

THE BORDER WAITES

Shipwreck

The music of Henry VII & Philip the Fair

*A programme exploring the music of the courts of England and Burgundy
and the hazards of international travel,
through the chance meeting of Henry VII and Philip the Fair.*

On the 10th January 1506, Philip the Fair, Duke of Burgundy, King of Castile, Archduke of Austria, and son and heir of Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor, set sail from Ymuiden in the Netherlands, with a large army, most of his court, Vincenzo Quirini the Venetian Ambassador and Joanna the Mad, his queen. His objective, to prevent his wife from taking up the crown of Castile and to claim her inheritance as his own, did not prevent him from travelling in sumptuous style, with many of his court musicians accompanying him.

After two days of plain sailing down the Channel, the fleet was becalmed, then only to be lashed violently by a "hideous wind" which eventually drove most of the fleet towards the English coast. The Venetian Ambassador's vessel reached Falmouth harbour, "a wild spot where no human being ever comes save the few boors who inhabit it". The local Cornishmen spoke virtually no English and the roads to London were so dangerous that the Ambassador resolved to remain where he was. Meanwhile, the flag ship was being tossed mercilessly on the open seas. Joanna had put on her richest attire so that her body, when washed up on shore, would be treated with the respect due to her regal status. However, six days after setting sail, the royal party made land at Melcombe Regis, near Weymouth. They were skilfully detained with the greatest courtesy by the Dorset gentry until escorted to Windsor by Henry, Prince of Wales and many English nobles with great pomp. There they met the King, Henry VII, at 3pm on 31st January, who invited them into the castle and oversaw their entertainment until their departure on 23rd April.

Of the composers represented in tonight's programme, Pierre de la Rue, Alexander Agricola and Mabrianus de Orto were actually on the voyage with Philip. Two of Philip's viol players, Hans Highorne and Hans Hossenet, were possibly the first violists to set foot on English soil, and later returned to serve Henry VII and Henry VIII for many years, becoming famous as "The Kinges olde vyols".

David Hatcher (Director)	shawm, viol, recorder, crumhorn, pipe & tabor, bagpipe
Frances Eustace	shawm, viol, recorder, crumhorn, bagpipe
Sharon Lindo	shawm, viol, rebec, recorder, crumhorn, bagpipe
Alison Kinder	viol, recorder, crumhorn, percussion

Programme

Alons ferons nous barbes

Loyset Compere (1445 or 1518)

Departure

Il sera pour vous combatu/L'homme armé

Robert Morton (c.1430-after 1479)

Quirini's storm

In te Domine speravi

Josquin Desprez (c.1450-1521)

Philip's storm

Ave Maria

Josquin Desprez

Falmouth

Rustic Cornish music:

Keur eledh

anon arr. Frances Eustace

To Winchester & Prince Henry

From stormy windes

Edmund Turges (born c.1445)

To Windsor & King Henry

Vive le Roi

Amy souffrez

Dentil prince de renom

Josquin Desprez

Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517)

Anon/Henry, Prince of Wales

Interval

Time to pass with goodly sport

Anon/Henry, Prince of Wales

In Windsor Castle

Je ne fay plus
Consort VII
Mi mi

Gilles Mureau (c.1450-1512)
William Cornish ("The Younger" 1465-1523)
Mabrianus de Orto (c.1460-1529)

The ladies dance

La Spagna "Falla con misuras"
La Spagna a3
La Spagna a4

Guglielmo Ebreo (1420-1484)
Josquin Desprez
Anon

Quirini & the German mercenaries

Will niemand singen?
Im Maien
Rompeltier

Anon arr. David Hatcher
Ludwig Senfl (c.1486-1542 or 1543)
Anon (from *Odhecaton*, 1501)

Quirini greets King Philip in Falmouth

Vercepe
Non val aqua a mio gran fuoco

Domenico da Piacenza (c.1400-1470)
Bartolomeo Tromboncino (c.1470-after 1535)

Joanna's madness & Spanish interests

Un Cavalier di Spagna
Tristeza

Magistro Rofino (15th century)
Anon (Nos. 12 & 13 from *Cancionero de Palacio* compiled 1474-1516)

The Fleet sets sail. The death of Philip

Gaudeamus
Plorer, gemir, crier

Alexander Agricola (1445-1506)
Pierre de la Rue

The readings of tonight's programme are taken from contemporary reports of the events surrounding the unfortunate last voyage of Philip the Fair and his enforced stay in England throughout the first few months of 1506. We are fortunate to have a number of eyewitness accounts. Vincenzo Quirini (1479-1514) served the Venetian state as ambassador to Burgundy and the Holy Roman Empire throughout the end of the fifteenth century until taking holy orders. He was meticulous in describing all he saw and heard and his numerous letters, reporting back to his master the Doge of Venice, give us valuable insights into the journey, and in particular the condition of Cornwall in 1506, where, to his clearly expressed frustration, he found himself stranded for the three months of the Burgundians' visit. Meanwhile, in Windsor, the actual meeting of the two Kings was described in great detail from an English perspective by Henry VII's Poet Laureate, Bernard André, in his *Memorials of King Henry VII*. There is also a fascinating account of the moment when the two monarchs met outside Windsor on January 17th 1506, in a letter written by William Makefyrre to Roger Darcy and Giles Alington, which survives as number 953 in the correspondence now known as the *Paston Letters*.

