

1985



**ST PETER'S CHURCH
SHAFTESBURY**

**Saturday 2nd March
7.30pm**

A CONCERT SPONSORED BY SHAFTESBURY ARTS CENTRE

**MUSIC for CHOIR, VIHUELA & ORGAN
from
16th 17th CENTURY SPAIN**

**JEREMY COX conductor
PATRICK RUSSELL organ
GERALD GARCIA vihuela**

Patrick Russell was organ scholar at New College and is now Organist at the Brompton Oratory in London. He teaches at the Royal Academy.

Gerald Garcia lives in Oxford. He has been described as "one of today's foremost guitarists". His repertoire ranges from 16th-century music to that of contemporary composers. He has played with the London Sinfonietta, Paco Peña, John Williams and Rohan de Saram, has toured Europe and the Far East, and performed at all the major British Festivals with John Williams and Friends. He has recently made a recording of music for the Vihuela, and one of music for flute and guitar with Clive Conway.

Jeremy Cox became the Cherwell Singers' conductor in 1983. He is Lecturer in Music at St Catherine's College, Oxford and sings in a number of professional choirs including the Clerkes of Oxenford.

THE CHERWELL SINGERS, founded in 1979, still include some founder members. They sing a wide range of music from all periods and perform in and around Oxford. Apart from giving public concerts, they also sing for charity or invited audiences. Enquiries from Chris Emlyn-Jones, 151 Divinity Road, Oxford. Tel. 245274.

THE CHERWELL SINGERS
SATURDAY 2ND MARCH 1985 - ST PETER'S CHURCH - SHAPTESBURY
PROGRAMME

Four Villancicos for Corpus Christi	Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)
1. O Celestial Medicinal	
2. O qué mesa y qué manjar!	
3. Que buen pan	
4. Todo quanto pudo dar	

Organ Solo: Three hymn versets	Juan Bermudo (c. 1510-1565)
1. Vexilla regia prodeunt	
2. Ave Maris Stella	
3. Pange lingua gloriosi	

Diferencias sobre el canto llano de Caballero	Antonio de Cabezón (1510-1566)
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De Los Alamos	Juan Vazquez (c.1510-1560)
Alabado sea la Purissima	Juan Bautista Comes (1585-1643)
El Fuego	Mateo Flecha (1481-1553)

Vihuela	
Organ Solo: tiento do oitavo tom natural	Manuel Rodriques Coelho (c.1555-1635)

De Los Alamos	
Alabado	
Four Villancicos for the Nativity	Francisco Guerrero
1. Oy, Joseph	
2. Prado ameno, gracioso	
3. Nino Dios d'amor herido	
4. Al resplandor d'una estralla	

INTERVAL (15 minutes)

Al Amor que viene	Joan Cererols (1618-1676)
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Vihuela solo: Fantasia Pavana	Luis de Milan (c.1500-1561)
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Senor mio Jesu-cristo	Joan Cererols
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Organ solo: Obra de octavo tono, Ensalada	Sebastian aguillera de Heredia (c.1565-1627)
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Tiento de falsas de primero tono Paracalles de primo tono	Juan Cabanilles (1644-1712)
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Ay qué dolor!	Joan Cererols
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Vihuela solo: Fantasia Diferencias sobre "Conde claros"	Luis de Narváez (fl.1530-50)
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Ya está en campaña	Joan Cererols
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The choral music in tonight's concert explores part of the magnificent and extensive repertoire of Spanish music written in the vernacular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All but two of the pieces to be performed fall into the category of works known as villancicos, a term first applied in the late fifteenth century to works whose rustic or popular themes were reflected in its etymological derivation from the word "villans", meaning a peasant. Musically, those early works grew out of medieval dance lyrics of the Virralai or Ballata type and demonstrated a structural feature which remained associated with the genre and will be heard in many of tonight's works; this is the scheme of several stanzas, or coplas linked by a repeated refrain or estribillo. Many villancicos possessed large numbers of coplas and must have run to considerable length in performance. Tonight only one or, exceptionally, two coplas will be included in each work.

Despite its thoroughly secular beginnings, the villancico in the latter half of the sixteenth century became almost exclusively a religious or devotional piece, employed as part of the celebration of the Church's great festivals, especially Christmas and Corpus Christi. This development reflects the widespread upsurge of popular devotion which accompanied the Counter-Reformation, the villancico losing none of its rhythmic vitality or vividly down-to-earth imagery in the transition, but merely applying these qualities with sublime assurance to metaphysical subject-matter.

Francisco Guerrero, whose Latin church music is justly admired, also wrote a large number of vernacular pieces, sometimes even adapting entirely secular works by the substitution of a devotional text. Two groups of his villancicos, the first associated with the feast of Corpus Christi and the second with Christmas, frame the first half of tonight's concert. All of these works, apart from Prado ameno, gracioso which is through-composed, display the pattern of estribillo, copla, estribillo. They are in four parts with the exception of Qué buen año for three high voices and Al resplandor d'una estralla, which varies from three to five parts in the estribillo while employing a single unaccompanied line in the copla. Guerrero was noted for the flair with which he exploited textural variety in his villancicos for larger resources, but in the simpler three and four part works it is primarily through rhythm that he achieves his effects. Whether in crisply syncopated homophonic passages, jostling cross-rhythms, or hemiolas, muscular or suave according to tempo, the rhythmic invention of these pieces is unfailingly superb.

