

BYRD 1589

Songs of sundrie natures

Rachel Haworth SOPRANO
Martha McLorinan MEZZO-SOPRANO
Clare Wilkinson MEZZO-SOPRANO
Nicholas Todd TENOR
Simon Wall TENOR
Timothy Scott Whiteley BARITONE
Robert Macdonald BASS

Jacob Heringman LUTE
Lynda Sayce LUTE

ALAMIRE
FRETWORK
DAVID SKINNER



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Rachel Haworth, soprano

Daisy Walford, soprano [Disc 2 track 9 only]

Martha McLorinan, mezzo-soprano

Clare Wilkinson, mezzo-soprano

Nicholas Todd, tenor

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Timothy Scott Whiteley, baritone

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Jacob Heringman, lute

Lynda Sayce, lute

Fretwork

Alamire, directed by David Skinner

*Original order in 1589 publication
noted in square brackets*

William Byrd (1543–1623)

DISC ONE

Songs in three parts

Seven Penitential Psalms

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Lord in thy rage rebuke me not [1] | [2:15] |
| 2. Right blessed are they [2] | [2:18] |
| 3. Lord in they wrath correct me not [3] | [2:05] |
| 4. O God which art most merciful [4] | [2:25] |
| 5. Lord hear my prayer instantly [5] | [1:37] |
| 6. From depth of sin [6] | [2:04] |
| 7. Attend mine humble prayer Lord [7] | [2:48] |

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 8. Susanna fair [8] | [2:38] |
| 9. The Nightingale [9] | [2:18] |
| 10. When younglings first [10-11] | [3:32] |
| 11. Upon a summer's day [12-13] | [3:07] |
| 12. The greedy hawk [14] | [1:42] |

Songs in four parts

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 13. Is love a boy? [15-16] | [5:06] |
| 14. Wounded I am [17-18] | [7:16] |
| 15. From Citheron the warlike
boy is fled [19-21] | [6:55] |
| 16. O Lord my God [22] | [3:14] |
| 17. While that the sun [23] | [1:49] |

Total playing time [53:18]

DISC TWO

Songs in five parts

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Weeping full sore [26] | [6:09] |
| 2. Penelope that longed for the sight [27] | [3:21] |
| 3. Compel the hawk [28] | [3:08] |
| 4. See those sweet eyes [29, 34] | [3:45] |
| 5. When I was otherwise [30] | [4:00] |
| 6. When first by force [31] | [2:21] |
| 7. I thought love had been a boy [32] | [1:06] |
| 8. O dear life [33] | [3:44] |
| 9. From Virgin's womb [35, 24] | [9:39] |
| 10. Of gold all burnished [36-37] | [4:47] |

Songs in six parts

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 11. Behold how good [38-39] | [3:29] |
| 12. An earthly tree a heavenly fruit [40, 25] | [7:28] |
| 13. Who made thee Hob [41] | [1:28] |
| 14. And think ye nymphs [42-43] | [1:49] |
| 15. If in thine heart [44] | [2:54] |
| 16. Unto the hills mine eyes I lift [45] | [4:09] |
| 17. Christ rising again [46-47] | [5:53] |

Total playing time [69:19]



Henry Carey, First Baron Hudson (1526–1596)

Finding that my last Impression of Musicke (most gentle Reader) through thy curtesie and fauor, hath had good passage and vtterance: and that since the publishing thereof, the exercise and loue that Art to haue exceedingly encreased. I have bene encouraged thereby, to take further paines therein, and to make thee pertaker thereof, because I would shew my selfe grateful to thee for thy loue, and desirous to delight thee with varietie ... for which purpose I do now publish for thee, songs of 3. 4. 5. And 6 parts, to serue all companies and voyces ...

Words to 'the curteous Reader' from the 'most affectionate freend to all that loue or learn Musick, William Byrd'. The 'last impression' to which Byrd refers is his *Psalmes, Sonets & songs of sadnes and pietie* published in 1588, which appeared some thirteen years after the joint publication of *Cantiones Sacrae* by Thomas Tallis and Byrd in 1575. Tallis died in 1585 and, thereafter, Byrd had sole monopoly of music printing in England. That he decided initially to offer a collection of songs for the chamber rather than the chapel is interesting, considering that a volume of his English church music would presumably had been highly popular in chapels and cathedrals at that time.