Although we know nothing concrete about any of the music actually played during the visit, we do know that Philip travelled with almost his entire establishment, including the *Grande Chapelle*, his chapel musicians. Working for the Burgundian court in 1506 were some of the most active and imaginative composers of the early renaissance, such as Pierre de la Rue, Alexander Agricola, Johannes de Stokem, Jean Japart and Gaspar van Weerbeke. The most famous international composer of the age, Josquin Desprez, had only a short career in the Low Countries, spending most of his working life in Italy and France, but his works were copied into chansonniers and choir books throughout Europe. England had enjoyed a period of stability since the end of the Wars of the Roses in 1485, when Henry VII came to the throne, and a distinct English school of composition was again beginning to flourish, with composers such as William Cornish and Edmund Turges enjoying the patronage of a King who both appreciated music and realised its value as a tool for propaganda. The King's second son, Henry, was not only a lover of music, but a talented performer and keen composer (although it must be said that his additions to popular pieces by other composers did not always result in an improvement).

Compere's *Alons ferons nous barbes* is found in Ottaviano Petrucci's monumental and hugely popular collection of Flemish music, the *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton*, first published in 1501. The text of the original song, not included in *Odhecaton*, is not unusual in its use of unsubtle double entendre: "*Let's go and do our beards gentlemen! The lady barber wets them often, two at a time*".

Nothing is known about the life of Englishman Robert Morton except for the period in which he served at the Burgundian court. From 1457 until 1476 he was a member of the chapel choir and by 1560 had been ordained a priest. He was a contemporary of the great Flemish composer Hayne van Ghizeghem. An occasion in which the two performed together at Cambrai being the subject of an anonymous piece. The melody, *L'homme armé* was used as the basis for a large number of later compositions, but this rather martial setting is the earliest example of its use.

Josquin Desprez was possibly the most famous composer in Europe by the end of the century. He trained at St. Quentin, on the French-Belgian border, probably under Ockeghem, and by the age of about thirty he had moved to Italy, where he was to remain for a considerable portion of his career. Despite this, *In te domine speravi* is one of only three surviving works written in Italian. The crew and distinguished passengers on board Quirini's ship certainly had ample opportunity to place their hopes in the hands of the Almighty. Josquin's sublime setting of the popular text *Ave Maria* became so popular in the composer's own lifetime that it was copied into innumerable manuscripts throughout Europe and was used as the basis for many other composers' settings.

Cornish music is known to have employed irregular phrase lengths. Keur eledh constantly alternates between three and two beats. Chaucer showed the music of the region little respect in *Romaunt de la Rose*:

*Controve he would, and foule faile, In Floites made he discordaunce,
With Hornpipes of Carnwaile. And in his musike with Misehauce,*

Quirini's letters paint a vivid picture of provincial England as a wild and dangerous place, where the local Cornishmen might not even speak English, but could understand enough to negotiate exorbitant prices for their services.

From Stormy Windes by Turges comes from the *Fairfax Manuscript*, a collection of early Tudor songs compiled around 1500, and is one of this evening's pieces specifically associated with the reign of Henry VII, being a celebratory air on the birth of his first son, Arthur, who died at Ludlow Castle in 1502. The text asks for him to be protected "*From stormy windes and grievous weather*", so its inclusion in this programme was irresistible.

The moment when Henry VII met Philip, two miles from Windsor at Cleworth Green, was a carefully orchestrated propaganda exercise for Henry. The reputation held by the Tudor court, as extravagantly expressive and grandiloquent, was won through confident displays "graced with elegance" and "daubed with cost". Josquin's *Vive le Roi*, here taken from the *Henry VIII Manuscript*, probably dates from the composer's years in the service of Louis XII of France between 1499 and 1513 and like so many of Josquin's works, it was quickly disseminated to the other courts of Europe. The tenor part is given as a riddle, whereby the vowels of the title represent notes of the melody found in the tenor voice (v = ut - or do in modern parlance, i = mi, e = re, o = so). Prince Henry's *Without Discord* and Heinrich Isaac's *Amy souffrez* are both from the same manuscript. The latter is based on a popular song.

