CALL FOR PAPERS

Academic symposium - Oxford, 19 & 20 June 2020

Spem in Alium is the most famous example of the extremely rare 40-part motet, and its origins and early performance history are enmeshed in a fascinating web of circumstance and intrigue. 2020 most likely marks the 450th anniversary of the piece, and to celebrate this event, ORA Singers, in partnership with Oxford Festival of the Arts, is planning a two-day interdisciplinary symposium to take place on 19th and 20th June 2020, at which a group of British and international academics and scholar-performers will meet to share insights arising from their engagement with Tallis’ motet. Early career scholars (postdocs, or others who have received their PhDs within the last five years) and doctoral students are also encouraged to participate.
The symposium will also mark the launch of ORA Singers’ new recordings of *Spem in Alium* and James MacMillan’s *Vidi Aquam*, a new 40-part motet commissioned by ORA as a modern reflection on Tallis’ work. The symposium will include a major concert featuring both Tallis and MacMillan motets sung by ORA Singers with Oxford Schola Cantorum. There will be a pre-concert talk with Sir James MacMillan talking to Suzi Digby, ORA Singers Artistic Director.

**HOW TO APPLY**

We are now seeking proposals for 30 minute papers from scholars on any aspect of *Spem in Alium*. Themes might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- *Spem in Alium* in historical context: why was it written and where was it performed?
- *Spem in Alium* over the centuries: why has the work been so greatly admired, and why are we still so fascinated by it today?
- Thomas Tallis: who was he, and how did he survive the vicissitudes of life under four Tudor monarchs, from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I?
- How did Tallis adapt his compositional style to the differing religious and musical demands of his royal employers?
- *Spem in Alium* in the context of religious and theological turmoil: what is signified by its Latin text?
- *Spem in Alium* in the context of architectural and musical design
- What kind of spatial experience do the forty voices create?

The conference is also open to receiving proposals in alternative formats.

In addition to the forthcoming ORA Singers’ recording featuring both works, a selection of the papers presented at the symposium will be included in a new publication.

Please send proposals of no more than 250 words, along with a short biography to tallis2020@orasingers.com by midnight (UK time) on Sunday 1 March 2020.

**PERSONNEL**

**Honorary Academic Advisor** Dr John Milsom (Honorary Professor, Liverpool Hope University)

**Conference Convenors**
- Dr Janet Dickinson (Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford)
- Dr Kerry McCarthy (OUP author; *Byrd*, 2013; *Tallis*, 2020)
- Mark Tatlow (Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg / ORA Singers)
- Dr Michelle Castelletti (Oxford Festival of the Arts / ORA Singers)
- Dr Victoria Cooper (Cooper Digital Publishing Ltd / ORA Singers)

[www.orasingers.com/tallis2020/oxford](http://www.orasingers.com/tallis2020/oxford)