The first song collection of 1588 was recorded by Alamire in late summer 2020. Here, all works were of a similar scoring with songs performable by a single voice and a consort of four viols. Byrd was keen to make the collection more

widely accessible and therefore supplied the text underlay for the instrumental parts as well as multiple verses for each song so they might be sung by singers alone. The 1589 collection of *Songs of sundrie natures* was quite a different enterprise; Byrd ensures the reader that some songs 'are easie and plaine to sing', while others are 'more hard and difficult, but all, such as any long practitioner in singing, with a little foresight, may easely performe.' Byrd's patron was Sir Henry Carey (1526–1596), First Baron Hunsdon, who not only financially supported Byrd's 1589 collection, but also Lord Chamberlain's Men (that famous company of Elizabethan actors) as well as William Shakespeare's own playing company. He was the son of Mary Boleyn (Anne Boleyn's elder sister) and a cousin of Queen Elizabeth I. It may be that royal connection which secured Byrd's funding, similar to Sir Christopher Hatton, patron of 1588, who was also Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor and one of her supposed lovers.

The 1589 collection is divided into works for three parts (twelve songs), four parts (five songs), five parts (ten songs) and six parts (seven songs). Works in more than one section were given multiple numbers so that the forty-seven numbered songs in the publication actually add up to thirty-four songs in total.

Byrd's chosen themes are indeed varied, and he begins with austere settings of the **Seven Penitential Psalms** with texts from anonymous metrical versions that cannot be

traced elsewhere. In stark contrast, five three-part secular songs (here accompanied by lutes) follow. **Susanna fair**, with its famously disturbing subject matter, is quite different from Byrd's five-part version of the same text in 1588. The remaining three-part works are supremely skilful in approach with complex counterpoint. **The greedy hawk**, in particular is highly animated with soaring scales mimicking the movement of the hawk swooping to 'strike' its prey. Of the relatively small selection of four-part works, the themes are wide and diverse. **Is love a boy?**, here arranged for solo voice and three viols, and **Wounded I am** are essentially two-stanza strophic songs, where the music is repeated for each. For the three stanzas in **From Citheron the warlike boy is fled** Byrd composed three separate works in this epic tale of Cupid and his gold-tipped arrow.

Highlights among the songs for five and six parts are undoubtedly the consort works for soloists and viols. **O dear life** is the tenth song from *Astrophel and Stella* by Sir Philip Sidney (1544–86), whose poetry and two funeral elegies feature so prominently in the 1588 collection. The two glorious carols for Christmas Day **From Virgin's womb**, for solo voice and four viols, and **An earthly tree a heavenly fruit** for two solo voices and four viols, are among the most masterful and majestic in the genre. Both come with four-part *a cappella* choruses, SSAA for the former and AATBar for the latter, which are separated from their respective consort songs in the collection (*From Virgins's womb*

make up numbers thirty-five and twenty-four, and **An earthly tree** numbers forty and twenty-five). In performances and recordings of both works, the choruses often follow only the final verse, whereas the print implies that each verse should segue into the chorus for each verse. This solution seems to provide a better balance to both works, and is performed as such here. The short and rustic **Who made thee Hob** is a playful dialogue between two farmers and a maiden 'Sylvana fair of high dessert' whose station is far out reach for Hob; both protest at the end 'Yet love I must or else I die'. It is curiously short at one and a half minutes in length begging the question whether the song originally had more verses or whether it was written as a short interlude for a now unknown play.

Byrd concludes the collection with his most impressive work, the Easter carol **Christ rising again**. The song incorporates two soloists accompanied by four viols, complete with full choir interjections akin to Byrd's other verse anthems. The second part 'Christ is risen again' is particularly energetic with the soloists building up the climax in close imitation at 'all men share be restored to life'. The choir's response is electric, with densely syncopated figures at 'restored to life', which is remarkably similar to the end of Orlando Gibbon's *Nunc dimittis* in his Second Service at 'and ever shall be', composed several years later. There is much to explore in his early collections, and, like 1588, for those wishing to delve deeper into the 1589

songs and their texts, one needs to look no further than Jeremy Smith's *Verse & Voice in Byrd's Song Collections of 1588 and 1589* (Boydell Press, 2016).

