



tallis vocalis

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TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA

# REQUIEM

OFFICIUM DEFUNCTORUM 1605

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TALLIS VOCALIS  
CHRISTOPHER WATSON CONDUCTOR

28 JUNE 2015 (SUN) 8PM  
ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL,  
HONG KONG

# In Memoriam 「追憶」

Tallis Vocalis 塔利斯合唱團

Christopher Watson *conductor* 克里斯多夫·華生 指揮

Programme 曲目

James MacMillan (b1959) *A Child's Prayer*

Tomás Luis de Victoria  
(c1548–1611) *Requiem (Officium Defunctorum 1605)*

- *Taedet animam meam*
- Introitus: *Requiem aeterna*
- *Kyrie*
- Graduale: *Requiem aeterna*
- Offertorium: *Domine, Jesu Christe*

Arvo Pärt (b1935) *Da pacem Domine*

– 15 minutes interval –

Arvo Pärt *The Woman With the Alabaster Box*

Tomás Luis de Victoria *Requiem*

- *Sanctus & Benedictus*
- *Agnus Dei*
- Communio: *Lux aeterna*
- Motet: *Versa est in luctum*
- Responsory: *Libera me, Domine*

John Tavener (1944–2013) *Song for Athene*

## TALLIS VOCALIS 塔利斯合唱團



Tallis Vocalis is Hong Kong's first vocal ensemble dedicated to the performance of early and Renaissance music. Founded in 2013 by local choral enthusiast Raymond Choi, the ensemble gathers 20 of the territory's best choral singers. The group's repertoire focuses on the great Renaissance polyphony of the 15th and 16th centuries, with the

occasional foray into early Baroque and contemporary music. The ensemble presented its inaugural concert in November 2014 with British conductor Andrew Griffiths (*Stile Antico*) in a programme of English Renaissance music.

## *Raymond Choi*

*Founder, Chairman & CEO*



Local choral enthusiast Raymond Choi founded Tallis Vocalis in 2013 out of a lifelong love for Renaissance polyphony. He is also the Chairman and CEO of the group.

Before founding Tallis Vocalis, Raymond Choi was Chairman of the Hong Kong Bach Choir from 2004 to 2014. Under his dedicated leadership, the Bach Choir cemented its place as the leading classical chorus in Hong Kong. He was responsible for the choir's innovative programming, which mixed the popular repertoire with numerous Asian and local premieres.

He has collaborated with local and overseas musicians, singers, chorus masters, conductors and organisations and has led the choir to concerts in Macao and Shanghai.

Apart from his role as an arts administrator, Raymond is also an experienced chorister and sings as a bass with Tallis Vocalis. He has also sung with choirs in Hong Kong and the UK such as the Hong Kong Bach Choir, Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus (UK) and the London Philharmonic Choir, under Lorin Maazel, Vladimir Jurowski, Eliahu Inbal, Marin Alsop, Stephen Cleobury, Nicholas Cleobury, Helmuth Rilling and Jerome Hoberman. He has recently participated in the Tallis Scholars Summer School under Peter Phillips, director of the Tallis Scholars.

## *Bethan Greaves*

*Rehearsal Leader*



Hailing from the UK, Bethan Clark (née Greaves) has spent 16 years living and working in Hong Kong. In 2002 she founded Katterwall, a company dedicated to everything vocal, establishing Kassia Women's Choir (2003) and Kassia Men's Chorus (2005). From 2011-2015 she also worked as a secondary school music teacher at Island School (ESF).

As conductor, chorus master and vocal coach, she has worked with the Cecilian Singers, HK Youth Arts Festival, Hong Kong Bach Choir Chamber Choir, Hong Kong Bach Choir, Tallis Vocalis, and St. John's Evensong

Choir. She has conducted in most of Hong Kong's prestigious venues including: HK Cultural Centre, HK City Hall, HK Arts Centre, HK Academy for Performing Arts, St. John's Cathedral, HK Fringe Club as well as many alternative performing spaces including bars, restaurants, parks, and stadiums.

In 2014, she prepared 30 members of Kassia Women's Choir for a performance in New York's Lincoln Center as part of DCINY's concert 'Lust and La Femme Mystique'. In 2010 she directed the Hong Kong premiere of Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World*.

