

LONDON
FESTIVAL OF
BAROQUE
MUSIC
2021

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English Baroque Masters

Tenebrae

Nigel Short – Director



Sunday 23 May 2021, 7.30pm

Live at St John's Smith Square

Livestreamed and available on demand for 30 days at www.sjss.org.uk

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Croft / Purcell	<i>Burial sentences</i>
Purcell	<i>Hear my prayer</i>
Purcell	<i>Remember not, Lord, our offences</i>
Purcell	<i>Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei</i>
Purcell	<i>I was glad</i>
Greene	<i>Lord let me know mine end</i>
Blow	<i>My God, my God</i>
Blow	<i>Salvator mundi</i>
Boyce	<i>Turn thee unto me</i>
Boyce	<i>O where shall wisdom be found</i>



A warm welcome to the 37th London Festival of Baroque Music, 'Grounds for Optimism', which brings together a combination of live concerts and online events over a long weekend as we emerge from lockdown. This year's festival is split in to two parts. The first runs from 21st to 23rd May and this will be followed by a second part, from 18th to 20th September.

Grounds for Optimism is the title of a short feature of five online concerts, given by harpsichordist Steven Devine which pairs 'grounds' by Henry Purcell with other intimate keyboard music from England in the late 17th century. Also featuring in the online series are the Rosary Sonatas of Biber, played by Bojan Čičić, and also with Steven Devine; three programmes of Bach given by Amici Voices directed by Helen Charlston; and five programmes devised and performed by Tabea Debus and friends.

The first of the 3 live concerts sees Helen Charlston singing Purcell song, followed on Saturday 22 May with an intimate and improvisatory programme of 17th century music for viols and theorbo given by Neue Vialles and finally on Sunday 23 May, a programme of Purcell Verse Anthems from Tenebrae, directed by Nigel Short.

Following the uncertainty and disappointment surrounding the cancellation of last year's festival, along with so many other events and much of what we hold dear, it's thrilling to be able to welcome audiences back to live music and to see the return of this much-loved festival.

Operating at 15% of our usual capacity clearly presents enormous challenges. We therefore need your help to raise £10,000 to support this year's festival. If you are in a position to help, please visit our Crowdfunder campaign here:

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lfbm2021>

Alternatively, to give by text message, text LFBM 10 to 70450 to donate £10. Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message.

We are immensely grateful to all of the festival's Friends and supporters for enabling these events to take place and to all of you for joining us, whether in person or online. Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Heason". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Heason, Director of the London Festival of Baroque Music

About the music

Tonight's concert opens with William Croft's (1678-1727) **Burial Sentences**, which were first published as part of the Burial Service in his 1724 *Musica Sacra*. They have been sung at every British state funeral since their publication, most recently that of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on 17 April 2021. The almost entirely homophonic texture highlights the grief and consolation of the various texts; all scriptures taken from the Order of the Burial of the Dead in the Book of Common Prayer, intended to be said or sung at Anglican funerals. The sentence 'Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts' is taken from Henry Purcell's 1695 *Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary*; Croft later justified the reason for this in the following homage to Purcell:

"There is one verse composed by my predecessor, the famous Mr Henry Purcell, to which, in justice to his memory, his name is applied. The reason why I did not compose that verse anew (so as to render the whole service entirely of my own composition) is obvious to every Artist; in the rest of that service composed by me, I have endeavoured as near as I could, to imitate that great master and celebrated composer, whose name will for ever stand high in the rank of those who have laboured to improve the English style."

Four anthems by Purcell himself (1659-1695) continue this evening's programme. **Hear my prayer**, a setting of Psalm 102:1, was composed between 1681-82 while Purcell was Organist of Westminster Abbey, a position later held by Croft. The stillness of the opening phrase, a solo voice singing 'Hear my prayer, O Lord', is contrasted by the building of texture as the other parts join one by one in the words 'and let my crying come unto thee'. The anguish of this cry is highlighted by the dissonance which intensifies throughout the piece until a striking discord on the last repetition of the word 'come', finally resolving to an ambiguous open fifth.

Remember not, Lord, our offences was also composed in the early years of Purcell's tenure at Westminster Abbey and is thought to date from between 1679-82. The text comes from the Litany compiled by Thomas Cranmer and included in the 1549 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. Following two homophonic repetitions of the opening phrase, one in A minor and the second in C major, the intensity grows and the voices intertwine in increasingly harmonically complex phrases of 'neither take thou vengeance of our sins' and 'but spare us, good Lord' before coming back together in their final, tranquil prayer for salvation.

