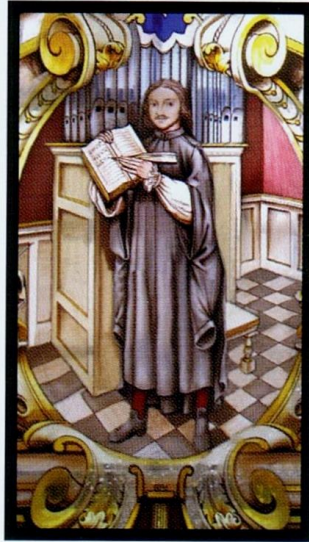




The
Thomas Tallis
Society Choir

presents

Thomas Tallis
500th Anniversary Celebration Concert



1505

2005

Performed at St Alfege Church, Greenwich, London

Conducted by Philip Simms

Organ: Stephen Dagg

Live recording at the Royal Peculiar Church of St Alfege, Greenwich - burial
place of Thomas Tallis "The Father of English Cathedral Music"
AND FEATURING FOUR 40-PART MOTETS

i. Kyrie, Op.5 ("Missa Temporis Perditi") - Jonathan Little (b.1965) in 21 parts (5:21)
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

ii. Ecce Beatam Lucem - Alessandro Striggio, Sr (1535 - 1592) in 40 parts (8:33)

iii. Spem in Alium - Thomas Tallis (1505 - 1585) in 40 parts (10:47)

iv. And There Shall Be No Night There - Robert Hanson (b.1948) in 40 parts (13:08)

v. Deus, Deus Meus - Mervyn Cooke (b.1963) in 40 parts (14:01)

Total running time: (51:51)



1. Kyrie, Op.5 (from the Mass of Lost Time)
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING
Jonathan LITTLE (b.1965)

Jonathan Little trained as a chorister with the National Boys' Choir of Australia, and later went on to study Composition and Performance at the University of Melbourne, where he won the Lady Turner Exhibition for overall excellence. He moved to the UK in 1995 upon completion of both the diploma of Associate in Theology and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (by research into the development of "exotic" orchestration in 19th- and 20th- century music).

As Principal of the Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford – Europe's leading specialist academy for students of contemporary music – he is currently responsible for the quality of music provision within its three schools of performance, production and music business.

This a cappella setting for SATB double choir and soloists of the first section of the traditional Latin Mass – "Kyrie eleison" – is based around permutations of one central motif. The eight main vocal lines are sometimes further divided for fullness of texture and motivic completeness. At least 21 voices are required to perform the work (choir: SSAATTBB, SSAATTBB + soloists: SSA, SA). The short central section of this ternary form composition ("Christe eleison") features high C's in both treble parts, and requires extra soprano and alto soloists to be present offstage (or situated in a gallery), a little removed from the main body of the choir.

2. Ecce beatam lucem ("Behold the blessed light")
Alessandro STRIGGIO, Sr. (1535-1592)

Alessandro Striggio was born in Mantua to an aristocratic family. Little is known of his early life, but he was well connected to the Medici family in Florence by the 1560's, and by the end of that decade to the Bavarian Court in Munich. Besides his life as a musician, Striggio also served the Medici family in a diplomatic capacity, and represented them in London in 1567. Striggio's surviving works are mainly secular madrigals, but he was a noted player of the lira

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da gamba and viol. He is also known to have written at least one other work in 40 parts – and also one in 60 parts (an *Agnus Dei*, performed in Paris in 1562).

The most notable performance of *Ecce beatam lucem* was for the marriage of a Bavarian Duke in Munich in 1568, conducted by Lassus. The vocal parts were intended to be doubled by instruments if required, with a number of possible permutations, including trombones, recorders, viols, lutes and keyboard instruments. The vocal parts are written for ten choirs of SATB voices (or four choirs of 8, 10, 16, and 6 voices), and the spatially-separated choirs create a dialogue effect through the alternation of soloists and chorus. The source of the poetic, Biblical-inspired text is presently unknown.

3. Spem in alium ("I have no hope other than in Thee, O God")
Thomas TALLIS (1505-1585)

According to George Bernard Shaw, Thomas Tallis was the "reputed father" of English cathedral Music. Tallis lived through a time of great turmoil in the English church, being obliged during various periods to alternate his music making between the Roman rite and the newly emerging English liturgy. As the senior musician at the Chapel Royal during this time, Tallis was the first to set the new Preces and Responses, and had to extract canticles such as the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from their separate Latin services (Vespers and Compline), set them in English and merge them into the new Evensong. Although Tallis was not alone in this (colleagues such as John Sheppard and Christopher Tye were also active), Tallis – as the senior and more prolific composer – was recognised as "the father" of the emerging style.

Spem in alium nunquam habui is one of Tallis's best-known works. It is recognised not only as the greatest of Tallis's musical achievements, but as one of the great musical compositions of all time. There has been much speculation about the origins of this piece, but recently discovered records of contemporary anecdotes suggest that Tallis wrote *Spem in alium* as a direct response to Striggio's *Ecce beatam lucem*.

