

= Martin Peerson =

Martin Peerson ( or Pearson , Pierson ) ( born between 1571 and 1573 ; died December 1650 or January 1651 and buried 16 January 1651 ) was an English composer , organist and virginalist . Despite Roman Catholic leanings at a time when it was illegal not to subscribe to Church of England beliefs and practices , he was highly esteemed for his musical abilities and held posts at St Paul 's Cathedral and , it is believed , Westminster Abbey . His output included both sacred and secular music in forms such as consort music , keyboard pieces , madrigals and motets .

= = Life and career = =

From Peerson 's will and the March marriage registers , it appears that he was the son of Thomas and Margaret Peerson of March , Cambridgeshire , in England . It is believed that Martin Peerson was born in the town of March between 1571 and 1573 , as records show that his parents married in 1570 , but a " Margaret Peersonn " was married in 1573 . It therefore seems that Thomas Peerson died a few years after 1570 and that Martin 's mother remarried .

In the 1580s , Peerson was a choirboy of St. Paul 's Cathedral in London under organist Thomas Mulliner . Subsequently , he came under the patronage of the poet Fulke Greville . On May Day in 1604 Peerson 's setting of the madrigal See , O See , Who is Heere Come a Maying was performed as part of Ben Jonson 's Private Entertainment of the King and Queene at the house of Sir William Cornwallis at Highgate ( now in London ) . A letter dated 7 December 1609 states that at the time Peerson was living at Newington ( now Stoke Newington , London ) and had composed several lessons for the virginals , which was his principal instrument . It appears that he had Roman Catholic sympathies , for that year , on the same occasion as Jonson , he was convicted of recusancy ? the statutory offence of not complying with the established Church of England .

Peerson then took up musical studies at the University of Oxford . In order to do so , he would have had to subscribe to Protestantism . In 1613 , he was conferred a Bachelor of Music ( B.Mus. ) and was appointed Master of the Boys of Canterbury Cathedral . It is possible that he was the " Martin Pearson " who was sacrist at Westminster Abbey from 1623 to 1630 . Between June 1624 and June 1625 he returned to St. Paul 's Cathedral as almoner and Master of the Choristers ; there is also some evidence suggesting he was later made a petty canon . Although all cathedral services ceased at the end of 1642 following the outbreak of the English Civil War , he retained the title of almoner and , along with the other petty canons and the vicars choral , had special financial provision made for him . Peerson is known to have been buried on 16 January 1651 in St. Faith 's Chapel under St. Paul 's . He therefore died in either December 1650 or , more likely , January 1651 .

In spite of his Roman Catholic leanings , evidenced by the use of pre @-@ Reformation Latin texts for his motets and his 1606 conviction for recusancy , Peerson 's position at the heart of the Anglican establishment confirms the overall esteem in which he was held .

= = Music = =

Peerson 's powerful patrons enabled him to print and publish a considerable quantity of his music , although little remains today . The only four extant keyboard pieces ? " Alman " , " The Fall of the Leafe " , " Piper 's Paven " and " The Primerose " ? appear in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book ( c . 1609 ? c . 1619 ) , one of the most important sources of early keyboard music containing more than 300 pieces from the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods . He also set to music some of William Leighton 's verses , written by the latter while in prison for debt . Together with works by other composers , these were published as The Teares and Lamentations of a Sorrowfull Soule in 1614 . This was followed two years later by Tristiae Remedium , with texts assembled by the Reverend Thomas Myriell mainly using psalm texts in the English language .

In 1620 Peerson 's collection Private Musicke was published . It contained secular music , including madrigals and consort songs , for one or two voices accompanied by viols or virginals . He

published some metrical psalter tunes in Thomas Ravenscroft 's 1621 work The Whole Booke of Psalmes with the Hymnes Evangelicall and Songs Spirituall , and then a group of Motets or Grave Chamber Musique in 1630 with English texts and the then @-@ fashionable keyboard continuo ; the latter work contains two very fine songs of mourning .

Thereafter , despite changing musical trends , Peerson 's music showed significant roots in Renaissance polyphony . However , he was adept in the use of then @-@ modern compositional procedures ; this is evident in his often daring use of chromaticism , especially seen in word painting . Some of his finest music is contained in his set of 15 Latin motets , which was probably composed around the turn of the century . Existing only in a single copy , it originally consisted of five part @-@ books but the Cantus book is lost . Richard Rastall , professor of historical musicology at the University of Leeds , spent 12 years reconstructing the missing part . The complete Latin motets have been published by Antico Edition , and a recording of their performance by Ex Cathedra entitled Peerson : Latin Motets was produced by Hyperion Records in 2005 .

= = Selected works = =

Private Musicke . Or the First Booke of Ayres and Dialogues : Contayning Songs of 4 . 5 @.@ and 6 . Parts , of Seuerall Sorts , and being Verse and Chorus , is Fit for Voyces and Viols . And for Want of Viols , they may be Performed to either the Virginall or Lute , where the Proficient can Play vpon the Ground , or for a Shift to the Base Viol alone . All Made and Composed According to the Rules of Art . By M. P. Batchelar of Musicke , London : Printed by Thomas Snodham , 1620 , OCLC 606486968 .

Mottects or Grave Chamber Mvsique : Containing Songs of Fiue Parts of Seuerall Sorts , some ful , and some Verse and Chorus . But all Fit for Voyces and Vials , with an Organ Part ; which for want of Organs , may be Performed on Virginals , Base @-@ Lute , Bandora , or Irish Harpe . Also , A Mourning Song of Sixe Parts for the Death of the late Right Honorable Sir Fvlke Grevil ... Composed According to the Rules of Art by M.P. , London : Printed by William Stansby , 1630 , OCLC 496804311 .