

*Illam ergo recolamus,  
Cuius fructum sic amamus;  
Colant et caelestia.*

*Quisnam vivit hoc in mundo,  
Cum sit captus iniucundo  
Morbo vel tristitia,*

*Quin, si oret istam matrem,  
Intercedat ut ad Patrem  
Caelesti in patria?*

*Exstat mater tum parata  
Nos iuvare; En! Quam grata  
Adest semper Maria.  
Rogamus et Frideswidam,  
Magdalenam, Catharinam  
Doctam philosophia;*

*Theologia disputans  
Gentes cunctas superans  
Cum sit haec Catharina.*

*His iam sanctis iubilemus,  
Voce, corde decantemus  
Hac nostra melodia.*

Producer: Mark Brown  
Engineer: Antony Howell  
Recorded at St. Bartholomew's Church, Orford

Translations by Jeremy White.  
Series devised by John Milsom.  
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Her therefore we celebrate,  
Thus showing our love for her child;  
Indeed the heavens honour her.

Who is there living on this earth  
For whom, when in the unhappy grip  
Of illness or sorrow,

If he but prayed to this his mother,  
She would not intercede as with his Father  
In his heavenly home?

We have a mother ready at those times  
To help us: Lo! How graciously  
Mary ever stands by us.  
Let us make our prayer also to Frideswide,  
To Magdalene, to Catherine  
Learned in philosophy;

Since in theological argument  
She overcomes all the pagans,  
This Catherine.

In these saints now let us rejoice;  
With heart and voice let us go on singing  
In this our melody.

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The Sixteen Ltd., General Manager, Alison Stillman  
The Sixteen Productions Ltd., General Manager, Claire Long  
For further information about The Sixteen recordings on  
CORO or live performances and tours,  
call +44 (0) 1869 331 711, or email  
coro@thesixteen.org.uk.  
www.thesixteen.com



CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

# The Flower Of All Virginity

Eton Choirbook Volume IV

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

KELLYK

NESBETT

FAYRFAX

BROWNE

THE VOICES OF  
CLASSIC *f*M



I remember well, some years ago, sitting in the library at Eton College with Christopher Page and recording a programme for BBC Radio 3 about the Eton Choirbook, by far the most outstanding of a handful of choirbooks to survive the

Reformation. We turned the parchment pages of this vast book, admiring the vividly illuminated capitals, marvelling at some of the, obviously frequently performed, motets, the corners of which were heavily thumbed by fingers of a past century. My abiding thought was how incredibly talented these sixteen choristers must have been to sing this highly complex music, difficult by any standard, while crowding around a lectern, straining to read by candlelight. Today we have modern editions, electricity and aids for failing sight and it still seems difficult!

Our edition represents very much the grass roots of our work and our overwhelming desire to rejoice in the survival of this great music.

*Harry  
Crisp*

TREBLE  
Fiona Clarke  
Ruth Dean  
Carys Lane  
MEAN  
Libby Crabtree  
Sally Dunkley  
Rebecca Outram\*  
Kim Porter\*  
Caroline Trevor  
Julia White\*  
ALTO  
Stephen Carter  
Andrew Giles  
Michael Lees  
TENOR  
Simon Berridge  
Andrew Carwood  
Robert Johnston  
Neil MacKenzie  
David Roy  
Matthew Vine  
BASS  
Simon Birchall  
Matthew Brook+  
Roger Cleverdon  
Robert Evans  
Michael McCarthy+  
Francis Steele

\* only in Browne O  
Maria Salvatoris  
Mater  
+ only in Kelly  
Gaude Flore Virginali  
and Browne O Maria  
Salvatoris Mater

ANON: AH MY DEAR  
MEAN  
Sally Dunkley (verse),  
Libby Crabtree,  
Rebecca Outram  
ALTO  
Michael Lees (verse),  
Andrew Giles,  
Caroline Trevor  
TENOR  
Simon Berridge (verse),  
Neil MacKenzie,  
David Roy

FAYRFAX: MOST  
CLEAR OF COLOUR  
MEAN  
Sally Dunkley  
TENOR  
Simon Berridge  
BASS  
Robert Evans

ANON: AFRAID, ALAS  
MEAN  
Libby Crabtree (verse),  
Sally Dunkley,  
Rebecca Outram  
ALTO  
Andrew Giles (verse),  
Michael Lees,  
Caroline Trevor  
TENOR  
Neil MacKenzie (verse),  
Simon Berridge,  
David Roy  
BASS  
Simon Birchall (verse),  
Roger Cleverdon,  
Robert Evans

