The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL

These eleven CDs contain all the anthems, services and devotional songs of Henry Purcell.

CONNOR BURROWES, MARK KENNEDY, DANIEL LOCHMANN, EAMONN O'DWYER, NICHOLAS WITCOMB trebles
LYNNE DAWSON, SUSAN GRITTON sopranos
JAMES BOWMAN, countertenor
PAUL AGNEW, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE tenors
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE basses

CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
CHOIR OF THE KING'S CONSORT

THE KING'S CONSORT
ROBERT KING

www.hyperion-records.co.uk
HYPERION RECORDS LIMITED LONDON ENGLAND
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 1 : CDS44141

1. O sing unto the Lord, Z44 (1688) [13’12]
2. O praise God in his holiness, Z42 (c1682/5) [8’12]
3. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, Z46 (probably 1689) [7’44]
4. It is a good thing to give thanks, Z18 (1682/5) [11’55]
5. O give thanks unto the Lord, Z33 (1693) [9’53]
6. Let mine eyes run down with tears, Z24 (c1682) [9’17]
7. My beloved spake, Z28 (before 1678) [11’23]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, ROBERT EVANS basses
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 25 26 27 November 1991
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
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DISC 2 : CDS44142

1. Blessed are they that fear the Lord, Z5 (1688) [9'36]
2. Behold now, praise the Lord, Z3 (c1680) [5'55]
3. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Z20 (c1682-5) [11'24]
4. My song shall be alway, Z31 (1690?) [14'42]
5. Te Deum and Jubilate Deo in D, Z232 (1694) [8'43]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, DANIEL LOCHMANN, PHILIP HALLCHURCH, TIMOTHY BOWES trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 26 27 28 February 1992
The Complete Sacred Music of
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DISC 3 : CDS44143

1. Blow up the trumpet in Sion, Z10 [7'29]
2. The Lord is king, be the people never so impatient, Z53 [4'52]
3. Begin the song, and strike the living lyre, Z183 [8'11]
4. The word is a lantern unto my feet, Z61 [4'55]
5. Tell me, some pitying angel (The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation), Z196 [7'38]
6. Hear my prayer, O Lord, Z15 [2'18]
7. Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes, Z136 [5'35]
8. O Lord, our Governor, Z39 [10'00]
9. Remember not, Lord, our offences, Z50 [3'29]
10. Hosanna to the highest, Z187 [5'24]
11. O God, thou hast cast us out, Z36 [4'05]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, DANIEL LOCHMANN, MARK KENNEDY, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles
LYNNE DAWSON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE, ROBERT EVANS basses
THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
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ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 24 25 26 27 28 August 1992
The Complete Sacred Music of 
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 4 : CDS44144

1. Behold, I bring you glad tidings, Z2 [10'55]
2. Since God, so tender a regard, Z143 [4'30]
3. Early, O Lord, my fainting soul, Z132 [5'42]
4. Sleep, Adam, sleep and take thy rest, Z195 [1'50]
5. Awake, ye dead, Z182 [3'13]
6. The earth trembled, Z197 [2'11]
7. The way of God is an undefiled way, Z56 [8'23]
8. Lord, not to us, but to thy name, Z137 [6'58]
9. Lord, what is man?, Z192 [6'18]
10. Sing unto God, Z52 [5'50]
11. O, all ye people, clap your hands, Z138 [2'31]
12. My heart is inditing, Z30 [16'58]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, CONNOR BURROWES,
MARK KENNEDY, PHILIP HALLCHURCH, EAMONN O’DWYER trebles
SUSAN GRITTON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE, STEPHEN VARCOE, ROBERT EVANS basses
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 26 August, 30 November, 1 December 1992 and 3-6 January 1993
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 5 : CDS44145

1 O Lord, rebuke me not, Z40 [7'18]
2 With sick and famish’d eyes, Z200 [5'22]
3 How long, great God?, Z189 [3'48]
4 Awake, and with attention hear, Z181 [12'49]
5 O God, thou art my god, Z35 [3'38]
6 We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear, Z199 [1'27]
7 Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, Z47 [10'24]
8 O, I’m sick of life, Z140 [5'16]
9 O God, the king of glory, Z34 [2'00]
10 Let the night perish (Job’s Curse), Z191 [4'26]
11 When on my sick bed I languish, Z144 [4'49]
12 Rejoice in the Lord alway (‘The Bell Anthem’), Z49 [8'24]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS,
MARK KENNEDY, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles
SUSAN GRITTON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor, CHARLES DANIELS tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE bass, ROBERT EVANS bass
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded 24 25 26 August, 30 November 1992, 6 January and 20 April 1993
The Complete Sacred Music of 
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 6 : CDS44146

1. Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?, Z65 [10'47]
2. Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth?, Z26 [4'15]
3. O Lord, grant the King a long life, Z38 [8'09]
4. Hear me, O Lord, the great support, Z133 [5'47]
5. Thou wakeful shepherd that does Israel keep (A Morning Hymn), Z198 [2'54]
6. Who hath believed our report?, Z64 [8'27]
7. I will love thee, O Lord, ZN67 [6'05]
8. Great God and just, Z186 [3'54]
9. Plung’d in the confines of despair, Z142 [4'41]
10. O praise the Lord, all ye heathen, Z43 [2'57]
11. My heart is fixed, O God, Z29 [8'31]

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’DWYER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor
CHARLES DANIELS, PAUL AGNEW tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 1 December 1992; 19-22 April 1993
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695
DISC 7 : CDS44147

1. I was glad when they said unto me, 1685 [4'03]
2. O consider my adversity, Z32 [9'25]
3. Beati omnes qui timent Dominum, Z131 [4'29]
4. I was glad when they said unto me, Z19 [8'02]
5. Save me, O God, Z51 [4'32]
6. In the black dismal dungeon of despair, Z190 [3'44]
7. Te Deum in B flat, Z230 [5'44]
9. Thy way, O God, is holy, Z60 [5'13]

Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary 1695

10. Drum Processional [1'53]
11. March, Z860 [1'29]

Funeral Sentences

12. Man that is born of a woman, Z27 [2'15]
13. In the midst of life, Z17b [4'07]
14. Thou know'st, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, Z58b [3'53]
15. Thou know'st, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, Z58c [2'16]
16. Canzona, Z860 [2'40]
17. Drum Recessional [2'01]

MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’Dwyer, JAMES GOODMAN tenors
SUSAN GRITTON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
NIGEL SHORT countertenor, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor, MARK MILHOFER tenor, MICHAEL GEORGE bass
ROBERT EVANS bass, THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD, THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 21 22 April [4]; 19 20 21 22 23 July; 23 24 25 26 August 1993
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 8 : CDS44148

1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, Z16 [11’50]
2. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, Z9 [6’23]
3. Benedicite in B flat, Z230 [7’28]
4. Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes, Z135 [6’26]
5. Full of wrath his threatening breath, Z185 [2’46]
6. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, Z11 [7’35]
7. Magnificat in G minor, Z231 [3’27]
8. Nunc dimittis in G minor, Z231 [1’40]
9. Be merciful unto me, Z4 [7’10]
10. They that go down to the sea in ships, Z57 [9’10]

EAMONN O’DWYER, MARK KENNEDY trebles, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE, MARK MILHOFER tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded on 22 April, 23 July, 23-26 August 1993; 5-8 January 1994
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 9 : CDS44149

1 The Lord is my light, Z55
2 The Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof, Z54
3 Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, Z8
4 O Lord God of hosts, Z37
5 Let God arise, Z23
6 Cantate Domino, Z230
7 Deus misereator, Z230
8 Blessed be the Lord my strength, Z6
9 O Lord our governor, Z141
10 In guilty night (Saul and the Witch of Endor), Z134

CONNOR BURROWES, EAMONN O’DWYER, JAMES GOODMAN,
MARK KENNEDY, AARON WEBBER trebles
SUSAN GRITTON soprano
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor,
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS,
MARK PADMORE, MARK MILHOFER tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded in July and August 1993 and January 1994
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

DISC 10 : CDS44150

1. I will give thanks unto the Lord, Z21 [9'53]
2. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, Z22 [3'05]
3. How have I stray’d, Z188 [3'50]
4. Benedictus in B flat, Z230 [4'03]
5. Hear my prayer; O God, Z14 [5'00]
6. Kyrie eleison in B flat, Z230 [1'02]
7. Out of the deep have I called, Z45 [6'52]
8. Nicene Creed in B flat, Z230 [4'18]
9. Blessed is he that considereth the poor, Z7 [5'53]
10. The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel, Z69 [3'30]
11. Unto Thee will I cry, Z63 [12'51]