This historic performance in St Alfege's Church, Greenwich, takes place above the mortal remains of Master Tallis and his wife, and occurs in the 500th year after Tallis's birth.

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4. *And there shall be no night there*
Robert HANSON (b.1948)

Robert Hanson has been Director of Music at Morley College since 1991. He studied at Southampton University under Peter Evans and Jonathan Harvey. He is a composer, conductor and musicologist who has written a wide variety of music for both professional and amateur musicians, and published articles on Lutoslawski and Webern, holding a doctorate in Webern's music.

Hanson wrote this motet to celebrate the 10th season of the Morley Chamber Choir. The motet is for eight five-part choirs and can be performed with brass quintet and organ, or organ only. The words are based on the *Nunc Dimittis* and the last chapter of *Revelation* (from which the title is taken).

5. *Deus, Deus meus* ("My God, look on me")
Mervyn COOKE (b.1963)

Mervyn Cooke is Professor of Music at the University of Nottingham. He is best known for his many books on the music of Benjamin Britten, and has also published widely in the field of jazz studies and film music. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and at King's College Cambridge, where he completed his doctorate on Britten, and spent six years as Research Fellow and Director of Music at Fitzwilliam College, before taking up a lectureship at Nottingham in 1993.

The forty-part motet *Deus, Deus meus* was commissioned to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Tallis's death, and first performed by the Thomas Tallis Society at St Alfege's in November 1985 – this event coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the Society. The motet is scored for eight five-part choirs and exploits spatial separation for antiphonal effects, with one choir placed behind the audience, one in the distance, and the other six ranged three to the left and three to the right. The text is a selection of verses from the Latin words of the highly dramatic Psalm 22.

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THE THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Sally Barber	Gill Blenkinsop	Colin Bex	David Bezer
Litsa Breingen	Rosemary Burch	Mark Harris	Andrew Copeman
Caroline Cox	Miriam Coe	Paul Harrison	David Costley-White
Alice Dagg	Phillipa Dodds-John	Lawrence Howes	Quentin Evans
Hessie Dagg	Susanna Edwards	Alan Jolly	Charlie Goldsmith
Cathy Derrick	Mara Goldstein	Stephen Limb	Iain Johncock
Bryony Ford	Virginia Harding	John Perry	Max Kelen
Lizzy Groves	Cathy Norbury	Paul Renney	Douglas Lee
Penny Gunstone	Vivian Price	David Stevens	Terry Olby
Gill Hallifax	Jane Radford	Graham Voke	Michael Paine
Jan Hart	Christina Raven		Alan Poppleton
Sue Heath-Downey	Sheila Searchfield		Nigel Press
Elizabeth Jones	Alice Shelton		John Templeton
Philippa Kent	Ruthie Smith		Bob Williams
Rosemary Naylor	Jenny Standage		
Judith Niechcial	Angela Willis		
Romy Nutall			
Helen Pickstone			
Charlotte Way			

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PHILIP SIMMS

Founder, Director and Principal Conductor of the Thomas Tallis Society and Tallis Chamber Choir, Philip is a well known orchestral and choral conductor. He has given concerts in all London's major concert halls and venues throughout the UK and Europe. Until 1992 a member of the English Chamber orchestra, he has conducted and directed them from the harpsichord in many other countries around the world.

In 1965, Philip founded the Thomas Tallis Society in Greenwich, where Tallis lived, worked and is buried; since then they have together given well over 200 concerts in the area, including most of the major choral works.

Under his direction the Tallis Chamber Choir (formed in 1982) continues to work with many of Britain's finest orchestras, receiving consistently high critical acclaim, and taking part in many commercial recordings.

Philip was organist and choir master at St Alfege's Church, Greenwich from 1965 to 2000, and is Organist Emeritus. Living mainly in Suffolk now, he has also conducted the Aldeburgh Music Club Choir. Throughout his working life, Philip Simms has always made great efforts to programme and promote contemporary British music.

STEPHEN DAGG

Stephen is a freelance organist, harpsichord and choral conductor, as well as a leader in music education in the UK.

In 1985, Stephen was appointed Director of Courses and Concerts for the Inner London Education Authority, forging links between London's professional music world and the education service. Stephen also had responsibility for the internationally renowned London Schools Symphony Orchestra, and has commissioned several new works from contemporary British composers.

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Having worked closely with Philip Simms as co-organist and choirmaster at St Alfege's Church, Stephen was appointed Director of Music in 2000 on the retirement of his former colleague. In 2005, Stephen took over the direction of the Thomas Tallis Society.

With thanks to Chris Moody and the churchwardens of St Alfege's Church; also to Deborah Sandringham, Nigel Press, Philip Simms and Stephen Dagg

Recording Engineer: Adi Winman
Recording Producer: Adi Winman
Executive Producer: Jonathan Little

Assistant to Adi Winman: Malcolm Maskell
Design: Neil J Hart www.neiljhart.com

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