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hyperion
Arise, my muse  Z320
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1690

Welcome to all the pleasures  Z339
Ode for St Cecilia’s Day, 1683

Now does the glorious day appear  Z332
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1689

TESSA BONNER, GILLIAN FISHER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, MICHAEL CHANCE countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor/alto
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, CHARLES POTT bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
CATHERINE MACKINTOSH, MARGARET FAULTLESS violin  KATHARINE HART, JANE COMPTON viola
JANE COE cello  AMANDA MACNAMARA double bass  PAUL GOODWIN, CATHARINE LATHAM oboe & recorder
CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS, MARK BENNETT natural trumpet
DAVID MILLER theorbo  ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Arise, my muse  Z320
1. Symphony  ..............................................................  [1'39]
2. Arise, my muse ........................................................................ Charles Daniels  [1'57]
3. Ye sons of music raise your voices high ............................................. Charles Daniels  [1'00]
4. Then sound your instruments and charm the earth  John Mark Ainsley, Michael George, tutti  [1'40]
5. See how the glitt'ring ruler of the day ............................................. Charles Daniels  [3'00]
6. Hail, gracious Gloriana ............................................................. Michael Chance, James Bowman, tutti  [3'01]
7. And since the time's distress to wars' alarms ..................................... Michael George  [1'24]
8. To quell his country's foes ........................................................... James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George  [1'22]
9. But ah, I see Eusebia drown'd in tears ............................................. Michael Chance  [2'37]
10. But Glory cries 'Go on' ............................................................... Michael George, Michael Chance, tutti  [3'17]

Welcome to all the pleasures  Z339
11. Symphony  ..............................................................  [1'32]
12. Welcome to all the pleasures that delight ....................................... James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George, tutti  [2'07]
13. Here the Deities approve ............................................................. James Bowman  [4'40]
14. While joys celestial their bright souls invade .................................. Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, Michael George  [1'31]
15. Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature  Michael Chance, Charles Daniels, Michael George, tutti  [1'54]
17. In a consort of voices while instruments play .................................. John Mark Ainsley, tutti  [1'20]

Now does the glorious day appear  Z332
18. Symphony  ...........................................................................  [3'39]
19. Now does the glorious day appear .................................................. John Mark Ainsley, Michael George  [1'22]
20. Not any one such joy could bring .................................................... John Mark Ainsley, Michael George  [1'24]
21. This does our fertile isle with glory crown ...................................... John Mark Ainsley  [2'29]
22. Now does the glorious day appear .................................................. John Mark Ainsley, tutti  [1'21]
23. It was a work of full as great a weight ........................................... Michael George  [1'56]
24. By beauteous softness mixed with majesty ..................................... James Bowman  [3'56]
25. Her hero to whose conduct and whose arms .................................. Michael George, Charles Pott  [1'32]
26. Our dear religion, with our law's defence ..................................... Gillian Fisher, James Bowman, Charles Daniels  [1'49]
27. No more shall we the great Eliza boast .......................................... John Mark Ainsley  [2'33]
28. Now, now, with one united voice .................................................. John Mark Ainsley, tutti  [1'36]
Hail! bright Cecilia  Z328
Ode for St Cecilia’s Day, 1692

Who can from joy refrain?  Z342
Birthday Ode for the Duke of Gloucester, 1695

TESSA BONNER, GILLIAN FISHER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
JOHN MARK AINSLEY, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, SIMON KEENLYSIDE bass
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD Z328

EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM director

THE KING’S CONSORT
ROY GOODMAN, MARGARET FAULTLESS, HELEN ORSLER, SIMON JONES violin I
MILES GOLDING, STEPHEN JONES, MAURICE WHITAKER, JANE DEBENHAM violin II
JANE COMPTON, MARTIN KELLY viola
JANE COE, DAVID WATKIN cello
PETER BUCKOKE double bass
PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboe & recorder
GAIL HENNESSY tenor oboe
ANDREW WATTS bassoon
DAVID MILLER archlute
CRISPAN STEELE-PERKINS, MARK BENNETT natural trumpet
CHARLES FULLBROOK timpani
ROBERT KING, JAMES O’DONNELL, EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM chamber organ
ROBERT KING, JAMES O’DONNELL harpsichord

ROBERT KING director
Hail! bright Cecilia  Z328

29. Symphony .......................................................... [9'27]
31. Hark, each Tree its silence breaks James Bowman, Michael George [4'13]
32. 'Tis Nature's Voice; thro' all the moving Wood James Bowman [4'03]
33. Soul of the World! New College Choir [2'41]
34. Thou tun'st this World below, the Spheres above Gillian Fisher, New College Choir [3'15]
35. With that sublime Celestial Lay James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Simon Keenlyside [3'10]
36. Wond'rous Machine! Michael George [2'44]
37. The Airy Violin Rogers Covey-Crump [1'28]
38. In vain the Am'rous Flute and soft Guitar James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley [5'53]
39. The Fife and all the Harmony of War John Mark Ainsley [3'07]
40. Let these amongst themselves contest Simon Keenlyside, Michael George [3'25]
41. Hail! bright Cecilia, Hail to thee! James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George, New College Choir [4'11]

Who can from joy refrain?  Z342

42. Overture ............................................................ [4'27]
43. Who can from joy refrain? James Bowman, Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, Rogers Covey-Crump, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George [5'12]
44. A Prince of glorious race descended Rogers Covey-Crump [3'34]
45. The Father brave as e'er was Dane Michael George [1'29]
46. The Graces in his Mother shine Tessa Bonner [2'00]
47. Sound the Trumpet and beat the warlike Drum John Mark Ainsley [2'29]
48. Chaconne – If now he burns with noble flame Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, tutti [5'31]
Fly, bold rebellion Z324
Welcome Song for Charles II, 1683

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum Z335
Welcome Song (? on his birthday) for James II, 1687

Celebrate this Festival Z321
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1693

TESSA BONNER, GILLIAN FISHER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, JONATHAN KENNY countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, RUFUS MÜLLER tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, CHARLES POTT bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
SIMON STANDAGE, MILES GOLimming violin  JANE COMPTON viola  JANE COE cello
PETER BUCKOKE double bass  PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboe & recorder
CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS natural trumpet
DAVID MILLER archlute & theorbo  ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Fly, bold rebellion  Z324  [19'29]
49. Symphony .............................................................. Michael George, tutti [1'58]
50. Fly, bold rebellion, make haste and be gone! Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [2'27]
51. Rivers from their channels turned ........................................... Michael George, Rufus Müller [3'14]
52. If then we've found the want of his rays Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, Rufus Müller [3'16]
53. But Heaven has now dispelled those fears James Bowman, Rufus Müller, Michael George, tutti [1'40]
54. Come then, change your notes, disloyal crowd Michael George, tutti [3'33]
55. Be welcome then, great Sir, to constant vows James Bowman [1'44]
56. Welcome to all those wishes fulfilled

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum  Z335  [23'47]
57. Symphony .............................................................. Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George, tutti [3'11]
58. Sound the trumpet, beat the drum Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [1'57]
59. Crown the year and crown the day Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [3'30]
60. Let Caesar and Urania live James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump [2'56]
61. What greater bliss can Fate bestow Rufus Müller, Michael George, tutti [2'48]
62. Chaconne ............................................................. Michael George [2'22]
63. While Caesar like the morning star James Bowman, Rufus Müller, Michael George, tutti [3'16]
64. To Urania and Caesar delights without measure James Bowman [3'16]

Celebrate this Festival  Z321  [32'49]
65. Symphony .............................................................. Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, James Bowman, Rufus Müller, Michael George, tutti [1'37]
66. Celebrate this Festival Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, James Bowman, Rufus Müller, Michael George, tutti [1'31]
67. Britain now thy cares beguile Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner, tutti [2'35]
68. 'Tis sacred, bid the trumpet cease Gillian Fisher, tutti [0'47]
69. Let sullen Discord smile Tessa Bonner, tutti [2'39]
70. Crown the altar, deck the shrine James Bowman [3'04]
71. Expected Spring at last is come Michael George, tutti [1'48]
72. April, who till now has mourned James Bowman [2'53]
73. Departing thus you'll hear him say Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [1'19]
74. Happy realm beyond expressing James Bowman, Rufus Müller, Michael George [3'24]
75. While, for a righteous cause he arms Michael George [4'49]
76. Return, fond Muse, the thoughts of war Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [3'28]
77. Kindly treat Maria's day Tessa Bonner, tutti [2'48]
Ye tuneful Muses  Z344
Welcome Song (? on his birthday) for James II, 1686

Celestial music did the gods inspire  Z322
Ode for a performance at Mr Maidwell’s School, 1689

From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War  Z325
Ode for the wedding of Prince George of Denmark and Princess Anne, 1683

TESSA BONNER, GILLIAN FISHER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, JONATHAN KENNY countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, CHARLES POTT bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, LUCY HOWARD violin  RUPERT BAWDEN viola
JANE COE cello  PETER BUCKOKE double bass  DAVID MILLER archlute & baroque guitar
RACHEL BECKETT, MARION SCOTT recorder  ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Ye tuneful Muses  Z344  [24'17]
78. Symphony ................................................................. Charles Pott, Michael George, tutti [3'26]
79. Ye tuneful Muses, raise your heads ......................................................... Charles Pott, Michael George, tutti [2'55]
80. Be lively then and gay ............................................................... Rogers Corey-Crump, tutti [2'22]
81. In his just praise your noblest songs let fall ................................................ Michael George, tutti [2'36]
82. From the rattling of drums and the trumpet’s loud sounds ........................................... Charles Daniels, tutti [3'16]
83. To music’s softer but yet kind ................................................................. James Bowman, Rogers Corey-Crump, Michael George [1'55]
84. With him he brings the partner of his throne ......................................................... James Bowman [4'31]
85. Happy in a mutual love ............................................................................. Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner [1'22]
86. Whilst in music and verse our duty we show .................................................... Rogers Corey-Crump, tutti [1'46]

Celestial music did the gods inspire  Z322  [17'27]
87. Symphony ......................................................................................... Michael George, tutti [3'10]
88. Celestial music did the gods inspire .......................................................... Michael George, tutti [2'09]
89. Her charming strains expel tormenting Care ..................................................... James Bowman [3'05]
90. Thus Virgil’s Genius lov’d the country best ...................................................... Gillian Fisher [2'13]
91. Whilst music did improve Amphion’s song ........................................................ Rogers Corey-Crump, Michael George [2'11]
92. When Orpheus sang all Nature did rejoice ....................................................... James Bowman [2'06]
93. Let Phyllis by her voice but charm the Air ...................................................... James Bowman, Charles Daniels, Michael George, tutti [2'25]

From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War  Z325  [17'54]
94. Symphony ......................................................................................... Michael George, tutti [2'36]
95. From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War ................................................ Michael George, tutti [3'12]
96. As Fame, great Sir, before you ran .............................................................. Rogers Corey-Crump, Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner [2'38]
97. Wake then, my Muse, wake Instruments and Voice ........................................ Michael George, tutti [1'58]
98. The Sparrow and the gentle Dove ................................................................... Charles Daniels [4'44]
99. So all the Boons indulgent Heav’n design’d ..................................................... James Bowman, Rogers Corey-Crump, Michael George [1'24]
100. Hence without Scheme or Figure to descry .................................................... Tessa Bonner, tutti [1'19]
Welcome, welcome, glorious morn  Z338
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1691

Great Parent, Hail to Thee!  Z327
Ode for the Centenary of Trinity College Dublin, 1694

The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear  Z337
Welcome Song for Charles II, 1682

GILLIAN FISHER, EVELYN TUBB soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, NIGEL SHORT countertenor
JOHN MARK AINSLEY, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, CHARLES POTT bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, MILES GOLDING violin  JANE COMPTON viola  JANE COE cello
PETER BUCKOKE double bass  DAVID MILLER archlute & theorbo
PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboe & recorder
CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS, DAVID BLACKADDER natural trumpet
ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Welcome, welcome, glorious morn  Z338

101. Symphony .............................................................. Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [2'24]
102. Welcome, welcome, glorious morn .................................... Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George, Nigel Short, John Mark Ainsley, Evelyn Tubb, Charles Pott, tutti [1'36]
103. At thy return the joyful Earth ...................................... John Mark Ainsley [4'01]
104. Welcome as when three happy Kingdoms strove ..................... James Bowman, Michael George [2'39]
105. The mighty goddess of this wealthy Isle ..................................... John Mark Ainsley [1'33]
106. Full of Wonder and Delight ................................................ James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George, tutti [1'53]
107. And lo! a sacred Fury swell’d her Breast .................................. John Mark Ainsley, tutti [3'17]
108. My Pray’rs are heard, Heav’n has at last bestow’d ....................... Gillian Fisher, tutti [3'55]
109. He to the Field by Honour call’d shall go .......................... Charles Pott, Michael George [1'43]
110. Whilst undisturb’d his happy Consort reigns ....................... Rogers Covey-Crump [1'47]
111. Sound, all ye Spheres; confirm the Omen, Heav’n ..................... John Mark Ainsley, tutti [2'19]

Great Parent, Hail to Thee!  Z327

112. Symphony .............................................................. [2'28]
113. Great Parent, Hail to Thee! ........................................ James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George, tutti [2'16]
114. Another Century commencing ........................................ James Bowman [2'22]
115. After War’s Alarms repeated .............................................. John Mark Ainsley, Rogers Covey-Crump [3'15]
116. Awful Matron take thy Seat ............................................. Michael George [3'25]
117. She was the first who did inspire ........................................ John Mark Ainsley, tutti [1'57]
118. Succeeding Princes next recite ........................................... Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George [1'50]
119. But chiefly Recommend to Fame ........................................... tutti [1'31]
120. Thy Royal Patron sung: Repair ........................................... Gillian Fisher [3'54]
121. With themes like these, ye Sons of Art .................................. tutti [1'21]

The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear  Z337

122. Symphony .............................................................. [2'27]
123. The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear .......................... Michael George, James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, tutti [3'24]
124. And when late from your throne Heaven’s call you attend ............ James Bowman, tutti [2'16]
125. Ah! had we, Sir, the power or art ......................................... Michael George, Gillian Fisher, Evelyn Tubb, tutti [2'31]
126. Happy while all her neighbours bled ...................................... James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George [1'32]
127. So happily still you your counsels employ ................................ John Mark Ainsley [1'13]
128. These had by their ill usage drove ........................................ James Bowman [2'30]
129. But those no more shall dare repine ...................................... John Mark Ainsley, tutti [2'19]
Love’s goddess sure was blind  Z331
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1692

Raise, raise the voice  Z334
Ode for St Cecilia’s Day, c1685

Laudate Ceciliam  Z329
Ode for St Cecilia’s Day, 1683

From those serene and rapturous joys  Z326
Welcome Song for Charles II, 1684

GILLIAN FISHER, MARY SEERS soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, NIGEL SHORT countertenor
MARK PADMORE, ANDREW TUSA tenor
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, MILES GOLDMING violin  JANE COMPTON viola  JANE COE cello
PETER McARDHY double bass  DAVID MILLER archlute, theorbo & baroque guitar
MARION SCOTT, REBECCA MILES recorder  ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Love's goddess sure was blind  Z331

130. Symphony .............................................................. James Bowman [21'44]
131. Love's goddess sure was blind this day ........................................ James Bowman [3'05]
132. Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien .................................. Michael George [1'28]
133. Sweetness of Nature and true wit ........................................ James Bowman, Mark Padmore [2'46]
134. Long may she reign over this Isle ........................................... Gillian Fisher, tutti [2'09]
135. May her blest example chase .............................................. Gillian Fisher [1'35]
136. Many such days may she behold ............................................ James Bowman, Mark Padmore [3'33]
137. May she to Heaven late return ............................................ Mary Seers, James Bowman, Andrew Tusa, Robert Evans, tutti [3'14]

Raise, raise the voice  Z334

138. Symphony .............................................................. [12'35]
139. Raise, raise the voice, all Instruments obey ................................ Michael George, tutti [2'48]
140. The God himself says he'll be present here ................................ Mary Seers, Andrew Tusa, Michael George, tutti [2'25]
141. Mark how readily each pliant string ........................................ Gillian Fisher, tutti [4'14]

Laudate Ceciliam  Z329

142. Symphony – Laudate Ceciliam, in voce et organo ....................... James Bowman, Mark Padmore, Michael George [2'28]
143. Modulemini psalmum novum ............................................. James Bowman, Mark Padmore, Michael George [2'37]
144. Symphony .............................................................. [1'50]
145. Dicite Virgini, canite martyri ............................................... James Bowman, Mark Padmore, Michael George [3'27]

From those serene and rapturous joys  Z326

146. Symphony .............................................................. [23'11]
147. From those serene and rapturous joys ....................................... James Bowman [3'36]
148. Behold th' indulgent Prince is come ....................................... Michael George, tutti [2'12]
149. Not with an Helmet or a glitt'ring Spear .................................... Gillian Fisher, Mary Seers [2'44]
150. Welcome as soft refreshing show'rs ......................................... Michael George, tutti [2'35]
151. Welcome, more welcome does he come ..................................... Mark Padmore [4'33]
152. Nor does the Sun more comfort bring ....................................... Andrew Tusa, Michael George [1'12]
153. With trumpets and shouts we receive the World's Wonder ............... Andrew Tusa, tutti [3'01]
Of old, when heroes thought it base  Z333
The Yorkshire Feast Song, 1690

Swifter, Isis, swifter flow  Z336
Welcome Song for Charles II, 1681

What shall be done in behalf of the man?  Z341
Welcome Song for the Duke of York, 1682

GILLIAN FISHER, SUSAN HAMILTON soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, NIGEL SHORT countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenor
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE bass

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, MILES GOLDING violin  JANE COMPTON viola  JANE COE cello
PETER BUCKOKE double bass  PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboe & recorder
CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS, MARK BENNETT natural trumpet
DAVID MILLER archlute, theorbo & baroque guitar  ROBERT KING harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
Of old, when heroes thought it base  Z333

154. Symphony ................................................................. [36'21]
155. Of old, when heroes thought it base ........................................... Michael George, Rogers Covey-Crump [4'03]
156. The bashful Thames, for beauty so renown’d .................................... Charles Daniels, tutti [4'31]
157. The pale and the purple rose ..................................................... James Bowman [4'19]
158. And in each track of glory since .................................................. Charles Daniels, Michael George, tutti [3'57]
159. Symphony ................................................................. [2'19]
160. And now when the renown’d Nassau ............................................ Charles Daniels, Rogers Covey-Crump [1'58]
161. They did no storms, nor threat’nings fear ...................................... Robert Evans, Michael George [2'05]
162. So when the glitt’ring Queen of Night ........................................ Charles Daniels [4'44]
163. Let music join ................................................................. tutti [1'27]
164. Sound trumpets, sound! beat ev’ry drum ....................................... Charles Daniels [2'34]
165. Sound all to him ................................................................. Michael George, tutti [1'47]

Swifter, Isis, swifter flow  Z336

166. Symphony – Swifter, Isis, swifter flow ........................................ Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [4'57]
167. Land him safely on her shore ..................................................... Michael George [1'09]
168. Hark, hark! just now my listening ears ....................................... Charles Daniels [1'56]
169. Welcome, dread Sir, to town .................................................... James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump, Michael George, tutti [1'15]
170. But with as great devotion meet ................................................ Michael George, Charles Daniels, tutti [2'07]
171. The King whose presence like the Spring ..................................... Gillian Fisher, James Bowman [1'27]
172. Then since, Sir, from you all our blessings do flow ........................... tutti [2'05]

What shall be done in behalf of the man?  Z341

173. Symphony ................................................................. [14'37]
174. What shall be done in behalf of the man? ..................................... Michael George, James Bowman, Charles Daniels, tutti [2'43]
175. All the grandeur he possesses .................................................... Rogers Covey-Crump, tutti [2'47]
176. Mighty Charles, though joined with thee ..................................... Michael George, tutti [3'36]
177. May all factious troubles cease .................................................... Gillian Fisher, Susan Hamilton, tutti [2'45]
Come ye sons of Art, away  Z323
Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, 1694

Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King  Z340
Welcome Song for Charles II, 1680

Why, why are all the Muses mute?  Z343
Welcome Song (? on his birthday) for James II, 1685

TESSA BONNER, GILLIAN FISHER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN, MICHAEL CHANCE countertenor
JOHN MARK AINSLEY, MARK PADMORE tenor
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD  Z323

EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM director

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, STEPHEN JONES, HELEN ORSLER, CLARE SALAMAN violin I
MILES GOLDING, MAURICE WHITAKER, MARIE KNIGHT, REBECCA MILES violin II
JANE COMPTON, RUPERT BAWDEN viola  JANE COE, MARK CAUDLE cello  PETER BUCKOKE double bass
DAVID MILLER archlute & theorbo  PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboe
CATHERINE LATHAM, REBECCA MILES recorder  ANDREW WATTS bassoon
CRISPION STEELE-PERKINS, MARK BENNETT natural trumpet  CHARLES FULLBROOK timpani
ROBERT KING solo, JAMES O’DONNELL tpt, JAMES O’DONNELL harpsichord & chamber organ

ROBERT KING director
**Come ye sons of Art, away**  
178. Symphony .............................................................. Michael Chance, New College Choir [3'36]
179. Come ye sons of Art, away ........................................... Michael Chance, New College Choir [1'59]
180. Sound the trumpet, 'till around .................................... James Bowman, New College Choir [3'50]
181. Strike the viol, touch the lute ...................................... James Bowman [5'12]
182. The day that such a blessing gave .................................. Michael George, New College Choir [3'00]
183. Bid the Virtues, bid the Graces .................................... Gillian Fisher [3'22]
184. These are the sacred charms that shield ........................ Michael George [1'46]
185. See Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way .................. Gillian Fisher, Michael George, New College Choir [2'53]

**Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King**  
186. Symphony – Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King ........... tutti [3'12]
187. Ah! Mighty Sir, if you to such long absence are inclined ...... James Bowman, Michael George [1'25]
188. But your blest presence now ........................................ tutti [2'09]
189. Your influous approach our pensive hope recalls ............. John Mark Ainsley, tutti [1'25]
190. When the Summer, in his glory ..................................... Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner [1'19]
191. All loyalty and honour be .......................................... tutti [0'59]
192. Music the food of love .............................................. Mark Padmore, tutti [3'33]

**Why, why are all the Muses mute?**  
193. Why, why are all the Muses mute? ............................... Mark Padmore, tutti [4'40]
194. When should each soul exalted be? ............................... John Mark Ainsley, tutti [2'30]
195. Britain, thou now art great, art great indeed! ................... James Bowman [3'40]
196. Look up, and to our Isle returning see ........................... Michael Chance, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George, tutti [2'10]
197. Accurs'd rebellion reared his head ............................... Michael George, Gillian Fisher, Tessa Bonner [3'07]
198. Caesar for milder virtues honour’d more ....................... Mark Padmore, Michael George [2'41]
199. The many-headed beast is quelled at home ..................... John Mark Ainsley, tutti [2'15]
200. In the equal balance laid ........................................... Robert Evans, Michael George [1'23]
201. O how blest is the Isle to which Caesar is given ................ Mark Padmore, tutti [5'20]
From between 1680 and 1695 twenty-four of Purcell’s Odes and Welcome Songs survive: four celebrate St Cecilia’s day, six are for the welcome of royalty, three are for the birthday of King James II, six celebrate the birthdays of Queen Mary from 1689 to 1694, and the remainder are ‘one-offs’ for a royal wedding, the Yorkshire Feast, the birthday of the Duke of Gloucester, the Centenary of Trinity College Dublin, and one for a performance ‘at Mr Maidwell’s School’. Of these twenty-four only a handful receive regular performances today, and the remainder, full of wonderfully inventive music, are usually and unjustly ignored. Besides its musical and historical importance as the first recording of all Purcell’s Odes and Welcome Songs, the eight discs in The King’s Consort’s series on Hyperion have an added interest for the scholar as the Odes cover almost all the period of Purcell’s activity as an established composer; his first Ode, for the welcome of Charles II, dates from 1680, and his last (that for the six-year-old Duke of Gloucester) was written just a few months before the composer’s untimely death in 1695.

Like the forty or so plays for which Purcell provided incidental music and songs, many of the libretti for the Odes are undistinguished. These texts accounted, in part at least, for the Odes’ neglect in the twentieth century. Purcell himself appears to have been less concerned by the texts he was given, consistently turning out music of astonishing imagination and high quality and frequently reserving his finest music for some of the least distinguished words. Seventeenth century audiences were perhaps not so preoccupied by texts as their modern counterparts—Purcell’s ravishing music must have been more than adequate compensation for poor poetry—and John Dryden, translating Virgil in 1697 backs this up: ‘The tune I still retain, but not the words.’ There was in any case a conventionally obsequious attitude to royalty, and Purcell’s music always wins, as the satirist Thomas Brown summed up:

For where the Author’s scanty words have failed, Your happier Graces, Purcell, have prevailed.