Once in Windsor Castle, billeted in sumptuous apartments, each King usually dined in his own chambers, according to André's *Memorials*, attended upon by his own servants. Philip had travelled with his own musical establishment, so his "bas", or quieter indoor music would have provided familiar repertoire. *Je ne fays plus* is from *Odhecaton*. It survives in over twenty sources and must have been one of the most widely known rondeau settings. The *Odhecaton* version has been "modernised" by the addition of a fourth part, known as a *si placet* part, typically in the alto range. Henry's chief composer, William Cornish, was master of the Children of the Chapel Royal and was responsible for making arrangements for the music at important state occasions. *Consort VII* is one of the numerous abstract instrumental compositions from the *Henry VIII Manuscript* and is unique in its use of the Hyperaeolian mode, giving rise to startling dissonance. Marbrianus de Orto became the *Premier Chapelain* of Philip's choir in 1505 and is one of the composers known to have travelled with Philip in 1506. After Philip's death in September 1506 he was retained by Joanna, but left Castile before the end of the year, leaving the post of *Premier Chapelain* to Pierre de la Rue. The title *Mi mi* gives the names of the first two notes in the renaissance system of *solfeggio*, in which notes are named by their position in a six-note scale, or *hexachord*.

La Spagna was an ubiquitous *Basse Dance* tenor: a dance melody of long notes in triple time, around which the dance band of the fifteenth century (typically consisting of a combination of trombones and shawms, but *bas* instruments were also used) would have improvised. The tenor can vary in length from setting to setting, but the character of the genre is unmistakable.

Will niemand singen?, *Im Maien* and *Rompeltier* are popular tunes from 15th century Germany. The first two exist as Tenor Lied by the prolific composer Ludwig Senfl, but whereas we perform Senfl's complete setting of the latter, we have "reverse engineered" the former to reveal the simple melody on which it was based. *Rompletier*; in addition to *Odhecaton*, appears in the earlier *Glogauer Liederbuch* (c.1480) as the refrain

to a strophic song with the customary suggestive text beginning: “*Don't rap on the door: my husband isn't at the mill, he's at home.*”

The refined taste of Italy is reflected in the next set. *Vercepe* is a *ballo* (a dance of numerous rhythmically contrasting sections) from the dance manual of the dancing master Domenico da Piacenza. This is one of only a handful of such books surviving today, and provides not only the descriptions of the dances, but also the tenors of the music. We have augmented the single-line tenor with parts above and below it (*contratenore in alta, contratenore in bassa*) following the typical practice of a dance band of the late fifteenth century. Italian dance reached a high level of sophistication by the turn of the century that was to continue to dominate the art for the following 150 years. The frottola became the dominant form of secular song in Venice at the end of the fifteenth century and was later to develop into the madrigal. Typically, a frottola is set in three to four voices with the melody in the upper part. It has a repeating refrain and is basically homophonic (all the parts sing more or less identical rhythms). Tromboncino was probably the most famous Frottolisto. *Non val aqua* was published by the Venetian publisher Petrucci in *Frottole, Libro Primo* in 1504, copies of which are known to have existed in many of the courts of northern Europe.

One of the largest collections of Castilian song is the *Cancionero de Palacio*, which is a manuscript of 458 works in two, three and four parts, with texts ranging from pious to downright obscene. Tantalisingly, the manuscript was possibly in the possession of Joanna during her incarceration at Tordesillas.

Alexander Agricola was one of the most famous musicians of the 15th century, yet little is now known of his early life. He travelled widely throughout Italy, taking up positions in a number of noble courts before returning to his native Flanders, where he took a fateful position within Philip's establishment in 1500. Journeying to Castile with Philip he succumbed to the same fever as did his master, expiring in 1506. His works were known for their rhythmic vitality, demonstrably apparent in this setting of the plainchant hymn *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino*.

Finally, to the lament *Plorer, gemir, crier*. Philip, having weathered the storm to be fêted by Henry VII, then successfully crossing the sea once more to Castile and enduring the tyranny of a madly jealous wife, was to die of typhus fever only a few months after taking up the reigns of power. Joanna refused to give up the body for burial for some months. This powerful lament combines a slow paraphrase of the plainchant for the office of the dead, shared between the tenor and bass parts, with an anguished lament on death in the superius and altus parts. The work was originally a lament on the death of one of the towering figures of 15th century music, Johannes Ockeghem, who died in 1497.

Superius and contratenor:
Sobs, moaning, crying and wailing join me, in great discomfort.
When death...

Tenor and bassus:
Give them eternal rest, Lord.
When death...