EAMONN O’DWYER, JAMES GOODMAN, MARK KENNEDY,
DAVID NICKLESS, AARON WEBBER trebles
SUSAN GRITTON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS,
MARK PADMORE, MARK MILHOFER tenors
COLIN CAMPBELL, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded in July and August 1993 and January and April 1994
1 Praise the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God, Z48 [16'42]
2 Close thine eyes and sleep secure, Z184 [3'20]
3 Lord, how long wilt thou be angry?, Z25 [3'42]
4 Hear me O Lord, Z13a/Z13b [6'59]
5 Magnificat in B flat, Z230 [3'50]
6 Nunc Dimittis in B flat, Z230 [1'56]
7 Turn thou us, O good Lord, Z62 [7'11]
8 O Lord, thou art my God, Z41 [7'32]
9 Now that the sun hath veiled his light (An Evening Hymn), Z193 [4'16]
10 Awake, awake put on thy strength, Z1 [8'36]

MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’DWYER, AARON WEBBER trebles
SUSAN GRITTON soprano, JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
THE KING’S CONSORT
ROBERT KING conductor

Recorded in July and August 1993 and January and April 1994
The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

“The greatest Genius we ever had.”

These compact discs contain all of Purcell’s anthems, services and devotional songs.
A list of the eleven CDs with their contents and durations appears on pages 156 to 159.
French and German commentaries can also be found on the Hyperion website – www.hyperion-records.co.uk.

All notes in this booklet are by the founder and conductor of The King’s Consort, Robert King.

A list of the artists who took part in the recordings appears on page 155.

Sometimes a hero in an age appears;
but scarce a Purcell in a thousand years.
### Purcell’s Sacred Music

An alphabetical list of Purcells’s anthems, services and devotional songs showing the disc on which each work appears and the number of the page in this booklet where it is discussed. The ‘Z’ numbers are from *Henry Purcell (1659-1695): an analytic catalogue of his music* by F B Zimmerman (London, 1963).

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... Te Deum and Jubilate
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Great God and just, Z186
Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, Z13a/Z13b
Hear me, O Lord, the great support, Z133
Hear my prayer; O God, Z14
Hear my prayer, O Lord, Z15
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How have I stray’d, Z188
How long, great God?, Z189
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My beloved spake, Z28 (before 1678)  
My heart is fixed, O God, Z29  
My heart is inditing, Z30  
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O, all ye people, clap your hands, Z138  
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O God, thou art my god, Z35  
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Unto Thee will I cry, Z63
We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear, Z199
When on my sick bed I languish, Z144
Who hath believed our report?, Z64
Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?, Z65
With sick and famish’d eyes, Z200
PURCELL began his musical upbringing as a boy chorister. There is nothing inherently unusual about that, for many British musicians have, over the years, been fortunate enough to have that unequalled education. But had he been born just a few years earlier, this would have been impossible. Fortunately, within a few months of his birth the puritan rule of Oliver Cromwell came to an end, and the monarchy and the Anglican Church were restored to Britain, releasing with it a burst of musical creativity and life that has never since been repeated. By the 1680s, when Purcell’s genius was flowering, London was buzzing with newly-written music for the church, the royal and private chapels, the newly-founded concert halls, the theatres and even the taverns.

But the twenty years which led to this explosion of music were not at all easy. Cromwell’s regime had done terrible damage to music in England, and only a handful of composers of note survived to see the Restoration. Music in Britain had always relied heavily on patronage, and the royal establishments had always been the greatest source of performers and composers. By 1660 few of these remained, and music under Charles II had to begin almost afresh. One of Charles’s first court appointments was that of Henry Cooke as Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal. As part of the royal establishment there were twelve such Children, who sang at services in the Chapel: their Master was responsible not only for their musical tuition but also for seeing that they were housed, fed, cared for when they were sick, had their clothes washed and repaired, had a fire in the winter, and that they were educated properly. By all accounts the royal purse was often strained, and Cooke was frequently owed large sums by the Crown. He was clearly a fine teacher, for his pupils included John Blow, Michael Wise and Pelham Humfrey (who succeeded to Cooke’s post in 1672), together with the young Henry Purcell. We do not know when Purcell entered the Chapel, but it may have been as early as 1667. Highly fashionable at the time was the latest French and Italian music, and Purcell would clearly have come under its influence.