Records of payments made to instrumentalists and singers for special occasions show the forces (and indeed the actual venues) utilized to have been surprisingly small. The ‘vingt-quatre violons’, modelled on the French version, were almost never at that strength by the 1690s, with the English musical establishment firmly in decline following the royal realization that music did not make money. All but the largest of Purcell’s Odes (notably Come ye sons of Art and Hail! bright Cecilia) seem to have been intended for performance by up to a dozen instrumentalists and a double quartet of singers, who between them covered all the solos and joined forces for the choruses. We believe therefore that the ensemble recorded here parallels the number of performers that took part in seventeenth-century performances.
Arise, my muse\dates from 1690, the second of six years in which Purcell was commissioned to write an Ode for the birthday of Queen Mary. That year saw a change in the orchestral scoring of Purcell’s Odes, with the addition of wind and brass instruments (other than the pair of recorders that had featured on various previous occasions) to the established string texture. For this work, with an unusually inspired libretto, Purcell added pairs of oboes, recorders and trumpets, and also a second viola to the string section, making possible sounds of great richness.

The overture, like so many of Purcell’s works, is in the French style, with a grand introduction (using the pairs of trumpets and oboes particularly effectively) followed by an imitative section in triple time. The solo alto’s first entry finds Purcell’s imagination stirred by D’Urfey’s text, as indeed it is again later on for the same voice at ‘See how the glitt’ring ruler of the day’ where, over an eight-bar ground bass in minuet style, the sun summons the planets to ‘Dance in a solemn ball’. Opportunities for pathetic texts are obviously limited in joyous Odes, but the section ‘But ah, I see Eusebia drown’d in tears’ enables Purcell to show genuine emotion, despite the fact that ‘Eusebia’ refers to the Anglican Church, regretting the fact that William III has to champion her cause in Ireland. Nonetheless, the piece ends in triumphant manner, with the text exhorting the illustrious Prince not to leave his work unfinished.

1. Symphony
2. Arise, my muse, and to thy tuneful lyre
   Compose a mighty ode
   Whose charming nature may inspire
   The bosom of some listening God
   To consecrate thy bold attempting verse,
   And Gloriana’s fame disperse
   O’er the wide confines of the universe.
3. Ye sons of music raise your voices high:
   And like your theme be your blest harmony:
   Then sound your instruments.
4. Then sound your instruments and charm the earth
   Upon the sacred day of Gloriana’s birth.
5. See how the glitt’ring ruler of the day,
   From the cool bosom of the sea
   Drives with speed away,
   And does attending planets all
   To wanton revels call.
   Who from the starry east and west
   To celebrate this day make haste;
   And in new robes of glory dressed
   Dance in a solemn ball.
6. Hail, gracious Gloriana, hail:
   May every future year
   Roll on, unknown to Care.
   May each propitious morn arise
   Bright as your virtue and charming as your eyes,
   And each succeeding hour new pleasures bring,
   To make the Muses yearly sing;
   All hail, gracious Gloriana, hail.
7. And since the time’s distress to wars’ alarms
   Call the lov’d Monarch from your arms;
   Your Phoebus does to lower Spheres decline,
   Only to rise again, and with more lustre shine.
8. To quell his country’s foes
   Behold, the God-like hero goes,
   Fated and born to conquer all,
   Both the great, vulgar and the small.
   To hunt the savages from dens,
   To teach them loyalty and sense,
   And sordid souls of the true faith convince.
9. But ah, I see Eusebia drown’d in tears;
   The sad Eusebia mourning wears,
   And in dejected state thus mourns her hapless fate.
   Ah wretched me, must Caesar for my sake
   These fatal dangers undertake?
No, no, ye awful powers, no, no,
Fate must some meaner force employ;
Fate must not let him go.

10. But Glory cries 'Go on, go on, illustrious Man;
Leave not thy work undone
Thou hast so well begun.
Go on, great Prince, go on.'
Ah wretched me, must Caesar for my sake
These fatal dangers undertake?
No, no, Fate must not let him go.
But Glory cries 'Go on, great Prince, go on.'
No, no, Fate must some meaner force employ;
Fate must not let him go.
THOMAS D'URFEY (1653–1723)

Welcome to all the pleasures is the earliest of the three Odes on disc 1, and the smallest in scale. An organization called 'The Musical Society' commissioned Purcell to set Christopher Fishburn's libretto for their first celebration of St Cecilia's Day in 1683. The event proved popular, for Purcell's setting of the Ode was published the next year, and the Musical Society had to move to larger premises for its next celebration, although they did not call on Purcell again until 1692 when he produced Hail! bright Cecilia. For the 1683 occasion the youthful Purcell, only twenty-four, produced a work of great freshness, notable amongst many features for its wonderfully original string ritornelli with which he concludes many of the vocal sections. The work also produced one particularly successful alto solo over a ground bass, 'Here the Deities approve' (which moves into a most elegant string ritornello) published separately in 1689 under the title 'A new Ground' in the second part of Musick's Hand-Maid. Fishburn's text gave the composer an opportunity for gentle word-setting at 'Beauty, thou scene of love', and Purcell obliged with a movement given first to a solo tenor (with a delicious, and maybe slightly malicious, discord at the mention of the lute), and then taken up by the string ensemble. Unusually, Purcell employs a quiet ending to the work, with the texture of the last line of music 'Iô Cecilia' fading away to leave just the bass instruments and singers to conclude the Ode.

11. Symphony

12. Welcome to all the pleasures that delight
Of ev'ry sense the grateful appetite,
Hail, great assembly of Apollo's race.
Hail to this happy place, this musical assembly
That seems to be the arc of universal harmony.

13. Here the Deities approve
The God of Music and of Love;
All the talents they have lent you,
All the blessings they have sent you,
Pleas'd to see what they bestow,
Live and thrive so well below.

14. While joys celestial their bright souls invade
To find what great improvement you have made.

15. Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,
Those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.
The power shall divert us a pleasanter way,
For sorrow and grief find from music relief,
And love its soft charms must obey.
Then lift up your voices, those organs of nature,
Those charms to the troubled and amorous creature.

16. Beauty, thou scene of love,
And virtue thou innocent fire,
Made by the powers above
To temper the heat of desire,
Music that fancy employs
In rapture of innocent flame,
We offer with lute and with voice
To Cecilia, Cecilia's bright name.
17. In a consort of voices while instruments play
   With music we celebrate this holy day;
   Iô Cecilia.
   In a consort of voices we'll sing
   Iô Cecilia.

CHRISTOPHER FISHBURN (dates unknown)

**Now does the glorious day appear** was Purcell’s first Ode written to celebrate the birthday of Queen Mary (on 30 April 1689), and so dates from exactly a year before *Arise, my muse*. Thomas Shadwell was the author of the text, which Purcell altered quite extensively, even to the extent of cutting the last fifteen lines. Purcell restricted the orchestral scoring to that of a string ensemble, but added a ‘third violin’ (actually a small viola) and thus provided himself with a five-part orchestral texture. This rich texture is immediately apparent in the French-style overture which at times has stylistic elements in common with the instrumental writing of Georg Muffat. The tenor solo ‘This does our fertile isle’ is set to what must be one of Purcell’s shortest ground basses, on just two notes, but one that is nonetheless effective, especially in its transformation into an orchestral ritornello.

But the highlight of the work, a movement which surely ranks as one of Purcell’s greatest, is the alto solo, set over a wistfully sighing four-bar dropping ground bass, ‘By beauteous softness’. One of Purcell’s most ravishing solos, especially with its quietly ecstatic vocal line at ‘She with such sweetness’, the voice’s final phrase is overlapped with an exquisite five-part string ritornello of quite melting beauty.

18. Symphony

19. Now does the glorious day appear,
   The mightiest day of all the year.

20. Not any one such joy could bring,
   No, no, not that which ushers in the spring.
   That of ensuing plenty hopes does give,
   This did the hope of liberty retrieve.

21. This does our fertile isle with glory crown,
   And all the fruits it yields we now can call our own,
   On this bless’d day was our restorer born;
   Far above all let this the calendar adorn.

22. Now does the glorious day appear,
    The mightiest day of all the year.

23. It was a work of full as great a weight,
    And did require the self-same power,
    Which did frail humankind create,
    When they were lost them to restore.
    For a like act, Fate gave our Princess birth,
    Which adding to the Saints, made joy in Heaven,
    As well as triumph upon Earth,
    To which so great, so good a Queen was given.

24. By beauteous softness mixed with majesty,
    An empire over every heart she gains;
    And from her awful power none could be free.
    She with such sweetness and such justice reigns.

25. Her hero to whose conduct and whose arms
    The trembling Papal world their force must yield
    Must bend himself to her victorious charms,
    And give up all the trophies of each field.

26. Our dear religion, with our law’s defence,
    To God her zeal, to man benevolence;
    Must her above all former monarchs raise
    To be the everlasting theme of praise.

27. No more shall we the great Eliza boast,
    For her great name in greater Mary’s will be lost.

28. Now, now, with one united voice
    Let us aloud proclaim our joys;
    ‘Iô Triumphe’ let us sing,
    And make Heaven’s mighty concave ring.

THOMAS SHADWELL (1642–1692) greatly modified by Purcell
In 1683 Purcell had been the first composer commissioned to write an Ode to celebrate St Cecilia’s Day by the newly formed ‘Musical Society’. On that occasion he produced Welcome to all the pleasures, notable not only for its great freshness but also for its wonderfully original string ritornelli. Nine years later the Society was flourishing and the ‘Gentleman Lovers of Musick’ once again turned to Purcell to ‘propagate the advancement of that divine Science’. As Motteux wrote, ‘A splendid entertainment is provided, and before it is always a performance of Music by the best voices and hands in town’. With Hail! bright Cecilia Purcell excelled himself.

Brady’s poem was derived directly from Dryden’s Ode of 1687, which was the first to call for obbligato instruments, and also the first to suggest that Cecilia invented, rather than simply played, the organ. Most of Purcell’s Odes were written for the relatively small forces available at Court, but on this occasion he was given the opportunity to write for a large group of performers. Purcell chose to mix large, contrapuntal choruses with a sequence of airs for soloists and obbligato instruments. The canzona of the Symphony contains a fugue on two subjects, and is thematically linked to the fugato theme which closes the work in ingenious double augmentation. At the centre of the Ode comes the powerful chorus ‘Soul of the World!’ closing in ‘perfect Harmony’. Between this and the large-scale choruses that frame either end of the Ode come an inspired selection of airs, based around an extraordinary collection of compositional devices. ‘Hark, each Tree’ is a sarabande on a ground, whilst ‘Thou tun’st this World’ is set as a minuet; ‘In vain the Am’rous Flute’ is set to a passacaglia bass, and ‘Wond’rous Machine!’ splendidly depicts an inexorably chugging machine with its ground bass and wailing oboes. Perhaps the most remarkable solo movement is ‘Tis Nature’s Voice’ where the recitative is so heavily ornamented as to make it melismatic arioso. (The score writes ‘Mr Pate’ against this number, but some commentators have misread Motteux’s report of this movement, ‘which was sung with incredible graces by Mr. Henry Purcell himself’, to suggest that Purcell was the singer, rather than the writer, of those ‘incredible graces’.) With a text full of references to music and musical instruments, the work requires a wide variety of vocal soloists and obbligato instruments. Everywhere we find writing of great originality, word-setting of the highest calibre, and music of startling individuality.

29. Symphony

30. Hail! bright Cecilia, Hail!
Fill ev’ry Heart with Love of thee and thy Celestial Art;
That thine and Musick’s Sacred Love
May make the British Forest prove
As Famous as Dodona’s Vocal Grove.

31. Hark, each Tree its silence breaks,
The Box and Fir to talk begin.
This in the sprightly Violin,
That in the Flute distinctly speaks.
’Twas Sympathy their list’ning Brethren drew
When to the Thracian Lyre with leafy Wings they flew.

32. ’Tis Nature’s Voice; thro’ all the moving Wood
Of Creatures understood:
The Universal Tongue to none
Of all her num’rous Race unknown.
From her it learnt the mighty Art
To court the Ear or strike the Heart:
At once the Passions to express and move;
We hear, and straight we grieve or hate, rejoice or love;
In unseen Chains it does the Fancy bind;
At once it charms the Sense and captivates the Mind.

33. Soul of the World! Inspired by thee,
The jarring Seeds of Matter did agree.
Thou did’st the scatter’d Atoms bind,
Which, by thy Laws of true proportion join’d,
Made up of various Parts one perfect Harmony.
34. Thou tun'st this World below, the Spheres above,  
Who in the Heav'nly Round to their own Music move.

35. With that sublime Celestial Lay  
Can any Earthly Sounds compare?  
If any Earthly Music dare,  
The noble Organ may.
From Heav'n its wondrous Notes were giv'n,  
(Cecilia oft convers'd with Heav'n).  
Some Angel of the Sacred Choir  
Did with his Breath the Pipes inspire;  
And of their Notes above the just Resemblance gave,  
Brisk without Lightness, without Dulness Grave.

36. Wond'rous Machine! To thee the Warbling Lute,  
Tho' us'd to Conquest, must be forc'd to yield:  
With thee unable to dispute.

37. The Airy Violin  
And lofty Viol quit the Field;  
In vain they tune their speaking Strings  
To court the cruel Fair, or praise Victorious Kings.
Whilst all thy consecrated Lays  
Are to more noble Uses bent;  
And every grateful Note to Heav'n repays  
The melody it lent.

38. In vain the Am'rous Flute and soft Guitar,  
Jointly labour to inspire  
Wanton Heat and loose Desire;  
Whilst thy chaste Airs do gently move  
Seraphic Flames and Heav'nly Love.

39. The Fife and all the Harmony of War,  
In vain attempt the Passions to alarm,  
Which thy commanding Sounds compose and charm.

40. Let these amongst themselves contest,  
Which can discharge its single Duty best.  
Thou summ'st their diff'ring Graces up in One,  
And art a Consort of them All within thy Self alone.

41. Hail! bright Cecilia, Hail to thee!  
Great Patroness of Us and Harmony!  
Who, whilst among the Choir above  
Thou dost thy former Skill improve,  
With Rapture of delight dost see  
Thy Favourite Art  
Make up a Part  
Of infinite Felicity.  
Hail, bright Cecilia, Hail to thee!  
Great Patroness of Us and Harmony!

NICHOLAS BRADY (1659–1726)

Purcell’s last Occasional Ode, *Who can from joy refrain?*, was written for the birthday, on 24 July 1695, of the six year-old Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, son of Princess (later Queen) Anne. The Queen had eighteen children, all of whom died in infancy except Prince William; his life reached only to the age of eleven. The performance took place in Richmond House, Kew, and was given by a select number of the royal musicians. The Ode contained an important trumpet part, whose warlike tones particularly appealed to the young Prince, and this part was played by the trumpet virtuoso John Shore. The work is far more typical of the majority of Purcell’s two dozen Odes than *Hail! bright Cecilia*, being written for a relatively small group of performers. Four of the singers are named on the autograph manuscript, and they seem to have taken both the solos and the choruses. The instruments all appear to have been played one to a part. The inclusion of woodwind instruments (other than recorders) was a fairly recent development for Purcell, and in this case his clearly indicated writing for a small oboe band (two oboes, tenor oboe and the recently introduced bassoon) was particularly effective.

'The Duke of Gloucester's Birthday Ode’ shows so much that is wonderful in Purcell’s writing: the Overture contains a marvellously rich slow section before the canzona returns, and the solo movements all feature
music of the highest order. ‘A Prince of glorious race descended’ in particular demonstrates one of Purcell’s familiar techniques, and one that he used to great effect in so many of his Odes. The movement begins with a ground bass and solo voice, and then, at the mid-point, is transformed into a ravishing four-part string ritornello. The last movement too is a compositional tour de force: Purcell’s extraordinary Chaconne alternates and mixes voices and instruments in a wonderful variety of textures and rhythms.

42. Overture

43. Who can from joy refrain, this gay,
This pleasing, shining, wond’rous day?
For tho’ the sun has all
His summer’s glories on,
This day has brighter splendours far
From a little rising star.

44. A Prince of glorious race descended
At his happy Birth attended
With rosy, smiling hours, to show
He will golden days bestow.

45. The Father brave as e’er was Dane
Whose thund’ring sword has thousands slain
And made him o’er half Europe reign.

46. The Graces in his Mother shine
Of all the Beauties, Saints and Queens
And Martyrs of her line.
She’s great, let Fortune smile or frown,
Her virtues make all hearts her own:
She reigns without a Crown.

47. Sound the Trumpet and beat the warlike Drum;
The Prince will be with laurels crown’d
Before his manhood comes.
Ah! how pleas’d he is and gay,
When the Trumpet strikes his ear!
His hands like shaking lilies play
And catch at ev’ry spear.

48. If now he burns with noble flame,
When grown, what will he do?
From Pole to pole he’ll stretch his fame
And all the world subdue.
Then Thames shall be Queen
Of Tyber and Seine,
Of Nibus, of Indus, and Ganges:
And, without foreign aid,
Our fleets be obey’d
Wherever the wide ocean ranges.

probably by NAHUM (NATHANIEL) TATE (1652–1715)

Fly, bold rebellion was one of Purcell’s early Welcome Songs, composed for Charles II in 1683. The manuscript gives no indication of the date of the first performance, but it seems evident from the anonymous author of the words that it was written shortly after the discovery of the Rye House Plot, which took place in June 1683. The Ode thus would seem likely to have been performed to celebrate Charles’s return from Windsor to Whitehall at the end of June, or perhaps later in the year on his return to London from Winchester (25 September) or Newmarket (20 October). After the splendid two-part Symphony, the Ode contains the already established selection of choruses, trios and solos, interspersed with Purcell’s deliciously scored string ritornelli. One movement in particular stands out: Purcell had an enormous affinity with the alto voice, giving it many of his finest movements, and it is once again for this voice that he set ‘Be welcome then, great Sir’. Over a three-bar walking ground bass the soloist winds an entrancing melody which then develops into a ravishing string ritornello. Elsewhere too there is enchanting string writing: the ritornelli to ‘Rivers from their channels turned’, ‘But Kings, like the sun’ and ‘But Heaven has now dispelled’ are exquisitely crafted. In the concluding chorus ‘Welcome to all those wishes fulfilled’ we find imitative entries in seven parts alternating in real
and inverted counterpoint: a final example of Purcell’s extraordinary creative mind.

49. Symphony

50. Fly, bold rebellion, make haste and be gone!
    Victorious in counsel great Charles is returned,
    The plot is displayed and the traitors, some flown
    And some to Avernus by Justice thrown down.
    Then with heart and with voice
    Prepare to rejoice,
    All you that are loyal and true:
    They nobly contend
    Who maintain to the end
    Those honours to Majesty due.

51. Rivers from their channels turned
    Other plains and meadows bless,
    And those tow’rs from whence they cease
    Ruined lie and unadorned;
    ’Tis the Prince’s presence graces
    And his absence that defaces,
    Seats of Monarchs naked look
    By the Monarch once forsook.

    For Majesty moves like the Season’s bright King,
    Appears and withdraws, restores and gives life
    Both to places and men.

52. If then we’ve found the want of his rays,
    Thank wicked Contrivance
    And ambition as vain
    That sought t’have shortened our Sovereign’s days.
    But Kings, like the sun, sometimes have their clouds
    To make them shine more bright,
    Their greatness exhales the vapour that shrouds
    And seeks to eclipse their light.

53. But Heaven has now dispelled those fears
    And here once again our Monarch appears,
    The delight of our eyes,
    To try if his subjects at length will grow wise.

54. Come then, change your notes, disloyal crowd,
    You that already have been too loud
    With importunate follies and clamours;
    ’Tis no business of yours
    To dispute the high powers,
    As if you were the government framers;
    But with heart and with voice
    Join all to rejoice
    With welcomes redoubled to see him appear,
    Who brings mercy and peace
    And all things to please
    A people that knew not how happy they are.

55. Be welcome then, great Sir, to constant vows
    Of loyalty never to vary more.
    Welcome to all that obedience owes
    To a Prince so mild and gentle in pow’r.

56. Welcome to all those wishes fulfilled
    That thrones of monarchs firmly build,
    Welcome to all the blessings of a long reign;
    Thus let united duty pray and never pray in vain.

ANONYMOUS

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum was the last of the three Odes that Purcell wrote between 1685 and 1687 to celebrate the birthday of James II. Queen Mary had been in Bath from 16 August to 6 October, but on 11 October she and King James returned from Windsor to Whitehall, ready for the King’s birthday celebrations on 14 October. The diarist Narcissus Luttrell recorded in his diary that the celebrations appeared to have been on a smaller scale than in previous years, there being ‘no bonfires, being so particularly commanded’. The Ode is contained in an surprisingly large number of sources: one later version (the Kent manuscript), produced after Purcell’s death, used a totally new text and adds trumpets and timpani to the orchestra. However, Purcell’s 1687 version is scored only for strings and, with the names of many of the singers
recorded in the manuscripts, we can see that the first performance was a fairly small-scale affair. After a splendid two-movement overture, Mr Abell, the alto, sets the Ode off in suitably military style, punctuated by interjections from both the bass and ritornelli from the strings. By 1687 Purcell was beginning to cut down on the instrumental ritornelli that concluded so many movements in the early Odes, tending instead to move straight into a contrasting vocal section, but the alto duet 'Let Caesar and Urania live', set over a two-bar ground bass, is transformed into glorious four-part string writing. The bass, Mr Bowman, must have been an extraordinary singer, for in the solo 'While Caesar like the morning star' Purcell utilizes a range from high E down to bottom D. Equally extraordinary is the Chaconne which Purcell includes at the mid-point of the Ode: this is as fine an example of the form as he ever wrote, using a multitude of compositional devices and including a marvellous minor section. Purcell must have been especially pleased with this movement for, four years later, he re-used it in King Arthur.

57. Symphony
58. Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,
Caesar and Urania come.
Bid the Muses haste to greet 'em,
Bid the Graces fly to meet 'em
With laurel and myrtle to welcome them home.

59. Crown the year and crown the day
While distant shores their tribute pay,
While never-failing Thames shall glide
With treasures and pleasures renew'd with each tide.
To Caesar all hail, unequall'd in arms,
To Urania all hail, unequall'd in charms.

60. Let Caesar and Urania live,
Let all delights the stars can give
Upon the royal pair descend,
Let discord to the shades be driven,
While earth and sky our song attend,
And thus our loyal vows ascend:
O, O preserve 'em, Heaven!

61. What greater bliss can Fate bestow,
While Caesar rules these isles
And bright Urania smiles?
The spheres above no better sway can show,
Jove is Heaven's Caesar,
Caesar Jove below.
With plenty surrounding and loyalty sounding
Io paeans of joy,
We'll pay our devotion
To the monarch of Britain and lord of the Ocean.

62. Chaconne
63. While Caesar like the morning star
Our British sphere shall grace,
No more alarms of rebel war
Shall Albion's beauteous soil deface.
His arms did first the rebel host confound,
His godlike mercy next the conquest crowned.
His fame, like incense, mounts the skyes,
While never, never more to rise
Pride and Discord headlong go
Down to the deep abyss below.

64. To Urania and Caesar delights without measure,
With empire no trouble, and safety with pleasure;
Since the joys we possess to their goodness we owe,
'Tis but just our best wishes like that should o'erflow.

ANONYMOUS

With Celebrate this Festival we come to the fifth of six Odes Purcell wrote to celebrate the birthday of Queen Mary in successive years from 1689. By 1693 the scoring of the orchestra had been increased to include oboes, recorders and a trumpet and, although the basic plan remained the same, the size and scale of the Odes and their dramatic content had increased. The choruses, often developing out of a series of solo sections, had increased in length and, in
the interests of keeping pace with the libretto, instrumental ritornelli had all but vanished, with sections running instead straight into a contrasting vocal movement. Purcell worked closely with the famous trumpeter John Shore, and possible now were movements with virtuoso obbligato trumpet parts, of which the suitably military ‘While, for a righteous cause’ is a splendid example. Similarly, the presence of both oboes and recorders in the orchestra (oboists usually doubled on recorders) enabled delicately scored movements such as ‘Return, fond Muse’ (scored for two recorders and viola). The Symphony, much grander in scale than those of ten years before, was on this occasion copied directly from *Hail! bright Cecilia*, performed just six months previously, and Purcell was obviously blessed with two fine sopranos, whose opening duet sets a suitably stately tone for the Ode. But there is also writing of great beauty too, in particular the quietly ecstatic setting for solo alto, over a ground bass, of ‘Crown the altar’. Effective, too, is the wonderful seven-part vocal texture at ‘Repeat Maria’s name’ which throws the Queen’s name between voices and instruments before a minuet closes the work in elegant vein.