For the late medieval English composer, there were three principal forms of religious observance that regularly required him to put pen to paper. The first was the liturgy itself. In the larger choral foundations such as cathedrals, college chapels, and the royal household chapels, both the Mass and the Offices were regularly adorned with new compositions. A second form of worship, practised largely by confraternities and educational establishments, were acts of communal devotion. These too were held in chapels, but for their structure and contents they followed the statutes of individual institutions, not the liturgy. Prayers, sung as well as spoken, formed the substance of such daily observances. A third category of sacred music belonged not to consecrated buildings at all, but rather to the rooms in which members of a community or court kept company together. Here, purely secular entertainment extended into music for spiritual recreation: songs with seasonal religious texts, expressed not in Latin but rather in the homely English language, were as much a part of daily life as attendance at services.

None of the music performed by The Sixteen on this record belongs to the first, liturgical category. Instead, the programme gives us glimpses into those acts of private devotion that took place in the chapel of Eton College at the end of the day, and in the hall of the college, where elaborate religious songs would have been sung in the evenings on special occasions.

For information about the corporate devotional services held at Eton, we need look no further than the college's original statutes of 1444. According to these, the choir was to proceed reverently to the chapel at a suitable time each evening, kneel at the crucifix to recite the Lord's Prayer, then rise before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary (to whom the college was dedicated), where they were to sing an antiphon in her praise, the text of which could be chosen according to the time of year. By 1500 this daily performance had become a major event – or at least, so it would seem from the contents of the Eton Choirbook, a sumptuous manuscript created for use by the choir at Eton. In it we find a wide variety of suitable pieces, a few by Eton composers, the majority borrowed from other British choirs. Among them are three settings of the Stabat Mater, an antiphon to the Virgin especially suitable for use during Passiontide. These three great works, by Davy, Cornysh, and Browne, form the framework of this record.

Eton College no longer owns a companion book of songs and seasonal carols for use outside the chapel, but there are good reasons for believing that such a book once existed. Like other colleges founded in the fifteenth century, Eton adopted a statute first introduced at Winchester College, which allowed fellows and scholars to have a fire in the college hall on important feast-days and special occasions. On such evenings (to quote from the Winchester statutes), 'recreations

suitable to the clerical state' were allowed, of which the singing of carols and songs would have been one. At Eton's sister foundation, King's College, Cambridge, a list of the college's books drawn up in 1529 included "iiii bokys in papyr off carrolls. Nowell." These too are lost; but another book, closely linked with the court of Henry VII, survives to give us an idea of what such anthologies must have been like. This is the so-called 'Fairfax' manuscript, now in the British Library. We have chosen two songs from this manuscript, both of them suitable for Passiontide, to reconstruct another part of Eton College's musical diet in the late fifteenth century.

All three settings of the Stabat Mater in the Eton Choirbook were imported from choirs elsewhere in the country. Richard Davy's work may have been sung first at Magdalen College, Oxford where Davy was master of the choristers in the 1490s. Virtually nothing is known about the career of John Browne, but he too seems to have been an Oxford man, this time from New College. Since William Cornysh was a court composer, the most likely destination for his setting would have been the Chapel Royal. Their chronology and relationship remain a mystery. Possibly Cornysh knew Davy's setting, since the two works (both for five-part choir) share several features of design that are absent from Browne's (which is for six-part choir). It may also be more than

coincidence that all three works are in the same key. But differences are more conspicuous than connections; each composer responded to the text quite independently, using it largely as an excuse for elaborate musical fantasy (in the manner so typical of English composers of the period), and only loosely underpinning the pathos of the words.

The two songs, by Browne and the unidentified Sheryngham, are broadly similar in style to the three antiphons, but more intimate in scale. Technically speaking they must be classed as carols, since their alternation of a refrain (or 'burden') with verses has its origin in the structure of the carole, the common round-dance of medieval Europe. The Franciscans, however, brought the carol into the service of piety, and there is still a Franciscan ring about the words set by Sheryngham and Browne, bluntly plain and direct as they are in their expression. In this respect they complement the harrowing sentiments of the Stabat Mater, itself a text of Franciscan origin. Perhaps the most striking contrast is in the different focus of their attention. Whereas Stabat Mater addresses the Virgin in her role as mediatrix between man and God, the carols either speak directly to Christ or – more painfully still – they express the agony of the Crucifixion through a paraphrase of Christ's own words to mankind.

