Friday, December 4, 2009, 8pm First Congregational Church

## The Tallis Scholars Peter Phillips, *director*

*Soprano* Janet Coxwell Amy Haworth

*Alto* Patrick Craig Caroline Trevor

*Tenor* Christopher Watson Simon Wall George Pooley Will Balkwill

> Bass Donald Greig Rob Macdonald

# Beata Virgine

#### PROGRAM

Josquin des Prez (c.1450–1521) Missa de Beata Virgine Kyrie Gloria Credo Sanctus Agnus Dei

#### INTERMISSION

John Nesbett (d.1488)	Magnificat
Thomas Tallis (c.1505–1585)	Tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter
William Byrd (c.1540–1623)	Ye sacred muses

- Byrd Tribulationes civitatum
- Byrd Vigilate

Cal Performances' 2009–2010 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

**Beata Virgine** 

**The TERM** "Renaissance polyphony" is applied to an enormous amount of different kinds of

music. Of course, we only have other terms, such

as "Baroque" or "Romantic," to compare it with,

but it is the great breadth and variation of style,

aesthetic and, of course, historical and cultural

background exhibited by different types of "po-

lyphony" when compared with other, later styles

that makes the term only a blunt categorization

tool at best or a colloquialism at worst. During

the last 150 years of the Renaissance, the pace of

cultural change, and the intensity of the cultural

conflicts which resulted, increased remarkably and

the musical manifestations of these changes and

composers of his day. Today, he overshadows com-

pletely his contemporaries from the final third of

the 15th century and is mentioned in the same

breath as Palestrina or William Byrd as one of a

handful of composers who defined "Renaissance

polyphony." Born in the early 1450s, however, he

lived most of his life free from the religious turmoil

of the 16th century which would have such a great

influence on later music. He brought late-Medie-

val music very much up to date, pioneering most

of the major genres which followed and bringing

both an intense clarity and passionate humanity to

music in a way unknown to his predecessors. His

Missa de Beata Virgine displays all of these charac-

teristics; it appears, either whole or in part, in no

fewer than 69 different sources-in manuscripts

originating in 5 countries, 8 printed publications

spanning nearly 30 years, 2 theory treatises and

15 tablatures. Compared with his contemporar-

ies, this is an enormously varied and thorough

distribution, indicating that Josquin's fame had

spread completely throughout Europe by the be-

ginning of the 16th century and that both his in-

dividual reputation and that of this piece in par-

ticular continued long after his death. The regular

singing of the Ordinary of the Mass (the Kyrie,

Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei movements

with which we are familiar) to a polyphonic set-

ting was only just becoming commonplace dur-

ing Josquin's lifetime and that fact is reflected in

Josquin des Prez was one of the most famous

conflicts necessarily reflected this.

this mass; from examining the many sources, it is apparent that Josquin wrote it-and that it was distributed-as separate movements and not as a group of five. Unlike most mass settings written in the Renaissance which were based on a single model—either a melody drawn from plainchant or a secular song or an entire polyphonic framework taken from a motet-this "chant paraphrase" mass takes as its inspiration the collection of plainsong melodies associated with the Mass Ordinary texts. The movements lack the characteristic unity of melodic theme and sonority found in later masses but because of this they stand on their own as individually conceived and performed works. The absolute clarity so characteristic of Josquin's music is apparent from the start, imitative passages worked so thoroughly that it is often difficult for the listener to distinguish imitation from canon. Strict canon, a favorite of Josquin, does indeed appear in the Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei movements of this work. Austerity, logic and Josquin's complete command of compositional form and contrapuntal symmetry permeate this music, suggesting a purity of conception meant to please God in its perfection, not excite the passions of men.