65. Symphony
66. Celebrate this Festival,
   Hark, the Muses and the Graces call.
67. Britain now thy cares beguile,
   Bless the day that blest our Isle.
68. ’Tis sacred, bid the trumpet cease.
   Cease, trumpet, cease.
69. Let sullen Discord smile,
   Let War devote this day to Peace.
70. Crown the altar, deck the shrine,
   Behold the bright seraphic throng
   Prepar’d our harmony to join,
   The Sacred Quire attend too long.
71. Expected Spring at last is come,
   Attir’d in all her youthful bloom;
   She’s come, and pleads for her delay:
   She waited for Maria’s day,
   Nor would before that morn be gay.
72. April, who till now has mourned,
   Claps for joy his sable wing
   To see within his orb return’d
   The choicest blessings he could bring:
   Maria’s birthday, and the Spring.
73. Departing thus you’ll hear him say:
   I envy not the pride of May,
   Crowned with the honour of this day;
   On Flora’s charms let her enlarge,
   A Saint and Beauty was my charge.
74. Happy realm beyond expressing,
   Such a royal pair possessing,
   Happy, happy, past expressing,
   Britain, if thou know’st thy blessing.
   Homebred faction ne’er alarm thee,
   Other mischiefs cannot harm thee.
   Caesar bears thy toils of war,
   Maria thy domestic care,
   Their’s the trouble, thine the blessing.
75. While, for a righteous cause he arms,
   The wondrous hero ’scapes
   From death in thousand shapes,
   Still safe, still foremost in alarms.
   Let guilty monarchs shun the field,
   The active part to others yield,
   In person triumph, but by proxy fight;
   The pious Prince alone can dangers slight.
76. Return, fond Muse, the thoughts of war
   On this auspicious day forbear,
   When Britain should her joy proclaim,
   And, to disarm approaching harm,
   Repeat Maria's name.

77. Kindly treat Maria's day,
   And your homage 'twill repay,
   Bequeathing blessings on our isle,
   The tedious minutes to beguile,
   Till conquests to Maria's arms restore,
   Peace and her hero, to depart no more.

NAHUM (NATHANIEL) TATE (1652–1715)

Ye tuneful Muses was written in 1686, most probably to celebrate the return of the Court from Windsor to Whitehall on 1 October. As the birthday of King James II fell on 14 October some scholars have suggested it is possible that the celebrations were combined, for the diarist Luttrell recorded that the birthday was 'observed with great solemnity ... the day concluded with ringing of bells, bonfires and a ball at Court’, but there is little in the text to suggest this was so. That anonymous author did however provide Purcell with a good libretto, full of variety and vivid material for compositional inspiration, especially in its references to music and musical instruments and, as ever, Purcell did not fail.

The fine opening Symphony is in the conventional two-section French style (which had itself originated in Italy), with the opening dotted section followed by a faster imitative triple-time movement. Two basses follow this with a rich duet, full of word-painting, linked to the first chorus by a short string ritornello. The section 'Be lively then and gay' is ingeniously based on the popular song ‘Hey boys, up go we’, and Purcell used its tune (to be found in The Dancing Master, 16th edition, 1686) first as the bass to the tenor solo, then as a counterpoint in the violins to the chorus, and then again as the bass to the dancing string ritornello which concludes the section. It is not known who was the bass singer for ‘In his just praise’ but he must have had a remarkable range of over two octaves which Purcell exploited to the full. The composer's good humour continues, for in the next section the upper strings furiously play on all four of their open strings in response to the chorus's exhortation 'Tune all your strings'. The musical allegories continue in 'From the rattling of drums and the trumpet's loud sounds' before we enter into a more gentle section 'To music's softer but yet kind and pleasing melody' which is accompanied by two recorders. This leads into the jewel of the Ode ‘With him he brings’, sung at the first performance by the famous countertenor (and fine composer) William Turner. Over a wonderful four-bar ground bass the Queen's beauty is praised, with especially delightful writing for 'There beauty its whole artillery tries', before the ground bass modulates up a fifth, and Purcell provides (as he does in so many of the Odes) a delicious string ritornello. The soprano duet ‘Happy in a mutual love’ which follows is delightful too, and the work ends with a lilting solo and elegantly harmonized chorus ‘Whilst in music and verse’.

78. Symphony

79. Ye tuneful Muses, raise your heads.
   No longer droop and mourn,
   Shake off that lethargy which has so long
   Enfeebled all your nervous raptures of heroic song.
   Phoebus, that did your breasts inspire,
   At length vouchsafes his all-enliv'ning fire,
   Again his pow'rful influence on you sheds;
   Again the God, bereft of whose kind light,
   So long you mourned the comforts of the day,
   Has put a period to your fright,
   And blest you with his joyful ray.
   This point of time ends all your grief,
   In bringing sacred Caesar it has brought relief.
80. Be lively then and gay,
All signs of sorrow chase away.
Be cheerful as the patron of the day
After a gloomy night’s gone by
And not one cloud obscures the glorious sky.

81. In his just praise your noblest songs let fall,
And let ’em be immortal all,
Immortal as the fame he’s won,
The wonders he has in battles done,
In which he did no danger shun
But made his name co-lasting with the sun.
Try, try ev’ry strain,
Excite ev’ry vein,
Tune all your strings to celebrate
His so much wish’d return;
To welcome home the best of kings
And make him welcome as the general joy he brings.

82. From the rattling of drums and the trumpet’s loud sounds
Wherein Caesar’s safety and his fame abounds,
The best protectors of his royal right
‘Gainst fanatical Jury and sanctified spite,
By which he glory first did gain,
And may they still preserve his reign.

83. To music’s softer but yet kind
And pleasing melody,
Music, from care and danger free,
Music, the sweet unbender of the mind,
To music and to love he comes.

84. With him he brings the partner of his throne,
That brighter jewel than a crown,
In whom does triumph each commanding grace,
An angel mien and matchless face!
There beauty its whole artillery tries,
Whilst he who ever kept the field
Gladly submits, is proved to yield
And fall the captive of her conquering eyes.

85. Happy in a mutual love
May they each other long possess,
May ev’ry bliss still greater prove,
And ev’ry care grow less;
May fate no revolutions bring,
But what may all serenely move,
Glorious as heaven from whence they spring
And gentle as its darling, Love.

86. Whilst in music and verse our duty we show,
And though we can never pay all that we owe,
Yet all we can raise,
Our little mites we humbly throw
Into the boundless treasury of their praise.

ANONYMOUS

In 1689 Purcell was commissioned to write works by two London schools. The more famous of these commissions resulted in *Dido and Aeneas*, first performed at Josias Priest’s School for Young Ladies in Chelsea, but at around the same time (perhaps keeping up with his competitors) the schoolteacher Mr Maidwell commissioned the music to the Ode *Celestial music did the gods inspire*, which was performed at his school on 5 August. The librettist is unknown, simply credited in the score with ‘the words by one of his scholars’, but certainly appears to have had a firm grounding in Greek and Roman mythology—and produced verse that was better than some written by more distinguished names of the time.

Purcell took the Symphony for the Ode directly from his 1685 coronation anthem *My heart is inditing*: such re-use of material was comparatively rare with Purcell and suggests that there may have been some haste in the composition. The solo bass at ‘Celestial music’ is accompanied by imitative strings who lead into a chorus which blossoms wonderfully at ‘Whom sacred music calls her Deity’. ‘Her charming strains’ is evocatively scored over a four-bar ground bass for the other-worldly combination of countertenor and two recorders and the instruments are provided with an elegant playout. ‘Thus Virgil’s Genius’ is also set on a ground and is given to a soprano soloist,
followed by the duet ‘Whilst music did improve Amphion’s song’ and a string ritornello, both based on the rhythmic motif of a Scotch snap. ‘When Orpheus sang’ is a miniature masterpiece in which, once again, the theme of music inspires Purcell to produce a movement of startling originality: the countertenor weaves a florid line over a hypnotic chordal accompaniment illustrating Orpheus and his lyre subduing nature and even cruel Pluto. Closing the work is a trio (with suitably rich harmony for the word ‘ravish’d’) which is then taken up by the chorus and enlarged with virtuoso breaks for the first violin.

87. Symphony

88. Celestial music did the gods inspire
   When at their feasts Apollo touch’d his lyre.
   Hence he by right the God of Wit shall be.
   Whom sacred music calls her Deity.

89. Her charming strains expel tormenting Care
   And weak’ned Nature’s wasted strength repair.

90. Thus Virgil’s Genius lov’d the country best
   Where music by each creature was exprest.
   Under a Beech while Birds their Notes repeat.
   And Crystal streams glide warbling by his feet.
   With ease, great Rome, he does thy fame rehearse,
   And so composes his harmonious Verse.

91. Whilst music did improve Amphion’s song,
   The wond’ring Stones in order danc’d along,
   And Thebes was rais’d by music’s magic Art,
   For its soft notes perform’d the workman’s part.

92. When Orpheus sang all Nature did rejoice,
   The Hills and Oaks bow’d down to hear his voice.
   At their Musician’s feet the Lions lay
   And list’ning Tigers can forget their Prey.
   His soft’ning Lyre did cruel Pluto move,
   And music prov’d of greater pow’r than Jove.

93. Let Phyllis by her voice but charm the Air,
   Philander’s soul lies ravish’d in his ear.
   Blessing the Nymph who can such pleasures give
   And suffer him to enter Heav’n alive.

ANONYMOUS

On 28 July 1683 the Bishop of London presided at St James’ in the marriage of Prince George of Denmark to King Charles’s niece, ‘Lady Ann’ (later Queen Anne). On 19 July Luttrell had recorded that ‘in the afternoon, Prince George, brother to the King of Denmark, arrived at Whitehall, and was kindly received by their majesties and their royal highnesses, being come to make his address to the Lady Ann, daughter to his royal highness’. We do not know for certain if Purcell’s Ode From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War was performed to the newly wed couple at their marriage celebrations, but the work is one of his finest early Odes, full of wonderful string ritornelli and fine vocal writing.

The Symphony is one of the composer’s best, simultaneously joyful yet wistful in the way that only Purcell’s early string writing can be, wonderfully inventive and delightfully unpredictable. Once again a solo bass introduces the voices with an extended solo covering a wide vocal range before the chorus enter. This chorus leads into the first of several splendid string ritornelli. Next a solo tenor has some glorious writing for ‘As Fame, great Sir’, especially at ‘The wonders you have since possessed’, and this is followed by an equally fine duet for sopranos. The solo bass introduces the chorus ‘Wake then, my Muse’ which is concluded by another ravishing string ritornello. However the best is yet to come. Here it is the tenor who is presented with one of Purcell’s finest and most inspired ground bass solos in ‘The Sparrow and the gentle Dove’: the singer’s lyrical melody is capped by a string ritornello of quite melting beauty. A short trio and another wistful
ritornello lead into the final chorus ‘Hence without Scheme’ where the soprano soloist alternates with the full ensemble.

94. Symphony

95. From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War, where you for Valour unexampled are, Where you on Honour look’d when you were young, As bold as Eagles gaze upon the sun, Hail, welcome Prince, to our benigner Isle, Where stars denouncing gentler battles smile On your arrival which portend you’ll prove As happy as victorious in your Love.

96. As Fame, great Sir, before you ran And told her story ere you came, But falter’d as she set it forth, For who can reach immortal worth; So doubtless back again she flew To paint the beauties now you view, But in the draft as ill expressed, The wonders you have since possessed.

97. Wake then, my Muse, wake Instruments and Voice To celebrate the Joys of such a choice, Whose loves unsullied meet with such delight As our grandparents fir’d at the first sight.

98. The Sparrow and the gentle Dove (Sacrifices fit for love) Roses sweet and Myrtle bring, Beauties of the blooming Spring, Into sacred Garlands twine To offer up to Venus’ shrine, That the pleasures they possess May still increase and still be fresh, And by a more exalted love Each happy hour to come improve.

99. So all the Boons indulgent Heav’n design’d To show’r on those whom Holy hands have joined, Illustrious Pair, shall on your heads be shed And easy make your consecrated Bed, Where mutual passions shall preserve desires As sacred as the Vestals kept their Fires.

100. Hence without Scheme or Figure to descry Events to come from your Nativity, Do we foretell as ev’ry King that reigns Through Europe shares the Blood that fills your veins; So shall the race from your great loins to come Prove future Kings and Queens of Christendom.

ANONYMOUS

Purcell and the majority of the British public were genuinely fond of Queen Mary, who with William replaced King James on the throne when he fled to the continent. London musicians breathed a collective sigh of relief at the Glorious Revolution and Purcell composed six of his finest Odes to honour his new Queen’s birthday.

For his 1691 offering to the Queen Purcell was on sparkling form, with recent successes on the stage leading to a more expansive style of composition. Besides the usual strings, Welcome, welcome, glorious morn also required pairs of oboes and trumpets whose presence is felt right from the extrovert start of the Symphony, where the trumpets’ theme is thrown between the pairs of instruments before all join together, first in busy semiquavers, and then in the rich cadential figuration. The imitative section that follows continues in the same vein, with trumpets, oboes and strings answering each other. In the later Odes there is a more integrated style of composition, with sections flowing into each other with more freedom, and the opening demonstrates this as the tenor soloist, oboes and finally the chorus combine together. The duet ‘At thy return the joyful Earth’ leads into a glorious instrumental ritornello before the chorus
returns, this time with the addition of two small duets. For the duet ‘Welcome as when three happy Kingdoms strove’ the mood changes to a more intimate style, but Purcell engineers an effective build-up to ‘the loudest song of Fame’. The tenor solo ‘The mighty goddess’ is an extraordinary piece of writing, with the soloist’s florid line contrasting with the insistent chordal string accompaniment. In the next section ‘Full of Wonder and Delight’ Purcell combines three elements, with a trio, a joyful chorus and finally the full instrumental ensemble joining in praise at the infant Queen Mary’s birth. ‘And lo! a sacred Fury’ is a compositional tour de force, with a dramatic recitative-style opening leading into the extended section ‘To lofty strains’, set over a remarkable dotted six-bar ground bass. The soloist’s line is finally taken up by the full vocal ensemble. Another short passage of semi-recitative, ‘My Pray’rs are heard’, this time for soprano, leads into a ground bass (treated freely in view of its brevity) and finally a chorus. The short bass duet ‘He to the Field by Honour call’d shall go’ and elegant tenor solo ‘Whilst undisturb’d his happy Consort reigns’ take us into the final solo and chorus. First a solo tenor and the two trumpets announce the theme, and then in augmented counterpoint the entire ensemble ends the work in triumphant vein.

101. Symphony
102. Welcome, welcome, glorious Morn,
   Nature smiles at thy return.
103. At thy return the joyful Earth
    Renews the Blessings of Maria’s Birth.
    The busy Sun prolongs his Race,
    The youthful year his earliest Tribute pays
    And Frosts forsake his head and Tears his face.
    Welcome, welcome, glorious Morn,
    Nature smiles at thy return,
    For Nature’s richest Pride with thee was born.

104. Welcome as when three happy Kingdoms strove
    In glad confusion to express their Love,
    When ev’ry heart did ev’ry tongue employ
    To speak its share of Public Joy,
    And great Maria’s Birth declare
    The noblest Theme, the loudest song of Fame.
105. The mighty goddess of this wealthy Isle
    Rais’d her glad head, and with an awfull smile
    She look’d, whilst thousand Cupids hover’d round
    And thousand Graces the fair infant crown’d.
106. Full of Wonder and Delight,
    She saw and bless’d the noble sight.
107. And lo! a sacred Fury swell’d her Breast,
    And the whole god her lab’ring Soul possest.
    To lofty strains her tunefull Lyre she strung
    And thus the goddess play’d and thus she sung.
108. My Pray’rs are heard, Heav’n has at last bestow’d
    The mighty blessing which it long has ow’d,
    At length the bounteous gods have sent us down
    A Brightness second only to their own.
    I see the round years successively move
    To ripen her Beauties and crown them with Love;
    A Hero renown’d in Virtues and Arms
    Shall wear the soft Chain and submit to her Charms,
    And Hymen and Hebe shall make it their Care
    To pour all their Joys on the Valiant and Fair.
    Then, then, our sad Albion shall suffer no more,
    She shall fly to his Aid and be free’d by his Pow’r,
    And date all her Blessings from this happy hour.
109. He to the Field by Honour call’d shall go
    And dangers he shall know and wonders he shall do.
    The God of Arms his Godlike Son shall bless
    And crown his Fleet and Armies with success.
110. Whilst undisturb’d his happy Consort reigns
    And wisely rules the Kingdoms he maintains.
    Britain at last shall see her peace restor’d
    And pay new Vows for her returning Lord:
Maria then shall all her cares unbend  
And she shall still adorn and he defend.

111. Sound, all ye Spheres; confirm the Omen, Heav’n,  
And long preserve the blessings thou hast giv’n.

ANONYMOUS

On 9 January 1694 Trinity College Dublin celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its foundation by Queen Elizabeth with a service at Christ Church Cathedral ‘sung by the principal Gentlemen of the Kingdom’ which was accompanied by orations in Latin and ‘an Ode by Mr Tate’ (the Poet Laureate) ‘who was bred up in this College’. For Great Parent, Hail to Thee! the librettist of Dido and Aeneas produced one of his weaker offerings, but Purcell still produced extraordinarily fine music. The Symphony is suitably celebratory, with the imitative second section neatly crafted, and the opening chorus full of variety and vigour. The alto solo ‘Another Century commencing’ finds Purcell writing gloriously lyrical music for his favourite voice, and the duet that follows (‘After War’s Alarms repeated’) contains effective word-painting in the echoes of the word ‘repeated’. The bass solo ‘Awful Matron’ is an outstanding movement which shows marvellous control of the solo line. The tenor solo and chorus ‘She was the first who did inspire’ also makes charming use of echoes, the duet ‘Succeeding Princes’ is full of lovely harmonies and the chorus ‘But chiefly Recommend to Fame’ opens out gloriously at its end. The soprano solo ‘Thy Royal Patron sung’ (one of the few extended arias for soprano in the Odes) is another triumph of Purcell’s fertile imagination, effectively written with the two recorders bringing added pathos, and the closing chorus is liltingly joyous.

112. Symphony

113. Great Parent, Hail to Thee! all Hail to Thee,  
Who hast from last Distress surviv’d,  
To see this joyful Year arriv’d;  
Thy Muses Second Jubilee.

114. Another Century commencing  
No decay in Thee can trace;  
Time with his own Laws dispensing,  
Adds new Charms to ev’ry Grace,  
That adorn’d thy Youthful Face.

115. After War’s Alarms repeated,  
And a Circling Age compleated,  
Vig’rous Offspring thou dost raise;  
Such as to Juverna’s praise;  
Shall Liflee make as proud a Name,  
As that of Isis or of Cam.

116. Awful Matron take thy Seat,  
To Celebrate this Festival;  
The learn’d Assembly well to Treat  
Blest Eliza’s Day recall.  
The Wonders of Her Reign recount  
In Songs that mortal Streins surmount:  
Songs for Phaebus to repeat.

117. She was the first who did inspire,  
And strung the mute Hibernian Lyre:  
Whose deathless Memory  
(The Soul of Harmony)  
Still animates the Vocal Quire.

118. Succeeding Princes next recite:  
With never dying Verse requite  
Those favours they did show’r;  
’Tis that alone can do ’em right;  
To save ’em from Oblivion’s Night  
Is only in the Muses pow’r.

119. But chiefly Recommend to Fame,  
Maria and Great William’s Name;  
For surely no Hibernian Muse  
(Whose Isle to Him, Her freedom owes)  
Can Her Restorer’s Praise Refuse,  
While Boyne or Shanon flows.

120. Thy Royal Patron sung: Repair  
To Illustrious Ormond’s Tomb:  
As, Living, He made Thee His Care,  
Give Him, next thy Caesar’s, Room.
Then a Second Ormond’s Story
Let astonisht Fame recite;
But she’ll wrong the Hero’s Glory,
Till with equal Flame she write
To that which he displays in Fight.

121. With themes like these, ye Sons of Art,
Treat this auspicious Day;
To Bribe the Minutes ere they part,
Those Blessings to bequeath, that may
Long, long remain Your Kindness to repay.
NAHUM (NATHANIEL) TATE (1652–1715)

The return of Charles II and the Duke of York from their usual Autumn visit to Newmarket was celebrated on 21 October 1682, but the diarist Luttrell indicated that the event was rather more muted than on previous occasions (probably due to the royal finances being in dire straits). Earlier in the year Purcell had been appointed one of the three organists at the Chapel Royal, an appointment which enabled him and his wife to move into grander quarters in Great St Ann’s Lane, and the commission to set The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear to music was another mark of official favour.

Although the Ode was only the fourth that Purcell had composed, the opening two-section Symphony is, beneath its veneer of joyfulness, one of his most wistful, leading directly into a virtuoso bass solo which again covers a range of over two octaves. A short trio leads into a chorus and the first of the string ritornelli which are such a strong feature of the early Odes. A four-note ground bass forms the basis for the alto solo ‘And when late from your throne’ which leads into its melancholy ritornello via a brief chorus. After a series of shorter movements comes another of Purcell’s gems, the alto solo ‘These had by their ill usage drove’, set over a four-bar modulating ground bass, and leading into the last (and finest) ritornello of the work. A solo tenor opens the final chorus, whose reflective ending proved to be prophetic: though the text wishes the monarch a long life, the hope was to prove vain less than three years later when King Charles’s reign came to a sudden end. Though he had nearly bankrupted the country, he had done much for music and musicians.

122. Symphony

123. The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear
Since you, great Sir, more charming fair appear,
Scattering the mists of faction with our fear.
Shine thus for many years, and let the sight
Your friends encourage and your foes affright,
Like Joshua’s sun, with undiminished light.

124. And when late from your throne Heaven’s call you attend,
In peace let your crown on the next head descend,
Let no sham pretences give birth to a guilt
Which would injure the blood of the Martyr was spilt.

125. Ah! had we, Sir, the power or art
To grant the wishes of our heart,
Your long and glorious reign should be
One entire piece of harmony.
No day should an ill aspect wear,
But, smooth as seas when calms appear.
All hearts should smile as at that hour
When you from exile blest our shore,
And the ill omens o’er us placed
Should vanish with the time that’s past.
Then would we conclude that our Isle, which of old
Was the Fortunate called, had her name but foretold
By some learned bard, who in times past foreknew
How in ages to come she’d be happy in you.

126. Happy while all her neighbours bled,
Their countries harassed and untilled,
When Peace to you for shelter fled,
Her garners with rich plenty filled,
When all the blessings of her train
Were at her feet an off’ring laid,
When fearless she did plough the main
And reap rich harvests of her trade.
127. So happily still you your counsels employ,
More blessings than all the whole world we enjoy;
But amidst all our stores some who surfeit on peace
The infection had spread of a mortal disease:
To the plague of rebellion the mischief was growing
And the life of the State to your conduct is owing.

128. These had by their ill usage drove
The beauteous Nymph long since away,
Had she not, vanquished by your love,
Charmed in your soft embraces lay.

129. But those no more shall dare repine,
Nor shall she ever hence remove,
And always to you constant prove.
Britannia shall now her large empire bestride
And over the seas she unrivalled shall ride,
Sole Emperess she the vast flood shall command
And awe the great blustering Hectors at land.
Thus strongly secured, mighty Sir, on your throne,
By all nations feared, and beloved of your own,
If of Heaven we could such a bounty obtain,
From our own stock of years we would lengthen your reign.

ANONYMOUS

Purcell’s fourth birthday Ode for the Queen, *Love’s goddess sure was blind*, was the most intimate of the six, scored for just strings and a pair of recorders. The two-section Symphony is one of Purcell’s finest, especially richly scored. The noble, yet wistful, first part is dominated by a six-note falling scale and a ravishing melody (which comes only once in the violins, but three times in the viola), all wrapped in glorious harmony. The triple-time second section at first glance appears lighter in character, but (as with so much of Purcell’s music, which needs to be played to discover its true riches) in practice still has an underlying current of melancholy, heightened at the end as the opening mood returns. Charles Sedley’s opening words are given to the countertenor soloist, leading into an elegant, extended string ritornello. The off-beat accompaniment to the bass solo ‘Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien’ gives the music an added urgency, and a contrast to the gently undulating duet that follows, ‘Sweetness of Nature’. Here Purcell pairs alto and high tenor with the pastoral sound of two recorders (the tessitura of the recorder writing necessitates the use of the larger voice flute). The soprano soloist begins the charming minuet ‘Long may she reign’, which is repeated by the full ensemble.

The music historian Sir John Hawkins tells a story concerning the next movement ‘May her blest example chase’ which, whether true or not, gives an idea of the problems that working for royalty sometimes brought. Commanding musical entertainment one day, the Queen sent for the soprano Mrs Hunt, the famous bass John Gostling and Purcell. They performed several of Purcell’s songs, but the Queen was clearly not satisfied with such sophisticated music, eventually requesting that Mrs Hunt sing the Scots ballad ‘Cold and Raw’. Mrs Hunt complied, and accompanied herself on the lute. Purcell meantime sat at the harpsichord ‘unemployed and not a little nettled at the Queen’s preference for a vulgar ballad to his music’. When he came to write *Love’s goddess sure* Purcell must have remembered the Queen’s request, and used the ballad tune as the bass line to ‘May her blest example chase’. Harmonically it is not a particularly good line, but Purcell managed, with a struggle, to force a melody over it: the rustic string ritornello works rather well. No such struggle accompanied the duet that follows, ‘Many such days’ which, set over a two-bar ground bass, is a compositional tour de force. The voices enter across the ground, rather than at the start of a repeat, and Purcell brilliantly manages contrasts and modulations within the movement without having to interrupt the bass’s inexorable progress. Only at the concluding string
ritornello does he allow the ground to wander into the other string parts, switching it rapidly through all the lines. The chorus ‘May she to Heaven late return’ too is another example of Purcell’s mastery of counterpoint, with subject and counter-subject treated with great imagination. The quartet that follows, ‘As much as we below’, is full of the delicious discords that make Purcell’s pathos-laden moments so telling, especially with the descending chromaticism of the word ‘mourn’ and the Ode ends reflectively.