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei dates from around 1680 and is one of only two sacred Latin motets by Purcell. Given that his two positions at this time were at Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, both Anglican churches in which Latin texts would not have been permitted following the Reformation, it is unclear why he would have composed a Latin psalm setting. However, this setting of Psalm 3 is some of the most evocative of his choral writing and the word painting throughout vividly depicts the range of emotions of the psalmist, from the tranquillity of 'Ego cubui et dormivi' ('I laid me down and slept'), to the declamatory bass solo, 'Non timebo' ('I will not be afraid'), and the percussive setting of 'dentes improborum confregisti' ('thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly').

I Was Glad, a setting of verses from Psalm 122, was composed by Purcell for the coronation of James II on 23 April 1685, and was sung at the beginning of the service as the King and Queen entered Westminster Abbey. Until recently this piece was attributed to John Blow, rather than to Purcell. The celebratory nature of the text is reflected both in the dotted rhythms of the opening section on the word 'glad', the repetition of 'glory', and the rapid imitative entries across all parts towards the end of the Gloria, as all the voices hasten towards the joyful conclusion of being together in the house of the Lord.

We continue the programme with ***Lord, let me know mine end*** by Maurice Greene (1696-1755). Greene succeeded William Croft as Organist at the Chapel Royal in 1727 and became Master of the King's Musick in 1735; this piece, a setting of Psalm 39, is one of a collection of 40 anthems he published in 1743. The organ has a walking bass line in crotchets throughout which may represent the psalmist's journey through life and the numbered days depicted in the text. A duet for the two upper voices describes the folly of mankind and the search for meaning in worldly things, before all voices join together in affirming 'and now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee'.

John Blow (1649-1708) was the teacher of both William Croft and Henry Purcell, and held the posts of Organist of Westminster Abbey, Choirmaster at St Paul's Cathedral and Composer to the Chapel Royal. ***My God, my God*** is a setting of Psalm 22:1-3, the opening words of which are later echoed by Jesus as one of the Seven Last Words from the Cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'. The voices enter one at a time with the opening chromatic motif highlighting the pain of separation from God, then come together briefly in the affirmation that God 'continueth holy' even throughout the trials of life, before returning to the original lament.

Blow's ***Salvator mundi*** is the second Latin text of this evening's programme, a setting of words from the Antiphon at Holy Unction in the Book of Common Prayer. The publication date of the work is uncertain but, as with 'Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei', it is unlikely that an anthem in Latin would have been performed in cathedral or church settings at the time of its composition, despite now being heard much more regularly in these contexts. Following the harmonic and rhythmic tension of the opening section, 'Salvator mundi, salva nos' ('Saviour of the world, save us'), the piece resolves to a G major chord and a homophonic texture in the upper voices for the plea, 'Auxiliare nobis' ('come to our rescue').

The final composer featured in tonight's concert, William Boyce (1711-1779), succeeded Maurice Greene as Master of the King's Musick in 1757 and as Organist at the Chapel Royal in 1758. Boyce completed Greene's unfinished collection *Cathedral Music*, which features many pieces that remain popular in the Anglican church repertory today. ***Turn thee unto me, O Lord*** was composed around 1736 and sets a text from Psalm 25:16-20; the first verse's desolation and misery is passed around all voices before a soprano duet continues the plea to God to 'look upon my adversity and forgive me all my sin'. All parts reconvene for a homophonic setting of the simple prayer 'O keep my soul, and deliver me' before the work builds to its eventual close, 'I have put my trust in thee'.

Boyce's ***O where shall wisdom be found*** was described by John S. Bumpus in *A History of English Cathedral Music* (1908) as Boyce's most representative anthem, for its 'combination of sound learning with truth and sublimity, and deep, though simple, piety of feeling'. The work is a setting of verses from Job 28; the opening questions 'where shall wisdom be found?' and 'where is the place of understanding?' are each posed by a solo voice before being echoed by the full choir as the writer ruminates on the source of these qualities which he cannot find in earthly things. All parts draw together in homophonic chords as the answer to these questions is reached: 'God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof'. A trio for the lower voices elaborates on the power of God over all things before the final answer to the opening question is declaimed in all parts: 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding'.

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Tenebrae

Described as “phenomenal” (The Times) and “devastatingly beautiful” (Gramophone Magazine), award-winning choir **Tenebrae** is one of the world’s leading vocal ensembles, renowned for its passion and precision.

Under the direction of Nigel Short, Tenebrae performs at major festivals and venues across the globe, including the BBC Proms, Edinburgh International Festival, Wigmore Hall, Leipzig Gewandhaus (Germany) and Melbourne and Sydney Festivals (Australia). The choir is renowned for its highly-acclaimed interpretations of choral music ranging from the hauntingly passionate works of the Renaissance through to contemporary choral masterpieces, and is a dedicated advocate for contemporary composers, having worked with Judith Bingham, Ola Gjeilo, Alexander L’Estrange, Alexander Levine, Paweł Łukaszewski, Paul Mealor, Hilary Tann, Joby Talbot, Sir John Tavener and Will Todd. Tenebrae is also frequently engaged with the world’s finest orchestras, regularly appearing alongside the Academy of Ancient Music, Aurora Orchestra and Britten Sinfonia, and also curates an annual Holy Week Festival in partnership with St John’s Smith Square.