There is a good chance that John Nesbett was older than Josquin. However, so little is known of his biography, other than that he was an English composer active in Canterbury in the 1470s and 1480s, that any meaningful description of his temporal or musical relation to the Flemish composer is impossible. Only two pieces of music by Nesbett survive, but his Magnificat survives in the two most famous musical sources of the first decade of the 16th century in the British Isles, the Carvor Choirbook compiled in Scotland and the much more important Eton Choirbook compiled at Eton College in Berkshire, England. As a member of the Eton Choirbook composers, Nesbett is considered part of a unique musical tradition, the "florid English style," identified as a self-contained musical movement which differed greatly from continental music written at the time. This contrast is immediately obvious here when comparing Nesbett's Magnificat with the Josquin mass which precedes it on tonight's program. This music blasts sound at the listener, rhythmically overwhelming the Josquin in terms of exuberance and flare. The pre-meditated predictability of the Josquin is nowhere to be found here; this music impresses and shines with an energetic pomp and swagger.

Although Thomas Tallis's earliest music does not quite reach these heights of exuberance, he wrote much which can easily be traced to its Eton Choirbook influences. Tallis, however, is the perfect example of a composer caught in cultural chaos. Born around 1505, living 80 years, and almost always employed by the English crown, Tallis sang and wrote music under four monarchs andcrucially-two warring religious ideologies. His Tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter were included in a book published in 1567 of all 150 psalms translated and versified in English by Matthew Parker, the first Archbishop of Canterbury appointed by Elizabeth I. These versified psalm books were common in Elizabethan England, but a remarkable feature of Parker's book was that he divided the psalm texts into eight groups, based on the emotional moods of their texts, said to be inherent in each of the eight musical modes. Tallis wrote a simple tune for each of these eight groups. Printed in the book are the words sung tonight, but it is clear that many different psalms could be sung to each tune, depending on the emotional character of the words. The ninth tune was written to provide a musical setting for a few other texts which appear after the psalm texts in the volume. These include translations of the Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc Dimitis and other service texts. This ninth tune, as well as the eighth, are popular hymn tunes today, and the third tune, "Why fumeth in fight," was immortalized by Ralph Vaughan Williams in his Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis.

The relationship between Tallis and William Byrd, some 35 years his junior, was a remarkable one. Byrd was very close personal friends with Tallis, undoubtedly his life-long mentor; they were constant musical colleagues and business partners and Tallis was godfather to Byrd's son Thomas. In 1583, Byrd witnessed Tallis's will. It is no surprise, then, that when Tallis died on November 23, 1585, Byrd wrote a lament on his mentor and friend's death. Ye sacred muses is a short piece, originally conceived as a consort song-a simple melody sung by one singer, in this case the soprano, and accompanied by instruments, usually viols or

perhaps a lute. The intimacy and simplicity of the top line, colored with slight madrigalian touches giving each individual word attention and care, displays the deep, tender and personal connection Byrd felt with this text. Byrd's ability to wrap woe and misery in such beautiful polphonic packages is here displayed with poignancy and sincerity.

If Ye sacred muses represented a personal expression of grief for a lost friend, Tribulationes civitatum is much more like what we are accustomed to from Byrd; a politically charged lament for the state of Protestant England. Byrd remained a Catholic throughout his life and the large number of anguished works bemoaning the plight of the Catholic recusancy in England has come to virtually summarise for many Byrd's entire life and work. It is indeed impossible to truly understand Byrd's music without understanding his political affiliations and the real oppression he no doubt experienced in his life and that of his friends. Byrd's political audacity is sometimes overlooked, however, as he would choose specific and often obscure texts, such as Tribulationes civitatum-drawn from four responsories of the old Sarum rite, the English Catholic liturgy-tailor them as he saw fit to exaggerate their political significance (the term "civitatum" and all the derivations of civic imagery that occur in this collection and his work as a whole are largely believed to refer to England as a state), set them to music, and then publish them using the monopoly on music printing granted to him by Queen Elisabeth herself! Both Tribulationes civitatum and Vigilate come from his first published collection of music after Tallis's death, his Cantiones Sacra of 1589. Indeed, this was his musical debut, in a way, showing to the wider musical world (these publications were largely intended for a continental audience) that Byrd was no longer Tallis's protégé, that he had firmly grasped the torch from his mentor.