At the centre of the first half are three more varied choral pieces. De los Alamos by Joan Vasquez is the only truly secular work in the programme and is characteristic of the composer in betraying a move towards the Italian Madrigal. Vasquez uses a imitative texture between the voices and blurs the sections of the Villancico by extending the estribillo through varied repetition, running straight into the copla and concluding with a much shortened version of the estribillo. However, the counterpoint is never complex and the individual lines are dominated by simple diatonic contours redolent of folksong. Juan Bautista Comes produced many spectacular villancicos for large resources, but here is represented by a remarkable unaccompanied work of minute proportions for four voices. Alabada sea la Purisima is addressed

to the Virgin and expresses its devotional theme in a succession of strange but richly sensuous dissonances until relaxing into unalloyed concord at its final cadence. *El Fuego* by Mateo Flecha is one of the composer's ten celebrated *Ensaladas* (a Spanish variant of the *Quodlibet*, in which material is loosely thrown together to make literally a musical 'salad'). Despite their disparate contents and great length - by far the lengthiest Spanish text Renaissance pieces - Flecha's *Ensaladas* sustain interest through their immense vitality and their variety of metre and texture. Like the other *Ensaladas*, *El Fuego* employs a macaronic text, a burlesque form of verse where vernacular Latin is employed (the latter occurring at the work's conclusion). Flecha underlines the point by invoking the more sober style and characteristic cadential formulae of the Latin motet.

All the choral items in the second half of the concert are villancicos by Joan Cerverols, a remarkable composer who from boyhood spent his whole life within the monastery at Montserrat. In these works, something of the central European Baroque style may be detected, notably in the ubiquitous Basso Continuo line, and in a tendency for expressive harmonies to submit to the discipline of sequential progressions and the stylised formulae of the Doctrine of Affections. This latter feature is best seen in the second piece, *Señor mío Jesu-cristo*, though even here local colour in the form of unusual melodious inflections and the contrastingly sprightly rhythms of the *copla* enriches the overall picture. *Ay qué dolor!*, in gentle triple metre throughout, explores a similarly expressive vein, but with its passages for reduced texture, explanatory interjections of the opening words and sudden sotto voce cadences, echoes the sense of immediate and personal anguish conveyed in the deceptively simple imagery of the text.

Both these works feature the *Vihuela*, which was widely employed as a continuo instrument in Spain at the time. In addition they will be in the one case preceded and in the other followed by two short solo pieces for *Vihuela*. The first group consists of a *Fantasia* and *Pavan* by Luis de Milan. Milan composed 40 *Fantasias* for *Vihuela* and also described the six *Pavans* in his output as *Fantasias*. He wrote *Pavans* in both duple and triple time and considered this form to be of Italian origin - the fifth and sixth *pavans* were, according to him, especially Italianate in sound. Loya de Narvaes wrote fourteen *Fantasias*, characterised by pervading imitation and almost constant activity, but perhaps his most remarkable work is the set of 22 variations on "*Conde claros*" to be heard tonight. "*Conde claros*", a form of the *Berqamasca* widely employed throughout Europe as the basis for variations, here is decorated with bravura scale passages, unusual arpeggio patterns, sudden changes of register, and in one variation, figuration intended to imitate the sound and style of the guitar.

Beginning and concluding the second half are villancicos in a livelier vein. *Al Amor que viene* is a piece of great charm, full of rapid, chattering passage work, and blending a robustly joyful diatonicism with quaintly colourful idiosyncrasies. It features two *coplas* and a coda-like addition to the final statement of the *estribillo*, known as a *respuesta*. Finally, *Ya está en campaña* is a vigorous, multi-sectional piece with vivid exploitation of textural and metrical changes. The almost brutal energy of this Villancico adds a further dimension to the range of expression found in just these four examples of Cerverols' outstanding and little-known oeuvre.

O CELESTIAL MEDICINA! O divine remedy, blessed flesh and blood of a Virgin! We are grateful for such help in our trouble. Who would have thought that after Adam another man would come to help the ailing with this bread.

O QUE MESA Y QUE MANJAR! Oh what a table and what a meal, oh what delicious food! The table of love and eternal food give immortal life to the sinner. He who feasts at this table will know that the host has been paid, for which we must give thanks.

QUE BUEN AÑO! O what delicious food Heaven gives us. My soul if you want to taste it, all you need is a pure mind.

TODO QUANTO PUDO DAR We have been granted all we could wish today: God and man in one mouthful. God in his love exceeds all love, and with his love alone can do all he wishes.