When Purcell’s voice broke at what was then the unusually early age of fourteen, he was clearly thought of as a gifted musician, for he was apprenticed (without salary) to John Hingeston, the royal repairer and tuner of musical instruments. Such a post would have brought him into daily contact with all the royal musical establishments and their leading figures. Not only did he tune the organ in Westminster Abbey, for instance, but he also had lessons in composition from its distinguished organist, John Blow, forging a connection with the Abbey that Purcell was to continue for the rest of his life. For the next three years the name of Henry Purcell continued to appear in the Abbey’s paybooks for tuning the organ and copying the occasional manuscript. He must have continued with his compositions, for in 1677 came his first official post. The eighteen-year old Purcell was appointed Composer-in-Ordinary to the Violins.
ROBERT KING
A photograph by Jim Four
JAMES BOWMAN
A photograph by Robert Carpenter Turner

ROBERT EVANS
A photograph by Naomi Schillinger

MICHAEL GEORGE
A photograph by Peter S Zonwir
SUSAN GRITTON
A photograph by Jason Bell

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP
A photograph by Coneyl Jay

PAUL AGNEW
The Royal Violins were a string orchestra, modelled on the famous French court orchestra, the Vingt-quatre violons du Roi, who played not only for the king at his table, but also in the Chapel Royal. Though chronically short of money, Charles took a keen interest in the music of his Chapel, and by bringing together the choir and the Violins (or more usually a small nucleus of them) he greatly encouraged the development of the large-scale verse anthem with strings.

In 1679 a greater appointment came Purcell’s way when he was made Organist of Westminster Abbey (keeping his job with the Violins) at the sum of £10 per annum, with an additional £8 towards the rental of a house. A major part of his post was to compose music for the Abbey, and this he did with great productivity. His speed of composition was remarkable, for over the next five years he contributed nearly 150 anthems, services and other sacred works. At the same time he was starting to compose music for the theatre (in fifteen years he provided music for over forty plays, as well as the five semi-operas and Dido), chamber music (the Sonnatas in three and four parts, and the Fantasias all probably date from 1680), writing the first of his twenty-four wonderful odes and welcome songs – and finding time to marry Frances Peters. In 1682 Purcell was additionally appointed one of the three organists at the Chapel Royal – a sure sign of royal favour and growing reputation, and also another reason for the continued outpouring of church music (an excuse to move into rather more grand quarters in Great St Anne’s Lane, where easy access to Westminster Abbey could be gained through Dean’s Yard). He must also have welcomed the extra £60 per annum that his appointment as ‘organ maker and keeper etc., in the place of Mr Hingeston, deceased’ brought him, but he would have earned every penny of his various salaries. The workload of being organist at the Abbey and the Chapel Royal, Composer to the Violins, Keeper of Instruments and a busy freelance composer was enormous.

The majority of Purcell’s church music was written before 1685, when Charles II died. Though the King’s finances had always been in a terrible state, he had been a great friend and encouraging patron of music. King James was less popular, unsubtly trying to impose his Catholic tastes on his subjects, and infuriating the musical establishment by setting up his own Roman Catholic chapel in Whitehall, with no expense spared: the salaries of the singing-men and instrumentalists alone came to £1,500 per annum. Worse still, James employed many foreign musicians, and at the same time the number of men at the Chapel Royal shrank from 32 to 23. Although Purcell seems to have carried out his royal duties conscientiously, he appears to have written relatively little music for James, choosing instead to divert his energies elsewhere. In many of those settings which he did provide, gone seems to be the exuberant intention of impressing a Sunday congregation at the Chapel, replaced by a more contemplative, penitential, almost private mood. Some of these smaller-scaled works – devotional songs – appear not to have been written for the Chapel Royal, but for private use.
The riches contained in Purcell’s sacred music are almost embarrassing. Extant are sixty-five full and verse anthems, a morning and evening service in B flat, a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G minor and a setting of the Te Deum and Jubilate (all with basso continuo and nearly half of them with string accompaniment), together with another thirty-five pieces whose texts are not taken from the bible: these latter examples range in scale from single voices to full choir with soloists, all with basso continuo but none with other instruments.

Although a small number of Purcell’s church works are regulars on the service papers of Britain’s cathedrals and collegiate choral establishments, the majority of his output for the Church is nowadays seldom heard. In church the string accompaniments today have usually to be played on an organ, losing Purcell’s delicious string textures which are such an attractive feature of the works. And those works which are recorded have rarely reproduced the orchestral line-up which was actually available at the Chapel Royal.

