

(*'Ne irascaris'* and *'Tribulationes civitatum'*), events which the Catholics associated with their own plight, as well as that of the coming judgement (*'Exsurge Domine'* and *'Vigilate'*). Penitence was also a very common thread (*'Infelix ego'*), as the Catholics believed, with the exiled Jews of the Old Testament, that their suffering was given as a punishment for sin.

Where dramatic or emotive treatment is demanded by the text, Byrd pulls out all the stops. In *'Vigilate'* we hear the crowing of the cock magnificently illustrated, as well as the lethargic believer being lulled to sleep at the wrong moment. In the most madrigalian of all the motets, *'Laudibus in sanctis'*, the various musical instruments of praise are jubilantly caricatured in the vocal lines, while a brief foray into triple time characterises those who 'praise him in the dance'. The drama and desperation of *'Exsurge Domine'* is characterised by ever wilder ascending leaps on the word *'exsurge'* ('arise') in the final section, including that of a minor ninth in the tenor.

Even in the sunnier and less dramatic motet *'Quis est homo'*, Byrd finds the opportunity for a little tongue-in-cheek characterisation, where, at the point at which 'the eyes of the Lord are upon the just', the just (*'justos'*) are portrayed with almost excessive religiosity – a string of falling suspensions followed by a very 'churchy' minor plagal cadence. Similar illustrative techniques are at work in *'Laetentur caeli'* – the florid melismata of the heavenly choirs (*'laetentur caeli'*) contrast with a rather more raucous and chaotic response from the earth (*'exultet terra'*).

**Stile Antico** is an ensemble of young British singers fast gaining recognition as one of the most original and exciting new voices in its field. In 2005 the group won the inaugural Audience Prize at the Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition, leading to a series of high-profile concert engagements, and drawing the attention of Harmonia Mundi. Their first recording for the label, *'Music for Compline'*, met with immediate success, receiving the prestigious Diapason d'Or and Choc du Monde de la Musique awards.

Working without a conductor, the members of Stile Antico rehearse and perform as chamber musicians, each contributing artistically to the musical result. Their repertoire ranges from English Tudor composers to the works of the Flemish and Spanish schools and

the music of the early Baroque. They are passionate about the need to communicate with their audiences, and about developing their educational work, for which they have received generous funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

In Autumn 2006 Stile Antico collaborated extensively with Sting in his project *'Songs from the Labyrinth'*, performing lute songs by John Dowland. Highlights for 2007 include a residency at Dartington International Summer School, a recital with the Rose Consort at the York Early Music Festival, and a three-week European tour with Sting. They have recently recorded a second disc as part of their ongoing relationship with Harmonia Mundi.

**Bar available before the concert and during the interval.**



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## Film at the Festival

*In association with Oundle Cinema*

**VENUS (15)**

**Director:** Roger Michell 2006

**9pm** Stahl Theatre, Oundle

Maurice (Peter O'Toole in an Oscar-nominated role) and Ian (Leslie Phillips) are successful but ageing actors whose conversation revolves around theatrical shop talk and the infirmities of old age. Ian, fearful that death is just around the corner, agrees to let his niece's daughter Jessie move into his flat to care for him. Jessie is in her early twenties, hard-drinking and aggressive, but Maurice sees in her a potential for humanity which blossoms under his gentle guidance. Surprises follow all round. Co-starring Vanessa Redgrave and Richard Griffiths, the film also introduces newcomer Jodie Whittaker as Jessie.

Venus reunites director Roger Michell (Notting Hill, Enduring Love) with writer Hanif Kureishi, with whom he previously collaborated on *'The Mother'* and on the TV series *'The Buddha of Suburbia'*.

**Contains very strong language.**

**Bar open before the film.**

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