Tenebrae’s ever-increasing discography has brought about collaborations with Signum, Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, and Warner Classics. In 2012 Tenebrae was the first-ever ensemble to be multi-nominated in the same category for the BBC Music Magazine Awards, securing the accolade of ‘Best Choral Performance’ for the choir’s recording of Victoria’s Requiem Mass, 1605. The following year Tenebrae’s Fauré Requiem with the London Symphony Orchestra was nominated for the Gramophone Awards, having been described as “the very best Fauré Requiem on disc” and “the English choral tradition at its zenith” (Richard Morrison, Chief Music Critic, The Times). In 2014 the choir’s recording of Russian Orthodox music, Russian Treasures, reached number 1 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart. In 2016 Tenebrae received its second BBC Music Magazine Award for a recording of Brahms and Bruckner Motets, the profits from the sale of which benefit Macmillan Cancer Support, and in 2018 it received a Grammy nomination for Music of the Spheres, its album of part songs from the British Isles.

‘Passion and Precision’ are Tenebrae’s core values. Through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, Tenebrae’s vision is to deliver dramatic programming, flawless performances and unforgettable experiences, allowing audiences around the world to be moved by the power and intimacy of the human voice.

Soprano

Emily Dickens
Victoria Meteyard
Anita Monserrat
Emilia Morton
Rosanna Wicks

Alto

Hannah Cooke
Elisabeth Paul

Tenor

Jeremy Budd
Nicholas Madden
Toby Ward

Bass

Tom Herring
Simon Whiteley

Organ

Joseph Wicks

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Tenebrae images: Sim Canetty-Clarke

Nigel Short

Award-winning conductor Nigel Short has earned widespread acclaim for his recording and live performance work with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world.

A former member of renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers (1994–2000), in 2001 Nigel formed Tenebrae, a virtuosic choir that combines the passion of a cathedral choir with the precision of a chamber ensemble. Under his direction, Tenebrae has collaborated with internationally acclaimed orchestras and instrumentalists and now enjoys a reputation as one of the world's finest vocal ensembles.

To date, Nigel has conducted the Academy of Ancient Music, Aurora Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, English Chamber Orchestra, English Concert, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble and Britten Sinfonia. He has directed the London Symphony Orchestra alongside Tenebrae in a live recording of Fauré's Requiem, which was nominated for the Gramophone Awards (2013) and since then, he has conducted the orchestra at St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival. Other orchestral recordings include Mozart's Requiem and Ave Verum Corpus with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and a new release of music by Bernstein, Stravinsky and Zemlinsky with the BBC Symphony Orchestra described as a "master stroke of programming" (Financial Times). Recent guest conducting appearances include the BBC Singers, Leipzig's MDR Rundfunkchor and the Danish National Vocal Ensemble.

Nigel has vast recording experience having conducted for many of the world's major labels including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, Signum and Warner Classics. In 2018, he received a Grammy nomination in the category of 'Best Choral Performance' for Tenebrae's album of parts songs from the British Isles, Music of the Spheres. As a Gramophone award-winning producer, Nigel works with many of the UK's leading professional choirs and vocal ensembles including Alamire, Ex Cathedra, Gallicantus and The King's Singers.

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The London Festival of Baroque Music, known before 2015 as the Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music, was founded in 1984 and aims to put before London audiences the highest quality performers in the field of Baroque music from abroad and from the UK.

The Lufthansa Festival was jointly founded in 1984 by Ivor Bolton and Tess Knighton to enrich the already-strong London scene for 17th- and 18th-century music by inviting over top-quality foreign artists, many to make their UK debuts. It quickly won recognition as one of the world's foremost early-music festivals, with a reputation for intelligent theme-based programming and for offering London audiences the opportunity to see live artists they may previously have only heard in recordings.

In its 30 years of existence, visiting artists have included such Baroque luminaries from abroad as Musica Antiqua Köln, La Petite Bande, the Bach Ensemble, Collegium Vocale Gent, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Les Talens Lyriques, Tafelmusik, Jordi Savall, Andreas Scholl, Gustav Leonhardt and Andreas Staier, and home-grown performers such as Dame Emma Kirkby, Andrew Manze, Carolyn Sampson, The English Concert, the Academy of Ancient Music and the Gabrieli Consort & Players.

Concerts were initially at St James Church, Piccadilly, but since 1998 have mainly taken place at a new regular home at the Baroque church of St John's Smith Square. Concerts are also presented in Westminster Abbey and a range of other local venues.

www.lfbm.org.uk

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lfbm2021>

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