130. Symphony

131. Love’s goddess sure was blind this day
   Thus to adorn her greatest foe,
   And Love’s artillery betray
   To one that would her realm o’erthrow.

132. Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien,
   Who could for virtue’s camp design?
   Defensive arms should there be seen,
   No sharp, no pointed weapons shine.

133. Sweetness of Nature and true wit,
   High pow’r with equal goodness join’d,
   In this fair paradise are met,
   The joy and wonder of mankind.

134. Long may she reign over this Isle,
   Lov’d and ador’d in foreign parts;
   But gentle Pallas shield awhile
   From her bright charms our single hearts.

135. May her blest example chase
   Vice in troops out of the land,
   Flying from her awful face,
   Like trembling ghosts when day’s at hand.
   May her hero bring us peace,
   Won with honour in the field,
   And our home-bred factions cease,
   He still our sword and she our shield.

136. Many such days may she behold,
   Like the glad sun without decay,
   May Time, that tears where he lays hold,
   Only salute her in his way.

137. May she to Heaven late return
   And choirs of angels there rejoice.
   As much as we below shall mourn
   Our short, but their eternal choice.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY (c.1639–1701)

Two of Purcell’s Odes, both written to celebrate St Cecilia’s Day, are for reduced forces. Raise, raise the voice and Laudate Ceciliam are both scored for three voices (rather than the usual four), with an accompaniment of just two violins and basso continuo. We are not sure in which year Raise, raise the voice was first performed, though its similarity in scoring with Laudate Ceciliam (which is dated 1683) has given some commentators grounds for believing the two Odes may have been performed in the same concert. But 1683 also saw the first performance of the St Cecilia’s Day Ode Welcome to all the pleasures, so it would seem unlikely that Purcell would have written three Odes for the same day in the same year. Our only terminus ante quem comes with the publication of the Ritornello Minuet in the second part of Musick’s Hand-Maid of 1689, when it was arranged for harpsichord, but the Ode clearly dates from well before that time.

Purcell’s Symphony to Raise, raise the voice is as adventurous and ingenious as ever, creating a rich texture from what is only a trio sonata grouping. After the stately first section comes a busy contrapuntal movement, full of angular writing and close imitation, and leading straight into the anonymous author’s Ode. Word-painting is immediately to the fore, with the phrase rising as the words suggest (‘Raise, raise the voice’), and a reference to the lute’s ‘softest notes’ giving immediate inspiration to the continuo players. The full ensemble joins together in
an unusual Purcellian texture: with no countertenors and no viola, the usual centre to the texture needs replacing, so Purcell keeps the tenor parts high, and provides the first violin with a descant above the sopranos before an instrumental ritornello rounds off the movement. A short soprano solo leads into the chorus ‘Crown the day with Harmony’, which is rounded off by the pretty Ritornello Minuet.

The centrepiece of the Ode is another remarkable ground bass, a jaunty setting of ‘Mark how readily each pliant string’, where Purcell’s insistently cheerful four-bar bass forms the background for a splendidly characterful soprano solo. The ‘pliant string’ prepares itself to a jazzy rhythm, the offering ‘of some gentle sound’ slinkily rises up the chromatic scale and, invited by the words ‘Then altogether’, first the two violins join the texture ‘in harmonious lays’, and then the whole chamber ensemble—with a wonderful line for the tenors. The best is yet to come, for the two violins’ closing ritornello caps the movement with some of the most extraordinary instrumental writing in Purcell’s entire output of Odes. Here is music of astonishing originality, breathtaking in seemingly breaking all the rules of harmony and counterpoint and still somehow ending in the right key!

138. Symphony

139. Raise, raise the voice, all Instruments obey:
Let the sweet lute its softest notes display;
For this is Sacred Music’s holiday.

140. The God himself says he’ll be present here,
Dress’d in his brightest beams he will appear,
Not to the eye but to the ravish’d ear.

Crown the day with Harmony;
Hark! I hear Apollo cry;
And let every generous heart,
In the Chorus bear a part.

141. Mark how readily each pliant string
Prepares itself and as an off’ring
The tribute of some gentle sound does bring.
Then altogether in harmonious lays,
To the sublimest pitch themselves they raise,
And loudly celebrate their Master’s praise.

Come raise up your voices and let us dispute
For melodious notes with the viol and lute;
Apollo’s delighted with what we have done,
And clapping his hands cries ‘lō! go on’:
With a smile he does all our endeavours approve,
And vows he ne’er heard such a Consort above.

ANONYMOUS

Laudate Ceciliam, the second of Purcell’s smaller-scale Odes to celebrate Saint Cecilia’s Day, dates from 1683, the same year as Welcome to all the pleasures. Like Raise, raise the voice the scoring is for just three voices, accompanied by two violins and basso continuo, but this time the text is in Latin: as well as being his shortest Ode, Laudate Ceciliam is Purcell’s only Ode to be set in a language other than English. The vocal writing seems clearly to be for solo voices throughout, and the influence of the verse anthem is apparent.

The Symphony is in the usual two parts, the first stately and dotted, the second a lighter, triple-time movement which leads straight into the first vocal entries. At ‘Modulemini psalmum novum’ (‘O sing a new psalm’) Purcell introduces his own new theme, more serious and recitativo-like in character, which is passed between each of the voices before a short violin ritornello ends the section. The bass briefly introduces new material at ‘Quia preceptum’ but the opening vocal material is reintroduced, followed by a complete repeat of the Symphony. The heart of the Ode is the touching duet for alto and tenor ‘Dicite Virgini’: the phrase ‘O beata Cecilia’ (‘O blessed Cecilia’) is set with especial affection, and ‘respice nos’
(‘look on us’) draws eloquent harmony from the composer. With the return of the trio at ‘Adeste caelites’ the supplicatory mood is displaced before the opening material returns: the singers praise the patron Saint of music ‘with voice and organ’ for the last time and Purcell’s smallest Ode draws to its conclusion.

142. 
Laudate Ceciliam, in voce et organo.

_Praise ye Cecilia, with voice and organ._

143. 
Modulemini psalmum novum
In insigni die solemnitatis eius. 
Quia preceptum est in ecclesia sanctorum, 
Tu lex in tabernaculis iustorum.

Laudate Ceciliam, in voce et organo.

_O sing a new psalm_
_On her glorious festival day._
_Since it is ordained in the company of the saints,_
_You are the law in the tabernacles of the just._

_Praise ye Cecilia, with voice and organ._

144. 
Symphony

145. 
Dicite Virgini, canite martyri,
Quam excelsum est nomen tuum, 
O beata Cecilia,
Tu gloria domus Dei, tu laetitia,
Quae sponsam Christo paras, respice nos.

Adeste caelites plaudite, 
Psallite nobiscum Virginis, pangite melos.

Nobiscum martyri alternate laudes, 
Citheris vestras iugite voces, 
Citheras nostris sociate cantibus.

Laudate Ceciliam, in voce et organo.

_Sing, ye martyrs, say to the Virgin,_
_How exalted is your name,_
_O blessed Cecilia,_
_You are the glory of the house of the Lord, you its joy,_
_You who prepare Christ’s betrothed, look on us._
_Come, ye heavenly ones, give praise,_
_Sing psalms with us to the Virgin, tune the song._
_Ye martyrs, echo our praise._

From those serene and rapturous joys, Purcell’s fifth Welcome Song for his employer, Charles II, was written to celebrate the King’s return to Whitehall in September 1684. Normally the King would have returned direct from Windsor, but this year some careful political manoeuvring had proved necessary, and Charles, together with the Duke of York, had moved from Windsor to Winchester at the end of August, travelling back to Whitehall in time for the celebrations of 25 September. Thomas Flatman’s Ode makes elegantly veiled (and, of course, flattering) references to the King’s diplomatic summer progress which successfully (and peacefully) ended his struggle to control England. For the first time the royal purse strings were not stretched to breaking point, and payments to royal musicians, Purcell amongst them, were up-to-date. England, albeit briefly, really was at peace with itself, and Purcell’s reflective setting mirrored this mood.

The opening of yet another splendid Symphony immediately finds this mood in Purcell’s characteristically rich string sonorities, countered by a busy and characterful second section. The tranquil opening verse of the Ode, extolling the virtues of a quiet country life, is set for solo countertenor (probably sung in 1684 by the famous William Turner), with the ‘rapturous joys’ given a particularly expressive melisma, and then transformed and extended into a glorious string ritornello, full of Purcell’s inimitable harmonic and melodic twists. A bass spiritedly announces the arrival of ‘th’ indulgent Prince’, accompanied by two violins, and is joined in his welcome by the full ensemble in elegantly swinging triple time. Two sopranos prettily tell of the King’s peaceful conquest of his
subjects before we are treated to another fine string ritornello, this time buoyant and energetic. ‘Welcome as soft refreshing show’rs’ gives another demonstration of the astonishing vocal range of John Gostling, Charles II’s favourite bass singer, and the chorus repeat their swinging chorus ‘Welcome home’.

Once again it is a ground bass which produces the most remarkable movement of the Ode, ‘Welcome, more welcome does he come’. The ground is unusual for Purcell in that it has rests at both the beginning and end, allowing him the option either of overlapping this hole by the voice, which he does on most occasions, or inserting a most effective pause. Combined with the ravishing string ritornello that follows the tenor solo, we have here yet another example of the genius of Purcell. The duet that follows, ‘Nor does the Sun more comfort bring’, is enriched by the addition of a violin part, effectively creating a third voice, and by the short but sumptuous string playout. The final movement is a rumbustious one, ‘With trumpets and shouts’, which alternates between strings and a solo tenor before it is finally taken up by the whole ensemble. On this occasion, however, the jollity was short-lived. Within a few months, as the diarist John Evelyn noted, the ‘inexpressible luxury, and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness’ that had marked Charles’s reign came to a sudden end on 2 February 1685, with a fit of apoplexy. Four days later ‘was all in the dust’ and a less dissolute, but far less popular, monarch suddenly became Purcell’s new employer.

146. Symphony

147. From those serene and rapturous joys
A country life alone can give,
Exempt from tumult and from noise.
Where Kings forget the troubles of their reigns,
And are almost as happy as their humble Swains,
By feeling that they live.

148. Behold th’ indulgent Prince is come
To view the Conquests of His mercy shown
To the new Proselytes of His mighty Town,
And men and Angels bid him welcome home.
Welcome home.

149. Not with an Helmet or a glitt’ring Spear
Does he appear;
He boasts no Trophies of a cruel Conqueror,
Brought back in triumph from a bloody War,
But with an Olive branch adorn’d
As once the long expected Dove return’d.

150. Welcome as soft refreshing show’rs,
That raise the sickly heads of drooping flow’rs,
Welcome as early beams of light
To the benighted traveller,
When he descries bright Phosphorus from afar,
And all his fears are put to flight.
Welcome home.

151. Welcome, more welcome does he come
Than life to Lazarus in his drowsy tomb,
When in his winding sheet at his new birth,
The strange surprising word was said—Come forth!

152. Nor does the Sun more comfort bring
When he turns Winter into Spring
Than the blest Advent of a peaceful King.

153. With trumpets and shouts we receive the World’s Wonder,
And let the Clouds echo His welcome with thunder,
Such a thunder as applauded what mortals had done,
When they fixt on his Brows the Imperial Crown.

THOMAS FLATMAN (1637–1688)

In the seventeenth century, it was a regular custom that natives of certain counties and towns and scholars of various schools would meet annually in London. They would attend a church service, and afterwards adjourn for a celebratory feast. Such meetings did not only promote conviviality but also often had benevolent aims—
organizations such as the Sons of the Clergy and the Charterhouse Scholars had a strongly charitable base behind their annual gatherings. The Gazette dated Monday 20 January 1689 (using the old style of dating when the year numbering changed on 25 March) contained the following advertisement: 'The Yorkshire Feast will be held on Friday the 14th February next, at Merchant-Taylors-hall; and a sermon will be at Bow-Church that Morning for the Society.' In the event, the celebration was postponed, for James II had fled the kingdom just before Christmas and the crown was in abeyance until 13 February, as a supplementary advertisement in the Gazette on 6 February explained: 'The Yorkshire Feast which was intended to be kept on the 14th Instant, is (by Reason several of the Stewards were members of the late Parliament, who are now obliged to go to the country) put off to the 27th of March next.'

With William and Mary duly crowned there was more topical material available than usual, and the Stewards commissioned the best available author and composer to celebrate in 'a very splendid Entertainment of all sorts of Vocal and Instrumental Musick'. Thomas D’Urfey included the libretto in his Pills to Purge Melancholy, describing it as 'An Ode on the Assembly of the Nobility and Gentry of the City and County of York, at the Anniversary Feast, March the 27th, 1690. Set to Musick by Mr. Henry Purcell. One of the finest Compositions he ever made, and cost £100 the performing'. Of old, when heroes thought it base was ostensibly a history of York from Roman times onwards, but it also contained allegories of the Glorious Revolution. Despite D’Urfey’s sometimes contrived text, Purcell responds with music of high quality.

The two-section Symphony is an extensive one, with trumpets, oboes and strings provided with a splendid canzona-like opening, arpeggios rising and falling around Purcell’s lively theme. The second section is a lilting triple-time movement, closely imitative and suitably celebratory. A solo bass, complete with graphic word-painting, begins the story with the Romans (the ‘martial race’) invading Britain, although the audience could hardly have missed the implied reference to the recent replacement of James II by William, and is followed by a short instrumental ritornello and duet for high tenor and bass ‘Brigantium, honour’d with a race divine’. Brigantium was the region which effectively made up the county of Yorkshire, and the reference to Constantine was to the Roman leader whose successful military campaign in Britain led him to be proclaimed emperor by his troops in Eboracum (now the city of York). Once again, Purcell’s treatment of the words, especially the reference to the ‘blooming glories’ is particularly effective and affectionate. Two recorders introduce ‘The bashful Thames’, delightfully running past her ‘puny town’ (London) with glorious harmony at moments such as ‘Augusta [London] then did drooping lie’. Purcell then translates the solo into a most touching chorus, adding beautifully crafted inner parts. Next the story moves on to the Wars of the Roses, fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster between 1455 and 1485. Purcell’s gentle setting of ‘The pale and the purple rose’ is introduced by an extended instrumental ritornello. The bass line ingeniously avoids the first beat of the bar, and over it the oboes and upper strings play a melody of great elegance. When the alto soloist enters with his expressive melody, the off-beat accompaniment is taken up by the all the strings, a device which gives a poignant ending. The following duet ‘And in each track of glory since’ appears to have been especially popular, and was published separately. As in ‘The bashful Thames’ Purcell follows the duet with a choral version, harmonizing the melody with the addition of delicious alto and tenor parts.

The opening joyful Symphony is repeated in full and leads directly into the tenor duet ‘And now when the
renown’d Nassau’. This section is a direct reference to William III, one of whose seats was as Count of Nassau in Rheinland-Pfalz. Over a tightly turning bass line the two soloists and two solo trumpets weave a fine movement, full of subtle turns and interesting contrasts. Purcell’s bass duet ‘They did no storms, nor threat’nings fear’ is a splendid, blustering example: the humour in the setting of ‘the grumbling air’ is particularly notable.

Next comes one of the most extraordinary movements of the Ode, the tenor solo ‘So when the glitt’ring Queen of Night’. Purcell uses a hypnotic ground bass, just five notes long, also utilized in the main melody. D’Urfey’s text here is inspired, and Purcell’s reaction to it is breathtaking in its calm, nocturnal poise and its ravishing harmonies. The second section in particular is glorious with its pictorialization of ‘the globe that swells’ and the shaft of soft light that Purcell brings by the brief use of the major key at the word ‘ray’. The chorus that follows finds Purcell with a subject that rarely fails to inspire him—that of music. He sets ‘Let music join’ in rich six-part counterpoint, at the midpoint additionally putting the melody into the bass in ingenious double augmentation before a dancing theme brings the movement to a surprisingly speedy ending. The movement ‘Sound trumpets, sound!’ is less subtle, and clearly was intended to set Yorkshire toes tapping with its rollicking rhythm and easily remembered tune, repeated after the soloist by strings and trumpets with the addition of a throbbing bass line, and then, following Purcell’s instructions, repeated ‘over again with all the instruments’. For the last movement Purcell goes into his most ceremonial mode, with a mighty bass solo introducing block chords from the chorus and orchestral fanfares.

154. Symphony

155. Of old, when heroes thought it base
To be confin’d to native air,
And glory brought a martial race
To breath their tow’ring eagles here,
The sons of fam’d Brigantium stood
Disputing freedom with their blood,
Undaunted at the purple flood.
Brigantium, honour’d with a race divine,
Gave birth to the victorious Constantine,
Whose colony, whilst planted there,
With blooming glories still renew’d the year.

156. The bashful Thames, for beauty so renown’d,
In haste ran by her puny town,
And poor Augusta was asham’d to own.
Augusta then did drooping lie,
Tho’ now she rears her tow’ring front so high.

157. The pale and the purple rose,
That after cost so many blows
When English Barons fought,
A prize so dearly bought
By the fam’d worthies of that shire,
Still best by sword and shield defended were.

158. And in each track of glory since,
For their lov’d country and their prince,
Princes that hate Rome’s slavery,
And join the nation’s right with their own royalty,
None were more ready, in distress to save,
None were more loyal, none more brave.

159. Symphony

160. And now when the renown’d Nassau
Came to restore our liberty and law,
The work so well perform’d and done,
They were the first begun.

161. They did no storms, nor threat’nings fear
Of thunder in the grumbling air,
Or any revolutions near.
The noble work large hopes of freedom told
Inspired their minds and made them bold,
And gave them English hearts like those of old
To welcome our deliverer when he came,
Whose virtue and whose fame
Made our long smother'd joy burst into brighter flame.

162. So when the glitt'ring Queen of Night
With black eclipse is shadow'd o'er
The globe that swells with sullen pride,
Her dazzling charms to hide,
Does but a little time abide,
And then each ray is brighter than before.

163. Let music join
In a chorus divine
The praise of all
That celebrate this glorious festival.

164. Sound trumpets, sound! beat ev'ry drum,
Till it be known through Christendom
This is the knell of falling Rome.

165. Sound all to him
That our mighty defender has been.
And to all the heroes invited him in.
And as the chief agents
In that royal work,
Long flourish the city
And county of York.

THOMAS D'URFEY (1653–1723)

Purcell’s sole Ode dating from 1681, Swifter, Isis, swifter flow, was only the second he wrote, and seems to have been composed to celebrate the return to London of Charles II from his annual autumn visit to Newmarket. Luttrell records in his diary that on 12 October 1681 ‘at night, for joy, were ringing of bells and bonfires in several places’ and the anonymous author, clearly familiar with such royal homecomings, makes direct references to these celebrations. Purcell too appears to have been especially inspired by the sound of bells ringing. Indeed, after the fine opening of the Symphony, characterized by falling chromatic harmonies, it is a downward six-note motif which permeates through the second, triple-time section and into the tenor’s opening phrase. (The river Thames flowing through the city of Oxford is called the Isis, reverting back to its former name as it widens towards London, where it ran past the King’s palace.) Throughout this opening, Purcell’s skill at writing for strings is particularly effective, as indeed it is in all the early church music which was already flowing copiously from his pen. The solo bass is accompanied at ‘Land him safely on her shore’ by two recorders, often associated by Purcell with plaintive or amorous themes. Purcell’s splendid string writing introduces the tenor solo ‘Hark, hark! just now my listening ears’, written over an unusually jolly four-bar ground bass. His melodic writing is its usual graceful self, with an especially attractive setting of ‘Oh, how she does my eyes delight’ before the ringing of bells returns, and the movement ends with a tantalizingly short instrumental playout: its eight bars require not only strings but also a solo oboe, which appears nowhere else in the Ode.

Next a trio and chorus alternate phrases with ‘Welcome, dread Sir, to town’ (with London referred to as ‘Augusta’) before the bass has a fine recitativo section ‘But with as great devotion meet’, full of graphic word-painting. The lilting ‘Your Augusta he charms’ is introduced by a solo tenor and taken up by the chorus, with a delightfully unexpected tonal shift at ‘Who tells her the King keeps his court here tonight’ before another short instrumental ritornello rounds off the movement. The duet ‘The King whose presence’ is underpinned by a gently running ground bass and touching suspensions, leading to the final chorus. Here the principal manuscript source is incomplete, with over half of the inner parts missing: for this recording these have been completed by Robert King. The
phrase ‘May no harsher sounds e’er invade your blest ears’ is particularly notable, with its intense chromaticism prefiguring some of the finest moments of *Dido and Aeneas*.

166. Swifter, Isis, swifter flow,
Muster all your streams together,
Then in a full body go
And guard great Britain’s monarch hither.
Charles, the mighty sovereign,
Great lord of the exhaustless main,
From whose fountain every tide
Your dead low waters are supplied.

167. Land him safely on her shore,
Who his long absence does deplore,
He with joy her walls does fill,
As high spring tides your channels swell,
Fills her walls to that excess,
As lovers’ hearts with happiness,
Tender lovers when returned
To those dear arms whose loss they mourn.

168. Hark, hark! just now my listening ears
Are struck with the repeated sound
Of labouring oars, and it appears,
By growing strong, they’re this way bound.
See, see, it is the royal barge,
Oh, how she does my eyes delight,
Let bells ring, and great guns discharge,
Whilst numerous bonfires banish night.

169. Welcome, dread Sir, to town,
Thrice welcome to this your chief seat,
Pensive at your retreat
As joyful at your return.
Though causeless jealousy
May by the factious be broached,
Your Augusta will never be
From your kinder arms debauched.

170. But with as great devotion meet
And fall at your returning feet,
As those glad northern people run
To welcome and adore the sun
(Who, in their gloomy hemisphere
For certain months does disappear)
When they are told the pleasing news
By him who first the glimmering views,
Your Augusta he charms with no lesser delight
Who tells her the King keeps his court here tonight.

171. The King whose presence like the Spring,
Recalls the beauty of each thing,
Makes gay the town as that the field
And more delight and profit yield,
Makes all our sorrows vanish quite,
As day-break clears the face of night.

172. Then since, Sir, from you all our blessings do flow,
And a tribute of praise to the fountain we owe,
’Tis fit when the best of your subjects address,
In music and song we our hearts should express,
As rivers back into the ocean do run
And a homage do pay where their streams first begun.
May no harsher sounds e’er invade your blest ears,
To disturb your repose or alarm our fears,
No trumpet be heard in this place or drum beat,
But in compliment or to invite you to eat,
Or this happy palace with any shouts ring
But the loud acclamations of ‘Long live the King!’

ANONYMOUS

Purcell’s third Ode, *What shall be done in behalf of the man?*, was written to celebrate the return of the Duke of York (later James II) from Scotland, where he had been High Commissioner since 1679. We are not certain exactly when the Ode was performed, but we know that James left Leith on 4 March 1682 and arrived at Yarmouth six days later, joining the Court at Newmarket on 11 March. Some writers have suggested that Purcell’s Ode was performed then, but it seems more likely that it was written to celebrate a later return. After a further visit to Scotland the
Duke returned to London on 27 May; Luttrell records that 'at night there were ringing of bells, and bonfires in several places, and other publick expressions of joy'.

Once again Purcell produces a fine Symphony, with its stately, dotted opening nonetheless leaving room for the wistful minor harmonies which make Purcell's string writing so appealing. The busily contrapuntal second section is equally imaginative and leads straight into the bass's opening solo, accompanied by two recorders, praising the Duke's success in defeating the rebellion of Monmouth. A trio continues the praise of James, reminding the listeners that he is next in line for the throne, and the chorus too takes up the liltting theme before a jaunty ritornello, similar to ones by Purcell's mentor John Blow in its alternation of strings and wind, closes the section. 'All the grandeur he possesses' is set most attractively for high tenor, and is transformed into a simple string ritornello of great beauty. The next chorus 'Therefore let us sing the praises' finds Purcell at his most homophonic, but with harmonies that show great craftsmanship. The extended bass solo 'Mighty Charles' is another example of Purcell's genius for word-setting, full of nobility and character, and leads into the liltting chorus 'But thanks be to Heaven'. Here we see the composer's humour coming out in the long list of fine characteristics that James is advertised as possessing: Purcell may have been amused to decide which member of his ensemble should take the solo words 'grateful', 'just', 'courageous' and—best of all—'punctual'. The Ode closes with the charming soprano duet 'May all factious troubles cease', fleshed out by the composer into a chorus: delightfully the instruments take the repeats before the complete ensemble is instructed to perform it again, 'Leaving out ye interludes of ye instruments between, and sing it thro, each strain twice, so conclude'.

173. Symphony
174. What shall be done in behalf of the man
   In whose honour the King is delighted,
   Whose conduct abroad
   Has his enemies awed
   And every proud rebel affrighted,
   With whose absence his Prince
   Will no longer dispense
   But home to the joys of his Court has invited?
   His foes shall all tremble before him,
   His friends little less than adore him,
   And the mobilé crowd
   Who so foolishly bowed
   To the pageant of royalty, fondly mistaken,
   Shall at last from their dream of rebellion awaken,
   And now every tongue shall make open confession
   That York, royal York, is the next in succession.

