

# WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 26 October 2024  
7.30pm

## El Fuego

### Cantoría

Inés Alonso soprano

Oriol Guimerà alto

Jorge Losana director, tenor

Víctor Cruz bass

Marc de la Linde viola da gamba

Pablo FitzGerald vihuela

Marina López organ

Mateo Flecha (1481-1553)

Gloria... pues nació

El Jubilate

Anon

Ríu, ríu, chíu

Verbum caro factum est

Dadme albricias hijos d'Eva

Mateo Flecha

El Fuego (fragments)

Antonio de Cabezón (1510-1566)

Diferencias sobre 'La dama le demanda'

Juan del Encina (c.1468-1529)

Oy comamos y bebamos

Más vale trocar

iCucú, cucú!

Mateo Flecha

La Justa (fragments)

### Interval

Mateo Flecha

El Toro

Diego Ortiz (1510-1570)

Recercada quarta sobre La Folía

Mateo Flecha

Que farem del pobre Joan

Teresica hermana

Anon

Corten espadas afiladas

Mateo Flecha

La Guerra (fragments)

Luys Milan (c.1500-1560)

Fantasia XXII

Pavana IV

Bartomeu Càrceres (fl. 1546)

Soleta so jo aci


Sus sus sus (fragmento de 'La Trulla')

Anon

Yo me soy la morenica

Mateo Flecha

La Bomba (fragments)

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This recital centres around two forms typical of Renaissance music of the Iberian peninsula: *ensalada* and *villancico*. The longest and most complex pieces we hear are six *ensaladas* by Mateo Flecha: *El Jubilate*, *El fuego*, *La Justa*, *El Toro*, *La Guerra* and *La Bomba*. 'Ensalada' means 'salad', and it's an apt descriptor for a form of music that brings together disparate elements – languages, styles, pre-existing and new themes – into a substantial, often lengthy whole that delights the senses by playing with texture, juxtaposition and balance. Flecha was born in Tarragona in 1481 and worked extensively as chapel master at several prominent courts, including in Valencia at the court of Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria. He is known sometimes as Mateo Flecha 'El Viejo' ('The Elder') to distinguish from his nephew, Mateo Flecha 'El Joven', who was responsible for the printing and, consequently, survival of many of his uncle's *ensaladas*. The *villancicos* are simpler, shorter songs, variously sacred and secular, which over time came to be associated closely with carol traditions and Christmas. The programme interweaves other themes through carefully-chosen song groupings: our attention is drawn to various pieces' shared provenance in key manuscripts and early printed songbooks; several songs focus on women; and we are led back and forth between lofty allegory and straightforward vernacular storytelling.

The opening *Gloria... pues nació* is the only surviving Christmas-themed *villancico* known to have been written by Flecha. The next three are all drawn from the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, a book of Spanish vocal music printed in Venice in 1556; it survives in a single copy held in Uppsala University Library, and its rediscovery there in the early 20th Century immeasurably enriched the extant corpus of early modern Spanish polyphony. *Río, río, chíu* has become a popular Christmas carol; while its authorship is unknown, some scholars have suggested attributions to Flecha and Càrceres. After the gently lilting *Verbum caro factum est*, the celebratory *Dadme albricias hijos d'Eva* brings a joyful expression of good news. The news is not so good in Flecha's *El Fuego*, where alarm bells ring in virtuosic onomatopoeiac polyphony.

The keyboardist Antonio de Cabezón was blind from childhood, and worked in the royal court as a composer, performer and teacher. His *Diferencias sobre 'La dama le demanda'*, published in 1570, comprises variations on a secular song. The next three items are by Juan del Encina, a highly influential composer, playwright, poet and priest born circa 1468 in Salamanca – a key hub of artistic and cultural activity during the Spanish Renaissance. Many of Encina's *villancicos*, including the three here, are preserved in the *Cancionero Musical de Palacio* – a major source for music dating from the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. *Oy comamos y bebemos* is a feast song, beginning with a call to eat, drink and be merry in advance of a period of fasting. *Más vale trocar* is similarly impassioned, this time advising that it is better to endure pain than to live without love; the lively *iCucú, cucú!* is slightly more explicit in its relationship advice. Flecha's *La Justa* is vibrantly intertextual, quoting extensively from sacred and secular song as part of its

musical storytelling; after the interval, we hear the shorter, startlingly evocative *El Toro*.

Diego Ortiz was an influential performer and theorist of the viola da gamba, who wrote several *recercadas* on existing themes – this one on the famous *La Folia*. Gossip reigns in the next group, with a return to Flecha's *villancicos* for two items copied consecutively in the *Cancionero de Uppsala*. The fast polyphony of *Que farem del pobre Joan* elicits sympathy for the unfortunate husband, while the dialogue form of *Teresica hermana* leaves us wondering about the outcome of a proposed affair. Malicious gossip is treated directly in *Corten espadas afiladas*, with its invocation of 'lenguas malas' (literally, 'evil tongues').