For special occasions (such as a coronation) a large string band would have been assembled, but for the majority of services at which instrumentalists were present, Purcell would have had only single strings (two violins, viola and two bass violins), an organ and two theorbos at his disposal. There were no sixteen-foot instruments used at the Chapel: the bass line was played by bass violins (their tone colour distinctive due to their being larger and tuned a tone lower than a cello), an organ and a pair of theorbos. For anthems and devotional songs which were intended to be accompanied only by continuo instruments, the ensemble would have contained just one bass violin, one or two theorbos and a small organ.

Pitch in the Chapel Royal, unusually, was much higher than our ‘standardised baroque’ A=415Hz, and higher even than ‘modern’ A=440Hz. These recordings take A=466Hz as their pitch centre; not only does this follow clear historical evidence, but it also makes sense of Purcell’s improbably (and uncharacteristically) low vocal writing in his Chapel Royal works. It gives a new dimension to the music, creating a choral and string sound that, to those used to hearing Purcell performed at a lower pitch, is quite revelatory. For the works that appear to have been written for use away from the Chapel Royal, where performing pitch was lower, we took A=415Hz as our pitch centre: the clearest practical evidence that the composer was writing for this lower pitch comes from the differing vocal tessitura of these pieces.

Some of the men at the Chapel Royal were extremely good singers, and Purcell’s writing is evidence of fine adult voices in all sections – not just those such as John Gostling whose low notes brought him fame. Nowadays the finest singers do not tend to sing in cathedral choirs to augment their living (though it is remarkable how many pass through the system before busy diaries force them to stop),
but in Purcell’s day there was less work around, and the Chapel Royal would probably have had the Bowman, Daniels and George of our day on its books, along with John Gostling, William Turner and Purcell’s other notable singers. Thus our use of modern-day ‘stars’ for the verse sections seems fully justified. And our use of the Chapel Royal’s high pitch is as clear a proof, if ever one was needed, that the countertenor voice was thriving at the Chapel Royal: many of Purcell’s alto lines in the sacred music are clearly written for falsettist.

Purcell must have had a handful of remarkable trebles at the Chapel Royal, because his verse-writing for the boys in the anthems often treats them no differently to his adult male soloists. For those devotional songs which seem to demand a boy’s voice (rather than those clearly written with a woman’s voice in mind – royal taste was moving to favour women’s voices at the theatre) Purcell’s writing requires not only singing of considerable control, but also a genuine understanding of the text. We know little about Purcell’s choristers, though with his own upbringing in the Chapel choir he must have been thoroughly acquainted with a choirboy’s lifestyle, and respectful of their professionalism. There is one story relating to the rehearsals in 1692 of the music to the play The Libertine, containing the song ‘Nymphs and shepherds come away’ which was being sung by the famous treble Jemmy Bowen. One of the musicians bossily told Bowen ‘to grace and run a Division [i.e. an ornament] in such a Place. “O, let him alone”, said Mr Purcell; “he will grace it more naturally than you, or I, can teach him”’. In that fleeting moment we get another, human reason why Purcell was so universally admired. And if this was how he always treated his choirboys, they must have adored him!

In recording all Purcell’s sacred music we attempted (as far as we could, three hundred years after the event) to recreate the textures, the performing pitch and the scale of performance that Purcell might have heard at his services: we also tried to build into our recorded sound picture the seventeenth-century acoustics of the Chapel Royal – a surprisingly small and intimate building which was sadly burned to the ground in a terrific fire at the end of the seventeenth century. Luckily ground plans still survive which show the dimensions of the Chapel. The top line of our choral sound aimed to imitate the colour that we believe Purcell’s experienced, sixteen-year-old choristers (whose voices were still unbroken) must have produced. But, scholarly considerations aside, what is most important (and what wins through) is wonderful music of the highest quality that deserves to be heard far more often than it is. It was no exaggeration at Purcell’s death when he was described by his fellow British musicians as “The greatest Genius we ever had”.

❖ ❖ ❖
1 O sing unto the Lord
Verse anthem, Z44 (1688)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor
ROBERT EVANS bass  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

1 Symphony

2 O sing unto the Lord a new song. Alleluia.
Sing unto the Lord all the whole earth. Alleluia.

3 Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name; be telling of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his honour unto the heathen, and his wonders unto all people.
Glory and worship are before him; power and honour are in his sanctuary.

