany and within the UK. He also made seven CD recordings and three broadcasts with the choir. He accompanied the Vierne Singers for their visits to Notre Dame de Paris between 2003-2005, and has played for the National Commemoration Service for the Liberation of Paris twice, the first occasion in 2003 in the presence of President Chirac. He has given many concerts with local choral societies, including Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and Doncaster Choral Society. He is now a police officer with South Yorkshire Police, and gives several concerts each year with the SYP Male Voice Choir.

In his spare time, he enjoys motoring and travel, as well as testing the results of other peoples' cooking.

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                                 **Handel: O Praise the Lord with one consent**
- Saturday 4 December    **Schutz: The Christmas Story**  
                                 **Britten: St Nicolas**
- Thursday 16 December   **Carols – at Ecclesfield Parish Church**
- Saturday 9 April            **Bach: B Minor Mass**  
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- Saturday 11 June          **Rossini: Petite Messe Solennelle**

### Officers of Sheffield Oratorio Chorus

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The Sheffield Oratorio Chorus is an independent choir and receives no public subsidy. We are committed to improving the quality of our performances and extending the range of our repertoire to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the city as a whole and we can only do this with the help of Friends, sponsors and business, and people prepared to advertise in our programmes.

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Bernard Lee on the Missa Solemnis Mar. 2010

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Season tickets £55 Concessions £40

## Join Us

The chorus rehearses on Wednesdays from 7.30–9.30pm at St Andrews URC Church, Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield S3 7RQ

The chorus welcomes new singers.

To buy season tickets, book for particular concerts, join the choir or for more information please visit our website

[www.oratorio.org.uk](http://www.oratorio.org.uk)



The Sheffield Oratorio Chorus is a member of Making Music