Byrd's political audacity is perhaps best summed up in the character and mood of Vigilate. Here, Byrd abandons his usual pleas to God for mercy and instead goes on the offensive. This piece sets a passage from Mark's gospel in which Jesus charges his disciples to keep watch for the coming End Times. All who knew this passage, as all of his liteners would have done, would know it comes as

the final punctuation to a chapter describing the cultural degredation, falsity and-specificallyoppression and strife preceeding the triumphal return of of the Messiah, who would judge the evil doers and restore righteousness. The subtext here is that Byrd implies to his listeners that the Protestant political climate in England, and the oppression of the Catholic failthful, are precisely what was being proficied. Byrd warns both his Catholic bretheren and English society at large that their judgment is just around the corner and that a vengeful God is

watching! The forthright, energetic, and powerful setting of these words makes Byrd's intentions clear. Watch out! Your time is coming.

Comparing this tortured, passionate and vivid music with the serenity and undisputed confidence of Josquin's mass highlights precisely the sort of contrasts in "Renaissance polyphony" which make listening to and understanding this music and its culture so richly rewarding.

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#### Josquin des Prez Missa de Beata Virgine

#### Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

#### Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis. Laudamus te; benedicimus te; adoramus te; glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram; qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus; tu solus Dominus; tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

#### Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula. Deum de Deo; Lumen de Lumine; Deum verum de Deo vero; genitum, non factum; consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de cælis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus et sepultus est.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in cælum, sedet ad dexteram Patris; et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos; cuius regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per prophetas; sid, have merey. Christ, have merey. Lord, have merey

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise thee; we bless thee; we worship thee; we glorify thee. We give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father almighty.

O Lord the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art Holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; begotten, not made: being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made.

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

#### Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

#### Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

## John Nesbett

#### Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes,

Suscepit Isræl puerum suum recordatus misericordiæ suæ, Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in sæcula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

And I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and Earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.m. O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, forever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holv Ghost: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

#### Thomas Tallis Tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter

Man blest no doubt who walk'th not out In wicked men's affairs, And stand'th no day in sinner's way Nor sit'th in scorner's chairs: But hath his will in God's law still, This law to love aright, And will him use, on it to muse, To keep it day and night.

Let God arise in majesty And scattered be his foes. Yea, flee they all his sight in face, To him which hateful goes. As smoke is driv'n and com'th to naught, Repulse their tyranny. At face of fire, as wax doth melt, God's face the bad must fly.

Why fum'th in fight the Gentiles spite, In fury raging stout? Why tak'th in hand the people fond, Vain things to bring about? The Kings arise, the Lords devise, In counsels met thereto, Against the Lord with false accord, Against His Christ they go.

O come in one to praise the Lord And him recount our stay and health. All hearty joys let us record To this strong rock, our Lord of health. His face with praise let us prevent; His facts in sight let us denounce, Join we, I say, in glad assent. Our psalms and hymns let us pronounce.

Even like the hunted hind The waterbrooks desire, E'en thus my soul, that fainting is, To thee would fain aspire. My soul did thirst to God, To God of life and Grace. It said e'en thus: when shall I come To see God's lively face? Expend, O Lord, my plaint of word In grief that I do make. My musing mind recount most kind; Give ear for thine own sake. O hark my groan, my crying moan; My King, my God thou art, Let me not stray from thee away, To thee I pray in heart.

Why brag'st in malice high, O thou in mischief stout? God's goodness yet is nigh All day to me no doubt. My tongue to muse all evil It doth itself inure. As razor sharp to spill, All guile it doth procure.

God grant we grace, he us embrace. In gentle part bless he our heart. With loving face shine he in place. His mercies all on us to fall. That we thy way may know all day, While we do sail this world so frail. Thy health's reward is night declared, As plain as eye all Gentiles spy.

