

LACRIMAE NOSTRAE:

Music for our tears

An evening to honor crying as part of our stress cycle and how it provides a healthy release for our mind, body, and soul.

Featuring works by:
William Byrd,
Thomas Tallis,
Josquin des Prez,
and Orlande de Lassus



LACRIMAE NOSTRAE



Our tears

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PROGRAM INSIGHT

As we navigated through the pandemic, I couldn't help but observe a significant shift in people's attitudes towards their well-being, with many becoming more interested and invested in their overall health. This shift was particularly evident to me when I attended the stunning show, *Flight or Fight*, choreographed by the exceptionally talented Christal Wagner at Danceworks. The piece presented a captivating, introspective, and physical portrayal of the various subdivisions of the nervous system, which prompted the audience to ponder how they could alleviate their stress. For me, the most prominent answer was crying.

Despite common misconceptions of weakness, crying is a powerful mechanism for emotional release and healing, with significant benefits for mental and physical health as well as regulating the parasympathetic nervous system. Inspired by the relationship between crying and Early music, I curated a program around the act of crying, featuring pieces that acknowledge or inspire tears. The initial segment of the program is marked by a profound sense of intensity and devastation. This decision was influenced by my personal experience of crying - a burst of intense emotion. The subsequent pieces portray a sense of despair and desolation, before culminating in a more optimistic and promising finale. A feature that can be readily noticed is our reconstructed English repertoire. We owe thanks to Joseph Krohlow, our skilled linguist, who has aided us in achieving the proper pronunciation of the time period.

The opening piece of our program, "Drop, drop, slow tears" by Orlando Gibbons, serves as the opening invitation to allow ourselves the freedom to let our bodies function with tears. It leads us seamlessly into the poignant and captivating performances of Josquin de Prez's "Stabat mater dolorosa" and Weelkes' "When David Heard"; both about losing a child. We then delve into the exquisite and renowned works of William Byrd, with "Ne irascaris, Domine & Civitas sancti tui". These compositions express the sorrow and displacement experienced by the captive Israelites in their Babylonian exile, while also reflecting Byrd's own lamentations on the state of English Catholicism. These four pieces represent the catalyst of the tears.

PROGRAM INSIGHT cont.

The following three pieces serve as a representation of the period when we are submerged in sadness, feeling isolated, and utterly defeated. William Byrd's "Circunderunt me" evokes the sensation of being surrounded by enemies or obstacles with the use of dense texture and unexpected dissonances, while John Bennett's "Weep, O mine eyes" portrays a sea of tears that engulfs and entraps. This set ends with Henry Purcell's "Miserere mei," where the lines both soar upward and travel to the depths of the human voice, creating a wide space for reflection. It settles so beautifully and sensitively into the open fifth interval, which to me, is a glimmer of strength amid the uneasiness.

The program concludes with three pieces evoking hope and calmness, emblematic of a balanced nervous system. The intricate and transcendent setting of Byrd's "Nunc dimittis" depicts the acceptance of departure, signifying liberation from stress or anguish. Similarly, Tallis' "Te lucis ante terminum" exudes simplicity and elegance, traditionally sung during Compline service to instill serenity and comfort, making it an apt complement to Byrd's work. Finally, Lassus' "Justorum animae" celebrates the attainment of inner peace, freeing one from distress and apprehension, and guiding them towards contentment and peace.

I trust that this program has motivated you to recognize and respect your physiological and emotional needs, unfettered by any social stigmas. Allow yourself the liberty to express and reconcile your feelings through the act of crying, and to ultimately find solace and restoration.

-Jackie Willis
Artistic Director

LACRIMAE NOSTRAE :

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Drop, drop, slow tears

Orlando Gibbons (1583 - 1625)

Stabat mater dolorosa

Josquin des Prez (c. 1450 - 1521)

When David Heard

Thomas Weelkes (1576 - 1623)

Ne irascaris, Domine & Civitas sancti tui

William Byrd (c. 1540 - 1623)

Circumdederunt me

William Byrd

Weep, O mine eyes

John Bennet (c. 1575 - 1614)

Miserere mei

Henry Purcell (1659 - 1695)

Nunc dimittis

William Byrd

Te lucis ante terminum

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505 - 1585)

Justorum animae

Orlando de Lassus (1532 - 1594)

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS

Drop, drop, slow tears,
And bathe those beautiful feet
Which brought from Heaven
The news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercy to entreat;
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let His eye
See sin, but through my tears.

