

The ETON CHOIRBOOK

A full-colour facsimile edition of Eton College Library, MS 178

One of the most iconic of music manuscripts, the Eton Choirbook is of unique importance, both in its own right as a cultural artefact and as a source of English choral polyphony composed during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Had it perished, along with so many other (less fortunate) pre-Reformation music manuscripts, our knowledge of a critical moment in the history of English music would have been immensely diminished.

Ever since it was first copied for use in the college chapel in the early 1500s, the choirbook has been continuously in the possession of Eton College. Several composers whose works were included in it had close associations with the college, not least Robert Wylkynson, who served as the college's *informator choristarum* from 1500. Other composers represented include Banastre, Browne, Cornyshe, Davy, Fawkyner, Fayrfax, Hygons, Lambe and Turges. Most of its original contents (67 out of a total of 93 pieces) were votive antiphons, or devotional motets of prayer and praise, sung each evening to the Virgin Mary, the college's dedicatee. The *Salve* ceremony, familiar to worshippers throughout Catholic Europe, lay at the heart of Eton College's *raison d'être* as a chantry college: the Eton Choirbook is an eloquent witness to this flowering of devotional culture on the eve of the Reformation.

The manuscript is also a work of consummate artistry, copied by an experienced scribe on large vellum leaves, and illuminated by a professional limner. Even in its incomplete state (nearly half of its original 224 leaves have been lost), the Eton Choirbook is the undoubted queen of early Tudor music manuscripts.



The Choirbook will be presented in full colour facsimile on heavy matt art paper, hard bound, with an introduction by Magnus Williamson (Newcastle University) and published by the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (University of Oxford)

Pages: 60 (introduction) + vi + 252 + vi

Format: 427 x 306 mm (reduced from 590 x 420 mm)

Pre-publication prices (orders received before 1 March 2010): Standard buckram binding £150

Full-leather binding £200

After publication: Standard buckram binding £180

Full-leather binding £250

Postage UK £10; Europe £18; Elsewhere £28. Copies collected from Oxford or Eton will not incur postage charge.

All orders or enquiries should be sent to:

DIAMM, Faculty of Music, St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1DB, enclosing a cheque (payable to 'Oxford University') for the appropriate amount plus postage, and including all contact details for despatch or notification if collected.

Orders and payment may also be made electronically in any currency via PayPal, to diamm@music.ox.ac.uk.