175. All the grandeur he possesses,
   He gratefully confesses
   Is derived from the caresses
   Of Charles, the gracious donor;
   Therefore let us sing the praises
   Of the man whom virtue raises,
   Whose worth the world amazes
   And the King delights to honour.

176. Mighty Charles, though joined with thee,
   Equal in his pedigree
   Noble York by nature stands,
   Yet he owns thy sovereignty
   And readily obeys all thy commands.
   His quick obedience still aspires
   To take for such thy least desires;
   Wish him be gone to foreign soils,
   Or into the extremest isles,
   The greatest hardship he defies;
   Such forward duty in a brother lies
   As has outdone
   And ought to shame even a son.
But thanks be to Heaven, he’s now returned again,
Welcome to all, and most to his sovereign,
Whose honour as before he still shall maintain.
Long live great Charles, the genius of this land,
And valiant York his foes to withstand,
York the obedient, grateful, just,
Courageous, punctual, mindful of his trust.
Never, Oh! never may this royal pair again be separate
Till Time and Fate
Shall add to Heaven the life of shortest earthly date,
Still may great Charles
Cherish with princely care this royal mate.

ANONYMOUS

For his 1694 offering to the Queen, *Come ye sons of Art*, away, Purcell was on sparkling form, and produced an Ode markedly different to the majority of the twenty-two works which had preceded it. The forces utilized were greater than normal, with an orchestra replacing the more usual single strings, and there was a clearly defined role for the chorus. Recent successes on the stage had led to this more expansive style of composition, and the inspired text (probably by Nahum Tate), full of references to music and musical instruments, was one which gave Purcell’s fertile imagination plenty of source material.

The overture (re-used the following year in *The Indian Queen*) begins in stately fashion, its opening ten bars full of glorious harmony, and the lively canzona which follows is full of rhythmic ingenuity amongst its three contrasting motifs. But it is in the wistful adagio section that Purcell is at his finest: the sighing motifs and poignant harmonies are full of pathos, and the use of sustained notes, which cut through the middle and bass of the texture, is quite extraordinary. Rather than the expected repeat of the canzona, we are immediately led into the opening chorus, and the first of several repetitions of the main theme in various harmonizations and arrangements—a technique taken straight from the theatre. With the tune taken first by a countertenor, Purcell cleverly solves the problem of rescoring for the chorus (where the tune would have either been too low or far too high for the sopranos) by providing them with a descant and retaining the tune in the altos, doubled by the trumpet and oboe. In the famous duet ‘Sound the trumpet’ Purcell resisted the temptation to use the actual named instruments, choosing instead an insistently lively two-bar modulating ground bass over which two countertenors demonstrate their virtuosity and giving the royal continuo players splendidly characterful lines. There would have been wry smiles in the orchestra at ‘You make the list’ning shores resound’, for two of the instrumentalists sitting in the band would have been the famous trumpeters Matthias and William Shore.

The centre-piece of the Ode is an ecstatic evocation of music, ‘Strike the viol’. With its mentions of viol, lute, harp and flute (recorder) Purcell was, as he always was by references to music, at his most inspired. The technique he uses was one that he had perfected in numerous previous Odes, combining a ground bass with a line for solo countertenor and then turning the vocal section into an instrumental ritornello. Here he uses a modulating two-bar ground bass, with two recorders adding their gentle accompaniment, over which the soloist weaves his entrancing melody. The best is still to come, for Purcell develops an orchestral ritornello that is one of his finest, alternating and combining the pair of recorders with the strings to create a ravishing movement.

‘The day that such a blessing gave’ is first given to a solo bass, with Purcell’s harmonic skill solving all the problems attendant with putting the melody in the bass line. At the
mid-point he transforms the solo into a full chorus, still retaining the melody at the bottom of the texture and once again giving the trebles of the choir a descant to sing. ‘Bid the Virtues’ is quite unique, even amongst the many remarkable movements contained in the Odes. A solo soprano and oboe intertwine in glorious harmonic and melodic writing, at moments florid, at others most touching, all showing Purcell’s ability to set words with extraordinary eloquence. Next comes a rumbustious aria for solo bass, ‘These are the sacred charms’, set over a jaunty ground bass. The final movement ‘See Nature, rejoicing’ is first sung as a duet by the soprano and bass, with contrast between repetitions of the rondeau given by two minor episodes, before the whole choir and orchestra take up Purcell’s strain.

The only complete source material for *Come ye sons of Art* is a copy by Robert Pindar, dating from 1765, and contains several dubious pieces of scoring which this performance corrects. Purcell scored his overture for one trumpet and one oboe, though in subsequent movements he uses a pair of each. Some modern editors have added an editorial part for a second trumpet (often ignoring the fact that Purcell’s trumpets could play very few notes in their lower registers) and doubled oboes on these lines. Purcell’s intentions appear to have been different, and in the overture we return to his scoring which gave Shore’s remarkable trumpet playing the top line, and the oboe, in its richest register, the second part. Pindar’s manuscript also contains a timpani part in the final chorus, wildly ornamented and out of keeping with other timpani parts of the era. For the opening chorus there is little possibility that the instruments could have been used, for the music moves too far away from the tonic and dominant. But in the last chorus ‘See Nature, rejoicing’ the music is of a different character, tonally more stable, and it is hard not to imagine a timpani part. After all the repetitions of the music in the duet that precedes the chorus, a timpanist could easily have improvised his line.

178. Symphony

179. *Come ye sons of Art, away,*
    Tune all your voices and instruments play,
    To celebrate this triumphant day.

180. *Sound the trumpet, ’til around*
    You make the list’ning shores resound.
    On the sprightly hautboy play,
    All the instruments of joy
    That skilful numbers can employ,
    To celebrate the glories of this day.

181. *Come ye sons of Art, away,*
    Tune all your voices and instruments play,
    To celebrate this triumphant day.

182. *Strike the viol, touch the lute,*
    Wake the harp, inspire the flute.
    Sing your patroness’s praise,
    In cheerful and harmonious lays.

183. *Bid the Virtues, bid the Graces,*
    To the sacred shrine repair,
    Round the altar take their places,
    Blessing with returns of pray’r
    Their great defender’s care,
    While Maria’s royal zeal
    Best instructs you how to pray,
    Hourly from her own
    Conversing with the Eternal Throne.

184. These are the sacred charms that shield
    Her daring hero in the field,
Thus she supports his righteous cause,
To his aid immortal pow'r she draws.

185. See Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way,
With innocent revels to welcome the day.
The tuneful grove, the talking rill,
The laughing vale, replying hill,
With charming harmony unite,
The happy season to invite.
Thus Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way,
With innocent revels to welcome the day.

What the Graces require,
And the Muses inspire,
Is at once our delight
And our duty to pay.
probably by NAHUM (NATHANIEL) TATE (1652–1715)

Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King. Purcell's first Ode, dates from 1680 and was written for the return of King Charles II to London, which the diarist Luttrell records as having taken place on 9 September. The Ode does not appear in the Buckingham Palace manuscript, into which Purcell collected many of his early Odes, but two other sources survive, both in the British Museum, demonstrating a remarkable piece of work from a composer just twenty-one years old. The chorus writing is spritely and full of life, the solo vocal writing sensitive and imaginative and the string writing especially fine. Purcell was already the author of a considerable bulk of church music at the Chapel Royal.

The Symphony is confident, richly harmonized in its first section, and showing the influence of Pelham Humfrey and Purcell's teacher John Blow in the dotted rhythms of the imitative second section. Purcell's mastery of technical devices is also apparent for, rather than simply repeating the second section of the overture as an instrumental section, he does this whilst superimposing the opening chorus over it, adding a new bass line and giving the original bass as an obbligato to the cello. After such a compositional tour de force comes a touching duet for alto and bass 'Ah! Mighty Sir', full of startling harmonic language, and capped by a charmingly scored string ritornello. The reference to 'Augusta' is again an alternative for 'London'. The chorus 'But your blest presence now' dances along, and leads into a glorious string ritornello—the first of dozens with which Purcell graced his Royal Odes over the next fifteen years. In 'Your influous approach' Purcell echoes the tenor soloist with the full ensemble and is inspired, as always, by the mention of the word 'harmony': he leaves the real pictorialization for 'Apollo with his sacred lyre' to the continuo players' imagination as a coda to the movement. 'When the Summer, in his glory' is delightfully scored for two sopranos, and the following chorus 'All loyalty and honour be' an example of how a simple, homophonic setting can be as effective as the most intricate of choruses. The tenor solo 'Music the food of love' is a jewel, with its simple melody repeated and harmonized by the full chorus before the continuo modulates the music up a fourth and the strings are given a ritornello of great charm and beauty. The final chorus of Purcell's first Ode is deliberately kept simple.

186. Symphony
Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King
That made and governs everything,
Welcome from rural pleasures to the busy throne
In this head city, this imperial town,
The seat and centre of your crown.

187. Ah! Mighty Sir, if you to such long absence are inclined,
Augusta will not stay behind,
But will your guardian light pursue
And steal from this cold air to follow you,
As birds when Autumn is begun
Follow the journey of the sun.
188. But your blest presence now,
All we can hope or wish for does allow.

189. Your influous approach our pensive hope recalls,
While joyful sounds redouble from the walls,
As when Apollo with his sacred lyre,
Did in the Theban stones a harmony inspire.

190. When the Summer, in his glory,
Was delightful, warm and gay,
All was but a Winter’s story
While our Sovereign was away:
Now decrepit Winter’s coming,
Yet the presence of a King
Makes him young and still a-blooming,
Turns his Autumn into Spring.

191. All loyalty and honour be
To this, our mortal deity.

192. Music the food of love,
The gentle reliever of care,
Gift of the Power above,
Please with a cheerful air.

ANONYMOUS

Why, why are all the Muses mute? was the first Welcome Song that Purcell wrote for King James II, and was probably performed on 14 October 1685 at Whitehall, soon after the Court had returned from Windsor. According to the diarist Luttrell, the occasion was marked by ‘publick demonstrations of joy, as ringing of bells, store of bonefires, &c’, and there was more to celebrate, as Monmouth’s rebellion (mentioned in the anonymous author’s text) had recently been suppressed. The opening of the Ode is unique as, at first glance, there appears to be no overture: Purcell’s pictorialization of the text ‘Why, why are all the Muses mute? Why sleeps the viol and the lute? Why hangs untun’d the idle lyre?’ leads him to begin, magically, with a lone solo tenor. The singer manages to wake the chorus (‘Awake, ’tis Caesar does inspire And animates the vocal quire’): the orchestra is harder to rouse but, when it finally arrives, the Symphony is of the highest order. The opening section is intricately detailed and the imitative second section full of busy imagination. After this rather unconventional start the Ode settles into the more established pattern of solos, duets, trios and choruses. The tenor solo ‘When should each soul exalted be?’ moves into a triple-time section which transforms into a five-part chorus and a dancing string ritornello.

For the famous countertenor William Turner, Purcell provided one of his finest ground bass arias, ‘Britain, thou now art great’. As in so many of the Odes he used his well-tried formula—a delicious ground bass, an alto solo and then a glorious string ritornello—and once again Purcell proved the system’s never-failing magic. Next comes a trio and chorus extolling great Caesar’s triumphs, leading into a remarkable bass solo. The bass at the performance (we do not know for certain who he was but can guess that it had to be John Gostling) must have had an astonishing voice, for his splendidly warlike ‘Accurs’d rebellion reared his head’ covers a huge vocal range of over two octaves, with Caesar ‘from on high’ dropping to subterranean levels for the depiction of Hell. This movement is given all the greater contrast by the following soprano duet ‘So Jove, scarce settled in his sky’.

The mid-point of the Ode is marked by a delightfully poised ritornello minuet, with Purcell’s string writing at its most courtly and elegant, leading directly into a duet for
tenor and bass, given added richness by a line for an obbligato violin and a brief concluding instrumental ritornello. The Monmouth rebellion is despatched by a tenor solo and chorus, and Europe’s fate is weighed in the balance by two basses: neither Britain nor Purcell’s writing is found wanting. The Ode ends perfectly: the lyrical high tenor solo ‘O how blest is the Isle’ develops into a ravishing string ritornello, full of Purcell’s harmony at its most glorious. But there is even better to come: Purcell appears at his greatest in the final chorus with a valediction worthy of Dido herself. The conclusion of the Ode drops through the chromatic scale in devastating fashion: there is no more poignant ending in all Purcell’s Odes.

193. Why, why are all the Muses mute?
   Why sleeps the viol and the lute?
   Why hangs untun’d the idle lyre?
   Awake, ’tis Caesar does inspire
   And animates the vocal quire.

194. When should each soul exalted be
   To all the heights of harmony?
   When, when should just excess of joy
   In their delightful task employ
   The nimble hand, and cheerful voice
   But when for Caesar’s welcome we prepare?
   Caesar, Earth’s greatest good!
   Caesar, Heav’n’s chiefest care!

195. Britain, thou now art great, art great indeed!
   Arise, and proud of Caesar’s godlike sway,
   Above the neighbour nations lift thy head.
   Command the world, while Caesar you obey.

196. Look up, and to our Isle returning see
   The days of triumph and of victory:
   Great Caesar’s reign with conquest did begin,
   And with triumphant shouts was ushered in.

197. Accurs’d rebellion reared his head,
   And his proud banners vainly spread,
   Back’d by all the Powers of Hell,
   Pride, Ambition, Rage and Zeal.
   But when Caesar from on high
   Let his avenging thunder fly,
   How soon the threatening monster fell
   Down, down from whence it rose to Hell.
   So Jove, scarce settled in his sky,
   The impious sons of Earth defy,
   But all their rage served only to convince
   The subject world of his omnipotence.

198. Caesar for milder virtues honour’d more,
   More for his goodness lov’d than dreaded for his pow’r,
   Secured by his victorious arms
   And safe from any new alarms,
   Is now at leisure to dispense
   His universal influence
   And let unenvied blessings flow
   On his obedient world below.

199. The many-headed beast is quelled at home,
   And from abroad obsequious nations come
   From Caesar to receive their doom.

200. In the equal balance laid
   Europe’s fate by him is weighed.
   This or that nation must prevail
   As he thinks fit to turn the scale.

201. O how blest is the Isle to which Caesar is given,
   The glory of earth and the darling of Heaven!
   His name shall the Muses in triumph rehearse,
   As long as there’s number or music in verse.
   His fame shall endure till all things decay,
   His fame and the world together shall die,
   Shall vanish together away.

ANONYMOUS

Notes by ROBERT KING © 2010
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE OXFORD
EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM director

Hail! bright Cecilia

OLIVER JOHNSTON, LEWIS WILSON, THOMAS CAREY, HOWARD FERGUSON, CHRISTOPHER NEALE, JEROME FINNIS, JONATHAN BELCHER, BENEDET ROWE, GUY HEAD, TIMOTHY BOWES, ALEXANDER HUNT treble
WILLIAM MISSIN, JEREMY BURROWS, ROGER BARRON, GEOFFREY CRYER alto
PHILIP CAVE, TOBY SPENCE, JUSTIN LEE, MARK ANDERSON, CHARLES JOLLY tenor
COLIN GORDON, ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH, JOHN BERNAWS, PAUL GRIER, TIMOTHY WEST bass

Come ye sons of Art, away

TIMOTHY BOWES, SIMON CAPPRE, WILLIAM GRESFORD, PHILIP HALLCHURCH, OLIVER HANDLEY, SAM HARRO,, GUY HEAD, MATTHEW HINMAN, CHRISTOPHER LANE, DANIEL LOCHMANN, ANGUS PATERSON, HARRY ROBSON, PAUL O’SULLIVAN, JONATHAN TYACK, NICHOLAS WITCOMB, OLIVER WRIGHT treble
JEREMY BURROWS, HENRY L’ESTRANGE, FERGUS McLUSKY, DUNCAN SAUNDERSON, STEPHEN TAYLOR countertenor
PHILIP CAVE, MARK MILHOFER, DANIEL NORMAN, AARRN NOUBAN, NICHOLAS SMITH tenor
COLIN GORDON, ADRIAN FINCH, NICHOLAS HARRIES, RICHARD HODDINGTON, RICHARD LEA, ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH bass

in All Hallows, Gospel Oak, London, St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, Rickmansworth Masonic School Chapel, St Paul’s Church, New Southgate, London

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Executive Producers CECILE KELLY, JOANNA GAMBLE, EDWARD PERRY

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Temperament: Vallotti
Performing editions by Robert King
Harpsichords prepared by Simon Neal, chamber organs by Justin Sillman and Simon Neal
The sixteenth-century Italian harpsichord was kindly loaned by Christopher Hogwood
Michael George recorded Of old, when heroes thought it base by kind permission of Archiv Production, Deutsche Grammophon

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VINGT-QUATRE Odes et Chants de bienvenue composés par Purcell entre 1680 et 1695 nous ont été conservés : quatre célèbrent la Sainte-Cécile, six souhaitent la bienvenue à la royauté, trois fêtent l’anniversaire du roi Jacques II et six celui de la reine Marie (de 1689 à 1694), les autres étant des pièces écrites pour un événement donné—un mariage royal, la fête du Yorkshire, l’anniversaire du duc de Gloucester, le centenaire du Trinity College de Dublin et une représentation « à l’école de Mr Maidwell ». Seules quelques-unes de ces vingt-quatre œuvres sont encore jouées régulièrement ; les autres, riches d’une musique merveilleusement inventive, sont généralement, et injustement, ignorées. En dehors même de leur importance musicalo-historique—ils constituent la première intégrale des Odes et Chants de bienvenue de Purcell—, les huit disques enregistrés ici par The King’s Consort pour Hyperion intéressent les spécialistes dans la mesure où les Odes couvrent presque toute la période durant laquelle Purcell fut un compositeur reconnu : la première Ode, pour souhaiter la bienvenue à Charles II, date de 1680, tandis que la dernière (pour les six ans du duc de Gloucester) fut rédigée quelques mois seulement avant la mort prématurée du compositeur, en 1695.

Tout comme les quarante et quelques pièces de théâtre pour lesquelles Purcell conçut des musiques et des chansons, les livrets des Odes sont très souvent quelconques—ce qui explique en grande partie l’oubli dans lequel ces œuvres ont sombré au XXe siècle. Purcell semble s’être lui-même peu soucié des textes qu’on lui fournissait, produisant régulièrement une musique étonnamment imaginative, de grande facture, et réservant même souvent ses plus belles partitions à certains des textes les moins remarquables. Les auditeurs du XVIIe siècle n’étaient peut-être pas aussi attentifs aux textes que leurs homologues modernes—la ravissante musique de Purcell devait plus que compenser la piété poésie—, comme le confirme John Dryden, traduisant Virgile en 1697 : « L'air je le garde, mais pas les paroles. » Quoi qu’il en soit, les textes étaient conventionnellement obséquieux envers la royauté, et la musique de Purcell remporte toujours la partie, ce que le satiriste Thomas Brown résuma ainsi :

Car là où les maigres mots de l’auteur ont échoué,
Tes ornements plus heureux, Purcell, l’ont emporté.

À en croire les registres de paiement des musiciens et des chanteurs, les effectifs (et partant les lieux) étaient de taille étonnamment réduite lors des événements spéciaux. Les « vingt-quatre violons », imités de la version française, n’étaient presque jamais au complet dans les années 1690, l’institution musicale anglaise ayant périclité du jour où la royauté réalisa que la musique ne rapportait rien. Les plus vastes Odes de Purcell (notamment *Come ye sons of Art* et *Hail! bright Cecilia*) semblent presque toutes avoir été conçues pour une douzaine d’instrumentistes, tout au plus, et un double quatuor de chanteurs assumant à eux seuls l’intégralité des solos et des forces conjointes pour les chœurs. Les effectifs des présents enregistrements correspondent donc, selon nous, à ceux qui exécutèrent les œuvres au XVIIe siècle.
**Arise, my muse** date de 1690 quand, pour la deuxième fois en six ans, Purcell se vit commander une ode pour l’anniversaire de Marie. Cette année-là, il modifia l’écriture orchestrale de ses Odes par l’adjonction de vents et de cuivres (autres que les deux flûtes à bec présentes lors des événements précédents) à l’habitude texture de cordes. Pour cette œuvre au livret exceptionnellement inspiré, en plus d’ajouter des paires de hautbois, de flûtes et de trompettes, il renforça la section des cordes par un second alto, d’où des possibilités sonores d’une grande richesse.

Comme si souvent chez Purcell, l’ouverture est à la française, avec une introduction grandiose où trompettes et hautbois par deux sont utilisés avec une singulière efficacité avant une section imitative en mesure ternaire. À la première entrée de la voix d’alto solo, l’imagination de Purcell est stimulée par le texte de D’Urfey, comme elle le sera de nouveau, pour la même voix, à « See how the glitt’ring ruler of the day » quand, par-dessus un *ground bass* de huit mesures en style de menuet, le soleil somme les planètes de « danser en un bal solennel » (« Dance in a solemn ball »). Les occasions d’écrire un texte pathétique sont, bien sûr, limitées dans les Odes joyeuses ; pourtant, la section « But ah, I see Eusebia drown’d in tears » permet à Purcell de montrer une authentique émotion, même si « Eusebia » fait référence à l’Église anglicane, déplorant que Guillaume III eût à défendre sa cause en Irlande. L’œuvre ne s’en conclut pas moins de manière triomphante, la texture de la dernière ligne musicale, « Iô Cecilia » s’évanouissant pour confier la fin de l’Ode aux seuls instruments de tessiture grave et aux chanteurs.

**Now does the glorious day appear** fut la première Ode composée par Purcell pour l’anniversaire de la reine Marie (le 30 avril 1689), juste un an, donc, avant **Arise, my muse.** Thomas Shadwell en signa le texte, que Purcell modifia considérablement, au point d’en retrancher les quinze derniers vers. La distribution orchestrale fut limitée à celle d’un ensemble de cordes mais l’ajout d’un « troisième violon » (en réalité, un petit alto) permit au compositeur de s’offrir une riche texture orchestrale à cinq parties. Cette dernière transparaît d’emblée dans l’ouverture à la française, dont certains éléments stylistiques sont en commun avec l’écriture instrumentale de Georg Muffat. Le solo de ténor « This does our fertile...
isle » reçoit ce qui doit être l’un des plus courts ground basses purcelliens—de seulement deux notes, ce qui ne l’empêche pas d’être impressionnant, notamment dans sa métamorphose en ritornello orchestral.

Mais l’apothéose de l’Ode, c’est le solo d’alto déployé par-dessus un ground bass descendant, tristement soupirant, de quatre mesures, « By beauteous softness »—certainement parmi les plus grandioses mouvements et les plus ravissants solos purcelliens, surtout avec sa ligne vocale extatique à « She with such sweetness », la dernière phrase vocale se chevauchant avec un exquis ritornello de cordes à cinq parties, d’une beauté toute attendrissante.

En 1683, Purcell avait été le premier compositeur à qui la toute jeune « Musical Society » avait commandé une Ode pour la Sainte-Cécile—ce fut Welcome to all the pleasures, qui se démarque par sa grande fraîcheur comme par ses ritornelli de cordes merveilleusement originaux. Neuf ans plus tard, la Society était florissante et ses « Gentleman Lovers of Musick » refirent appel à Purcell pour « diffuser l’avancement de cette science divine ». Comme l’écrivit Motteux, « Un splendide divertissement est proposé et, avant, il y a toujours une musique exécutée par les meilleures voix et mains de la ville ». Avec Hail! bright Cecilia, Purcell se surpassa.

Le poème de Brady dérivait directement de l’Ode de Dryden, une composition de 1687 qui fut la première et à requérir des instruments obligés et à suggérer que Cécile ne fut pas seulement organiste mais qu’elle inventa l’orgue. Bien qu’il destinât la plupart de ses œuvres aux effectifs relativement restreints de la cour, Purcell eut ici l’occasion d’écrire pour un large éventail d’interprètes. Il choisit de mélanger de grands chœurs contrapuntiques à une séquence d’airs pour solistes et instruments obligés. La canzone de la Symphonie renferme une fugue sur deux sujets et est thématiquement liée au fugato qui clôt la partition en une ingénieuse double augmentation. L’Ode est marquée en son centre par le puissant chœur « Soul of the World! », qui s’achève en « perfect Harmony ». Entre lui et les vastes chœurs initial et conclusif s’intercale un heureux choix d’airs fondés sur un extraordinaire corpus de procédés compositionnels. « Hark, each Tree » est une sarabande sur un ground ; « Thou tun’st this World » est un menuet et « In vain the Am’rous Flute » est une basse en passacaille tandis que « Wond’rous Machine! », avec son ground bass et ses hautbois gemisants, dépeint splendidement une machine au haletement inexorable. Le mouvement solo le plus remarquable est peut-être « ’Tis Nature’s Voice », au récitatif si orné qu’il en devient un arioë mêlismatique. (Sur ce numéro, la partition porte la mention « Mr Pate » et certains commentateurs, ayant mal compris ce que Motteux avait dit de ce mouvement, « qui fut chanté avec des ornements incroyables de [by] Mr Purcell en personne », firent de Purcell le chanteur, en non l’auteur, desdits « ornements incroyables ».) Forte d’un texte truffé de références à la musique et aux instruments de musique, l’Ode fait appel à une large palette de solistes vocaux et d’instruments obligés. Partout une écriture très originale le dispute à une mise en musique d’excellente facture et à une musique d’une saisissante singularité.

