

The Tallis Scholars

The Field of the Cloth of Gold

Jean Mouton: *Nesciens mater* (sung as an introit and from a distance if the building allows)

William Cornysh: *Ave Maria*

Mouton: *Ave Maria*

Mouton: *Quaeramus cum pastoribus*

Browne: *Salve regina*

Interval

Mouton: "Kyrie" and "Agnus dei" from the *Missa Dictes moy toutes vos pensées*

Mouton: *Salva nos*

Cornysh: *Ah Robin*

Cornysh: *Woefully arrayed*

Cornysh: *Magnificat*

Between the 7th and 24th June 1520, in fields near Calais, there took place one of the most spectacular political summit meetings of all time. Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France met to seal a treaty of friendship between their two warring countries, with no expense spared. Everything was carefully prepared to make the surface seem smooth, yet everything had an undercurrent of the most intense rivalry, from the negotiations of high state, to the wrestling, the food, the jousting - and the music.

The two Chapels Royal were of course in attendance, and of course they tried to out-sing each other. As luck would have it the two choirs were led by two exceptional composers of the period, composers to whom the Tallis Scholars have devoted individual recordings: Jean Mouton on the French side, and William Cornysh on the English.

Unfortunately the Tallis Scholars cannot now, by themselves, recreate the seething atmosphere of the original meeting - nor do we know exactly what was sung then - but we can give an idea of the splendour of the occasion. At least we know that the music on both sides would have been the best each country had to offer - and perhaps it is good to be able to enjoy it now without the threat of a wrong note or some dissonant harmony sparking off an international incident...