After 1589, Byrd was to concentrate his publishing efforts on collections of Latin 'sacred songs' (1589 and 1591), and then, more boldly, three settings of the Mass (mid 1590s) and two books of *Gradualia* (1605 and 1607). Both books of *Gradualia* appeared together in a reprint of 1610, and in the following year he returned to secular and sacred songs in his final publication *Psalms, Songs and Sonnets*. Here he claimed that these would be his 'last labours', although a few more works trickled from his pen in the final years of his life, including four songs featured in William Leighton's *Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*, published nine years before Byrd's death.

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Texts

DISC ONE

Seven Penitential Psalms

1. Lord in thy rage rebuke me not

For my most grievous sin,
Nor in thine anger chasten me,
But let me favour win.
Have mercy Lord on me,
Because my state is weak to see,
Heal me, O Lord, for that my bones
Are troubled sore in me.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 6, 1–2

2. Right blessed are they

whose wicked sins
By God remitted be,
And whose defaults are covered
Through his great clemency.
The man is blessed, to whom our Lord
Hath not imputed sin,
Nor in his spirit deceit is found,
Nor takes delight therein.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 32, 1–2

3. Lord in they wrath correct me not

Nor in thy fury vex;
Give tears, give grace, give penitence
Unto my sinful sex,
For that the arrows of thy wrath

Are fixed in my heart,
And thou hast laid thine hand on me
For my most just desert.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 38, 1–2

4. O God which art most merciful

Have mercy Lord on me,
According to thy mercy great,
Let me relieved be
And put away my wickedness,
Which sundry ways hath been,
According to the multitude
Of thy compassions seen.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 51, 1

5. Lord hear my prayer instantly

Which I before thee make,
And let my cry come unto thee,
Do not the same forsake.
Turn not away thy face from me
When troubles me oppress,
Each day incline thine ear to me
And succour my distress.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 102, 1–2

6. From depth of sin, O Lord to thee

I have made humble cry,
Lord hear my voice, make it ascend
Unto thy throne so high.



Unto the voice of my request,
Poured out before thy sight,
Lord let thine ears attentive be,
To hear me day and night.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 130, 1–2

7. Attend mine humble prayer Lord

With thine attentive ear,
Even in thy truth and justice Lord,
Vouchsafe my suit to hear,
And into judgement enter not,
With thy poor servant here,
Because none shall be justified
And stand before thee clear.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 143, 1–2

8. Susanna fair sometime assaulted was

By two old men desiring their delight,
Which lewd intent they thought to bring to pass,
If not by tender love, by force and might,
To whom she said, if I your suit deny,
You will me falsely accuse, and make me die.

And if I grant to that which you request,
My chastity shall then deflowered be,
Which is so dear to me, that I detest
My life, if it berefted be from me,
And rather would I die of mine accord,
Ten thousand times, then once offend our Lord.

Based on Guérault's poem Susanne un jour

9. The Nightingale so pleasant and so gay,
In greenwood groves delights to make his dwelling,
In fields to fly chanting his roundelay,
At liberty against the cage rebelling.
But my poor heart with sorrows over-swelling,
Through bondage vile, binding my freedom short,
No pleasure take in these his sports excelling,
Nor in his song receiveth no comfort.

*Nicholas Yonge's translation of an anonymous
French poem Le rossignol*

10. When younglings first on

Cupid fix their sight,
And see him naked, blindfold and a boy,
Though bow and shafts and
firebrand be his might,
Yet ween they he can work them none annoy.
And therefore with his purple wings they play,
For glorious seemeth love though light as feather,
And when they have done,
they ween to 'scape away,
For blind men say they,
shoot they know not whether.

But when by proof they find that he did see,
And that his wound did rather dim their sight,
They wonder more how such a lad as he,
Should be of such surpassing power and might
But Ants have gals, so hath the Bee his sting,
Then shield me heavens from such a subtle thing.

