



WILLIAM BYRD THE ENGLISH CATHOLIC

William Byrd was the greatest English composer of the 16th century. His life spanned a period of huge political and religious upheaval through which he clung to his Catholic beliefs in spite of the repression of a reformed government. He composed throughout his long life, producing his most spritely and modern sounding music in his later years. It was surely his great abilities and the esteem in which he was held which allowed him to survive in Protestant England. The first part of this programme is given over the Byrd's powerful Mass for Five Voices together with Gregorian chant and two motets from his 1591 collection. The second half explores Byrd's works in English including two movements from his monumental ten-voiced Great Service (probably written in the 1590s for the Chapel Royal) and four pieces in English which are rarely performed. Byrd was a resolute Catholic but also a convinced Englishman and this programme allows an exploration of his unique position in 16th century society.

PROGRAMME

Domine, salva nos
Kyrie & Gloria (*Mass for Five Voices*)
Alleluia. Scitote quoniam
Credo (*Mass for Five Voices*)
Afferte Domino
Sanctus & Benedictus (*Mass for Five Voices*)
Domine non sum dignus
Agnus Dei (*Mass for Five Voices*)

INTERVAL

Benedictus (*The Great Service*)
Sing we merrily unto God
O Lord my God
Come let us rejoice
Praise our Lord, all ye Gentiles
Magnificat (*The Great Service*)

No. of performers 10 (SAATB) + Andrew Carwood
Artistic Costs