



The South West Early Music Forum

Registered charity no. 291319

‘Exaudi nos’

The masses and motets of Jacob Obrecht (1457/8 - 1505)

A workshop for singers in all voice ranges, with Peter Syrus. Cancelled in April 2020, May 2021, and June 2021, we now have a fresh date for this workshop,

16th October 2021.

The sixteenth century is well represented in workshops run by the Early Music Forums, and most grant medieval music the occasional outing. By contrast, the fifteenth century is shamefully neglected, despite figures such as Dunstaple, Du Fay or Ockeghem, and the extraordinary wealth of composers at the close of the century generally termed Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish. If Josquin was (and is) regarded as the greatest of them, several, including Obrecht, run him a close second. Had Obrecht not succumbed to the plague some sixteen years prior to Josquin’s death, who knows what the final verdict might have been...?

We shall sample Obrecht’s many settings of the Mass Ordinary, both early (Petrus Apostolus) and mature (Salve diva parens and Malheur me bat). His motets embrace a huge stylistic variety, from the disarming simplicity of ‘Parce Domine’ to the dazzling virtuosity of ‘Factor orbis’ (nothing less than a comprehensive sermon in song). Important contexts for such items were the Salve services prevalent in the Low Countries, so a six-voice ‘Salve Regina’ is self-selecting. And if time permits there’s ‘Laudes Christo redemptori’, a joyous setting of the Easter sequence and possibly Obrecht’s last composition.

Johannes Tinctoris, writing in the 1480s, ranked Obrecht among the masters ‘whose compositions, distributed throughout the whole world, fill God’s churches, the palaces of kings, and the houses of private individuals, with the utmost sweetness’. Tinctoris knew a thing or two; now you can get to know an Obrecht Mass or three, a motet or four...

Peter Syrus, who is making a return visit after successful workshops with him in earlier years, was until recently a member of staff at the RNCM in Manchester, has taught courses on Renaissance music at several universities in the north of England, and is practically involved as both singer and instrumentalist. He is in regular demand as a tutor on workshops for the regional Forums, and on residential courses up and down the country.

The workshop will take place in conditions appropriate to the law and official guidance at the time, with the intention in any case of optimising Covid-safe conditions. For the May and June dates, we expected to be limited by space to 24 participants, and that is exactly the number of applications we had. In the event of course we were not even allowed to hold the workshop. As at present there will be no such imposed constraints, but nevertheless chairs will be well spaced out, and all possible precautions will be taken to ensure the continued safety of all. A few singers have indicated that they will not be available for the October date, so more applications may now be accepted for this reason, and because of the slight relaxation of social distancing.

St John’s Church is about half way down Glastonbury High Street, BA6 9DR. The nearest car parks are [St John’s car park](#), BA6 9JJ, [Butt Close car park](#), BA6 9HY, and [Silver Street car park](#), BA6 8BS. (NB If you think of parking on Morrison’s as in previous years, be aware that it is now under video surveillance.)

Cost: SWEMF and other Fora members - £18, non-members - £20.

To apply, please contact Venetia Caine either by email venetia.caine@musiewild.plus.com or phone 01458 832298 or 0750 456 6947, with the following details: *Name; email; preferred phone number; voice; alternative voice if any; membership or otherwise of an Early Music Forum*. Or use the link on the website: <https://www.swemf.org.uk/apply-online-6968/> Venetia will then advise you about when and how to make payment. Already paid in respect of earlier dates? No need to apply again.