

# stile antico

early music vocal ensemble

*"It's never a good idea to miss a concert from this British vocal ensemble: There are no finer singers of early music."* NEW YORK TIMES

**Offering new programmes for 2020, Stile Antico enjoys a prestigious touring career and has an award-winning discography with Harmonia Mundi.**

## BREAKING THE HABIT

**Music written by and for women in Renaissance Europe – 12 singers**

The sixteenth century saw an unprecedented number of female rulers. From the powerful Medici women in Italy to the great Tudor queens of England, women across Europe held more power than ever before. Many of these monarchs used their patronage to facilitate the production of music of exquisite beauty by the finest composers of the day, extravagant showcases of their power contrasting with intimate and personal compositions. The century also saw the first publications of music by female composers, often Italian nuns, whose convents supported musical groups of astonishing ability.

## THE JOURNEY OF THE MAYFLOWER

**Marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famous voyage across the Atlantic – 12 singers**

2020 marks 400 years since William Bradford and his fellow pilgrims set out on their fateful journey across the Atlantic in the Mayflower, seeking freedom from persecution. England in 1620 was a country rife with religious and political division, standing on the brink of civil war. But the age also spawned some of the finest music ever composed in the land, with Gibbons, Tomkins and the aged Byrd overseeing the late flowering of the English musical Renaissance. This programme explores the journey the pilgrims took - from Northern England to Leiden and Southampton, before setting sail for modern day Massachusetts - using music of the time, interspersed with first-hand accounts from the pilgrims themselves.

## SONGS OF LONGING AND EXILE

**With Rihab Azar – 12 singers and oud**

Inspired by Dowland's melancholic song *Flow my tears*, and the heartbreaking stories of contemporary refugees, vocal ensemble Stile Antico and Dartington Arts commissioned poet Peter Oswald to create texts for Dowland's instrumental Lachrimae pavans. These new poems about displacement and exile present a counterpoint to Dowland's exquisite music. Between the pavans, Syrian oud player Rihab Azar intersperses partly-improvised music for oud. The performance ends with a new work for oud and voices by Giles Swayne, providing a fitting climax to a unique and powerful concert experience.

## TENEBRAE RESPONSORIES

**Tomas Luis da Victoria's intense settings of the Tenebrae Responsories – 12 singers**

Arguably the finest work of the Spanish Renaissance, Tomas Luis da Victoria's intense settings of the Tenebrae Responsories provide a glimpse into the Catholic liturgy at the height of the church year. The emotionally charged motets follow the story of Christ's passion from his betrayal to his burial. The Responsories were traditionally performed at the end of Holy Week and this programme is particularly suitable for performance by candlelight. *Released on Harmonia Mundi in early 2018.*

## A SPANISH NATIVITY

**For Advent, Christmas & Epiphany – 13 singers**

For its latest Christmas programme, Stile Antico turns to the sensuous musical world of Renaissance Spain, drawing together an irresistible mix of sumptuous polyphony and infectiously joyful folk dances. A superbly rich and luminous mass by Alonso Lobo, based on a motet by Guerrero and intended for performance at Toledo Cathedral, forms the programme's centrepiece. Interspersed between its movements are an exuberant 'ensalada' by Mateo Flecha, beautiful Christmas miniatures by Tomás Luis de Victoria, and classic *villancicos* - Spain's answer to the traditional carol.