Purcell écrivit sa dernière Ode de circonstance Who can from joy refrain? pour les six ans du prince Guillaume (fêtés le 24 juillet 1695), duc de Gloucester, fils de la princesse (et future reine) Anne. Cette dernière eut dix-huit enfants, tous morts en bas âge à l’exception du prince Guillaume—lequel ne vécut toutefois pas plus de onze ans. L’Ode, exécutée à Richmond House, Kew, par un nombre choisi de musiciens royaux, renfermait une importante partie de trompette, dont les sonorités martiales séduisaient particulièrement le jeune prince, et cette partie fut assumée par le virtuose John Shore. Cette œuvre, écrite pour un ensemble relativement modeste,
est bien plus représentative des vingt-quatre Odes purcelliennes que ne l'est *Hail! bright Cecilia*. Le manuscrit autographe donne les noms de quatre chanteurs qui, semble-t-il, assumèrent et les solo et les chœurs. Quant aux instruments, tous furent apparemment joués à un par partie. L’inclusion d’instruments à vent en bois (autres que les flûtes à bec) était un développement alors assez récent chez Purcell et, ici, son morceau clairement adressé à une petite formation de hautbois (deux hautbois, un hautbois ténor et un basson, d’introduction récente) est particulièrement impressionnant.

« L’Ode pour l’anniversaire du duc de Gloucester » montre tout le merveilleux de l’écriture purcellienne : l’ouverture renferme une section lente, d’une richesse sublime, avant le retour de la canzone, et les mouvements solo présentent tous une musique de la plus haute volée. « A Prince of glorious race descended », surtout, fait l’adémonstration d’une technique chère à Purcell et marquant, avec beaucoup d’effet, nombre de ses Odes. Le mouvement s’ouvre sur un *ground bass* et une voix solo avant de se muer, à mi-chemin, en un ravissant ritornello de cordes à quatre parties. Le dernier mouvement est, lui aussi, un tour de force compositionnel : son extraordinaire Chaconne alterne et mélange voix et instruments en une splendide variété de textures et de rythmes.

**Sound the trumpet, beat the drum** fut la dernière des trois Odes écrites par Purcell entre 1685 et 1687 pour l’anniversaire de Jacques II. La reine Marie avait été à Bath du 16 août au 6 octobre mais, le 11 octobre, le roi Jacques et elle avaient quitté Windsor pour Whitehall, de manière à être prêts pour l’anniversaire du roi, le 14 octobre. D’après le journal du chroniqueur Narcissus Luttrell, les célébrations eurent, semble-t-il, moins d’envergure que par le passé — « il n’y eut pas de feux de joie, une exigence particulière ». L’Ode figure dans un nombre impressionnant de sources : une version ultérieure (le manuscrit du Kent), produite après la mort de Purcell, utilisait un tout autre texte et augmentait l’orchestre de trompettes et de timbales. Toutefois, la version purcellienne de 1687 est dévolue aux seules cordes et, d’après les noms de plusieurs chanteurs consignés sur les manuscrits, la création de l’œuvre se déroula à assez petite échelle. Passé une splendide ouverture en deux mouvements, Mr Abell, l’alto, lança l’Ode dans un style militaire comme il se devait, ponctué d’interjections de la basse et de ritornelli...
aux cordes. En 1687, Purcell entreprit de réduire les ritornelli instrumentaux, qui concluaient tant de mouvements de ses premières Odes, et tendit à enchaîner directement sur une section vocale contrastive ; le duo d’altos « Let Caesar and Urania live », sur un ground bass de deux mesures, fut, lui, changé en une splendide écriture de cordes à quatre parties. La basse, Mr Bowman, devait être un chanteur extraordinaire car l’ambitus du solo « While Caesar like the morning star » va de mi aigu à ré grave. La Chaconne incluse à mi-chemin, l’une des plus belles jamais écrites par Purcell, est tout aussi splendide, avec une multitude de procédés compositionnels et une merveilleuse section en mineur. Purcell dut en être particulièrement satisfait car il la réutilisa quatre ans plus tard, dans King Arthur.

Avec Celebrate this Festival, nous voici à la cinquième des six Odes écrites par Purcell de 1689 à 1694, pour l’anniversaire de la reine Marie. La distribution orchestrale de cette œuvre de 1693 est agrémentée de hautbois, de flûtes à bec et d’une trompette et, si le plan de base demeure inchangé, la taille et l’envergure des Odes, mais aussi leur contenu dramatique se sont amplifiés. Les chœurs, souvent développés à partir d’une série de sections solo, ont gagné en longueur et, pour suivre le rythme du livret, les ritornelli instrumentaux ont presque tous disparu, les sections embrayant plutôt avec un mouvement vocal contrastif. Purcell travailla en étroite collaboration avec le célèbre trompettiste John Shore et les mouvements avec parties de trompette obligée virtuose lui devinrent possibles, tel le militaire, et splendide, « While, for a righteous cause ». De même, la présence, dans l’orchestre, de hautbois et de flûtes à bec (généralement tenues par les hautboïstes) permet des mouvements délicatement écrits comme « Return, fond Muse » (pour deux flûtes à bec et alto). Pour cette Ode, la Symphonie, bien plus grandiose que toutes celles des dix années passées, fut directement empruntée à Hail! bright Cecilia, jouée tout juste six mois plus tôt. Purcell avait manifestement le bonheur d’avoir deux remarquables sopranos et leur duo inaugural instaura le ton solennel qui convient à cette Ode. Mais on découvre aussi une écriture de toute beauté ailleurs, notamment dans le « Crown the altar » pour alto solo, paisiblement extatique par-dessus un ground bass. Tout aussi impressionnante, la merveilleuse texture vocale à sept parties, à « Repeat Maria’s name », lance le nom de la reine entre les voix et les instruments avant qu’un menuet ne vienne élegantement clore l’œuvre.

Ye tuneful Muses fut composé en 1686, très vraisemblablement pour célébrer le retour de la cour qui, partie de Windsor, rentra à Whitehall le 1er octobre. Comme l’anniversaire du roi Jacques II tombait le 14 octobre, certains spécialistes envisagèrent une possible combinaison des deux célébrations ; le chroniqueur Luttrell nota que l’anniversaire fut « fêté avec une grande solennité … la journée s’acheva avec des sonneries de cloches, des feux de joie et un bal à la cour » mais rien ou presque dans le texte ne corrobore cette supposition. Purcell disposa toutefois d’un bon livret (d’un auteur anonyme) très varié et avec un matériau pittoresque propre à l’inspirer, notamment par ses références à la musique et aux instruments de musique ; et comme toujours, il ne déçut pas.

La belle Symphonie inaugurale adopte le style français conventionnel à deux parties (lui-même originaire d’Italie), avec la section liminaire pointée suivie d’un mouvement imitatif ternaire, plus rapide. Deux basses exécutent ensuite un riche duo, gorgé de figuralismes et rattaché au premier chœur par un bref ritornello de cordes. La section « Be lively then and gay » repose ingénieusement sur le chant populaire « Hey boys, up go we », dont Purcell utilisa la mélodie (trouvable dans The Dancing Master, 16é édition, 1686) d’abord comme basse
du solo de ténor, puis comme contrepoint violonistique au chœur et, de nouveau, comme basse du dansant ritornello de cordes, qui clôt la section. On ignore qui assura la basse de « In his just praise », mais ce devait être un chanteur doué d’une formidable étendue de deux octaves passées, exploitée ici au maximum. Purcell ne se déprit pas de sa bonne humeur et, dans la section suivante, les cordes supérieures jouent à une allure folle sur leurs quatre cordes à vide pour répondre à l’exhortation du chœur, « Tune all your strings ». Les allégories musicales se poursuivent dans « From the rattling of drums and the trumpet’s loud sounds », avant une section plus paisible, « To music’s softer but yet kind and pleasing melody », accompagnée de deux flûtes à bec et débouchant sur le joyau de l’Ode, « With him he brings », chanté à la création par le célèbre contre-ténor (et bon compositeur) William Turner. Par-dessus un merveilleux ground bass de quatre mesures, la beauté de la reine est louée, avec une écriture fort charmante à « There beauty its whole artillery tries », puis le ground bass module à la quinte supérieure et Purcell nous concocte (comme il le fait si souvent dans ses Odes) un délicieux ritornello de cordes. Après le tout aussi ravissant duo de sopranos « Happy in a mutual love », l’œuvre s’achève sur un allant solo et sur un chœur élogialement harmonisé « Whilst in music and verse ».

Dido and Aeneas fut la plus célèbre des deux pièces que Purcell composa en 1689 pour des écoles londoniennes. Peu après sa création à la Josias Priest’s School for Young Ladies de Chelsea, le professeur Mr Maidwell (peut-être pour ne pas être en reste avec la concurrence) commanda à Purcell une musique pour l’Ode Celestial music did the gods inspire, jouée en son école le 5 août. Le librettiste est inconnu, la partition le créditant d’un simple « les paroles d’un de ses élèves », mais il devait avoir de solides bases en mythologie gréco-romaine—and sa poésie vaut mieux que certains vers signés par de plus grands noms.

Purcell emprunta directement la Symphonie de cette Ode à son coronation anthem de 1685, My heart is inditing : pareille réutilisation de matériau étant relativement rare chez lui, peut-être faut-il y voir le signe d’une certaine hâte dans la composition. À « Celestial music », la basse solo est accompagnée de cordes imitatives amenant un chœur qui s’épanouit merveilleusement à « Whom sacred music calls her Deity ». Sur un ground bass de quatre mesures, « Her charming strains » a une écriture évocatrice, conçue pour la combinaison éthérée d’un contre-ténor et de deux flûtes à bec, auxquelles revient une élégante conclusion. « Thus Virgil’s Genius », également fondé sur un ground, est assumé par une soliste soprano, juste avant le duo « Whilst music did improve Amphion’s song » et un ritornello de cordes, tous deux bâtis d’un motif rythmique lombard. « When Orpheus sang » est un mini chef-d’œuvre où le thème de la musique inspire encore à Purcell un mouvement d’une originalité saisissante : le contre-ténor file une ligne fleurie par-dessus un hypnotique accompagnement en accords, symbole d’Orphée soumettant, avec sa lyre, la nature, jusqu’au cruel Pluton. L’œuvre s’achève sur un trio (avec une harmonie d’une richesse de circonstance au mot « ravish’d »), repris par le chœur et étoffé par des passages virtuoses au premier violon.

Le 28 juillet 1683, à St James, l’évêque de Londres présida au mariage du prince George de Danemark et de « Lady Ann » (la future reine Anne), la nièce du roi Charles. Le 19 juillet, nous apprend Luttrell, « dans l’après-midi, le prince George, frère du roi de Danemark, arriva à Whitehall et fut aimablement reçu par leurs majestés et leurs altesses royales, car il venait demander la main de Lady Ann, fille de son altesse royale ». On ignore si From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War fut effectivement joué devant le tout jeune couple lors de la
fête de mariage, mais ses sublimes ritornelli de cordes et sa remarquable écriture vocale l’inscrivent parmi les plus belles premières Odes de Purcell.

La Symphonie est l’une des meilleures du compositeur : tout à la fois joyeuse et mélancolique, comme seule peut l’être l’écriture des cordes du Purcell des débuts, elle est merveilleusement inventive et délicieusement imprévisible. Une fois encore, une basse introduit les voix par un solo prolongé couvrant un large ambitus, puis le chœur entrel, qui mène à un splendide ritornello de cordes—d’autres suivront. Arrivent alors le solo de ténor « As Fame, great Sir », au splendide « The wonders you have since possessed », et un duo pour sopranos, tout aussi beau. La basse solo introduit le chœur « Wake then, my Muse », qui s’achève sur un nouveau ritornello de cordes, ravissant. Mais le meilleur reste à venir. Dans « The Sparrow and the gentle Dove », c’est le ténor qui se voit offrir l’un des meilleurs ground basses purcelliens, l’un des plus inspirés aussi : la mélodie lyrique du chanteur est couronnée par un ritornello de cordes d’une beauté attendrissante entre toutes. Un court trio en un nouveau ritornello nostalgique débouchent sur le chœur final « Hence without Scheme », où la soliste soprano alterne avec l’ensemble au complet.

Purcell, et le public anglais en général, adorait vraiment la reine Marie qui, avec Guillaume, remplaça sur le trône le roi Jacques, enfui sur le Continent. À l’annonce de cette glorieuse Révolution, tous les musiciens anglais poussèrent un soupir de soulagement ; quant à Purcell, il composa six de ses plus belles Odes pour l’anniversaire de sa nouvelle reine.

Pour son cadeau de 1691, Purcell tenait une forme éblouissante, de récents succès scéniques l’ayant conduit à adopter un style davantage expansif. Outre les habituelles cordes, Welcome, welcome, glorious morn exige des hautbois et des trompettes par deux, dont on ressent la présence dès le début extraverti de la Symphonie, quand le thème des trompettes est lancé d’une paire d’instruments à l’autre avant que tous se réunissent, d’abord en doubles croches animées puis dans la riche figuration cadentielle. La section imitative suivante est dans la même veine, trompettes, hautbois et cordes se répondant mutuellement. Les Odes tardives présentent un style plus intégré : les sections se coulent les unes dans les autres, plus librement, comme ici, dans l’ouverture, quand le ténor solo, les hautbois et, enfin, le chœur se combinent. Le duo « At thy return the joyful Earth » mène à un sublime ritornello instrumental avant le retour du chœur, augmenté, cette fois, de deux petits duos. Pour le duo « Welcome as when three happy Kingdoms strove », le climat se fait plus intime, malgré une impressionnante montée en puissance jusqu’à « the loudest song of Fame ». L’extraordinaire solo de ténor « The mighty goddess » voit la ligne fleurie du soliste contraster avec l’insistant accompagnement de cordes, en accords. Dans la section suivante, « Full of Wonder and Delight », Purcell combine un trio, un chœur allègre et, enfin, l’ensemble instrumental au complet, tous s’unissant pour louer la naissance de la petite reine Marie. « And lo! a sacred Fury » est un tour de force compositionnel, avec une ouverture théâtrale en style récitatif, menant à la section prolongée « To lofty strains », sur un remarquable ground bass pointé de six mesures. La ligne du soliste est finalement reprise par toutes les voix. Un autre court passage de semi-récitatif, « My Pray’rs are heard », cette fois pour soprano, conduit à un ground bass (traité librement, vu sa brièveté), et, pour terminer, à un chœur. Le court duo de basses « He to the Field by Honour call’d shall go » et l’élégant solo de ténor « Whilst undisturb’d his happy Consort reigns » nous entraînent dans l’ultime solo et chœur. Un ténor et les deux trompettes annoncent le thème et c’est ensuite en contrepoint augmenté que
l’ensemble au grand complet clôt l’œuvre dans une veine triomphante.

Le 9 janvier 1694, le Trinity College de Dublin fêta le centenaire de sa fondation par la reine Élisabeth avec une service en la cathédrale de Christ Church « chanté par les principaux gentilshommes du royaume » assorti d’oraisons en latin et d’une « Ode de Mr Tate » (le poète lauréat) « qui fut élevé dans ce collège ». Pour *Great Parent, Hail to Thee!*, le librettiste de *Dido and Aeneas* conçut l’une de ses œuvres les moins convaincantes, ce qui n’empêcha pas Purcell d’imaginer, là encore, une musique extraordinairement belle. La Symphonie, festive comme il se doit, a une seconde section imitative magnifiquement ciselée et un chœur inaugural très varié et vigoureux. Le solo d’alto « Another Century commencing » nous montre un Purcell écrivant pour sa voix favorite une musique superbement lyrique ; le duo qui suit (« After War’s Alarms repeated ») arbore un efficace figuralisme dans les échos du mot « repeated ». Le solo de basse « Awful Matron » est un mouvement remarquable, d’où ressort une splendide maîtrise de la ligne solistique. Le solo de ténor et le chœur « She was the first who did inspire » use aussi avec charme des échos ; le duo « Succeeding Princes » regorge d’harmonies ravissantes tandis que le chœur « But chiefly Recommend to Fame » s’épanouit splendidement à la fin. Le solo de soprano « Thy Royal Patron sung » (l’une des rares arias d’*Ode* qui soit imposante et pour soprano) est encore un triomphe de l’imagination fertile de Purcell—son écriture y est efficace, les deux flûtes à bec apportant un surcroît de pathos—and le chœur conclusif est allègrement plein d’entrain.

Le retour de Charles II et du duc d’York, après leur habituel séjour automnal à Newmarket, fut célébré le 21 octobre 1682 mais, nota le chroniqueur Luttrell, l’événement se fit encore plus discret qu’avant (la faute, probablement, à la mauvaise passe traversée par les finances royales). Plus tôt cette année-là, Purcell avait été nommé à l’un des trois postes d’organiste de la Chapel Royal, ce qui lui avait permis d’emménager avec sa femme dans les quartiers plus chics de Great St Ann’s Lane ; la commande d’une musique pour *The summer’s absence unconcerned we bear* fut une nouvelle marque de faveur officielle.

Sous son vernis d’allégresse, la Symphonie inaugurale en deux sections est l’une des plus nostalgiques de Purcell, dont ce n’était pourtant que la quatrième *Ode*. Elle débouche directement sur un solo de basse virtuose couvrant, là encore, plus de deux octaves. Un court trio mène à un chœur et au premier de ces ritornelli de cordes qui marquent tant les premières *Odes* purcelliennes. Un *ground bass* de quatre notes est à la base du solo d’alto « And when late from your throne », qui conduit à un mélancolique ritornello via un bref chœur. Passé une série de mouvements plus courts, un autre bijou de Purcell survient, le solo d’alto « These had by their ill usage drove », sur un *ground bass* modulant de quatre mesures, qui mène au dernier (et plus beau) ritornello de l’œuvre. Un ténor solo ouvre le chœur final, dont la conclusion méditative s’avéra prophétique : le texte souhaite longue vie au monarque, un espoir qui sera brusquement déçu moins de trois ans plus tard avec la fin du règne de Charles—ce roi qui avait pratiquement ruiné le pays mais qui avait tant fait pour la musique et pour les musiciens.

La quatrième *Ode* d’anniversaire pour la reine, *Love’s goddess sure was blind* écrite juste pour cordes et deux flûtes à bec, est l’une des plus intimes des six. Sa Symphonie en deux sections, d’une grande richesse d’écriture, compte parmi les plus remarquables de Purcell. La première partie, majestueuse mais mélancolique, est dominée par une gamme descendante de six
notes et par une ravissante mélodie (qui apparaît une seule fois au violon mais trois fois à l’alto) drapée d’une resplendissante harmonie. De prime abord, la seconde section ternaire semble plus légère de caractère mais (comme si souvent avec la musique purcellienne, qui ne dévoile ses vraies richesses que quand on la joue), dans la pratique, elle garde une mélancolie sous-jacente, amplifiée par le retour du climat inaugural, à la fin. Les premiers mots du texte de Charles Sedley, confiés au soliste contre-ténor, amènent un élégant et long ritornello de cordes. L’accompagnement, accentué sur le temps faible, du solo de basse « Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien » confère à la musique une urgence accrue qui contraste avec le duo suivant (« Sweetness of Nature »), doucement ondoyant. Ici, Purcell apprécie l’alto et le ténor aigu à la sonorité pastorale de deux flûtes à bec (la tessiture de leur écriture nécessite l’emploi de flûtes alto, plus grandes). La soliste soprano entame le charmant menuet « Long may she reign », repris par l’ensemble au complet.

À propos du mouvement suivant, « May her blest example chase », l’historien de la musique Sir John Hawkins relate une anecdote qui, vraie ou non, en dit long sur la difficulté qu’il pouvait y avoir à travailler pour la royauté. Un jour qu’elle exigea un divertissement musical, la reine manda la soprano Mrs Hunt, la célèbre basse John Gostling et Purcell, qui jouèrent plusieurs chants de ce dernier. Mais la reine, manifestement insatisfaite d’une musique aussi sophistiquée, finit par demander à Mrs Hunt de chanter la ballade écossaise « Cold and Raw ». Mrs Hunt s’exécuta, en s’accompagnant au luth. Pendant ce temps, Purcell resta assis au clavecin, « à ne rien faire et très agacé que la reine eût préféré une vulgaire ballade à sa musique ». Pourtant, au moment d’écrire Love’s goddess sure, il dut se souvenir de la requête royale car l’air de cette ballade lui sert de ligne de basse pour « May her blest example chase ». Harmoniquement, cette ligne n’a rien d’extraordinaire mais il réussit, non sans peine, à y plaquer une mélodie : le rustique ritornello de cordes fonctionne plutôt bien. Il eut beaucoup moins de mal avec le duo suivant, « Many such days » qui, sur un ground bass de deux mesures, est un tour de force compositionnel. La voix entre sur le ground plutôt qu’au début d’une répétition et Purcell parvient brillamment à multiplier les contrastes et les modulations au sein du mouvement, sans jamais devoir interrompre le cours inexorable de la basse. Et c’est seulement au ritornello de cordes conclusif qu’il laisse le ground baguenauder dans les autres parties de cordes, le faisant rapidement passer par toutes les lignes. Le chœur « May she to Heaven late return » illustre encore son art du contrepoint, avec un sujet et un contre-sujet fort inventifs. Le quatuor suivant, « As much as we below », abonde en discordances délicieuses qui rendent si éloquents les moments chargés de pathos, surtout avec le chromatisme descendant au mot « mourn » ; l’Ode s’achève sur un ton pensif.

Deux Odes purcelliennes écrites pour célébrer la Sainte-Cécile, Raise, raise the voice et Laudate Ceciliam, s’adressent à des forces réduites—trois voix, au lieu des quatre habituelles, avec un simple accompagnement de deux violons et basse continue. On ignore quand Raise, raise the voice fut jouée pour la première fois mais, sa distribution étant similaire à celle de Laudate Ceciliam (datée de 1683), certains commentateurs ont cru pouvoir avancer que les deux pièces avaient été interprétées lors du même concert. Or l’année 1683 vit aussi la création de Welcome to all the pleasures, et il semble peu probable que Purcell ait écrit trois Odes pour la Sainte-Cécile la même année. Notre unique terminus ante quem nous vient de la publication, dans la seconde partie de Musick’s Hand-Maid (1689) d’un arrangement pour clavecin du Ritornello Menuet, mais l’Ode est, à
l'évidence, bien antérieure à cette date.

La Symphonie de *Raise, raise the voice*, audacieuse et ingénieuse comme jamais, tire une riche texture de ce qui n'est qu'une formation de sonate en trio. Passé la majestueuse première section, un mouvement contrapuntique animé, tout en écriture hachée et en imitation serrée, mène tout droit à l'Ode de l'auteur anonyme. D'entrée, le figuralisme occupe le devant de la scène : la phrase monte, conformément aux paroles « *Raise, raise the voice* »), et une référence aux « softest notes » du luth inspire immédiatement les continuistes. L'ensemble au complet s'unit dans une texture inhabituelle : le centre normal de la texture devant être remplacé, faute de contre-ténors et d'altos, Purcell maintient les parties de ténor dans les aigus et fait déchanter le premier violon par dessus les sopranos avant de clore le mouvement sur un ritornello instrumental. Un bref solo de soprano mène au chœur « Crown the day with Harmony », que termine un joli Ritornello Minuet.

Au cœur de l'Ode se trouve un autre remarquable *ground bass*, une mise en musique enjouée de « *Mark how readily each plaint string* », où la basse constamment allègre de quatre mesures sert de fond à un solo de soprano splendide expressif. La « corde docile » (« pliant string ») s'apprête à un rythme jazzy, l'offrande « d'un doux son » (« of some gentle sound ») s'élève en douceur le long de la gamme chromatique et, à l'invite des mots « Then altogether », les deux violons se joignent en premier à la texture « in harmonious lays », suivis de tout l'ensemble de chambre—avec une merveilleuse ligne pour les ténors. Le meilleur est à venir car le ritornello conclusif des deux violons couronne le mouvement de l'un des plus extraordinaires morceaux instrumentaux de toutes les Odes purcelliennes. Voilà une musique d'une originalité étonnante, époustouflante en ce qu'elle donne l'impression de briser toutes les règles du contrepoint et de l'harmonie tout en réussissant tant bien que mal à finir dans la bonne tonalité !

**Laudate Ceciliam**, la seconde des petites Odes pour la Sainte-Cécile, date de 1683, l'année de *Welcome to all the pleasures*. Comme *Raise, raise the voice*, elle est écrite pour seulement trois voix, accompagnées de deux violons et basse continue, mais cette fois le texte est en latin : cette Ode, la plus courte de Purcell, est la seule à ne pas avoir de texte en anglais. De bout en bout, l'écriture vocale paraît clairement s'adresser à des solistes, et l'influence du *verse anthem* y est patente.