Bethan has been able to learn from many internationally recognised experts in the field, including Jason Lai (HK Sinfonietta, Singapore Symphony Orchestra), Kirby Shaw, Steve Zegree, Deborah Miles-Johnson (BBC Singers), Nicholas Cleobury (Oxford Bach Choir), Peter Phillips (The Tallis Scholars), Chris Watson (The Tallis Scholars, Theatre of Voices) and Tobias Hug (Swingle Singers).

In 2011 Bethan was the first person in Hong Kong to become a Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (L.R.S.M) in Choral Conducting, which she achieved with Distinction.

## Christopher Watson

Conductor



Christopher Watson studied music at Exeter University, and went on to hold lay clerkships at Durham, Oxford and latterly Westminster Cathedrals. He now lives in Oxford and divides his time between solo singing, consort work and conducting.

Christopher is a member of The Tallis Scholars, with whom he has made more than 400 appearances, *Tenebrae* and *Gallicantus*. He has also worked as chorus master for *Ars Nova* Copenhagen and *Coro Casa da Música* in Porto, and directs *Sospiri*, a chamber choir based in Oxford, with whom he has made 6 recordings alongside their regular program of concerts in and around Oxford.

He is also the Director of Music at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he directs the chapel choir and organizes a series of concerts.

In 2007 he made his debut at Carnegie Hall in New York with Theatre of Voices and Paul Hillier, giving the world premiere of David Lang's *Little Match Girl Passion*, which subsequently won a Pulitzer Prize. He has performed the *Little Match Girl Passion* all over the world, including the Perth Festival in Australia and the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato in Mexico, and the Theatre of Voices recording of the piece won a Grammy Award.

Other engagements include the first performances of *The Stones of the Arch* by Gavin Bryars and a series of pieces by Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen with the Kronos Quartet and London Sinfonietta, Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Tuscany with Philippe Herreweghe, and in Denmark and Sweden with Paul Hillier and Concerto Copenhagen. He has made more than 100 recordings, including several discs of Dufay and Josquin, the Schütz *Resurrection History* with *Ars Nova* Copenhagen, Lassus motets and *Penitential Psalms* with Philippe Herreweghe, the Bach Motets with Sette Voci and Peter Kooij, the 1575 *Cantiones Sacrae* of Thomas Tallis and William Byrd with Alamire and Lassus's *Lagrime di San Pietro* with Gallicantus. With Theatre of Voices he has given performances of Stockhausen's *Stimmung*, and with them recorded Berio's *A-Ronne* and Pärt's *Stabat Mater* for Harmonia Mundi USA. He released his first solo recording, of British and American Art Song in 2010, and launched it at a series of recitals in Canada. Christopher has made several appearances at the Proms in London and has performed in Cathedrals and concert halls all over the world, from San Marco in Venice and Notre Dame in Paris to the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, Sydney Opera House and Lincoln Center in New York.

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME 節目介紹

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. To commemorate this occasion, tonight's programme brings together music written in the Renaissance period and the present day on the theme of remembering those we have lost.

Death is a universal theme in art. Over the centuries many great composers have set the Requiem Mass (or Mass for the dead) to music to express questions of mortality or feelings of sadness and loss: Mozart, Verdi and Fauré to name but three. In the Renaissance repertoire, Victoria's *Officium Defunctorum* (Office of the Dead) — now often simply known as his *Requiem* — ranks among the greatest works of polyphony.

Tomás Luis de Victoria was born in Ávila, Spain in 1548. At the age of 17 he was sent to Rome, at 27 he was ordained as a priest and he remained a churchman all his life. In 1578 he returned to Ávila to take up the position of Chaplain and Chapelmaster at the Royal Convent of Barefoot Nuns of St Clare in Madrid, the place of residence of the Empress Dowager Maria, sister of King Philip II of Spain and widow of Maximilian II. In February 1603 the Empress Dowager passed away, and for her funeral services in April the same year, Victoria wrote his second Office of the Dead. The work, which he published in 1605, contained not only the text of the *Missa pro defunctis* (Mass for the Dead), but also an introductory lesson from the Matins of the Dead, *Taedet animam meam*, a funeral motet *Versa est luctum*, and the Absolution itself, with the full Responsorium, *Libera me, Domine*, and its final Kyrie.