11. Upon a summer's day

love went to swim,
And cast himself into a sea of tears,
The clouds called in their light,
and heaven waxed dim,
And sighs did raise a tempest, causing fears.
The naked boy could not so wield his arms,
But that the waves were masters of his might,
And threatened him to work far greater harms,
If he devisèd not to 'scape by flight.

Then for a boat his quiver stood in stead,
His bow unbent, did serve him for a mast,
Whereby to sail his cloth of vail he spread,
His shafts for ores on either board he cast,
From shipwreck safe this wag got thus to shore,
And sware to bath in lovers' tears no more.

12. The greedy hawk

with sudden sight of lure
Doth stoop in hope to have her wishèd prey;
So many men do stoop to sights unsure,
And courteous speech doth keep them at the bay:
Let them beware least friendly looks be like
The lure whereat the soaring hawk did strike.

Songs in four parts

13. Is love a boy?

What means he then to strike,
Or is he blind? Why will he be a guide?
Is he a man? Why doth he hurt his like?
Is he a God? Why doth he men deride?
No one of these but one compact of all,
A wilful boy, a man still dealing blows,

Of purpose blind, to lead men to their thrall,
A God that rules unruly, God he knows.

Boy pity me that am a child again,
Blind be no more, my guide to make me stray,
Man use thy might to force away my pain,
God do me good and lead me to my way:
And if thou beest a power to me unknown,
Power of my life, let here my grace be shown.

14. Wounded I am and dare not seek relief,
For this new stroke unseen but not unfelt;
No blood nor bruise is witness of my grief.
But sighs and tears wherewith I mourn and melt.
If I complain my witness is suspect.
If I contain with cares I am undone,
Sit still and die, tell truth and be reject,
O hateful choice that sorrow cannot shun.

Yet of us twain whose loss shall be the less,
Mine of my life, or you of your good name,
Light is my death regarding my distress,
But your offence cries out to your defame:
A virgin fair hath slain for lack of grace,
The man that made an idol of her face.

15. From Citheron the warlike boy is fled

And smiling sits upon a virgin's lap,
Thereby to train poor misers to the trap,
Whom beauty draws with fancy to be fed:
And when desire with eager looks is lead,
Then from her eyes the arrow flies,
Feathered with flame, arm'd with a golden head.

There careless thoughts are freed of that flame
Wherewith her thralls are scorched to the heart,
If love would so, would God th'enchancing dart
Might once return and burn from whence it came,
Not to deface of beauties work the frame,
But by rebound it might be found
What secret smart I suffer by the same.

If Love be just, then just is my desire;
And if unjust why is he called a God?
O God, O good, O just! reserve thy rod
To chasten those that from thy laws retire,
But choose aright, good Love I thee require,
The golden head not that of lead,
Her heart is frost and must dissolve by fire.

16. **O Lord my God** let flesh and blood
thy servant not subdue,
Nor let the world deceive me
with his glory most untrue,
Let not, O Lord, O mighty God,
let not thy mortal foe,
Let not the fiend? with all his craft,
thy servant overthrow:
But to resist, give fortitude,
give patience to endure,
give constancy that always thine
I may persèver sure.

17. **While that the sun** with his beams hot,
Scorched the fruits in vale and mountain:
Philon the shepherd late forgot,
Sitting besides a crystal fountain,

In shadow of a green oak tree,
Upon his pipe this song played he:

Adieu love, untrue love,
Your mind is light, soon lost for new love.

DISC TWO

Songs in five parts

1. **Weeping full sore** with face as fair as silver,
Not wanting rose nor lily white to paint it,
I saw a lady walk, fast by a river,
Upon whose banks Diana's Nymphs all dancèd,
Her beauty great had divers gods enchanted,
Among the which love was the first transformèd,
Who unto her his bow and shafts had granted,
And by her sight, to adamant was turnèd.
Alas quoth I, what meaneth this demeanour,
So fair a dame to be so full of sorrow:
No wonder, quoth a Nymph, she wanted pleasure,
Her tears and sighs ne cease from eave to morow:
This lady, rich is of the gifts of beauty,
But unto her, are gifts of fortune dainty.

