Programme

Missa Papae Marcelli - Kyrie - Gloria - Credo - Sanctus - Benedictus - Agnus dei I - Agnus dei II	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	1525-1594

++ *Interval* ++

So ben, mi, c'ha bon tempo	Orazio Vecchi	1550-1605
Now is the month of maying	Thomas Morley	1557-1602
Il bianco e dolce cigno	Jacques Arcadelt	1507-1568
The silver swan Ah, dear heart What is our life?	Orlando Gibbons	1583-1625
Can she excuse my wrongs	John Dowland	1563-1626
I love, alas, I love thee My bonny lass she smileth	Thomas Morley	

Don't miss our next concert!
Sunday December 14th
St Faith's Church, Gaywood



Sparked by a revival of interest in the culture of the classical worlds of Greece and Rome, the Renaissance began in Florence in the late 15th century. Under the patronage of the Medici family the city attracted many great artists, most notably Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli. The period was also dominated by religious upheavals, with significant reforms in the Catholic Church and by the Protestant Reformation, instigated by Martin Luther in 1517. It was in this context that the music of tonight's concert was created.

The story goes that, on Good Friday 1555, Pope Marcellus II, whose papacy only lasted 22 days before he died, summoned the musicians of the Sistine Chapel and instructed them to perform "with properly modulated voices, so that everything could be heard and understood properly." Church music had become very complex and there were concerns among the clergy that the words could not be heard clearly. One of the musicians, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina composed the ***Missa Papae Marcelli*** after the Pope's death and in the face of restrictions by the church on compositional style. He aimed to create a perfect balance in which no element - melody, rhythm or harmony - would obtrude. Melodies were mainly stepwise and the limited use of dissonance was used to expressive effect. It is interesting to compare the word-setting in movements such as the *Credo,* where there is a lot of text and the *Agnus Dei*, where single words are set to long phrases. There are frequent changes of texture, with the number and combination of voices singing at any time in constant flux.

The church was the main employer of musicians at this time and so it was they who had the compositional skills necessary to write secular and popular madrigals which often set texts reflecting the delights or despair of romantic love. In England, they were particularly popular at the court of Elizabeth I, where they would be sung with one singer to each part, for pleasure, rather than for public performance.

Orazio Vecchi was a cathedral organist who wrote several books of madrigals. ***So ben, mi, c'ha bon tempo*** was a model for later madrigals including Thomas Morley's ***Now is the month of maying***, with all parts having the same words (homophonic texture) followed by a series of fa-la-la's, which have interweaving melodic lines (counterpoint). In 1588 a set of Italian madrigals, called *Musica Transalpina* was published in England, and quickly became popular at the Elizabethan court, prompting many of its adherents to imitate the style. Jacques Arcadelt's ***Il bianco e dolce cigno*** and Orlando Gibbons' ***The silver swan*** both tell the legend that swans are silent in life and sing beautifully once just before their death. Gibbons' ***What is our life*** is a philosophical reflection with words written by Sir Walter Raleigh as he awaited death in the Tower of London. John Dowland is best known for his love-sick lute songs such as ***Can she excuse my wrongs*** and the sentiment is carried over into Morley's ***I love, alas, I love thee*** before we lighten the mood with his ballett, ***My bonny lass she smileth***.

The Guildhall Singers:

The Guildhall Singers is a dynamic chamber choir based in West Norfolk, dedicated to bringing choral music to life with warmth, clarity and expressive artistry. Formed in 2019 by Helen Herbert and a group of experienced local singers, the ensemble was born from a desire to explore music especially suited to a smaller, more agile vocal group, one that values intimacy, precision and diversity in programming. From sacred Renaissance motets and English part songs to jazz standards and modern folk-inspired works, their repertoire spans centuries, genres and moods, always chosen for its emotional resonance and musical richness. "We are curious, collaborative, and committed to craft. We honour tradition while embracing innovation, always aiming to create intimate musical moments that resonate deeply."

The Guildhall Singers have performed at notable events and venues across the region, including projects for the Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust, the Mayor's Trust, True's Yard, and a special performance alongside UK jazz legend Norma Winstone.

Soprano:	Ena Burgess, Helen Herbert, Ana Joyette, Sarah Treble, Janet Walker
Alto:	Susan Benstead, Zoë Callender, Emily Hague, Clare Howard-Vyse, Tracey Thompson,
Tenor:	Colin Gilmore, Andrés Hernández-Salazar, Adrian Johnson, Derek Wilkins
Bass:	Nick Balaam, Rob Galliard, Peter Hancock, Howard Taylor, Mike Walker, Pete Willson

Andrés Hernández-Salazar

Led by Andrés Hernandez Salazar, an expert choral director and vocal coach, the group combines technical excellence with an open, collaborative spirit. Andrés brings vision, vitality and a deep sense of musical purpose, helping each singer contribute to a unified, expressive sound.

He began his musical studies in Venezuela and was awarded a scholarship by The British Council (the first for a Venezuelan musician) to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He subsequently studied at the Trinity College of Music, London, and has since performed extensively. Andrés was conferred the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities with Music, by The Open University. Since 2002 he has been in great demand as a voice tutor and music history lecturer.

www.theguildhallsingers.org for further information