4 The Lord is great, and cannot worthily be praised; He is more to be feared than all gods.
As for all the heathen, they are but idols; but it is the Lord that made the heavens.

5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

6 Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is king, and that it is he who hath made the round world
so sure that it cannot be moved, and how that he shall judge the people righteously. Alleluia. Amen.

Psalm 96 vv 1-6 9-10

O sing unto the Lord is a relatively late work, noted in the Gostling Manuscript as ‘Written by
Mr Purcell in 1688’. It shows Purcell at his most Italianate, with vigorous antiphony between
voices and instruments, and also between a prominent solo bass and the chorus. This seems to have
been a verse anthem written for a special occasion when the large string orchestra was available,
with the block chords that open the work especially suited to a fuller orchestral texture. Before the
imitative section that almost always makes up the second half of the Symphony in the anthems
Purcell unusually adds a wonderfully expressive section (frequently marked ‘Drag’ in manuscripts),
full of chromaticism and diminished harmonies. Although the writing is overtly celebratory, behind it
is the deliciously wistful quality which is a feature of so much of Purcell’s music.
After the strings’ Symphony a solo bass ceremoniously opens the proceedings, followed by two lilting choral Alleluias, before we are treated to the first of a series of imaginative instrumental ritornelli. The four-part verse ‘Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name’ leads straight into the mysteriously-coloured ‘Declare his honour’, which blossoms into a full chorus. Ground basses are surprisingly thinly spread in the church music (compared at least to the odes and welcome songs) but the duet for treble and alto ‘The Lord is great’ is a fine example, capped by another marvellously inventive string ritornello.

The central section of the anthem is the quartet ‘O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness’, as magical a piece of writing as Purcell ever produced. After such awestruck writing the antiphony of solo bass with choir and strings returns at ‘Tell it out among the heathen’, leading into a final section of Alleluias. Typically, Purcell treats these Alleluias gently, and the anthem ends serenely.

**7 O praise God in his holiness**
Verse anthem, Z42 (c1682/5)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor   CHARLES DANIELS tenor
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

7 Symphony
O praise God in his holiness: praise him in the firmament of his power.

8 Praise him in his noble acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet; praise him upon the lute and harp.
Praise him in the cymbals and dances; praise him upon the strings and pipe.

9 Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals; praise him upon the loud cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Psalm 150

*O praise God in his holiness* is another of Purcell’s jewels, which probably dates from between 1682 and 1685. It takes as its text the inspired words of Psalm 150, which are full of references to music and musical instruments. Purcell separates each verse of the psalm with a dancing instrumental ritornello, building up the work to its climax in a most compelling fashion.

The harmony of the opening section of the Symphony is unusual, even for Purcell, with the angular lines, complex rhythms and delicious suspensions creating the wistful mood that is so prevalent in
Purcell’s early writing (and a clear indication that this is an anthem to be played by single strings). With the more lively, triple-time second section the air begins to clear, and at the first entry of the voices a joyful mood is finally set. Unusually, Purcell writes a descant for the first violin throughout much of the verse sections, giving a brighter texture than the all-male quartet would otherwise provide, and providing a natural link into the instrumental ritornelli.

The triple-time metre is temporarily broken at ‘Praise him in his noble acts’, with upper and then lower pairs of voices combining in splendid word-painting. Each of the voices is given its solo ‘break’ as the different instruments on which the Lord is to be praised are introduced – the higher bass for the trumpet, the tenor for the ‘cymbals and dances’, the lower bass for the ‘well-tuned cymbals’ (with an especially ‘blue’ harmony for the word ‘tuned’ and covering an extraordinarily wide tessitura of over two octaves), and there is a delightful harmonic shift from the full quartet for the ‘lute and harp’. The build-up is inexorable, with Purcell holding the choir in reserve until the final section ‘Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord’. Gone here are the dotted rhythms, replaced with a huge sweep of sound as the instruments, the soloists and choir combine in a magisterial, broad ending that is wonderfully uplifting.

**Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem**
Verse anthem, Z46 (probably 1689)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor    MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

**10 Symphony**

**11 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion.**
For kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.
As we have heard, so have we seen: In the city of our God.
God upholdeth the same for ever.