The music is scored for six parts SSATTB (except for *Taedet animam meam* which is SATB) and includes the plainchant as a *cantus firmus* mostly sung by the second sopranos. This chant does not move as slowly as *cantus firmus* parts conventionally do, while the surrounding polyphony does not move very fast, resulting in a beautifully blended and restrained texture. It is in the *Versa est in luctum* that Victoria composes more freely and lavishly, in a perfect example of the composer's genius in expressing grief and mourning through music.

Scottish composer James MacMillan is one of the most sought-after composers working today. His oeuvre includes a large proportion of choral works, most of which are influenced by his strong Catholic faith. He wrote the serene and touching *A Child's Prayer* in memory of the 16 primary school children who were murdered at the Dunblane school massacre in 1996. The scoring is poignant: two soprano/treble lines representing children's voices alongside the more grounded SATB chorus. The piece opens with the chorus repeating the word 'welcome' in lament-like chords, while the soprano duet soars above ethereally. It builds to an intense climax with the chorus proclaiming 'joy' in turns, suggesting an optimistic and peaceful resolution, before the duet declines to a quiet ending.

John Tavener's austere beautiful *Song for Athene* was written in memory of Athene Hariades, a half-Greek actress and friend of Tavener who died in 1993. The text is derived from the Orthodox Funeral Service and Shakespeare's Hamlet, interspersed with the baritone's intonation of 'Alleluia' seven times throughout the piece. Following the tradition of Byzantine music, the piece is underlaid by a continuous drone provided by the bass line. The piece gained widespread popularity when it was performed at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey in 1997.

Arvo Pärt started writing his *Da pacem Domine* two days after the Madrid bombings in 2004 as his personal tribute to the victims. For this prayer of peace he chose a ninth-century Gregorian antiphon as his text. The piece does not quite follow his trademark tintinnabuli style, but instead harks back to a more 'classical' composition — a simple four-part structure with minimal rhythmic variation. The conductor Paul Hillier aptly describes the piece as 'a near harmonic stasis in which each pitch is carefully placed in position like stones in a Zen garden.'

Similarly, Pärt's *Woman With the Alabaster Box*, commissioned in 1997 for the 350th anniversary of the Karlstad Diocese in Sweden, is a piece of simple, pure and unmistakable writing. Setting text from the Gospel according to St. Matthew in which Jesus describes his own burial, the piece starts solemnly with adjacent thirds against long-held notes, until the choir unites on 'Verily I say unto you...' with contrasting block chords which bring the piece to a solemn ending.

## SINGERS 團員

**Sopranos:** Fanny Chan\*, Sui Ming Chu, Bethan Greaves\*, Sue Morris, Nicola Wilkinson, Mylthie Wong

**Altos:** Genevieve Hilton, Sandy Ho, Rinske Kuiper, Ruth Lau, Emilie Pavey, Arlene Siagian

**Tenors:** Peter Clarke, Thierry Colin, Kyle Hung, Roger Lo\*, Joseph Travers

**Basses:** Artus Cheung, Raymond Choi, Sam Hilton, Jon Picker, Tom Raggett, Charles Wood

女高音：陳文芬、朱穗明、紀碧琳、莫瑞儀、韋綺琦、黃婉薇

女低音：陳濤珍、何珮珊、費亦姬、劉思敏、貝恩夢、余愛玲

男高音：祈彼德、郭迪禮、洪燕荻、勞展霖、杜摘星

男低音：張嘉笙、蔡明翰、陳明山、畢文韜、賴傑翰、查理斯

\* Soloists in *A Child's Prayer* 獨唱

# Soloist in *Song for Athene* 獨唱

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 鳴謝

Martin Lee, Aaron Ying.

## SUPPORT US 支持我們

Tallis Vocalis is a non-profit-making performing arts organisation and receives no government funding. We rely solely on the support of our Friends and the sponsorship of individual donors. If you would like to learn more about our Friends Circle Scheme and how to sponsor us, please email [info@tallisvocalis.com](mailto:info@tallisvocalis.com). As a registered charity, any donation of HK\$100 or more to Tallis Vocalis is tax-deductible with receipt.

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