2. **Penelope that longed for the sight**
Of her Ulysses, wandering all to long,
Felt never joy, wherein she took delight,
Although she lived in greatest joys among.

So I, poor wretch, possessing that I crave,
Both live and lack, by wrong of that I have:
Then blame me not, although to heavens I cry,
And pray the gods that shortly I might die.

3. **Compel the hawk** to sit that is unmanned,
Or make the hound untaught, to draw the deer,
Or bring the free against his will in band,
Or move the sad a pleasant tale to hear,
Your time is lost, and you are n'er the near:
So Love ne learns by force the knot to knit,
He serves but those that feel sweet fancies fit.

Thomas Churchyard, c. 1520–1604

4. **See those sweet eyes**
those more then sweetest eyes,
Eyes whom the stars exceed not in their grace:
See love at gaze, love that fain would devise,
But cannot speak to plead his wondrous case.

Love would discharge, the duty of his heart,
In beauties praise, whose greatness doth deny,
Words to his thoughts, and thoughts to her desert,
Which high conceits since nothing can supply.

Love here constrained,
through conquest to confess,
Bids silence sigh, that tongue cannot express.

5. **When I was otherwise** than now I am,
I lovèd more but skillèd not so much,
Fair words and smiles,
could have contented then,
My simple age and ignorance was such:
But at the length, experience made me wonder,
That hearts and tongues did lodge so far asunder.

As watermen which on the Thames do row,
Look to the East, but West keeps on the way,
My sovereign sweet, her countenance set'led so,
To feed my hope while she her snares might lay,
And when she saw, that I was in her danger,
Good God, how soon she provèd then a ranger.

I could not choose but laugh although to late,
To see great craft deciphered in a toy,
I love her still, but such conditions hate,
Which so profanes my paradise of joy.
Love whets the wits, whose pain is but a pleasure,
A toy, by fits, to play with all at leisure.

6. **When first by force** of fatal destiny,
From Carthage town the Trojan knight did sail,
Queen Dido fair, with woeful weeping eye,
His strange departure did grievously bewail,
And when no sighs nor tears
could ease her smart,
With sword full sharp,
she pierced her tender heart.

7. **I thought love had been a boy**
With blinded eyes,
or else some other wanton toy,
That men devise,
like tales of fairies often told,
By doting age that dies for cold.

8. **O dear life** when may it be,
That mine eyes thine eyes may see,
And in them my mind discover,
Whether absence hath had force,
Thy remembrance to divorce,
From the image of thy lover.

O, if I my self find not,
Though my parting ought forgot
Nor debarred from beauties treasure
Let no tongue aspire to tell
In what high joys I shall dwell,
Only thought aims at the pleasure.

Thought therefore I will send thee
To take up the place for me,
Long I will not after tarry,
There unseen thou may'st be bold
These fair wonders to behold,
Which in them my hopes do carry.

*Vv. 1–3 of the tenth song from Astrophel
and Stella by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86)*

9. **From Virgin's womb** this day did spring
The precious seed that savèd man,
This day let man rejoice and sweetly sing
Since on this day salvation first began,
This day did Christ man's soul from death remove
With glorious saints to dwell in heaven above.

Rejoice, rejoice, with heart and voice,
In Christ his birth this day rejoice.

This day to man came pledge of perfect peace,
This day to man came love and unity,
This day mans grief began for to surcease,
This day did man receive a remedy,
For each offence and every deadly sin
With guilty heart that earst he wandered in.

Rejoice...

In Christ his flock let love be surely placed,
From Christ his flock let concord hate expel,
Of Christ his flock let love be so embraced,
As we in Christ, and Christ in us may dwell.
Christ is the Author of sweet unity,
From whence proceedeth all felicity.

Rejoice...

O sing unto this glitt'ring glorious king,
O praise his name let every living thing,
Let heart and voice like bells of silver ring
The comfort that this day to man doth bring,
Let Lute, let Shawm ["viol" in this recording],
with sound of sweet delight
These joys of Christ his birth this day recite.

Rejoice...

10. **Of gold all burnished**
brighter than sun beams,
Were those curled locks upon her noble head
From whose deep conceits,
my true deservings fled.
Wherefore these mine eyes,
such store of tears outstreams.

