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MUSIC IN THE CATHEDRALS OF ENGLAND

Tallis - Parsons - Byrd - Morley - Blow - Purcell

Deller Consort / conductor Alfred Deller

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MUSIC IN THE CATHEDRALS OF ENGLAND

Side A

Thomas Tallis : *Salvator mundi*
Robert Parsons : *Ave Maria*
William Byrd : *Haec dies*
Thomas Morley : *Laboravi in gemitu meo*
Peter Philips : *Ascendit Deus*
Richard Dering : *Jesu dulcis memoria*

Side B

John Blow : *Salvator mundi*
Henry Purcell : *Jehova quam multi sunt hostes mei.*
Thomas Arne : *Libera me*

It is perhaps not always understood just how much confusion there must have been among church musicians in England at the time of the reformation. The time-honoured form of the Latin Liturgy was swept away, and composers were expected to write music for a fundamentally different form of worship in the English language. That they achieved this task with such brilliance is a tribute to the genius of such composers as Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, both of whom wrote for the old and the new forms of worship. Byrd in particular continued to write liturgical music and motets for the latin rite long after it had been banished from use. He remained a devout catholic all his life, even though he held positions in the reformed church, including those of organist of Lincoln Cathedral and of the Chapel Royal.

The first side of this record gives examples of motets composed from the time of the Reformation up to the death of Charles I (1649), while the second side takes us from the Restoration of the Monarchy (1660) to the middle of the 18th century.

THOMAS TALLIS (1505-1585) is represented by his motet *Salvator mundi*. This is taken from a joint publication of Tallis and Byrd which appeared in 1575 under the title of *Cantiones Sacrae*. Although it is a setting of a psalm-antiphon, it does not follow the conventional cantus firmus pattern of early Tudor liturgical pieces, but is composed in continuously evolving counterpoint of great dignity and beauty.

ROBERT PARSONS (d. 1570) is a somewhat shadowy figure of whose life little is known. He was born at Exeter and was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. A small quantity of his music has been preserved for us, both sacred and secular. His five-part setting of *Ave Maria* is a particularly beautiful example of his work.

By far the best of WILLIAM BYRD's music is set to the Latin rite. His motet *Haec dies* comes from his second book of *Cantiones Sacrae*, published in 1591. It is written for six voices and is a work of great brilliance.

THOMAS MORLEY (1558-1603) was a pupil of Byrd, a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He was probably the only composer of his period who composed in every medium available to him. Many of his Latin motets were written as exercises in the old style and some of these were printed in his treatise on music called *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Music* (1597). The motet *Laboravi in gemitu meo* only survives in two manuscripts of the early seventeenth century. It is written for six voices.



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