© JOHN MILSOM

## Hugh Kellyk Gaude flore virginali

*Gaude flore virginali  
Honoreque speciali  
Transcendens splendiferum  
Angolorum principatum  
Et sanctorum decoratum  
Dignitate numerum.*

*Gaude sponsa cara Dei,  
Nam ut clara lux diei  
Solis datur lumine,  
Sic tu facis orbem vere  
Tuae pacis resplendere  
Lucis plenitudine.*

*Gaude splendens vas virtutum,  
Cuius pendens est ad nutum  
Tota caeli curia:  
Te benignam et felicem  
Jesu dignam genitricem  
Veneratur in gloria.*

*Gaude nexu voluntatis  
Et amplexu caritatis  
Iuncta sic Altissimo,  
Ut ad votum consequaris  
Quicquid virgo postularis  
A Jesu dulcissimo.*

Rejoice, who in the flower of your maidenhood  
And in the special honour due to you  
Surpass all the shining  
Hosts of angels  
And the decorated company of saints  
In worthiness.

Rejoice beloved spouse of God,  
For as the clear light of day  
Shines forth in the sun's rays,  
So truly do you make the earth  
Brilliant with the fullness  
Of the light of your peace.

Rejoice radiant vessel of goodness,  
On whose assent hangs  
All the government of heaven:  
You the kind, the blessed,  
The worthy mother of Jesus  
They venerate in glory.

Rejoice that you are so united in the bond of will  
And the embrace of love  
With the Most High  
That you obtain the promise  
Of whatever virgin prayer you make  
Of your sweetest Jesus.

*Gaude mater miserorum,  
Quia Pater saeculorum  
Dabit te colentibus  
Congruentem hic mercedem  
Et felicem poli sedem  
Regnis in caelestibus.*

*Gaude virgo mater Christi  
Quia sola meruisti,  
O virgo piissima,  
Esse tantae dignitatis  
Quod sis sanctae Trinitatis  
Sessioni proxima.*

*Gaude virgo mater pura  
Certa manens et segura  
Quod haec septem gaudia  
Non cessabunt nec decrescent  
Sed durabunt et florescent  
Per aeterna saecula. Amen.*

Rejoice mother of the poor  
That the father of all ages  
Will grant to all who honour you  
A fitting reward here on earth  
And a blessed place on high  
In the kingdom of heaven.

Rejoice virgin mother of Christ  
That you alone were counted worthy,  
Most dutiful maiden,  
To enjoy the great honour  
Of taking the place  
Next to the holy Trinity.

Rejoice, who as pure virgin and mother  
Remain ever sure and secure,  
That these seven joys  
Will not cease or diminish  
But will endure and flourish  
Through eternal ages. Amen.

Anon

Ah, my dear, ah, my dear son!

‘Ah, my dear, ah, my dear son!’  
Said Mary: ‘Ah my dear;  
Kiss thy mother, Jesu,  
With a laughing cheer.’

This enders night I saw a sight  
All in my sleep:  
Mary, that may, she sang lullay  
And sore did weep.

To keep she sought full fast about  
Her son fro cold:  
Joseph said, ‘Wife, my joy, my life,  
Say what ye would.’  
‘Nothing, my spouse, is in this house  
Unto my pay;  
My Son, a king, that made all thing,  
Lieth in hay.’

‘Ah, my dear, ... laughing cheer.’

‘My mother dear, amend your cheer,  
And now be still:  
Thus for to lie, it is soothly  
My Father’s will.

Derision, great passion,  
Infinitely,  
As it is found, many a wound  
Suffer shall I.

On Calvary that is so high,  
There shall I be,  
Man to restore, nailed full sore  
Upon a tree.’

‘Ah, my dear, ...  
laughing cheer.’

## John Nesbett

# Magnificat

*Magnificat anima mea Dominum:  
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.  
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:*

*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes  
generationes  
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:*

*Et sanctum nomen eius.  
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies:*

*Timentibus eum.  
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
Dispexit superbos mente cordis sui.  
Deposuit potentes de sede:  
Et exaltavit humiles.  
Esurientes implevit bonis:  
Et divites dimisit inanes.*

*Suscepit Israel puerum suum:  
Recordatus misericordiae suae.  
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros:  
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.  
Gloria Patri et Filio:  
Et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper:*

*Et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:  
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.  
For he has looked upon the lowliness  
of his handmaid:  
Behold, from henceforth all generations  
will call me blessed.  
For he who is mighty has done great  
things for me:  
And holy is his name.  
And his mercy extends from generation  
to generation:  
Upon those who fear him.  
He has put forth his arm in strength:  
And scattered those who are proud in heart.  
He has cast the mighty from their thrones:  
And has raised up the lowly.  
The hungry he has filled with good things:  
And the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has protected Israel his servant:  
Remembering his mercy.  
As he promised to our forefathers:  
To Abraham and his children for ever.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son:  
And to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now, and ever shall be:  
World without end. Amen.