Her eyes are fair stars,
her red like damask rose,
Her white silver shine of Moon,
on Crystal stream,
Her beauty perfect,
wheron my fancies dream,
Her lips are rubies,
her teeth of pearl two rows.

Her breath is more sweet than
perfect Amber is,
Her years are in prime,
and nothing doth she want
That might draw Angels from
Heaven to further bliss.
Of all things perfect this do I most complain,
Her heart is rock made all of Adamant.
Which gifts all delight, this last doth only pain.

Songs in six parts

11. **Behold how good** a thing it is,
For brethren to agree,
When men amongst them do no strife,
But peace and concord see,
full like unto the precious balm,
From Aaron's head that fell,
And did descend upon his beard,
His garment skirts until.
And as the pleasant morning dew,
The Mountains doth relieve:
So God will bless, where concord is,
And life eternal give.

12. **An earthly tree a heavenly fruit** it bear,
A case of clay contained a crown immortal
A crown of crowns, a King whose cost and care
Redeemed poor man,
whose race before was thrall
To death, to dome, to pains of everlasting,
By His sweet death, scorns,
stripes, and often fasting.

Cast off all doubtful care, exile and banish tears,
To joyful news divine, lend us your list'ning ears.

A Star above the Stars, a Son of light,
Whose blessed beams this
wretched earth bespread
With hope of Heaven and of God's son the sight
Which in our flesh and sinful soul lay dead.
O faith, O hope, O joyes renown'd for ever,
O lively life that deathless shall persevere.

Cast off all doubtful care...

Then let us sing the lullabies of sleep
To this sweet babe, born to awake us all
From drowsy sin that made old Adam weep,
And by his fault gave to mankind the fall.
For lo this day, the birth day, day of days,
Summons our songs to give him laud and praise.

Cast off all doubtful care...

13. Who made thee Hob forsake the Plough,
and fall in love?
Sweet beauty which hath power to bow
the gods above,
What, dost thou serve a shepherdess?
Ay, such as hath no peer I guess.
What is her name who bears thy heart
within her breast?
Sylvanna fair of high dessert whom I love best,
Oh Hob, I fear she looks too high,
Yet love I must or else I die.

14. And think ye nymphs to scorn at love?
As if his fire were but of straws:
He made the mighty gods above,
To stoop and bow unto his laws,
And with his shafts of beauty bright,
He slays the hearts that scorn his might.
Love is a fit of pleasure,
Bred out of idle brains,
His fancies have no measure,
No more than have his pains,
His vain affections like the weather,
Precise or fond, we wot not whether.

15. If in thine heart thou nourish will
And give all to thy lust,
Then sorrows sharp and griefs at length
Endure of force thou must:
But if that reason rule thy will
And govern all thy mind,
A blessed life then shalt thou lead,
And fewest dangers find.

16. Unto the hills mine eyes I life
Unto the hills mine eyes I lift,
My hope shall never fade,
But from the Lord I look for help,
That heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot he will from slipping save,
And he that doth thee keep,
With watchful eye will thee preserve,
Without slumber or sleep.

The Lord thy keeper and shade is,
And stands at thy right arm,
The Sun by day shall not thee burn,
Nor Moon by night thee harm.

The Lord shall keep thee from all ill,
Thy soul he shall preserve,
And all thy ways both in and out,
For ever shall conserve.

Anonymous metrical version of Psalm 121

17. Christ rising again from the dead,
now dieth not.
Death from henceforth hath no power upon him.
For in that he died,
he died but once to put away sin,
But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
In Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ is risen again,
The first fruits of them that sleep,
Foreseeing, that by man came death,
By man also cometh the resurrection of the dead.
For as by Adam all men do die,
So by Christ all men shall be restored to life.
Amen.

