

Tridentine Community News

December 4, 2022 – Second Sunday of Advent

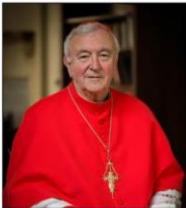
Music News from London, England:

Westminster Cathedral William Byrd Polyphonic Propers and Rosary Shrine Music Program Upgrade

It seems there is often something refreshingly interesting to report from the Latin Mass epicenter that is London, England. This week there are two developments there on the sacred music front:

Many of our readers are familiar with the compositions of William Byrd. For almost 20 years, Windsor's St. Benedict Tridentine Community Choir has sung Byrd's Mass for Three Voices and Mass for Four Voices with regularity. Less well-known is the fact that Byrd composed polyphonic settings of the Propers of the Mass (Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory, and Communion Antiphon). In honor of the 200th Anniversary of William Byrd, the Westminster Cathedral Choir will sing Byrd's polyphonic Propers at Masses throughout 2023. They have published a brochure detailing what will be sung on each day, from which the adjacent two pages have been taken:

https://westminstercathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Byrd-Brochure-2_compressed.pdf



On 11 October 2022, I listened to the music of William Byrd being sung in the Chapel of St Peter in the Tower of London, as part a musical tribute to our late Queen, Elizabeth II. As I listened I became intensely conscious of the bodies of St Thomas More and St John Fisher, lying in the lower part of that very church since 1535. Here was music, composed during the long years of religious persecution, coming alive again in the presence of these two famous martyrs.

Shortly after their deaths, William Byrd was born. He lived through the great religious persecutions of Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth I. He was a devout Catholic and some of his earliest church music accompanied the Sarum missal, in use at that time. He composed for both his own Catholic faith and for the Church of England. His musical ability enabled him to navigate these dramatic differences. But his finest music came later in life, in particular in music for the Roman liturgy as established by the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

His settings for the Mass were first heard in secret, in private chapels and back rooms, attended by Catholics who risked their livelihoods and by priests who risked their lives. Yet despite the private nature of these first performances, Byrd made no compromises in the depth and intimacy of his music. It is full of life and emotion and communicates the vitality of a living faith, standing strong against the difficulties of the time. Every note, every phrase, is a prayer: Our prayer today stands in continuity with his.

This year, Westminster Cathedral Choir brings the music of Byrd's *Gradualia* out into the open. While the inspiring surroundings of the Cathedral stand in stark contrast to the cramped environment in which this music was first sung, Byrd's music transcends time and place. Its beauty communicates to us the faith which inspired him, and which continues to inspire us.

The beauty of his music today not only overcomes the conflicts of the past but also draws so many into the realms of faith. This is central to the mission of Westminster Cathedral.

I thank all who will contribute to this remarkable celebration of the 400th anniversary of his death. May many be attracted and come to know our Blessed Lord through the artistic genius of William Byrd, which is, truly, a great gift of God and a precious inheritance.

+ Vincent Nichols

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols

While Westminster Cathedral does host Masses in the Extraordinary Form, the Cathedral Choir – comprised of boys and men – usually sings for Novus Ordo Masses that are partially or all in Latin, virtually every day of the year.

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail info@windsorlatinmass.org. Previous columns are available at www.windsorlatinmass.org.

PROGRAMME

Sunday 18 December 2022 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

12 noon - Solemn Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Advent (Full choir)

Mass for five voices

Introit - *Rorate caeli desuper*

Gradual - *Tollite portas*

Alleluia - *Ave Maria*

Offertory - *Ave Maria*

Communion - *Ecce Virgo concipiet*

Sunday 25 December – Christmas Day

4pm - Solemn Vespers and Benediction (Men's voices)

Motet - *O magnum misterium*

Friday 6 January 2023 – Epiphany

5.30pm - Solemn Mass with Propers for Epiphany (Men's voices)

Introit - *Ecce advenit*

Gradual - *Surge illuminare Ierusalem*

Offertory - *Reges Tharsis et insulae*

Communion - *Vidimus stellam eius in Oriente*

Saturday 7 January

10.30am - Mass with Propers for Christmas (Men's voices)

Introit - *Puer natus est nobis*

Gradual - *Viderunt omnes*

Alleluia - *Dies sanctificatus*

Offertory - *Tui sunt caeli*

Communion - *Viderunt omnes*

Saturday 14 January

10.30am - Mass (Men's voices)

Offertory - *Alma redemptoris mater*

Thursday 19 January

5.30pm - Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Christmas to Candlemas (Full choir)

Introit - *Vultum tuum*

Gradual - *Speciosus forma*

Alleluia - *Post partum virgo*

Offertory - *Felix namque est*

Communion - *Beata viscera*

Further north in metropolitan London is the Dominicans'

Rosary Shrine, an enormous church with fifteen side chapels dedicated to the mysteries of

the Rosary. For the last several years Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP has been leading an effort to reinvigorate parish life at the Rosary Shrine; the church had been easy to overlook amongst the other liturgical offerings in London due to its location in a residential neighborhood north of the central city. First Fr. Lawrence instituted a weekly Sunday Dominican Rite High Mass. Then he restored the sanctuary and historic High Altar. Now he is running a modest campaign to improve the quality of their monthly polyphonic Dominican Rite Mass by adding professional singer(s). The case he sets forth is clear and conservative in funding goals. Donors from the U.S. are able to make tax-deductible donations. An impressive model for how a church can upgrade its musical offerings:

<https://rosaryshrine.co.uk/donate/future-decades-campaign/supporting-sacred-music/>