DE LOS ALAMOS I come from the poplar trees of Seville, mother; I have seen how they dance in the breeze. I come from seeing my beautiful maiden; I have seen how they dance.

ALABADA SEA LA PURISIMA Glory be to the purest Virgin, to our Lady, mother of God, conceived without original sin.

EL FUEGO This piece tells us about the hell fire into which those who do not obey God's command will be cast, and that the world is a furnace of sin; if we give in to sin, we will end up in the flames of eternal damnation: we must hurry to put out the fire with the water of faith.

OY JOSEPH O Joseph, heaven has put its trust in you, God has given you his son, you can be proud: through a miracle, the holy Spirit has made its spouse your spouse.

PRADO AMENO, GRACIOSO Pretty meadow, a thousand shepherds envy you, in you I picked beautiful flowers. Who knows whether I might one day see in this meadow angels singing the glory of God and announcing peace to men.

NINO DIOS D'AMOR HERIDO God child, wounded with love, who loved so soon: barely were you born that you wept for love. In your mortal guise, you changed laughing for weeping.

AL RESPLANDOR D'UNA ESTRALLA By the light of a star, the kings of the Orient are seeking a new shining star in the arms of a maiden. He came so small and poor, and with such humbleness, that the heavenly sun eclipsed his brightness.

AL AMOR QUE VIENE Love is like bread: if the wheat grows plentiful, how sweet the bread will be.

SEÑOR MIO JESU-CRISTO Dear God, because I love you with all my heart, I regret having offended you. Before your tribunal, oh Judge of the quick and the dead, I present myself humbly.

AY QUE DOLOR Oh what grief, my eyes are weeping, for life is ailing and dying of love, for He who is hanging like a white flower from a post and eclipsing the sun was wounded through the acts of an odious traitor.

YA ESTA EN CAMPAGNA There is, in an expanse of glass, guided by the God of love, a ship searching for the lost soul in uncertain waters. Oh sailor, rely on the sails and the oars since within my breast I have found the soul. Wait, you are filling me, I am lost! Water, I am burning, I am full to the brim! Air, I am choking! I am losing you. Heaven, help me since the water is not enough to quench such a fire!

The organ pieces interspersed in tonight's programme offer a fascinating picture of the Spanish repertoire between the two great figures of Cabezón and Cabanilles. Juan Bernado, an almost exact contemporary of Cabezón, was a mathematician by training and after turning to music devoted most of his energies to theoretical writings. The three hymn versets are actually part of a set of nine pieces appended to the fourth volume of his treatise, "Declaración de instrumentos musicales" (1555). Antonio de Cabezón was undoubtedly the most important composer of organ music in sixteenth-century Spain. In addition to his innate gifts, he had the advantage of travelling extensively in the entourage of Philip II both before and after the latter's accession. His travels to Italy, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands left their mark on the keyboard music of other nations, as well as enriching that of Spain. This outward influence is demonstrated in Cabezón's *Diferencias*, or variation cycles, one of which will be heard tonight, in which the practice of placing the borrowed theme in a different voice in each succeeding variation found prompt acceptance elsewhere, not least in the works of William Byrd.

Another form favoured by Spanish organists was the *Tiento*, an equivalent of the *Ricercare* with a multi-sectional structure and, as the name implies, hints of an exploratory, fantasia-like texture. Manuel Rodrigues Ceolho, a Portuguese composer and organist, is known through a single surviving collection of music, "*Floras de Musica*" (1620) among which are 24 *tientos* (the Portuguese spelling), three for each liturgical tone. Stylistically, these pieces owe a great deal to Cabezón, though some, including that to be heard tonight, are distinctive in their considerable length, sustained in part through lively dotted and triplet figuration.

Sebastian Aquilera de Heredia was, from 1603, priest and master organist of Saragossa Cathedral. He wrote exclusively for the church and though he largely operated within the tradition established by Cabezón, some of his innovations were taken up by the later generation, including Cabanilles. This may be seen in the *fabas* style of composition, a term which he originated, in which a texture of almost continuous dissonance is elaborated over the foundation of a slow, steady tempo. Cabanilles was later to excel at this genre, an example of which will be heard tonight. Heredia sometimes gave the title *Obra* to his *tientos* and, as is the case here, appended the term *Ensalada* to denote an extended piece in which are featured a succession of different thematic ideas presented in contrasting styles.

Juan Cabanilles is widely regarded as the greatest composer of organ music in seventeenth-century Spain. Although his style is firmly based in that of earlier composers, his works tend to be more substantial contrapuntally, more cohesive in broad design and less prone to routine figurative writing. Equally, however, the sharp dissonances, unusual melodic intervals and unexpected harmonic progressions of his *tientos de falsas* reveal an unparalleled depth and richness in the more idiosyncratic side of his musical imagination. The final organ work to be heard tonight, also by Cabanilles, is a *Pasacalles*, as its name suggests, much like the Italian *Pasacaglia* in consisting of a pattern of continuous variations over a repeated bass. Pieces in this form, despite their exploitation of the traditional triple dance metre, were probably intended for liturgical use.