



THE GESUALDO SIX

THE ENGLISH IN EUROPE

The Gesualdo Six • Owain Park



How the Contenance Angloise helped shape a European polyphonic tradition

The Gesualdo Six explore the transmission of sacred choral traditions in Renaissance Europe, shaped by patronage, pedagogy, and cultural exchange. At its core is the *Contenance Angloise*—a distinctive English style of rich consonance, flowing melodies, and controlled dissonance that influenced continental composers like Binchois and Brumel.

We trace English polyphony's impact through Dunstaple's *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and Du Fay's *Nuper rosarum flores*, the latter commissioned for Florence's cathedral consecration. Walter Frye's *Ave Regina caelorum* may have even appeared in artworks featuring sheet music, highlighting the interplay of music, architecture, and visual art. Paired *Tota pulchra es* settings by Forest and Mouton showcase Marian devotion as a vehicle for stylistic exchange, while settings of *Sub tuum* by Dunstaple and Brumel further reflect English influence on continental practice.

The programme culminates in *Infelix Ego* by Willaert and Byrd, demonstrating how sacred texts served as both personal expressions of faith and reflections of institutional power. This repertoire reveals the fluid boundaries between artistic transmission and cultural appropriation, underscoring English composers' lasting imprint on European polyphony.

"The Gesualdo Six sang magnificently in tune; the ensemble was faultless. Their sound is precision-tooled for blend, perfectly rounded, and has the utmost ease and precision."

OperaWire

PROGRAMME



Gilles Binchois <i>Plainchant</i>	Da pacem, Domine Asperges me – ‘faburden’ (<i>from the Sarum Rite</i>)
Antoine Brumel	Da pacem, Domine
John Dunstaple Guillaume Du Fay Loyset Compère	Veni sancte Spiritus (<i>found in both Modena B and ‘Old Hall’</i>) Nuper rosarum flores Quis numerare queat?
John Forest Walter Frye Jean Mouton	Tota pulchra es Ave Regina caelorum (<i>Modena B</i>) Tota pulchra es
John Dunstaple Antoine Brumel	Sub tuam protectionem Sub tuum praesidium
Adrian Willaert Gilles Binchois William Byrd	Infelix Ego Asperges Me Infelix Ego

*Approximate duration 1 hour 10 minutes
followed by refreshments*

MONTHLY CONCERT SERIES

3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 4PM

ST MARY'S CHURCH THORNBURY BS35 1HQ

2025

19 October	Panache Steel Band
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2026

15 February	Glenda Clwyd (harp)
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15 March	Celli Peppers
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19 April	Nota Bene
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17 May	
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21 June	Phoenix Recorder Orchestra
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19 July	St Mary's Choir
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20 September	
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18 October	
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REFRESHMENTS

FREE ENTRY
RETIRING COLLECTION