*Canticle for Morning Prayer on Easter Day,
Book of Common Prayer 1552 & 1559*

Alamire

Rachel Haworth, soprano
Daisy Walford, soprano [Disc 2 track 9 only]
Martha McLorinan, mezzo-soprano
Clare Wilkinson, mezzo-soprano
Nicholas Todd, tenor
Simon Wall, tenor
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Robert Macdonald, bass

Alamire boasts some of the finest consort singers in the world under the directorship of David Skinner. Inspired by the great choral works of the medieval and early modern periods, the ensemble expands or contracts according to repertoire and often combines with instrumentalists, creating imaginative programmes to illustrate musical or historical themes. The ensemble was formed in 2005 by three friends and early music experts: David Skinner, Rob Macdonald and Steven Harrold.

Performing extensively throughout Europe and the USA, the consort recorded for several years with Obsidian Records, founded by Martin Souter, for whom they have won a number of awards. In 2015 they received the coveted Gramophone Award (Early Music) for *The Spy's Choirbook*, while *Anne Boleyn's Songbook* was nominated for a BBC Music Award, and was CD of the Year (Choral & Song) in Australia's *Limelight Magazine*. *Thomas Tallis: Songs of Reformation* was met with widespread

media acclaim, being featured on various media outlets including BBC Breakfast Television. The project commemorated the beginning of the European Reformation, famously initiated by Martin Luther on 31 October 1517, and offered new perspectives on Thomas Tallis, Queen Katherine Parr and the advent of the English Reformation.

The ensemble continues under label Inventa Records, dedicated to early music performances with the same underlying principles of offering rich, historically informed projects that not only shed light on rarely performed repertoire but also on the historical events surrounding them. Most recent recordings include the complete secular song collections of William Byrd, published in 1588 and 1589.



David Skinner

David Skinner is Fellow and Osborn Director of Music at Sidney Sussex College in the University of Cambridge where he teaches historical and practical topics from the medieval and renaissance periods, and divides his time equally as a scholar and choral director. An engaging presenter he has worked extensively for BBC radio, appearing in and writing a variety of shows on Radio 3 and 4. He acted as music advisor for the *Music and Monarchy* series on BBC 2 with David Starkey, and was Music Consultant for the BBC4 documentary *Evensong* with Lucy Worsley. He has published widely on music and musicians of early Tudor England, and his latest publications include an historical introduction for a facsimile publication of Royal College of Music, MS 1070 — The Anne Boleyn Music Book — as well as a collected edition of Tallis's Latin church music for *Early English Church Music* (Stainer & Bell), of which he is General Editor.

He also directs the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, with whom he has toured and made highly acclaimed recordings, and is frequently invited to lecture, lead workshops and coach choirs throughout Europe and the USA.

Martha McLorinan

Martha McLorinan trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has won prizes at the Thelma King Award and Royal Overseas League. She enjoys a career of oratorio, opera, consort and recording work. Solo oratorio highlights include Bach's St. John Passion at Zarayadye Concert Hall, Moscow (The Taverner Consort/Andrew Parrott), St Matthew Passion at St John's Cathedral, Malta (OAE/John Butt), Magnificat at Snape Maltings (Les Siecles/Francois Xavier-Roth), B Minor Mass at the British Museum (AAM/Nigel Short), Handel's *Messiah* at Symphony Hall (CBSO/Simon Halsey) and Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* at the Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam (The Sixteen/Harry Christophers). Opera roles include Lotinka (Dvorak's *The Jacobin*) and The Notary's wife (Strauss' *Intermezzo*) for Buxton Festival Opera, First Witch (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*) at the Royal Festival Hall (London Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Roger Norrington) and Second Witch at Wigmore Hall (Trevor Pinnock and friends), and La Messaggera and Proserpina Monteveri's *L'Orfeo* (i fagiolini/Robert Hollingworth) at the Swidnica and Cheltenham festivals. Her discography includes Garcia's *Missa Pastoril* (Ex Cathedra/ Jeffrey Skidmore, Hyperion) and Bingham's *The Drowned Lovers* (Tenebrae/Nigel Short, Bene Arte).

Future plans include a recording of songs by Alec Roth.

