

# BORDER MARCHES EARLY MUSIC FORUM

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## *A Compendium of Revelations:* Meditations by Girolamo Savonarola written from prison

A workshop for voices and instruments  
Plus AGM

Bishopswood Village Hall,  
Bishopswood, nr Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5QT  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026 10:00 -16:30,  
registration from 09:30. AGM 12:45 -1:15

Directed by David Hatcher



Early in the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1498, the Dominican Friar, Girolamo Savonarola, was led out into the Piazza della Signoria, the centre of Florence, where he was hanged and burned alive for heresy. His ashes were collected and cast into the river Po to prevent his many followers from using them as sacred relics and to eradicate his memory.

During his 45 years of life, Savonarola became one of the most notorious thorns in the side of the all-powerful Church through his writings and sermons, denouncing the luxury and debauchery of the secularised world and corrupted Church. He warned '...Prepare thyself, O Rome, for great will be thy punishments'. His book *Compendio di revelatione*, written in 1496 and sent to Pope Alexander VI in a vain attempt to explain his revelations and mollify papal anger, became one of the friar's most widely read publications.

During his imprisonment in the tower of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio, Savonarola was brutally tortured, his tormentors sparing only his right arm so as to enable him to sign his confession. He seems to have made use of this small mercy to write two extensive meditations: *Infelix ego* on Psalm 50 ('Miserere mei, Deus', Vulgate), and *Tristitia obsedit* me, Psalm 30 ('In te, Domine, speravi'). These texts were smuggled out by his disciples and were widely disseminated. They were to be taken up by a number of composers as libretti for some of the most moving motets of the following century.

This workshop will look at a number of these magnificent works, including those by William Byrd, Lassus and Willaert, in addition to Josquin's sublime setting of Psalm 50, 'Miserere me'. We will be using new editions by David Hatcher, prepared during the covid epidemic lockdowns as part of his Music Minus One project.

Music will be provided. Pitch is A=440. Music is scored for one or two choirs and period instruments: strings, recorders, winds and brass.

Registration for the weekend will begin at 9:30am in the hall, with tea and coffee.

The cost for the day will be £22 for members of BMEMF or other Fora and £26 for non-members, £5 for students. including scores and refreshments. The AGM will be held 12:45 – 1:15. There is ample parking nearby, and players can stop close to the hall entrance to leave instruments and stands.

**Prior booking** is essential. Either book online at [www.bmemf.org.uk](http://www.bmemf.org.uk), or print out the form below and return it to **Sue Weber**, Old Bakehouse, The Street, Bishops Cannings, Wiltshire, SN10 2LD. Please contact Ellen Sarewitz if you have any queries [ellen.sarewitz@cantab.net](mailto:ellen.sarewitz@cantab.net)