

News release

14 March 2011

## **I Fagiolini: taking the UK charts by storm.**

### **Decca Classics World Première recording of Striggio's mass enters UK pop charts ahead of Bon Jovi, George Harrison, Duffy and Eminem.**

**Following the release by Decca Classics of I Fagiolini's world première recording of a long lost Italian Renaissance masterpiece by Alessandro Striggio on 7 March, the unique recording has conquered the hearts of UK audiences and claimed its place among the greats in the Pop charts, even closing up to long time chart topper André Rieu in the Classical charts.**

Decca Classics released the world première CD recording of Alessandro Striggio's epic, recently discovered 40-part mass, *Missa Ecco sì beato giorno*, on 7 March. Recorded by maverick British vocal group *I Fagiolini* with Robert Hollingworth in celebration of the ensemble's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Decca Classics recording is accompanied by Tallis's 40-part *Spem in alium* and Striggio's other 40-part *tour de force* on which the mass is based, the motet *Ecce beatam lucem*

On the day of release, the music thought to have inspired Tallis's masterpiece *Spem in alium*, reached No. 1 on the iTunes chart as well as on the specialist Amazon album charts. On the first day the specialist classical recording entered the UK Pop Charts.

Receiving an immediate and enthusiastic embrace from listeners the album kept rising in an unprecedented run to reach No. 68 in the Pop charts today. The masterpiece that had been lost for hundreds of years has now secured a place ahead of well established chart toppers and has even closed up to Dutch violinist André Rieu on No. 2 in the Classical charts, with classical No. 1 spot only a short waltz away. The Striggio album is the chart-topper in the specialist classical chart.



#### **Dickon Stainer, President of Decca Records Group, said:**

'This is the musical equivalent of the Tollund man and just as unravelling. It's wonderful that a new generation can now hear this magical music.'

#### **Paul Moseley, Managing Director of Decca Classics, said:**

'From the beginning we knew with Robert Hollingworth's Striggio Mass recording we had a rare gem in our hands. Audiences all across the UK are now celebrating a work that has been made available in recording for the first time and in exceptional high quality, with the surround sound allowing listeners to enter a hitherto unknown sound world.'

In search of the ideal audio setting to introduce this early masterwork to a wider audience, both the mass and motets have been recorded in the round in All Saints Church in Tooting, London, providing a revealing use for 5.1 surround-sound which can be experienced on the accompanying DVD. The result reproduces both the grandeur and intimacy of the music, and imaginatively brings together not just voices but the full gamut of Renaissance instrumental colour, including strings, brass, wind and lutes.

The album unites some of the finest talent in the world of Renaissance performance; all conducted by *I Fagiolini*'s founder Robert Hollingworth. Ambitious recording projects with

forces on this scale are undertaken only very rarely. Although references to Striggio's mass exist from his 1567 European journey, the work was lost until its re-discovery a few years ago by scholar Davitt Moroney and its first modern-day performance at the 2007 BBC Proms. This Decca Classics recording uses an edition made by Hollingworth and Brian Clark.

Also included is Tallis's 40-part *Spem in alium*; but notably this performance uses instruments, another recording première in this arrangement, and it benefits from Hugh Keyte's new edition of the work. The recording is completed with a wider selection of Striggio's works, many of which were written for political occasions, recorded here for the first time. The album's companion DVD includes a 12-minute behind-the-scenes film made during the recording and featuring interviews with conductor, producer and performers as well as 5.1 surround-sound recordings of the large-scale works.

The release of the Decca Classics I Fagiolini album coincides with the ensemble touring the UK and Europe with an anniversary programme including madrigals by Striggio.

**Critical acclaim:**

**"A Masterpiece"** The Guardian

**"Subtle and moving"** The Observer

**"Enough to test anyone's hi-fi equipment"** The Times

**"Impressive ... powerfully affecting"** The Independent

**"40 voices hitting you beautifully left and right"** The Times

**CD information:**

Label – Decca Classics

Release date – 7 March 2011

Format – CD and DVD

Catalogue number – 478 2734

E-album audio - 478 2833

**Upcoming concerts by I Fagiolini:**

|          |  |
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| 16/03/11 | Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough              |
| 17/03/11 | National Centre for Early Music, York            |
| 18/03/11 | Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford on Avon         |
| 19/03/11 | New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth                    |
| 25/03/11 | Queen Elizabeth Hall, London (Bach B Minor Mass) |
| 27/03/11 | Queen Elizabeth Hall, London (Bach cantatas)     |
| 01/04/11 | St. George's, Bristol                            |