

**‘Hail, Queen of Heaven’ - Iberian Music for the Blessed Virgin Mary.
A workshop for singers with tutor Will Dawes at the Bishop’s Palace, Hereford.
Saturday 23 February 2019**

In 16th and 17th century Spain and Portugal, devotion to Mary as Queen of Heaven was profound, and was perhaps most fully expressed in the music of the four great seasonal Marian antiphons: ‘Alma Redemptoris Mater’, ‘Ave Regina Caelorum’, ‘Regina Caeli’ and ‘Salve Regina’. For our February workshop, Will Dawes has chosen exquisite settings of these by Pedro de Christo, Cristobal de Morales, Pedro de Escobar, Juan de Padilla, Alonso Lobo and Diego Melgas. In addition, we shall sing the glorious 8-part ‘Ave Maria’ by Victoria.

Sung at the end of Compline, the antiphons celebrate Mary as the gate of Heaven, star of the sea, queen of angels and intercessor for sinful mankind with her divine Son.

From Advent until Candlemas, ‘Alma Redemptoris Mater’ tells of the Annunciation and of Mary’s divine motherhood. ‘Ave Regina Caelorum’ (Candlemas until Maundy Thursday) stresses Mary’s beauty – “Glorious Virgin, beautiful above all. Hail, O very fair one.”

During the Easter season, ‘Regina Caeli’ is full of joy, brimming over with alleluias, after a Lent where no alleluias are sung. Then, until Advent comes round again, the ‘Salve Regina’ by contrast depicts “the banished children of Eve” crying out to the mother of mercy to give comfort.

How did the individual composers convey the varying moods of these antiphons? How widely did they differ from each other in their response to a particular text? An illuminating comparison is Lobo’s treatment of ‘Ave Regina Caelorum’ set against that of Padilla, written in Mexico. In Lobo’s heaven the worshippers are serene, the upper voices moving in strict canon; in Padilla’s, with rushing scales and triple time, they are dancing.*

February’s workshop will allow us to explore this further. The full repertoire is as follows – and you’ll see that Will Dawes has set us quite a challenge!

- Alma redemptoris Mater: Pedro de Christo SATB
- Ave Regina caelorum: Alonso Lobo SSATB
- Ave Regina caelorum: Juan de Padilla SSAATTBB
- Regina Caeli: Pedro de Escobar SATB
- Salve Regina: Diego Melgas SATB
- Salve Regina: Cristobal de Morales SAATB
- Ave Maria: Tomas Luis de Victoria SSAATTBB

Both the Padilla and the Victoria are for double choir, so please do book in good time so that we can balance the parts. Tenors and Basses, we shall need a substantial number of you!

This promises an exceptional day of music-making, not to be missed.

*You’ll find excellent performances on these YouTube clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xf6EEvCXekY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcNuop4JrDE>