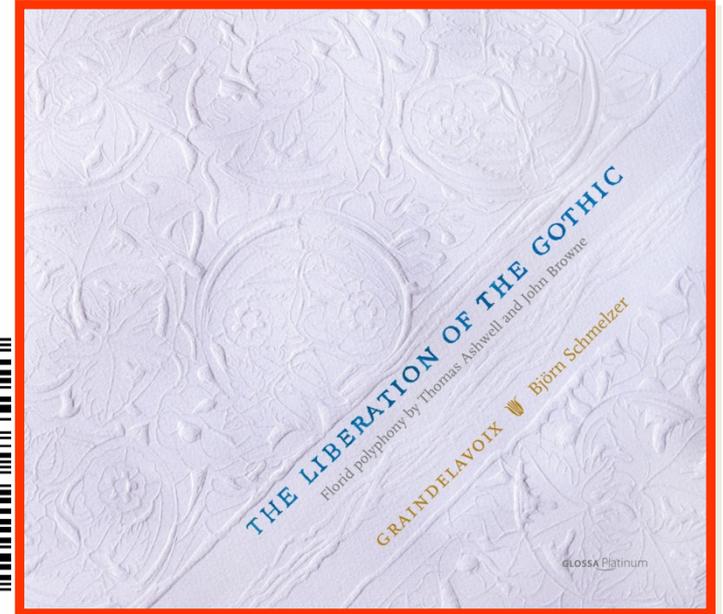




**GLOSSA**



<b>THE LIBERATION OF THE GOTHIC</b> <b>Florid Polyphony by Thomas Ashwell and John Browne</b>  Graindelavoix Björn Schmelzer	<b>GCD P32115</b>	<b>PC: 01Q</b>
	1 CD  2017	
<b>Also available: GCD P32114</b> <b>Cipriano de Rore</b> <b>PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A STARVED DOG</b> Björn Schmelzer/Graindelavoix		

With *The Liberation of the Gothic*, **Björn Schmelzer** and **Graindelavoix** deliver an imaginative reading of music by two English composers active at the end of the fifteenth century, the towering figure of John Browne and the slightly later and much less well-known Thomas Ashwell (or Ashewell). Björn Schmelzer draws a vivid connection between the florid polyphony of these two composers and the freedom of structure and ornament found in late Gothic architecture, notably that of the fourteenth-century Lady Chapel built as part of the “Ship of the Fens”, Ely Cathedral. Performing Ashwell’s intricately-woven *Missa Ave Maria* – a landmark in polyphony – Schmelzer and his Antwerp-based ensemble echo, in the individual freedom accorded to these virtuoso singers, the rich ornamentation of foliage, seemingly in constant motion, decorating the walls of Ely’s Lady Chapel. The singers add their own “coloratura”, an approach which continues to be central to Björn Schmelzer’s interpretation of medieval and Renaissance works, as have been appearing on Glossa for a decade and a half now.

In his booklet essay Schmelzer refers to the British writer and artist John Ruskin describing the “liberation of the Gothic” as also concerning “the workers, who were not submitted to repetitive, mechanical work but invested in continuous and infinite variation.” Acting as surrounding pillars to Ashwell’s Mass on this recording are two of the extended motets, much favoured by early Tudor English polyphonists – and encountered in the famous Eton Choirbook manuscript: John Browne’s *Stabat mater* and his first setting of the *Salve regina*.