

## JOSQUIN'S LEGACY

Angel Early Music – artist feedback in relation to grant  
The Gesualdo Six



In mid-2020, The Gesualdo Six embarked on a project that would include two CD recordings, an online video series, collaborations with ensembles in Italy and Greece, and a series of concerts around the UK and abroad. This stemmed from a grant made by Angel Early Music to support their early research into the musical legacy of Josquin des Prez, one of the foremost musical architects of the 16th century, and an inspiration to both renaissance and contemporary composers.



*from Josquin's Legacy recording sessions, November 2021. © Simon Perry.*

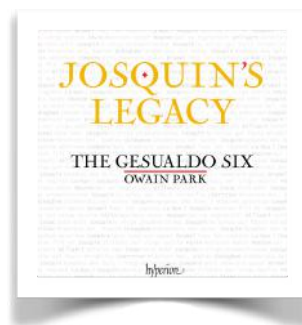
### Owain Park – Director of The Gesualdo Six

Back in 2020, it was difficult to think long-term about almost anything: we were living day-to-day, week-to-week. However, our Josquin's Legacy project gave us a focus beyond this, and an impetus to rehearse, create and discover. As a group, we will ever be thankful for the support shown to us by Angel Early Music, enabling us to develop this repertoire into an international touring programme, create a highly acclaimed recording with Hyperion, and commission a new work from Shruthi Rajasekar, *Da pacem, Domine*.



## Guy James – Project Director

I have been absolutely delighted with the Josquin's Legacy project. During the pandemic as live performances were unviable, Josquin's Legacy was a framework through which we were able to continue to learn new repertoire, including works that had never been modernly performed or recorded. We were able to connect them to our established tradition with a variety of joint projects such as our residency at York's National Centre for Early Music and in a collaborative recording with the Italian vocal ensemble Odhecaton.



In the early stages, filmed live concerts allowed us to reach a much larger audience than keeping things in-house. Josquin's Legacy provided the impetus for our *Canon and Invention* programme at St John's Smith Square, which was one of the first DCMS trial performances to a live audience as the performing world emerged from lockdown. The Gesualdo Six provided a lecture recital to MedRen 2020 in collaboration with Dr Jeannette Jones and the *Josquin at Ely* series via the online hosting platform OnJam.

Josquin's Legacy has produced a step-change in the way that we approach researching and performing early music, and has provided a huge range of repertoire for live performances across UK and abroad. It continues to bear fruit and will have a legacy of its own: our performance editions will soon be made available on our website, as we continue to produce repertoire and programming ideas into the future.

## Notable performances

St John's Smith Square	August 2020	<i>Canon and Invention</i>
Follina, Italy	October 2020	Recording with Odhecaton
National Centre for Early Music	March 2021	<i>A York Tapestry</i>
Josquin at Ely	June 2021	Online series (June Sessions)
St George's Bloomsbury	October 2021	CD launch event
Fairfield IA, Dallas TX, La Jolla CA	November 2021	Tour of the USA
St John's Smith Square	May 2022	New programme: <i>The Venetian School</i>
St George Temple, Corfu	September 2022	Inaugural festival of sacred music
Wigmore Hall, London	October 2022	Live on BBC Radio 3
Kings Place, London	October 2022	New programme: <i>Mirror of Time</i>



Nesciens mater Antoine de Fevin

Source(s): D. V.C.Vbav (formerly I-Kvat) MS Pal. lat. 1976. C, T & B: A-Wn Mus.Hs. 15941.  
Suggested musica recta and ficta supplied by the editor in brackets.  
Original note values. Transposed up a whole tone from notated pitch.

Févin: 'Nesciens mater'. Showing the transformation from partbook to new, modern edition.

## Critical reception for Josquin's Legacy

*"The central work, Josquin's highly personal Nymphes des Bois, was composed in memory of the Franco-Flemish composer Ockeghem, whose own five-part setting to the Virgin Mary, Intemerata Dei mater, opens the album. Works by Jean Mouton, Adrian Willaert, Heinrich Isaac and others complete this impeccably performed recital. It's hard to think it could be better sung."*

**The Guardian (Fiona Maddocks)**

*...[A]s a single-disc introduction to the motet of Josquin's time, this is hard to beat."*

**Editor's Choice, Gramophone Magazine November 2021 (Fabrice Fitch)**

*That countertenor sound – I mean it's out of this world."*

*"This is an inventive piece of programming... Apart from the skill involved in assembling such a discriminating selection, it's a clever way of introducing listeners to music that might otherwise pass them by."*

*[H]ad it been issued under a different title, in a year other than 2021, it would still be superb. The same goes for The Gesualdo Six's singing. The decision to take the Ockeghem at an uncharacteristically high pitch is bold, and with a very bright countertenor on the top line the effect is luminous and transparent (dare I say magical?)...*

*[T]he performance of Absalon fili mi is simply jaw-dropping: beautifully controlled and restrained but intensely moving. The upper voice is taken by a high tenor, so that the bass goes down to low [Bb] (he might almost be Flemish, and for basses there's no greater compliment).*

**BBC Radio 3 Record Review (Jeremy Summerly)**

*From the sensual, close-clustering lines of the first piece, Mouton's "Tota pulchra es", the Gesualdo Six's half-dozen male voices wove an intimate aural tapestry, in which individual lines blended to form a rich, velvety whole, sometimes sacrificing clarity of diction for beauty of tone. The first half dealt with birth, and the joy of the annunciation, with Josquin's "Praeter rerum seriem", its rhythmic complexities skilfully negotiated, Brumel's "Sicut lilium", and De Févin's "Nesciens mater".*

*The second part brooded on death and loss, with plangent accounts of Josquin's "Nymphes des bois", and a caressing tenderness for the anonymous "Mille regretz". Compère's sprightlier "Venez regretz" and La Rue's "Secretz regretz" were sung with just a touch of bounce, as if to suggest a courtier grief with one eye on the audience.*

**Church Times (Fiona Hook)**

*"Josquin's Legacy, the latest recording from The Gesualdo Six, sets the focus upon the famed Franco-Flemish composer and his contemporaries. Plush and radiant, the performances cast a vivid glimpse of a rich and varied era fit for this past anniversary year. Beaming solo voices grow to encompass the full ensemble, where suspended harmonies tip the music towards light. The music of Josquin's indelible legacy, the performances suggest, look to the hope that shines even in the most perilous times."*

**Josquin and Friends Inspire The Gesualdo Six to the Heights –  
Early Music America (Aaron Keebaugh)**