

GAMBA MUSIC CLUB

WILLIAM CORNYSH

Fa La Sol

Tr T B

**GMC120
1999**

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William Cornysh (d.1523)

Composer, poet, dramatist and actor.

Earliest reference to him at court is a payment of 13s 4d 'to one Cornyssh for a prophesy' on 12th Nov. 1494. In 1501 he devised pageants for the marriage festivities of Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Katharine of Aragon. In 1504 he was imprisoned in the Fleet, although the reason for this is unknown.

On 29th September 1509 Cornysh became Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, a post he held until his death. From 1509 he was a leading light in the plays and entertainments which enlivened court life, but unfortunately none of his dramatic writings survive. In 1513 Cornysh took the Chapel Royal to France in the retinue of Henry VIII and won great favour. He was again in France to supervise the Chapel Royal's ceremonies at the field of the Cloth of Gold.

Cornysh also appeared to be a man of business and at various times he was granted permission to import woad and wine, and to export beer. All that is known of his domestic life is that his wife's name was Jane and he had a son called Henry. His will was executed on 14th Oct. 1523.