Come Holy Ghost, eternal God, Which dost from God proceed; The Father first and eke the Son, On God as we do read.

#### William Byrd Ye sacred muses

Ye sacred Muses, race of Jove, whom Music's lore delighteth, Come down from crystal heav'ns above to earth where sorrow dwelleth, In mourning weeds, with tears in eyes: Tallis is dead, and Music dies.

#### TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

#### Byrd Tribulationes civitatum

Tribualtiones civitatum audivimus quas passæ sunt, et defecimus. Domine ad te sunt oculi nostri, ne pereamus.

Timor et hebetudo mentis cecedir super nos, et super liberos nostros: ipsi montes nolunt recipere fugam nostram. Domine, miserere.

Nos enim pro peccatis nostris hæc patimur. Aperi oculos tuos Domine, et vidi afflictionem nostram.

Byrd Vigilate

Vigilate, nescitis enim quando Dominus domus veniat, sera an media nocte an gallicantu, an mane. Vigilate ergo, necum venerit repente, inveniat vos dormientes. Quod autem dico vobis omnibus dico: Vigilate. We have heard of the trials which the cities have suffered, and have lost heart. Our eyes are fixed on thee O Lord, and do not wander.

Fear and confusion have fallen upon us, and upon our children: even the mountains offer us no refuge. Lord, have mercy.

For it is because of our sins that we are suffering these things. Open thine eyes O Lord, and behold our affliction.

Watch ye alway, for that ye know not at what hour the Lord will come again: eventide, or haply at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or morning. Watch ye therefore alway, lest if suddenly he cometh he findeth you then sleeping. What then I say unto you, I say unto all: Watch ye alway.



The Tallis Scholars were founded in 1973 by their director, Peter Phillips. Through their recordings and concert performances, they have established themselves as the leading exponents of Renaissance sacred music throughout the world. Peter Phillips has worked with the ensemble to create, through good tuning and blend, the purity and clarity of sound which he feels best serve the Renaissance repertoire, allowing every detail of the musical lines to be heard. It is the resulting beauty of sound for which The Tallis Scholars have become so widely renowned.

The Tallis Scholars perform in both sacred and secular venues, giving around 70 concerts each year across the globe. In 2009–2010, the group will tour the United States twice and appear at festivals and venues across the United Kingdom and Europe, including in their own Choral Series at Cadogan Hall. In 2011, the group will be returning to Japan, and plans include a return visit to Australia. The Tallis Scholars team up with the National Centre for Early Music and the BBC in a now annual nationwide composition competition, designed to encourage young people to write for unaccompanied voices. The winning entry will be part of the concert which will open the 2010 Chester Festival, alongside Palestrina's spectacular Missa Papae Marcelli.

The Tallis Scholars' career highlights have included a tour of China in 1999, including two

concerts in Beijing; and the privilege of performing in the Sistine Chapel in April 1994 to mark the final stage of the complete restoration of the Michelangelo frescoes, broadcast simultaneously on Italian and Japanese television. The ensemble have commissioned many contemporary composers during their history: in 1998, they celebrated their 25th anniversary with a special concert in London's National Gallery, premiering a Sir John Tavener work written for the group and narrated by Sting. A further performance was given with Sir Paul McCartney in New York in 2000. The Tallis Scholars are broadcast regularly on radio (including performances from the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in both 2007 and 2008) and have also been featured on the acclaimed ITV program, The Southbank Show.

Much of The Tallis Scholars' reputation for their pioneering work has come from their association with Gimell Records, set up by Mr. Phillips and Steve Smith in 1980 solely to record the Scholars. In February 1994, Mr. Phillips and The Tallis Scholars performed on the 400th anniversary of the death of Palestrina in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, where Palestrina had trained as a choirboy and later worked as Maestro di Cappella. The concerts were recorded by Gimell and are available on both CD and DVD.