Many of Flecha's *ensaladas* function allegorically on multiple levels, and some have been linked by scholars to specific political events. For instance, the musicologist Maricarmen Gómez identifies the 1529 siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire as the likely backdrop of *La Guerra*, which unfolds as an allegorical battle between Christ and Luzbel. Luys Milán was a musician and writer known for producing the first printed music for the vihuela – a lute-like instrument popular in early modern Spain. He also wrote a book that provides valuable insight into the musical life of the Valencian court. His music for the vihuela includes dozens of *fantasias* and *pavanas*; we hear one of each.

The next group foregrounds women and women's voices. The *villancico Soleta so jo ací* has been attributed to Bartomeu Càrceres, about whom little is known except for his erstwhile employment in the chapel of the Duke of Calabria; this Catalan song is included within the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, and is written from a woman's perspective. *Sus, sus, sus*, also by Càrceres, is a song of praise to the Virgin. The composer of *Yo me soy la morenica* is unknown, but it was published in a section of Christmas *villancicos* within the *Cancionero de Uppsala*; the soprano leads, portraying the mysterious persona of the title, with the rest of the ensemble joining in for simple, beautifully-harmonised refrains.

The final *ensalada* we hear is one of Flecha's longest, the disaster tale *La Bomba* ('The shipwreck'). In an interview earlier this year, members of Cantoría explained the inspiration they found in the 'vivacity and wit' of the *ensalada* and *villancico* that so vibrantly conjures 'the emotion of the people of that time'. Indeed, the selections on this programme tell us a lot about how Renaissance composers fashioned musical interrogations of faith, love, war, sex, spirituality, disaster and so on in ways that reached across social classes.

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## Mateo Fiecha (1481-1553)

### Gloria... puros nacido

Gloria in excelsis Deo Pues nació Quien cumplió nuestro deseo. ¿Quién lo dixo? di Mateo Mi fe yo lo dixe yo.	Glory to God in the highest, for a child is born in answer to our prayer. Who says so? Tell us, Matthew. By my faith, I say so myself.
Di Mateo qué has sabido Deste sancto nascimiento. Dygo vos que ya es naciódo El Mexías prometido En el viejo testamento Yo lo creo, yo lo creo Ya nació Quien cumplió nuestro deseo. ¿Quién lo dixo? di Mateo Mi fe yo lo dixe yo.	Tell us, Matthew, what you know about this holy birth. I tell you the Messiah is born who was promised to us in the Old Testament. I believe it, I believe it. A child is born in answer to our prayer. Who says so? Tell us, Matthew. By my faith, I say so myself.
Dinos agora también Di Mateo por qué vía Digos vos que allá en Belén Cerca de Jerusalén De una que dizen María O que arreos O que aseo que hoy nació Quien cumplió nuestro deseo. ¿Quién lo dixo? di Mateo Mi fe yo lo dixe yo.	Now tell us too, tell us, Matthew, how to find him. I tell you down there in Bethlehem, not far from Jerusalem, in a stable for oxen and asses, a woman they call Mary has today given birth to a child in answer to our prayer. Who says so? Tell us, Matthew. By my faith, I say so myself.

### El Jubilate

*'Jubilate Deo omnis  
terra,  
Cantate et exultate et  
psallite.'*

Mil plaseres  
aca estén.  
¡Amén!  
Y así lo digo yo

*Praise God with gladness,  
all you lands:  
sing, rejoice and worship  
him.*

May a thousand  
pleasures reign here,  
amen.  
And so I say

Por el Niño que  
nació  
Esta noche en Belén.  
¡Oh gran bien!  
Por quien se diría:  
'Para mí me lo querría,  
Madre mía,  
¡Para mí me lo querría!'

¿Por dó veniste  
bien tal?  
Por la Virgen  
preservada  
La qual dixo en su llegada  
Al pecado  
original:

*'Poltron françoys, lassame  
andare  
Que soy infantina de bel  
maridare.'*

El diablo que lo oyó,  
se temió  
Porque no pudo creer  
Que lo que mujer perdió  
lo cobremos por  
mujer,  
'Que sí puede ser, señor  
bachiller,  
¡Que sí puede ser!'

El banastón me  
espanta  
Que traga con su  
garganta  
Los padres primeros.  
¡Oh! groseros  
¿No veys que la  
Virgen santa  
Dixo contra  
Lucifer:

'Non fay el cavaller,  
Non fay tal  
vilanía  
Que fillola me soy  
De Dios de Abrán,  
Señor de la jerarchía?  
¡L'ánima mía!'

because of the Child that  
was born  
this night in Bethlehem,  
oh great tidings!  
Folk would say of him:  
'I wish he were mine,  
dear mother,  
I wish he were mine!'

Where does such good  
come from?  
From the Immaculate  
Virgin  
who, at His birth,  
faced original sin and  
said:

*'French coward, leave me  
be  
for I am a true-born  
princess.'*

The devil, who heard her,  
was afraid,  
as he could not believe  
that what woman had lost  
woman could redeem for  
us,  
'But yes, it can be, my fine  
sir,  
it can be!'

The great monster  
frightens me,  
as its throat opens to  
swallow  
our forefathers.  
Oh, foolish men,  
can't you see that the  
Holy Virgin  
stood up to Lucifer and  
said:

'Don't do it, good sir  
do not act with such  
villainy,  
for I am a daughter  
of the God of Abraham,  
who is Lord of all,  
by my very soul!'

*Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.*