## Robert Fayrfax

# Most clear of colour

Most clear of colour and root of steadfastness  
With virtue cunning her manner is led,  
Which that passeth my mind for to express  
Of her bounty, beauty and womanhood:  
The brightest mirror and flower of goodlihead,  
Which that all men know'th, both more and less;  
These virtues been printed in her doubtless.

## John Browne

# Salve Regina

*Salve Regina, mater misericordiae:  
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Evae.  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes  
In hac lacrimarum valle.  
Eia ergo advocata nostra,  
Illos tuos misericordes oculos  
Ad nos converte,  
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
Virgo mater ecclesiae,  
Aeterna porta gloriae,  
Esto nobis refugium  
Apud Patrem et Filium.*

Hail, O queen, mother of mercy;  
Our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail!  
To you we cry out, exiled children of Eve;  
To you we sigh as we mourn and weep  
In this valley of tears.  
O then, our advocate,  
Turn those merciful eyes of yours  
Towards us;  
And after our exile here, show to us the blessed  
Fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Virgin mother of the church,  
Everlasting gateway to glory,  
Be our refuge  
Before the face of the Father and the Son.

O Clemens!

*Virgo Clemens, virgo pia,  
Virgo dulcis, O Maria,  
Exaudi preces omnium  
Ad te pie clamantium.*

O pia!

*Funde preces tuo nato,  
Crucifixo, vulnerato,  
Et pro nobis flagellato,  
Spinis puncto, felle potato.*

O dulcis Maria, salve!

Anon

## Afraid, alas, and why so suddenly?

Afraid, alas, and why so suddenly?  
Why so dismayed? Why should she heavy be,  
Or otherwise evil apaid? Afraid.

Sith it concluded was in the Trinity  
That the Son of God should make us all free,  
Though death be bewailed by ways of pity,  
Yet when our Lady's Son was slain,  
Our soules comfort came again:  
Therefore though death be never so sore,  
Now, blessed Lady, weep no more: Afraid.

O gentle!

Virgin gentle, virgin holy,  
Virgin sweet, O Mary,  
Hear the prayers of all  
Who dutifully cry to you.

O holy!

Pour out our prayers to your Son,  
Crucified, bruised  
And scourged for our sake,  
Pierced with thorns, given gall to drink.

O Sweet Mary, hail!

Methinketh in my reason thou ought to be glad,  
When Jews with their treason to death thy Son lad:  
They beat him for our guilt, though he sin no had;  
Thy Son was doughty, the fiend was adrad:  
To joy of every worldes wight,  
So now is known thy Sonnes might:  
Therefore though death be never so sore,  
Now, blessed Lady, weep no more: Afraid.  
Well I remember his woundes were full smart;

The crown at his head, the spear at his heart,  
They beating and bruising, or life did depart;  
All was on red blood without any shirt:  
But blessed be that hour that He suffered  
That sharp shower!

Therefore though death be never so sore,  
Now, blessed Lady, weep no more: Afraid.

John Browne

## O Maria Salvatoris Mater

*O Maria Salvatoris Mater,  
Fragrans flos pudoris,  
Superans nascentia.*

*Parit illa mater fructum  
Qui iam nostrum tulit luctum  
Cunctaque peccamina.*

*Parit Christum virgo manens;  
Quisnam negat? Numquid parens  
Virga Aaron legitur frondes,  
Flores produxisse?  
Deum ita potuisse  
Filium adseritur.*

*Ex hac matre sic intacta  
Gignit eum, quo est facta  
Cunctaque viventia.*

Glorious Lady, of heaven high queen,  
Lay down all thy weeping, let no more be seen!  
Remember thy joys, that joyful aye been!  
Thy dear Son is past his trouble and his teen;  
His death was sweet, it did us good;  
He bought us with His precious blood:

Therefore though death be never so sore,  
Now, blessed Lady, weep no more: Afraid.

O Mary, Mother of the Saviour,  
Fragrant flower of chastity  
Surpassing all the children of men.

This mother brings forth the child  
Who now has borne our sorrow  
And all our sins.

She bears the Christ yet remains a Virgin;  
Who could deny it? Do we not read  
That Aaron's staff was seen  
To have brought forth leaf and bud?  
That God has had the power in the same way  
To bring forth a son we here declare.

From this mother thus untouched  
He begets him by whom she herself was made  
And all that lives.