Recordings by The Tallis Scholars have attracted many awards throughout the world. In 1987, their recording of Josquin's Missa La sol fa re mi and Missa Pange lingua received Gramophone's Record of the Year award, still the only recording of early music ever to win this coveted award. In 1989, the French magazine Diapason gave two of its coveted Diapason d'Or de l'Année awards for recordings of a mass and motets by Lassus and of Josquin's two masses based on the chanson L'Homme armé. Their recording of Palestrina's Missa Assumpta est Maria and Missa Sicut lilium was awarded Gramophone's Early Music Award in 1991; they received the 1994 Early Music Award for their recording of music by Cipriano de Rore; and the same distinction again in 2005 for their disc of music by John Browne, which was also nominated for a Grammy Award. Their most recent disc, featuring the music of Josquin, received exceptional reviews and was awarded a further Diapason d'Or.

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#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

These accolades are continuing evidence of the exceptionally high standard maintained by The Tallis Scholars, and of their dedication to one of the great repertoires in Western classical music.

Peter Phillips has made an impressive if unusual reputation for himself in dedicating his life's work to the research and performance of Renaissance polyphony. Having won a scholarship to Oxford in 1972, Peter Phillips studied Renaissance music with David Wulstan and Denis Arnold, and gained experience in conducting small vocal ensembles, already experimenting with the rarer parts of the repertoire. In 1973, he founded The Tallis Scholars, with whom he has now appeared in 1,450 concerts and made over 50 discs, encouraging interest in polyphony all over the world. As a result of his work, through concerts, recordings, magazine awards, publishing editions of the music and writing articles, Renaissance music has come to be accepted for the first time as part of the mainstream classical repertoire.

Apart from The Tallis Scholars, Mr. Phillips continues to work with other specialist ensembles. Among others, he has appeared with the Collegium Vocale of Ghent, broadcasting live on French radio from the Saintes Festival; the Vox Vocal Ensemble of New York; and Musix of Budapest. He also works extensively with the BBC Singers, with whom he has broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Mr. Phillips gives numerous masterclasses and choral workshops every year around the world, and is also Artistic Director of The Tallis Scholars Summer School—U.K.- and U.S.-based choral courses dedicated to exploring the heritage of Renaissance choral music, and developing a performance style appropriate to it as pioneered by The Tallis Scholars. Mr. Phillips was recently appointed Director of Music at Merton College, Oxford, where he established a new Choral Foundation in 2008.

In addition to conducting, Mr. Phillips is well known as a writer. For many years, he has contributed a regular music column (as well as one on cricket) to *The Spectator*. In 1995, he became the owner and publisher of *The Musical Times*, the oldest continuously published music journal in the world. His first book, *English Sacred Music 1549–1649*, was published by Gimell in 1991, while his second, *What We Really Do*, an unblinking account of what touring is like, alongside insights about the makeup and performance of polyphony, was published in 2003.

Mr. Phillips has made numerous television and radio broadcasts. Besides those featuring The Tallis Scholars (which include live broadcasts from the 2001 and 2003 Proms, the Aldeburgh Festival, the Bath Festival and the Cheltenham Festival), he has appeared several times on the BBC's *Music Weekly* and on the BBC World Service, on *Kaleidoscope* and *Today* (Radio 4) and on German, French, Canadian and North American radio.

In 2005, Peter Phillips was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture, a decoration intended to honor individuals who have contributed to the understanding of French culture in the world. In 2006, his song cycle for contralto, *Four Rondeaux by Charles d'Orleans*, was premiered in the Guggenheim Museum, New York, to critical acclaim.

#### Sightlines

Friday, December 4, 2009, 7pm First Congregational Church

Pre-performance conversation with Tallis Scholars Artistic Director Peter Phillips and Professor Davitt Moroney, UC Berkeley Department of Music.

This *Sightlines* event is free to all concert ticket holders.