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrymosa,
Dum pendebat Filius,
Cujus animam gementem,
Contristantem et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.
O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti.

The grieving mother stood
Next to the cross, tearful,
While her son hung,
Whose groaning soul,
Saddened and grieving,
The sword pierced.
Oh how sad and afflicted
Was that blessed
Mother of the only-begotten,

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS cont.

Quae maerebat et dolebat,
Et tremebat, dum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.
Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto supplicio?⁹
Quis non posset contristari,
Piam Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum filio?⁹
Pro peccatis suae gentis,
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem natum
Morientem desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.
Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.
Virgo virginum praeclara,
Jam mihi non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis ejus sortem,
Et plagas recolere.

Who mourned and grieved
And trembled when she saw
The punishment of her illustrious son.
Who is one who would not weep,
If one saw the Mother of Christ
In such torment?⁹
Who could not be saddened
To gaze upon the holy Mother
Grieving with her son?⁹
For the sins of her people,
She saw Jesus in torture,
And subjected to scourges.
She saw her sweet son
Left dying
While he gave up the spirit.

Come, Mother, fountain of love,
Make me perceive the force of grief,
That I may weep with you.
Make my heart burn
In loving Christ the god,
That I may be acceptable to him.
Virgin brightest of virgins,
Do not now be harsh with me,
Make me lament with you.
Make me carry the death of Christ,
The prophecy of his suffering,
And recall his stripes.

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS cont.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce hac inebriari,
Ob amorem filii.
Inflammatum et accensum,
Per te Virgo sim defensum
In die iudicii.
Fac me cruce custodiri,
Morte Christi praemuniri
Confoveri gratia.
Quando corpus morietur
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.
Amen.

When David heard
That Absalom was slain
He went up into his chamber
Over the gate and wept,
And thus he said:
My son, my son, O Absalom my son,
Would God I had died for thee!

Make me wounded by his wounds,
To be drunk with this cross,
For love of the Son.
Flaming and burning,
O Virgin, may I be protected by you
On the day of judgment.
Let me be protected by the cross,
Forearmed by Christ's death,
Embraced by grace.
When the body dies,
Let my soul be given
The glory of Paradise.
Amen.

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS cont.

Ne irascaris Domine satis,
et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostrae.
Ecce respice populus tuus omnes nos.

Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.
Sion deserta facta est,
Jerusalem desolata est.

Circumdederunt me dolores mortis,
et pericula inferni invenerunt me.
Tribulationem et dolorem inveni,
Et nomen Domini invocavi.
O Domine, libera animam meam.

Weep, O mine eyes and cease not,
alas, these your spring tides
methinks increase not.
O when begin you
to swell so high that I may drown me in you?

Miserere mei, O Jesu.

Be not angry, O Lord,
and remember our iniquity no more.
Behold, we are all your people.

Your holy city has become a wilderness.
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem has been made desolate.

The sorrows of death have encompassed me:
and the perils of hell have found me.
I met with trouble and sorrow:
And I called upon the name of the Lord.
O Lord, deliver my soul.

Have mercy on me, O Jesus.

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS cont.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum,
Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace:
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium,
et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus,
Ut pro tua clementia,
Sis praesul et custodia.

Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata:
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum.

Amen.

Lord, now lettest thou
thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray,
that with thy wonted favour thou
wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
from nightly fears and fantasies;
tread under foot our ghostly foe,
that no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
through Jesus Christ thine only Son,
who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
doth live and reign eternally.

Amen.

TEXT & TRANSLATIONS cont.

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,
et non tanget illos tormentum mortis.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,
illi autem sunt in pace.

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and the torment of death shall not touch them.
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die;
but they are in peace.

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