Clare Wilkinson

Clare Wilkinson makes music with groups of different shapes and sizes – lute, consort of viols, vocal consort, baroque orchestra – and loves them all. Many new songs have been written for Clare, including a number by her late father, Stephen. Clare has recorded very widely, and a number of her disks have won Gramophone awards and nominations. As well as Alamire, she has recorded with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Andrew Parrott, the Dunedin Consort, Fretwork, the Rose Consort of Viols & Ensemble Plus Ultra, amongst others. Clare is also a member of I Fagiolini, with whom she enjoys a broad spectrum of musical experiences, from staged Monteverdi madrigals to banana gags. She enjoys a regular collaboration with lutenist Jacob Heringman. Clare lives in Belgium with her husband and two small sons, and is more often to be heard singing Flemish nursery rhymes than Byrd at present. Byrd remains, however, second only to Bach amongst her musical gods.

Fretwork

Richard Boothby
Emilia Benjamin
Jo Levine
Sam Staden
Reiko Ichise (Disc 2, track 17 only)
Sarah Small (Disc 2, track 17 only)

Having recently celebrated thirty-five years of performing music old and new, Fretwork look forward to a challenging and exciting future as the world's leading consort of viols. Fretwork have expanded their repertory to include music from over 500 years, from the first printed consort music in Venice in 1501 to music written this year. And, in between, everything that can be played on a consort of viols – Byrd and Schubert, Purcell and Shostakovitch, Gibbons and Britten, Dowland and Grieg.

This great musical adventure has taken them all over the globe, from Russia to Japan to North America to Australia. Audiences have responded enthusiastically to the extraordinary sound world that Fretwork create and to the consistently high standards that they achieve. The future sees many exciting projects based on the thrilling juxtaposition of old and new; making the experience of old music new and bringing the sensibilities of past ages to bear on contemporary music.

Jacob Heringman

For thirty-six years, the American-born lutenist Jacob Heringman has made his home in England, where he is established as a leading soloist and chamber musician. Jacob has released several highly acclaimed solo renaissance lute recordings, including two groundbreaking discs of Josquin intabulations (most recently, *Inviolata* in 2021 for the 500th anniversary of Josquin's death INV1004). He has had the good fortune to work regularly with many fine singers, including Emma Kirkby, Barbara Bonney, and Michael Chance. Recent projects include concert and recording collaborations with singers John Potter, Anna Maria Friman, and Clare Wilkinson; and instrumentalists Ariel Abramovich, Elizabeth Kenny, Susanna Pell and the late 'ūd player Adel Salameh. Jacob appears on many film soundtracks (including *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *The Hobbit*, and Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood and Kingdom of Heaven*) and the occasional pop album (Joni Mitchell's *Travelogue*, for example), and is active in the areas of improvised and crossover music, as well as transcription, arrangement, and teaching. His training as a teacher of the Alexander Technique greatly influences his lute playing and teaching.

Lynda Sayce

Originally trained as a flautist, Lynda Sayce read Music at Oxford, where she fell in love with the lute and its repertory, and went on to study it with Jakob Lindberg at the Royal College of Music. She now performs as soloist and continuo player with leading ensembles worldwide. She is principal lutenist with La Serenissima, The King's Consort and Ex Cathedra, and appears on more than 100 commercial recordings. She also directs the lute ensemble Chordophony, whose repertory and instrumentarium are based entirely on her research. Lynda has performed with many leading modern instrument orchestras and opera companies, and was chosen by Sir Simon Rattle to play lute continuo for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's recent epic staging of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, performed in Europe and the US. Her discography ranges from some of the earliest surviving lute music to the jazz theorbo part in Harvey Brough's *Requiem in Blue* and the latest album from folk rock legend Boris Grebenchshikov. She is very happy to revisit her first musical love, and often plays early flutes and recorders in concert. In 2014, after many years as a frustrated listener, she bought a viol, and now ventures on stage as a gamba player with Neue Vialles, The City Musick, and Sounds Historical.

Acknowledgements:

With much gratitude to Mrs Patricia Brown for her generous financial support.

Performing pitch: A=440

Inventa Records, UK
www.inventarecords.com

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Recorded in the Fitzalan Chapel, Arundel Castle, Arundel, West Sussex
29 March – 1 April 2022

Recorded at 96khz/24-bit resolution

Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks
Concept & research: David Skinner
Edition typesetting: Francis Bevan
Project Patron: Mrs Patricia Brown
Cover image by Julian Hindson