La Symphonie présente les deux parties habituelles, l'une majestueuse et pointée, l'autre un mouvement ternaire plus léger, qui débouche droit sur les premières entrées vocales. À « *Modulemini psalmum novum* » (« Chantez un psaume nouveau »), Purcell introduit son nouveau thème, davantage sérieux et façon récitatif, et le passe entre chacune des voix avant de clore la section par un court ritornello violonistique. La basse amène brièvement un matériau neuf, à « *Quia preceptum* », mais le matériel vocal liminaire est réintroduit, suivi d'une complète redite de la Symphonie. Le cœur de l'Ode est l’émouvant duo pour alto et ténor « *Dicite Virgini* » : la phrase « O beata Cecilia » (« Ô bienheureuse Cécile ») est musiquée avec une tendresse toute particulière, et « respic nos » (« veille sur nous ») tire du compositeur une harmonie éloquente. Avec le retour du trio à « *Adeste caelites* », le climat suppliant se dissipe avant la réapparition du matériau inaugural : pour la dernière fois, les chanteurs louent la sainte patronne de la musique « avec la voix et l’orgue » et la plus petite Ode de Purcell touche à sa fin.

**From those serene and rapturous joys**, le cinquième Chant de bienvenue écrit par Purcell pour son employeur Charles II, célèbre le retour du roi à Whitehall en septembre 1684. En temps ordinaire, le monarque
rentrait directement de Windsor mais, cette année-là, de délicates manœuvres politiques s'étaient avérées nécessaires et Charles, accompagné du duc d'York, avait quitté Windsor pour Winchester à la fin d'août, regagnant Whitehall à temps pour les festivités du 25 septembre. L'Ode de Thomas Flatman fait une allusion élégamment voilée (et bien sûr flatteuse) à l'estival voyage diplomatique du roi, qui parvint (pacifiquement) à contrôler l'Angleterre. Pour la première fois, les cordons de la bourse royale purent un peu se desserrer et les musiciens royaux, dont Purcell, furent payés sans retard. L'Angleterre était véritablement en paix avec elle-même, fût-ce pour une courte période, et l'Ode méditative de Purcell le reflète bien.

Ce climat, l'ouverture d'une nouvelle Symphonie splendide le traduit d'emblée dans les sonorités des cordes, riches comme à leur habitude et contrées par une seconde section animée et expressive. La tranquille strophe inaugurale de l'Ode, louant les vertus d'une paisible vie campagnarde, s'adresse à un contre-ténor solo (probablement, en 1684, le célèbre William Turner), les « rapturous joys » se voyant confier un mélisme particulièrement expressif, avant une métamorphose et un développement en un glorieux ritornello de cordes, gorgé des inimitables inflexions harmonico-mélodiques de Purcell. Une voix de basse annonce vigoureusement l'arrivée de « th' indulgent Prince », accompagnée de deux violons et bientôt rejointe dans sa salutation par tout l'ensemble en une mesure ternaire élégamment cadencée. Deux sopranos disent joliment comment le roi conquit paisiblement ses sujets puis un autre beau ritornello de cordes survient, cette fois allant et énergique. « Welcome as soft refreshing show'rs » prouve encore l'étonnant ambitus vocal de John Gostling, la basse favorite de Charles II, et le chœur répète son cadencé « Welcome home ».

De nouveau, c'est à un ground bass que l'on doit le mouvement le plus remarquable de l'Ode, « Welcome, more welcome does he come ». Ce ground a ceci d'inhabituel qu'il comporte des silences initiaux et finals, ce qui permet à Purcell soit de boucher le trou avec la voix—ce qu'il fait la plupart du temps—, soit d'insérer une pause des plus efficaces. Si l'on ajoute à cela le ravissant ritornello de cordes qui succède au solo de ténor, nous tenons là une nouvelle illustration du génie purcellien. Le duo qui vient ensuite, « Nor does the Sun more comfort bring », est enrichi par l'adjonction d'une partie violonistique, véritable troisième voix, et par une courte mais somptueuse conclusion aux cordes. L'exubérant mouvement final, « With trumpets and shouts », alterne entre cordes et ténor solo avant d'être finalement repris par l'ensemble au complet. Mais la gaieté fut de courte durée. Quelques mois plus tard, comme le nota le chroniqueur John Evelyn, le « luxe indincible, l'impie, les jeux et toute la débauche » qui avaient marqué le règne de Charles disparurent brusquement avec l'attaque d'apoplexie qui frappa le roi le 2 février 1685. Quatre jours plus tard, « tout était en poussière » et un monarque moins dissolu, mais bien moins populaire, devint soudain le nouvel employeur de Purcell.

Au XVIIe siècle, les habitants de certains comtés et de certaines villes, ainsi que les membres de diverses écoles avaient coutume de se rencontrer chaque année à Londres. Ils assistaient à un service religieux puis participaient à une célébration festive. Ce genre de rassemblement promouvait la convivialité mais avait aussi, souvent, des visées caritatives—les réunions annuelles d'organisations comme les Sons of the Clergy et les Charterhouse Scholars avaient une base fortement caritative. The Gazette datée du lundi 20 janvier 1689 (avec l'ancien calendrier, quand l'année commençait le 25
mars) publia l’annonce suivante : « La fête du Yorkshire se tiendra le vendredi 14 février prochain, à la salle Merchant-Taylor ; et un sermon sera délivré à BowChurch, ce matin-là, pour la Society. » Finalement, la fête fut reportée car, Jacques II ayant fui le royaume juste avant Noël, le trône demeura vacant jusqu’au 13 février, comme l’expliqua une nouvelle annonce parue dans The Gazette du 6 février : « La fête du Yorkshire qui devait avoir lieu ce 14 février est reportée au 27 mars prochain (du fait que plusieurs administrateurs, membres de l’ancien parlement, sont à présent contraints d’appeler le pays aux urnes). »

Avec Guillaume et Marie dûment intronisés, l’actualité était plus riche qu’à l’ordinaire et les administrateurs demandèrent au meilleur auteur et au meilleur compositeur disponibles de célébrer l’événement dans « un divertissement absolument splendide avec toutes sortes de musiques vocales et instrumentales ». Thomas D’Urfey rédigea un livret qu’il inclut dans ses Pills to Purge Melancholy avec ce commentaire : « Une ode sur l’assemblée de la noblesse et de la petite noblesse de la cité et du comté d’York à la fête anniversaire du 27 mars 1690. Mise en musique par Mr Henry Purcell. Une des plus belles compositions qu’il ait jamais faites, et 100 £ de coût pour la représentation. » Of old, when heroes thought it base se voulait l’histoire d’York depuis l’époque romaine, mais elle renfermait aussi des allégories sur la glorieuse Révolution. Purcell répond au texte, parfois un peu forcé, de D’Urfey par une musique de fort belle facture.

La Symphonie en deux sections, étendue, fait avec les trompettes, les hautbois et les cordes une splendide ouverture façon canzone, des arpèges montant et descendant autour du entraînant thème purcellien. La seconde section est un enjoué mouvement ternaire, en imitation serrée et festif comme il se doit. Un solo de basse, au figuralisme imagé, commence par évoquer l’invasion de la Grande-Bretagne par les Romains (la « race martiale »), même si le public ne manqua certainement pas la référence implicite au récent remplacement de Jacques II par Guillaume ; s’ensuivent un court ritornello instrumental et un duo pour ténor aigu et basse, « Brigantium, honour’d with a race divine ». Brigantium désigne le comté du Yorkshire tandis que Constantin renvoie au chef romain que ses troupes proclamèrent empereur à Eboracum (l’actuelle York), suite à sa victorieuse campagne en Grande-Bretagne. Là encore, Purcell traite les mots avec une efficacité et une tendresse particulières — surtout l’allusion aux « blooming glories » (« gloires resplendissantes »). Deux flûtes à bec introduisent « The bashful Thames » (« La pudique Tamise »), qui arrose délicieusement sa « ville malingre » (« puny town », Londres), avec une rayonnante harmonie, comme à « Augusta [Londres] then did drooping lie ». Purcell traduit ensuite le solo en un très émouvant chœur, ajoutant des parties intérieures superbement ouvragées. L’histoire se poursuit avec la guerre des Deux-Roses, qui opposa les maisons d’York et de Lancastre de 1455 à 1485. La douce mise en musique de « The pale and the purple rose » est amenée par un vaste ritornello instrumental. La ligne de basse, par-dessus laquelle hautbois et cordes supérieures jouent une fort élégante mélodie, évite habilement le premier temps de la mesure. Quand le soliste alto entre avec son expressive mélodie, l’accompagnement accentué sur le temps faible est repris par les cordes au complet, ce qui offre une poignante conclusion. Le duo suivant « And in each track of glory since » parut séparément, signe probable d’une grande popularité. Comme dans « The bashful Thames », Purcell fait suivre le duo d’une version chorale, de délicieuses parties d’alto et de ténor venant harmoniser la mélodie.

La joyeuse Symphonie inaugurale est reprise en entier
juste avant le duo de ténoirs « And now when the renown’d Nassau ». Cette section est une allusion directe à Guillaume III qui, en tant que comte de Nassau, possédait une résidence en Rhénanie-Palatinat. Par-dessus une ligne de basse virant sec, les deux solistes et les deux trompettes solo tissent un beau mouvement, tout en détours subtils et en contrastes intéressants. Le duo de basses « They did no storms, nor threat’nings fear » est un splendide exemple fanfaron—l’humeur de « the grumbling air » est particulièrement remarquable.

Arrive alors l’un des plus extraordinaires mouvements de l’Ode, le solo de ténor « So when the glitt’ring Queen of Night ». Purcell utilise le même ground bass hypnotique, de cinq notes seulement, que dans la mélodie principale. Le texte de D’Urfey est ici inspiré et la réaction de Purcell est confondante de grâce paisible, nocturne, et d’harmonies ravissantes. La seconde section, en particulier, resplendit par son illustration du « globe qui enfle » (« globe that swells ») et par le rai de douce lumière issu du ton majeur utilisé brièvement au mot « ray ». Le chœur qui suit trouve Purcell aux prises avec un sujet qui a rarement manqué de l’inspirer : la musique. Exprimé dans un riche contrepoint à six parties, « Let music join » voit, à mi-chemin, la mélodie placée à la basse, en une ingénieuse double augmentation, avant qu’un thème dansant ne vienne clore le mouvement de manière étonnamment rapide. Le mouvement « Sound trumpets, sound! » est moins subtil : il voulait manifestement faire taper des pieds le Yorkshire, avec son rythme allant et son air facile à retenir repris, après le soliste, par les trompettes et les cordes (une ligne de basse vrombissante est ajoutée) avant d’être, enjoint Purcell, répété « derechef par tous les instruments ». Pour le dernier mouvement, Purcell adopte son mode le plus cérémoniel, avec un puissant solo de basse introduisant des blocs d’accords choraux et des fanfares orchestrales.

Swifter, Isis, swifter flow, la deuxième Ode de Purcell—et la seule datant de 1681—fut, semble-t-il, composée pour célébrer le retour de Charles II à Londres, après son séjour automnal à Newmarket. Luttrell consigne dans son journal que, le 12 octobre 1681 « [au] soir, en signe de liesse, on sonna les cloches et on fit des feux de joie dans plusieurs endroits », et l’auteur anonyme de l’Ode, manifestement familier de ces retours royaux, fait des allusions directes à ces célébrations. Purcell paraît, lui aussi, avoir été fort inspiré par les sonneries de cloches. En effet, passé la belle ouverture de la Symphonie, marquée par des harmonies chromatiques descendantes, c’est un motif descendant, de six notes, qui envahit la seconde section ternaire puis la phrase inaugurale du ténor. (Quand elle passe à Oxford, la Tamise est appelée Isis ; elle ne retrouve son nom que lorsqu’elle s’élargit vers Londres, où elle passait devant le palais royal.) Tout au long de cette ouverture, Purcell impressionne par sa magistrale écriture des cordes, marquant aussi toute la musique liturgique qui jaillissait déjà abondamment de sa plume. À « Land him safely on her shore », il fait accompagner la basse solo par deux flûtes à bec, souvent associées, chez lui, aux thèmes plaintifs ou amoureux. Sa splendide écriture des cordes introduit le solo de ténor « Hark, hark! just now my listening ears », rédigé par-dessus un ground bass de quatre mesures inhabituellement allègre. L’écriture mélodique est, comme toujours, charmante, avec un « Oh, how she does my eyes delight » fort avenant, avant le retour des cloches ; le mouvement s’achève sur un épilogue instrumental cruellement bref : ses huit mesures exigent, en plus de cordes, un hautbois, qui n’apparaît nulle part ailleurs dans l’Ode.

Un trio et un chœur alternent ensuite des phrases de « Welcome, dread Sir, to town » (où Londres est appelé « Augusta »), puis la basse a une belle section de récitatif « But with as great devotion meet », pleine de figuralisme...
imagé. L’enjoué « Your Augusta he charms » est introduit par un ténor solo et repris par le chœur, avec une transition tonale délicieusement inattendue à « Who tells her the King keeps his court here tonight », avant qu’un nouveau court ritornello instrumental ne termine le mouvement. Le duo « The King whose presence » est étayé par un ground bass qui file doucement et par de touchantes suspensions débouchant sur le chœur final. Ici, la principale source manuscrite est incomplète, avec plus de la moitié des parties intérieures manquantes—Robert King les a complétées pour cet enregistrement. La phrase « May no harsher sounds e’er invade your blest ears » vaut par son intense chromatisme préfigurant certains des plus beaux moments de Dido.

Troisième Ode de Purcell, What shall be done in behalf of the man? fut écrite pour célébrer le duc d’York (le futur Jacques II) rentrant d’Écosse, où il était haut commissaire depuis 1679. On ignore quand cette Ode fut interprétée mais on sait que Jacques quitta Leith le 4 mars 1682 et que, arrivé à Yarmouth six jours plus tard, il rejoignit la cour à Newmarket le 11 mars. Selon certains auteurs, l’Ode de Purcell a pu être interprétée à ce moment-là, mais elle fut probablement rédigée pour fêter un retour ultérieur. Après s’être de nouveau rendu en Écosse, le duc rentra à Londres le 27 mai ; Luttrell rapporte que, « le soir, on sonna les cloches, on alluma des feux de joie à plusieurs endroits et il y eut d’autres expressions de joie publiques ».

Ici encore, Purcell produit une belle Symphonie, avec une majestueuse ouverture pointée autorisant malgré tout ces mélancoliques harmonies en mineur qui font tout l’attrait de son écriture de cordes. Tout aussi imaginative, la seconde section activement contrapuntique mène droit au solo inaugural de la basse qui, accompagnée de deux flûtes à bec, loue la victoire du duc sur la rébellion de Monmouth. Un trio poursuit la louange de Jacques, annonçant aux auditeurs qu’il est le prochain prétendant au trône, et le chœur reprend à son tour le thème enjoué avant qu’un ritornello jovial—similaire, par son alternance cordes/vents, à ceux de John Blow, le mentor de Purcell—ne termine la section. Le fort séduisant « Therefore let us sing the praises » trouve Purcell dans sa veine la plus homophonique, mais avec des harmonies tenant du grand art. Purcell laisse encore éclater son génie de la mise en musique tout en noblesse et en caractère dans le vaste solo de basse « Mighty Charles » ; le chœur allègre « But thanks be to Heaven » qui vient juste après lui permet de montrer son humour à travers la longue liste de belles qualités que Jacques est censé posséder : peut-être même s’est-il amusé à choisir qui, dans son ensemble, assumerait les mots « grateful » (« reconnaissant »), « just » (« juste »), « courageous » (« courageux ») et—le meilleur de tous—« punctual » (« ponctuel »). L’œuvre s’achève sur le charmant duo de sopranos « May all factious troubles cease », étoffé d’un chœur : avec beaucoup de charme, les instruments font les reprises avant que tout l’ensemble ne doive le rejouer—« omettre les interludes intermédiaires des instruments, chanter chaque air deux fois, et conclure ainsi ».

En 1694, Purcell, dans une forme éblouissante, offrit à la reine l’Ode Come ye sons of Art, away, résolument différente des vingt-deux œuvres précédentes. Les effectifs requis sont plus imposants que de coutume : un orchestre remplace les cordes seules et le chœur se voit assigner un rôle clairement défini. De récents succès scéniques avaient amené Purcell à un style davantage expansif et le texte inspiré de cette Ode (probablement de Nahum Tate), truffé de références à la musique et aux instruments, ne pouvait que copieusement alimenter son imagination féconde.
L’ouverture (réutilisée l’année suivante dans *The Indian Queen*) commence solennellement par dix mesures aux harmonies splendides tandis que les trois motifs contrastifs de l’enjouée canzone suivante regorge d’ingéniosité rythmique. Mais c’est dans la mélancolique section adagio que Purcell est à son meilleur : les motifs soupirants et les harmonies poignantes débordent de pathos, et l’usage de notes tenues, transperçant le centre et la basse de la texture, est extraordinaire. Au lieu de l’attendue reprise de la canzone, nous enchaînons directement sur le chœur d’entrée et la première d’une série de répétitions du thème principal dans divers arrangements et harmonisations—une technique tout droit venue du théâtre. En confiant l’air d’abord à un contre-ténor, Purcell résout intelligemment le problème de la réécriture pour le chœur (l’air y aurait été soit trop grave, soit trop aigu pour les sopranos) en octroyant à ce dernier un déchant et en conservant la mélodie aux altos, doublés par la trompette et le hautbois. Dans le célèbre duo « Sound the trumpet », résistant à la tentation d’utiliser les instruments énumérés dans le texte, il opta pour un ground bass modulant de deux mesures—constamment enjoué, par-dessus lequel deux contre-ténors font étalage de leur virtuosité—et donna aux continistes royaux des lignes superbement expressives. À « You make the list’ning shores resound », certains, dans l’orchestre, durent arborer un sourire ironique car deux des instrumentistes étaient les célèbres trompettistes Matthias et William Shore.

Le cœur de l’Ode est une extatique évocation de la musique, « Strike the Viol ». Avec un tel texte mentionnant la viole, le luth, la harpe et la flûte (sous-entendu à bec), Purcell se montra des plus inspirés, comme toujours quand il était question de musique. Utilisant une technique perfectionnée dans nombre de ses Odes antérieures, il combina un ground bass avec une ligne pour contre-ténor puis transforma la section vocale en ritornello instrumental. Ici, il recourt à un ground bass modulant de deux mesures, avec deux flûtes à bec ajoutant leur doux accompagnement, le soliste tissant sa mélodie enchanteresse par-dessus. Mais le meilleur reste à venir car Purcell développe l’un de ses plus beaux ritornelli orchestraux, alternant et combinant les flûtes à bec et les cordes pour créer un mouvement ravissant.

« The day that such a blessing gave » est confié d’abord à une basse solo, la maîtrise harmonique de Purcell résolvant tous les problèmes inhérents au fait de placer ainsi la mélodie à la ligne de basse. À mi-parcours, il transforme le solo en chœur entier, tout en conservant la mélodie au bas de la texture et en confiant une nouvelle fois un déchant aux sopranos du chœur. « Bid the Virtues » est tout à fait unique, même parmi les nombreux mouvements remarquables des Odes. Une soprano et un hautbois s’entremêlent en une resplendissante écriture harmonico-mélodique, tantôt fleurie, tantôt émouvante, qui ne laisse de démontrer l’aptitude purcellienne aux mises en musique extraordinairement éloquentes. Survient ensuite une exubérante aria pour basse solo, « These are the sacred charms », sur un ground bass enlevé. Le dernier mouvement, « See Nature, rejoicing » est d’abord chanté par un duo soprano/basse, avec des contrastes entre les répétitions du rondeau donné par deux épisodes en mineur, avant que tout le chœur et l’orchestre ne reprennent le chant purcellien.

Le seul document complet concernant *Come ye sons of Art* est une copie de Robert Pindar datant de 1765 et recelant plusieurs morceaux douteux, corrigés ici. Purcell conçut son ouverture pour une trompette et un hautbois même si, dans les mouvements suivants, il doubla ces instruments. Certains éditeurs ont ajouté une partie pour une seconde trompette (ignorant souvent que les trompettes purcelliens pouvaient jouer seulement très
peu de notes dans leur registre inférieur) et doublé les hautbois sur ces lignes. Purcell l’entendait, semble-t-il, différemment et nous retrouvons, dans l’ouverture, l’instrumentation qui le voit confier la ligne supérieure à la remarquable trompette de Shore et la seconde partie au hautbois, dans son registre le plus aigu. Dans le manuscrit de Pindar, le chœur final a aussi une partie de timbales largement ornée et se départant des autres parties de timbales de l’époque. Pour le chœur inaugural, il n’est guère possible que ces instruments aient été utilisés, la musique s’éloignant trop de la tonique et de la dominante. Dans the dernier chœur « See Nature, rejoicing »), en revanche, la musique, tonalement plus stable, est d’une tout autre trempe, et il est difficile de l’imaginer sans partie de timbales. Après toutes les répétitions de la musique survenues dans le duo qui précède le chœur, un timbalier aurait pu sans peine improviser sa ligne.

Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King, la première Ode purcellienne, date de 1680 et fut écrite pour le retour à Londres du roi Charles II, le 9 septembre, selon le chroniqueur Luttrell. Elle est absente du manuscrit de Buckingham Palace, où Purcell rassembla nombre de ses premières Odes, mais deux autres sources, conservées au British Museum, nous montrent cette œuvre remarquable d’un compositeur tout juste âgé de vingt et un ans. L’écriture des chœurs y est sémillante et pleine de vie, celle des voix solo sensible et inventive et celle des cordes de toute beauté. À cette époque, Purcell avait déjà écrit énormément de musiques liturgiques à la Chapel Royal.

La Symphonie, pleine d’assurance, est richement harmonisée dans sa première section, les rythmes pointés de sa seconde section imitative trahissant l’influence de Pelham Humfrey et de John Blow, le professeur de Purcell. La maîtrise des procédés compositionnels est ici manifeste : Purcell forge sa section instrumentale non sur une simple reprise de la seconde section de l’ouverture mais sur une reprise à laquelle il surimpose le chœur initial en ajoutant une nouvelle ligne de basse et en allouant au violoncelle la basse originale sous forme d’obbligato. À ce tour de force succède un touchant duo pour alto et basse « Ah! Mighty Sir », tout en langage harmonique éblouisant et couronné d’un ritornello de cordes à l’instrumentation charmante. De nouveau, « Augusta » désigne Londres. Le dansant chœur « But your blest presence now » mène à un splendide ritornello de cordes—le premier de ceux que Purcell concevra par dizaines pour ses Odes royales des quinze années suivantes. Dans « Your influential approach », Purcell fait écho au soliste ténor avec l’ensemble au complet et est inspirée, comme toujours, par le mot « harmony » : il laisse à l’imagination des continuites la vraie illustration pour « Apollo with his sacred lyre », qui sert de coda au mouvement. « When the Summer, in his glory » est délicieusement écrit pour deux sopranos; le chœur suivant, « All loyalty and honour be », montre comment une mise en musique simple, homophonique, peut être aussi efficace que le plus complexe des chœurs. Le solo de ténor « Music the food of love » est un bijou, avec sa mélodie simple, répétée et harmonisée par le chœur entier avant que le continuo ne module la musique à la quarte supérieure et que les cordes ne jouent un ritornello tout de beauté et de grâce. Le chœur final de cette première Ode purcellienne est délibérément conservé dans sa simplicité.

Why, why are all the Muses mute?, le premier Chant de bienvenue écrit par Purcell pour le roi Jacques II, fut probablement exécuté le 14 octobre 1685 à Whitehall, peu après que la cour fut rentrée de Windsor. Selon le chroniqueur Luttrell, l’événement fut marqué par des « démonstrations de joie publiques, comme des sonneries de cloches, des feux de joie en abondance, &c », d’autant qu’on pouvait aussi fêter le tout récent écrasement de la rébellion de Monmouth (mentionné dans le texte
anonyme). L'ouverture de cette Ode a ceci d'unique que, de prime abord, elle semble être inexistante, les phrases « Why, why are all the Muses mute? Why sleeps the viol and the lute? Why hangs untun'd the idle lyre? » amenant Purcell à commencer, magiquement, par un solo de ténor. Le chanteur parvient à réveiller le chœur (« Awake, 'tis Caesar does inspire And animates the vocal quire ») ; l'orchestre est plus dur à réveiller mais, quand il l'est enfin, la Symphonie est de la plus haute volée. La section inaugurale a des détails complexes et la seconde section imitative déborde d'imagination. Après ce début assez peu conventionnel, l'Ode renoue avec le modèle plus établi—solos, duos, trios et chœurs. Le solo de ténor « When should each soul exalted be? » se meut en une section ternaire qui se mue en un chœur à cinq parties et en un dansant ritornello de cordes.

