

GAMBA MUSIC CLUB

THOMAS MORLEY

Now is the gentle season

Tr T T B

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Thomas Morley

(b. ?London 1557; d. London ? 1603)

Morley was a pupil of William Byrd, and in 1588 he took his degree of Mus.B. at Oxford. In 1589 he was probably organist of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London as entered in the registers of that year is the burial of "Thomas ye sonne of Thomas Morley, Organist." It appears that later he moved to St. Pauls Cathedral. In 1592 Morley was made Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. In 1594 he published 'Madrigalls to Foure Voyces' from which 'Now the gentle season' is taken. Then in 1598 he was granted a licence for 21 years to print song-books of all kinds and music paper. The last book which appears to have been printed "by an assignement of a Patent granted to T. Morley" was Dowland's 'Third Book of Songs' (1603). On Morley's death Barley obtained the patent and his name appears as owner of it from 1606 onwards.

Morley's contemporaries, such as Meres and Peacham, placed him among the best musicians of the time. Ravenscroft speaks of him after his death as "he who did shine as the Sun in the Firmament of our Art, and did first give light to our understanding with his Præcepts."