Purcell offrit au célèbre contre-ténor William Turner l'une de ses plus belles arias sur ground bass, « Britain, thou now art great ». Comme si souvent dans les Odes, il employa sa recette éprouvée : un délicieux ground bass, un solo d'alto puis un resplendissant ritornello de cordes—un système dont il démontre, ici encore, la magie infaillible. Un trio et un chœur viennent ensuite louer les triomphes du grand César pour déboucher sur un remarquable solo de basse. Le chanteur qui l'interprêta (on ne sait s'il s'agissait de John Gostling, mais on peut le supposer) devait avoir une voix étonnante car son « Accurs'd rebellion reared his head » splendidement martial couvre un énorme ambitus de plus de deux octaves, César plongeant « d'en haut » (« from on high ») sous terre pour dépeindre l'Enfer. À ce mouvement s'oppose, dans le plus vif des contrastes, le duo de sopranos suivant « So Jove, scarce settled in his sky ».

Le milieu de l'œuvre est marqué par un menuet ritornello où l'écriture des cordes purcellienne atteint des summums de style et d élégance, avant un duo pour ténor et basse, où une ligne de violon obligé et un bref ritornello instrumental conclusif apportent un surcroît d'opulence. La rébellion de Monmouth est expédiée par un solo de ténor et un chœur ; le sort de l'Europe est mis en balance par deux basses : ni la Grande-Bretagne ni l'écriture purcellienne ne flanchent. Partfaite conclusion de l'Ode, le lyrique solo de ténor aigu « O how blest is the Isle » se développe en un ravissant ritornello de cordes, gorgé de la plus rayonnante des harmonies purcelliennes. Mais il y a encore mieux : dans le chœur final, Purcell se montre grandissime avec un adieu digne de Didon elle-même. La conclusion dévale la gamme chromatique de manière irrésistible : aucune Ode purcellienne n'a de conclusion plus poignante.

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Traduction HYPÉRION
PURCELL Sämtliche Oden & Welcome Songs


Denn wo die mageren Worte des Dichters versagten, traten deine glücklicheren Gaben, Purcell, hervor.

Arise, my muse entstand 1690, dem zweiten der sechs Jahre, in denen Purcell den Auftrag für eine Geburtstagsode zu Ehren Königin Marias hatte. In dem Jahr änderte Purcell auch die Instrumentalbesetzung seiner Oden, indem er Holz- und Blechbläser (zusätzlich zu den zwei Blockflöten, die zu verschiedenen vorherigen Gelegenheiten eingesetzt worden waren) der gängigen Streicherbesetzung hinzufügte. In diesem Werk, das ein ungewöhnlich inspiriertes Libretto hat, setzte Purcell jeweils zwei Oboen, Blockflöten und Trompeten ein und fügte ebenfalls dem Streicherapparat eine zweite Bratsche hinzu, was besonders reichhaltige Klänge ermöglichte.


Now does the glorious day appear war Purcells erste Ode, die anlässlich des Geburtstags von Königin Maria (am 30. April 1689) entstand und damit genau ein Jahr bevor Arise, my muse komponiert wurde. Thomas Shadwell war der Autor des Texts, den Purcell recht umfassend bearbeitete und von dem er sogar die letzten 15 Zeilen strich. Purcell beschränkte die Instrumental-
besetzung auf ein Streicherensemble, fügte jedoch eine „dritte Violine“ (eigentlich eine kleine Bratsche) hinzu, so dass ihm eine fünfstimmige Orchesterstruktur zur Verfügung stand. Diese reiche Textur ist von Anfang an in der französisch anmutenden Ouvertüre zu hören, die zuweilen ähnliche stilistische Elemente zu dem Instrumentalstil von Georg Muffat aufweist. Das Tenor-Solo „This does our fertile isle“ ist mit einem sehr kurzen Basso ostinato vertont—er besteht aus nur zwei Tönen, die trotzdem wirkungsvoll sind, besonders wenn sie in ein Orchester-Ritornell übergehen.

Der Höhepunkt dieses Werks ist jedoch ein Satz, der zu den besten von Purcell gezählt werden muss, nämlich das Alt-Solo, „By beauteous softness“, das über einem wehmütig seufzenden, viertaktigen und absteigenden Basso ostinato erklingt. Es ist dies eins der hineinlebendsten Soli Purcells, besonders bei der still-ekstatischen Passage „She with such sweetness“, wenn die letzte Phrase der Gesangstimme sich mit einem vorzüglichen fünfstimmigen Streicher-Ritornell überschneidet.

1683 war Purcell der erste Komponist gewesen, der mit einer Ode anlässlich des Festtags der Heiligen Cäcilia von der neugegründeten „Musical Society“ beauftragt worden war. Für diesen Anlass schrieb er Welcome to all the pleasures, das nicht nur aufgrund seiner besonderen Frische, sondern auch aufgrund seiner originellen Streicher-Ritornelle bemerkenswert ist. Neun Jahre später blühte die Gesellschaft und die „Gentleman Lovers of Musick“ wandten sich wiederum an Purcell, auf dass er „den Fortschritt dieser göttlichen Wissenschaft propagiere“. Motteux schrieb dazu: „Eine prächtige Unterhaltung wird bereitgestellt und davor erklingt stets eine Musikafführung mit den besten Stimmen und Händen, die die Stadt zu bieten hat.“ Mit Hail! bright Cecilia übertraf Purcell sich selbst.


Mit Celebrate this Festival kommen wir zu der fünften der sechs Oden, die Purcell anlässlich des Geburtstags von Königin Maria regelmäßig ab 1689 schrieb. Purcell erweiterte die Anlage im Laufe der Zeit, so dass 1693 im Orchester auch Oboen, Blockflöten und eine Trompete auftraten und obwohl die Gliederung im Großen und Ganzen gleich blieb, hatten sich der Umfang und die Anlage der Oden und ihres dramatischen Inhalts erweitert. Die Chöre, die sich oft aus einer Reihe von Solo-Abschnitten entwickelten, waren länger geworden und um mit dem Libretto Schritt zu halten, waren die instrumentalen Ritornelle fast verschwunden, so dass die verschiedenen Abschnitte stattdessen direkt in einen kontrastierenden Vokalsatz übergingen. Purcell arbeitete eng mit dem berühmten Trompeter John Shore zusammen und es waren nun Sätze mit obligater Trompetenstimme möglich, wofür das passend militärisch anmutende „While, for a righteous cause“ ein sehr gutes Beispiel ist. Dementsprechend machten die Oboen und Blockflöten im Orchester (wobei die Oboen die Blockflöten zumeist verdoppelten) feingliedrige Sätze wie etwa „Return, fond Muse“ (das für zwei Blockflöten und Bratsche angelegt ist) möglich. Die Sinfonie, die eine sehr viel größere Anlage hat als diejenigen der vorangegangenen zehn Jahre, wurde zu dieser Gelegenheit direkt aus Hail! bright Cecilia kopiert, das erst sechs Monate zuvor aufgeführt worden war, und Purcell standen offenbar zwei sehr gute Sopranen zur Verfügung, deren Anfangsduet eine sehr sehenswerte Atmosphäre ein, worin die Sinfonie aus Hail! bright Cecilia kopiert wurde.
Solo-Alt, „Crown the altar“, der über einem Basso ostinato erklingt. Ebenfalls wirkungsvoll ist die wunderbare siebenstimmige Vokaltextur bei „Repeat Maria’s name“, wo der Name der Königin zwischen Stimmen und Instrumenten hin- und hergereicht wird, bis ein Menuett das Werk in eleganter Weise beendet.


1689 erhielt Purcell Kompositionsaufträge von zwei Londoner Schulen. Der eine wurde berühmt, da er auf die Komposition der Oper Dido und Aeneas hinauslief, die in Josiahs Priests Schule für junge Damen in Chelsea uraufgeführt wurde. Etwa um die gleiche Zeit gab (möglicherweise, um mit der Konkurrenz Schritt zu halten) ein Lehrer namens Mr. Maidwell die Musik zur Ode Celestial music did the gods inspire in Auftrag, die am 5. August
an seiner Schule uraufgeführt wurde. Der Librettist ist unbekannt und in der Partitur findet sich lediglich der Hinweis: „die Worte stammen von einem seiner Schüler“. Doch scheint dieser solide Kenntnisse der griechischen und römischen Mythologie gehabt zu haben und dichtete einen Text, der besser war als einige andere, die von berühmteren Autoren der damaligen Zeit verfasst wurden.


Purcell und der Großteil der britischen Öffentlichkeit

Als er 1691 seine Ode für die Königin schrieb, befand Purcell sich in Hochform — die Erfolge, die er kurz zuvor mit seinen Bühnenwerken gefeiert hatte, inspirierten ihn zu einem weitläufigeren Kompositionsstil. Neben den üblichen Streichern ist Welcome, welcome, glorious morn mit jeweils zwei Oboen und Trompeten besetzt, deren Gegenwart gleich am extravertierten Beginn der Sinfonie zu spüren ist. Hier wird das Trompetenthema zwischen den anderen Instrumentenpaaren hin- und hergeworfen, bevor sie alle zusammenfinden, zunächst in geschäftigen Sechzehnteln und dann in reichhaltiger Kadenzfikuration. Im anschließenden imitativen Abschnitt führen Trompeten, Oboen und Streicher sozusagen eine Unterhaltung miteinander. In den späteren Oden ist der Kompositionsstil integrierter, wobei die jeweiligen Abschnitte freier ineinander übergehen; zu Beginn wird dies demonstriert, indem sich der Tenorsolist, die Oboen und schließlich der Chor zusammenschließen. Das Duett „At thy return the joyful Earth“ leitet zu einem herrlichen instrumentalen Ritornell über, bevor der Chor zurückkehrt, diesmal mit zwei zusätzlichen kleinen Duetten. Bei dem Duett „Welcome as when three happy Kingdoms strove“ ändert sich die Stimmung und der Stil wird intimer, doch Purcell gelingt trotzdem ein wirkungsvoller Aufbau hin zu „the loudest song of Fame“. Das Tenorsolo „The mighty goddess“ ist eine außergewöhnliche Komposition, in der die ausgeschmückte Gesangslinie des Solisten im Kontrast zur beharrlichen akkordischen Streicherbegleitung steht. Im nächsten Abschnitt, „Full of Wonder and Delight“, kombiniert Purcell drei Elemente — die Geburt des Königskindes Mary wird zunächst von einem Trio, dann von einem freudigen Chor und schließlich dem vollständigen Instrumentalensemble bejubelt. „And lo! a sacred Fury“ ist eine kompositorische Glanzleistung, in der ein dramatischer, rezitativischer Beginn zu dem längeren Abschnitt „To lofty strains“ führt, der über einem bemerkenswerten punktierten, sechstaktigen Basso ostinato erklingt. Die Gesangsfigur des Solisten wird schließlich vom gesamten Vokalensemble aufgenommen. Eine weitere kurze quasi-rezitative Passage, „My Pray’rs are heard“, diesmal für Sopran, leitet zu einem ostinaten Bass (der angesichts seiner Kürze frei gehandhabt wird) und schließlich zu einem Chor über. Das kurze Bassduett „He to the Field by Honour call’d shall go“ und das elegante Tenorsolo „Whilst undisturb’d his happy Consort reigns“ führen direkt zum letzten Solo und Schluschor. Erst kündigen ein Solotenor und die beiden Trompeten das Thema an, und dann bringt das ganze Ensemble in augmentiertem Kontrapunkt das Werk zu einem triumphierenden Abschluss.

herrlicher, lyrischer Musik vertont (der Alt war Purcells Lieblingsstimmlage) und das anschließende Duett „After War’s Alarms repeated“ enthält wirkungsvolle Lautmalerei in Gestalt von Echos bei dem Wort „repeated“. Das Basssolo „Awful Matron“ ist ein herausragender Satz, in dem die Solostimme meisterlich geführt wird. Im Tenorsolo und Chor „She was the first who did inspire“ werden ebenfalls in reizvoller Weise Echos eingesetzt, während das Duett „Succeeding Princes“ voller lieblicher Harmonien ist und der Chor „But chiefly Recommend to Fame“ einen prachtvollen Abschluss bildet. Das Sopranosolo „Thy Royal Patron sung“ (eine der wenigen längeren Sopranarien in den Oden) stellt einen weiteren Triumph Purcells fruchtbarer Phantasie dar, in dem zwei Blockflöten für zusätzliches Pathos sorgen und der Schlusschor wohlklingende Freude zum Ausdruck bringt.


Obwohl die Ode erst die vierte war, die Purcell bis dahin geschrieben hatte, ist die zweiteilige Sinfonie zu Anfang unter ihrer frölichen Oberfläche eine der melancholischsten, die er je komponierte und geht direkt in ein virtuoses Basssolo über, das wiederum einen Stimmumfang von über zwei Oktaven abdeckt. Ein kurzes Trio führt zu einem Chor und zum ersten der Streicher-Ritornelle, die ein so herausragendes Merkmal der frühen Oden sind. Ein Basso ostinato aus vier Tönen bildet die Grundlage für das Altsolo „And when late from your throne“, das über einen kurzen Chor in das zugehörige melancholische Ritornell führt. Nach einer Reihe von kürzeren Sätzen folgt eine weitere Kostbarkeit Purcells, das Altsolo „These had by their ill usage drove“, das über einen viertaktigen modulierenden Basso ostinato gesetzt ist und in das letzte (und gelungenste) Ritornell des Werks mündet. Ein Solotenor eröffnet den Schlusschor, dessen besinnliches Ende sich als prophetisch erweisen sollte. Obwohl dem Monarchen im Text ein langes Leben gewünscht wird, sollte sich weniger als drei Jahre später alle Hoffnung als vergebens herausstellen, als die Herrschaft König Karls II. ein jähes Ende nahm. Zwar hatte er das Land fast in den finanziellen Ruin getrieben, doch hatte er sich gleichzeitig sehr für die Musik und die Musiker eingesetzt.

Purcells vierte Geburtstagsode für die Königin, Love’s goddess sure was blind, war nur mit Streichern und zwei Flöten besetzt und damit das intimste der sechs Werke. Die zweiteilige Sinfonie ist besonders gelungen und ergiebig gesetzt. Der edle und doch melancholische erste Abschnitt wird von einer absteigenden Tonleiter aus sechs Tönen und einer herrlichen Melodie beherrscht (die nur einmal in den Violen, jedoch dreimal in der Bratsche erscheint) und alles ist in wunderschöne Harmonien eingehüllt. Der zweite Abschnitt im Dreiertakt scheint zunächst sorgloser daher zu kommen, besitzt jedoch (wie der überwiegende Teil von Purcells Musik, die man spielen muss, um ihren wahren Gehalt zu entdecken) in Wirklichkeit nach wie vor eine unterschwellig melancholische Tendenz, die am Ende gesteigert wird, wenn sich die Atmosphäre des Anfangs wieder einstellt. Charles Sedleys einleitende Worte werden vom Countertenor-Solisten übernommen und leiten in ein elegantes, längeres Streicher-Ritornell über. Die synkopierte Begleitung des Basssolos „Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien“ verleiht der Musik zusätzliche Dringlichkeit und hebt
sie vom anschließenden, sanft wogenden Duett „Sweetness of Nature“ ab. Hier kombiniert Purcell die Altstimme und den hohen Tenor mit dem pastoralen Klang zweier Blockflöten (allerdings muss hier aufgrund des Tonumfangs der Blockflöte die größere, sogenannte „Voice flute“ eingesetzt werden). Der Solosopran beginnt das reizvolle Menuett „Long may she reign“, das danach vom gesamten Ensemble wiederholt wird.


Purcells Sinfonie zu Raise, raise the voice ist wie gewöhnlich kühn und eifallsreich gestaltet und erzeugt


Laudate Ceciliam, die zweite der kleiner angelegten Oden, die Purcell anlässlich des Festtags der Heiligen Cäcilia komponierte, entstand 1683, demselben Jahr wie auch Welcome to all the pleasures. Wie bei Raise, raise the voice ist auch hier die Besetzung auf drei Singstimmen beschränkt, die von zwei Violinen und Basso continuo begleitet werden, nur dass diesmal der Text auf Latein vorliegt: Laudate Ceciliam ist Purcells kürzeste und auch einzige Ode, die nicht in englischer Sprache verfasst ist. Die Gesangs parts scheinen durchweg für Solostimmen gedacht zu sein, und der Einfluss des Verse-Anthems ist deutlich.


Bei dem Beginn der wiederum prachtvollen Sinfonie ist eben jene Stimmung sogleich in Purcells typisch dichtem Streicherklang spürbar; dem steht ein geschäftiger und origineller zweiter Abschnitt gegenüber. Die friedvolle erste Strophe der Ode, in der die Vorzüge des geruhsamen Landlebens gepriesen werden, ist für Solo-Countertenor komponiert (und wurde 1684 vermutlich von dem berühmten Countertenor William Turner gesungen). Dabei werden die „rapturous joys“ („verzückte Freuden“) mit einem besonders ausdrucksvollen Melisma vertont, was dann zu einem wunderbaren Streicher-Ritornell umgewandelt und erweitert wird, in dem Purcells unnachahmliche harmonischen und melodischen Wendungen immer wieder zum Ausdruck kommen. Ein Bass kündigt, begleitet von zwei Violinen, gut gelaunt die Ankunft des „gültigen Prinzen“ an, und wird bei seinem Willkommens-


Purcells einzige Ode aus dem Jahr 1681, Swifter, Isis, swifter flow, war insgesamt erst seine zweite und entstand wahrscheinlich zur Feier der Rückkehr Karls II. nach London von seinem alljährlichen Herbstaufenthalt in Newmarket. Luttrell vermerkt in seinem Tagebuch, dass am 12. Oktober 1681 „abends jubelnd die Glocken läuteten und überall Freudenfeuer brannten“. Der anonymer Verfasser des Odentextes war offenbar mit derartigen königlichen Heimkehrfeiern vertraut und spielt direkt auf sie an. Auch für Purcell scheint das Glockenläuten eine besondere Quelle der Inspiration gewesen zu


Wieder stellt Purcell eine ausgezeichnete Sinfonie an den Anfang, die zwar feierlich und punktiert beginnt, aber trotzdem den melancholischen Mollharmonien Platz lässt, die Purcells Streichersatz so besonders machen. Der geschäftig kontrapunktische zweite Abschnitt ist ebenso einfallreich und geht direkt ins erste Basssolo über, das von zwei Blockflöten begleitet wird und den Erfolg des Herzogs bei der Niederschlagung des Monmouth-Aufstandes preist. Ein Trio setzt das Loblied auf Jakob fort und erinnert die Hörer, dass er in der Thronfolge an nächster Stelle steht, und der Chor nimmt das schwung-

Als Purcell 1694 Come ye sons of Art, away für die Königin schrieb, war er im Hochform und komponierte eine Ode, die sich deutlich von dem Großeil der 22 vorangegangenen Werke abhob. Die Anlage war diesmal größer als gewohnt — an die Stelle der einzel besetzten Streicher trat ein Orchester und dem Chor wurde eine klar definierte Rolle zugewiesen. Die Erfolge, die er kurz zuvor mit seinen Bühnenwerken gefeiert hatte, spornen Purcell zu einem weiträumigeren Kompositionsstil an und der inspirierte (vermutlich von Nahum Tate stammende) Text mit zahlreichen Hinweisen auf Musik und Musikinstrumente lieferte Purcells fruchtbarer Phantasie reichhaltiges Material.

Die Ouvertüre (die er im folgenden Jahr in The Indian Queen wiederverwendete) beginnt in stattlicher Art und Weise; die ersten zehn Takte zeichnen sich durch prachtvolle Harmonik aus, und die anschließende lebhafte Canzona weist viele rhythmische Einfälle nebst drei kontrastierenden Motiven auf. In dem melancholischen Adagio-Teil zeigt sich Purcell jedoch von seiner besten Seite. Die Sopranstimme und ergreifenden Harmonien sind voller Pathos, und der Einsatz von ausgehaltenen Noten, die sich durch die mittleren und tiefen Stimmen ziehen, ist außergewöhnlich. Anstelle der erwarteten Wiederholung der Canzona geht es direkt mit dem Anfangschorn weiter, so wie der ersten von mehreren Wiederholungen des Hauptthemas in unterschiedlichen harmonischen Ausprägungen und Arrangements — eine direkt vom Theater übernommene Technik. Indem die Melodie zuerst von einem Countertenor gesungen wird, löst Purcell geschickt das Problem der Umsetzung für den Chor (wo die Melodie entweder zu tief oder für die Sopranstimmen viel zu hoch gewesen wäre). Außerdem fügt er eine Diskantstimme hinzu und lässt die Melodie den Altstimmen, die von der Trompete und Oboe verstärkt werden. Bei dem berühmten Duett „Sound the trumpet“ widerstand Purcell der Versuchung, die im Text genannten Instrumente zu verwenden, und entschied sich stattdessen für einen lebhaften zweitaktigen modulierenden Basso ostinato für die königlichen Continuo-Spieler, worüber zwei Countertenore ihre Virtuosität demonstrieren. Bei „You make the list’ning shores resound“ („Du lässt lauschende Ufer widerhallen“) wurde im Orchester sicherlich geschmunzelt — man kann mit einiger Sicher-
heit davon ausgehen, dass zwei der Instrumentalisten des Ensembles die berühmten Trompeter Matthias und William Shore waren.

Das Herzstück der Ode, „Strike the viol“, ist eine ekstatische Darstellung der Musik. Es werden darin die Gambe, Laute, Harfe und Flöte (gemeint ist die Blockflöte) genannt, was Purcell (wie immer, wenn im Text von Musik die Rede ist) besonders inspirierte. Er arbeitet hier mit einer Technik, die er in zahlreichen früheren Oden perfektioniert hatte—er kombiniert einen Basso ostinato mit einem Countertenor-Solo und leitet die Gesangspassage dann in ein Instrumentalritornell über. Hier setzt er einen modulierenden zweitaktigen ostinaten Bass ein, der behutsam von Blockflöten begleitet wird. Darüber schlängelt sich die bezaubernde Melodie des Solisten entlang. Gekrönt wird das Ganze durch ein Orchester-Ritornell, in dem die beiden Blockflöten mit den Streichinstrumenten alternieren, was eine besonders reizvolle Wirkung hat.

„The day that such a blessing gave“ wird zunächst von einem Solobass gesungen, und dank Purcells harmonischen Geschick werden jegliche Probleme vermieden, die sich auftun können, wenn die Melodie im Bass erklingt. In der Mitte verwandelt er das Solo in einen vollständigen Chor, wobei die Melodie im unteren Bereich der Textur verbleibt und die Sopranstimmen im Chor erneut einen Diskant zu singen bekommen. „Bid the Virtues“ ist einzigartig, selbst unter den vielen bemerkenswerten Sätzen der Oden. Ein Solosopran und eine Oboe werden in prachtvoller Harmonik und Melodik miteinander verbunden, mal in ausgesuchter Weise, mal überaus anrührend; stets jedoch außerordentlich gewandt vertont, wie es für Purcell charakteristisch war. Als nächstes folgt „These are the sacred charms“, eine ausgelassene Arie für Solobass über einem lebhaften ostinaten Bass. Der Schlussatz, „See Nature, rejoicing“, wird zunächst als Duett vom Sopran und Bass gesungen, wobei zwei Moll-Episoden des Rondos für Abwechslung zwischen den einzelnen Wiederholungen sorgen, bevor der ganze Chor samt Orchester Purcells Melodie aufnehmen.


Purcells erste Ode, Welcome, vicegerent of the mighty King, stammt aus dem Jahr 1680 und wurde zur Rückkehr von König Karl II. nach London komponiert, die den Aufzeichnungen des Chronisten Luttrell zufolge am 9. September stattfand. Die Ode erscheint nicht im


Das Orchester lässt sich nicht so leicht wachrufen, doch wenn es sich schließlich aufrafft, erklingt eine erstklassige Sinfonie. Die Einleitung ist voller aufwendiger Details, während der imitativen zweite Teil besonders phantasievoll gestaltet ist. Nach diesem unkonventionellen Anfang nimmt die Ode gewohntere Formen an und fährt mit Soli, Duetten, Trios und Chören fort. Dem Tenorsolo „When should each soul exalted be?“ folgt ein Abschnitt im Dreiertakt, der dann in einen fünfstimmigen Chor und schließlich ein tänzerisches Streicher-Ritornell übergeht.

Für den berühmten Countertenor William Turner schrieb Purcell „Britain, thou now art great“, eine seiner schönsten Ostinato-Arien. Wie bei so vielen seiner Oden bediente er sich hier seiner bewährten Formel — ein reizvoller Basso ostinato, ein Alto solo und dann ein herrliches Streicher-Ritornell — und bewies einmal mehr den nie versagenden Zauber dieser Methode. Als nächstes folgen ein Trio und Chor, in denen die Triumphe des großen Cäsars gepriesen werden, was dann in ein bemerkenswertes Basssolo übergeht. Der ursprüngliche Basssänger (es lässt sich nicht mit Sicherheit sagen, um wen es sich dabei gehandelt hat, doch kann man wohl annehmen, dass es John Gostling war) muss eine erstaunliche Stimme besessen haben, denn sein prächtig kriegerisches „Accurs’d rebellion reared his head“ erfordert einen riesigen Stimmumfang von mehr als zwei Oktaven, in dem Cäsar „from on high“ („von hoch droben“) bis in die unterirdischen Tiefen der Hölle hinabfällt. Das anschließende Sopran-duett „So Jove, scarce settled in his sky“ sorgt damit für einen wirkungsvollen Kontrast.


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