**12 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength:**
So will we sing and praise Thy power.
Alleluia.

Psalm 147 v 12; Isaiah 49, v 23; Psalm 48 v 8; Psalm 21 v 13
This verse anthem dates most probably from 1689, by which time Purcell’s writing for the Chapel had all but come to an end. Indeed, it may be the only anthem that he wrote that year.

The Symphony is especially spacious, beginning with a series of four mysterious block chords before a winding series of imitative entries leads into a lyrical triple-time section of great beauty. Restraint is also shown at the first vocal entry, which is sung not by the full choral forces, but by the quintet of solo singers. The five-part texture allows harmonies of great richness, and ‘For kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers’ contains delicious suspensions. ‘As we have heard, so have we seen’ introduces the choir simply and gently, and it is only at the section ‘Be thou exalted, Lord’, constructed over a rising arpeggio, that the mood brightens, beginning with the five soloists, enlarging into the full choir, and ending in a series of Alleluias, each set more spacious than the previous ones. Finally the triple-time metre is replaced for the last stanza with seven bars of expansive duple-time Alleluias of great harmonic richness.

**13** It is a good thing to give thanks

Verse anthem, Z18 (c1682/5)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

13  Symphony
It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most highest.

14  To tell of thy loving kindness early in the morning upon an instrument and upon the lute. And of thy truth in the night season upon a loud instrument and upon the harp. For thou Lord hast made me glad through thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operation of thy hands.

15  O Lord, how glorious are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep. An unwise man doth not well consider it, and a fool doth not understand it. O Lord, how glorious are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep.

16  For thou Lord, hast made me glad through thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operation of thy hands. Alleluia. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most highest. Alleluia.

Psalm 92 vv 1-6
It is a good thing to give thanks dates from around 1682-1685, with the instrumental writing, clearly designed for single strings, florid and full of the dancing, dotted rhythms that so pleased Charles II (but that had been a feature of music on the Continent for many years previously).

The Symphony is in the usual two halves, the first a duple-time, pompous section typical of a French opera overture, and the second a lively triple-time section whose music recurs in many of the subsequent ritornelli. The three solo voices function largely as a unit, although there is plenty of variety in texture from purely homophonic to quite complex counterpoint. Almost every section is concluded with an instrumental ritornello, with the midpoint marked by a repetition of the triple-time section from the Symphony.

After this interlude the solo bass is given a recitativo-like section, full of word-painting and making much use of vocal and harmonic colour. Once again, the range of the part is enormous, from low D on ‘very deep’ to notes two octaves and more above. The trio solo returns with ‘For thou, Lord, hast made me glad’, leading into a series of Alleluias which make much use of echo effects. After a reprise of the opening vocal material and the dotted ritornello the function of the full choir is small, providing just a simple ‘Alleluia’ at the conclusion – such a device was of course deliberate, for it would not have taken long to teach the boys of the choir their music for this particular service!

**17** O give thanks unto the Lord

Verse anthem, Z33 (1693)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB treble  JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  
CHARLES DANIELS tenor   MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHORI OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

17 O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.
18 Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise?
19 Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour that thou bear’st unto thy people:  
   O visit me with thy salvation;
20 That I may see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice with the gladness of thy people  
   and give thanks with thine inheritance.
21 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and world without end; and let all the people say. Amen.

Psalm 106 vv 1-2 4-5 46
O give thanks unto the Lord is one of Purcell’s last pieces of church music, dating from 1693: it shows a marked difference to works written even two years previously. The instrumental contribution is minimal, with the two solo violins given only the briefest of ritornelli at the close of sections, suggesting that the influence of King James – and the Royal Purse – had all but won its way at the Chapel Royal. (Queen Mary, who with William III succeeded James, was a great music-lover, but her main musical interests lay in other areas and music in the Church never really regained its former glory.)

The style of the anthem is Italianate, and at the opening (unusually with no symphony) the trio of soloists enter into vigorous dialogue with the chorus: the role of the choir is more pronounced than in earlier anthems, suggesting that choral standards at the Chapel had not fallen, even if finances had. The opening music is highly sectionalised, alternating not only between chorus and soloists, but between major and minor (the latter sections also marked ‘slow’). The florid duet for alto and bass ‘Who can express’ (which could easily have come from one of the odes) forms a lyrical contrast with the opening, with chains of sequences and suspensions.

The highlight of the anthem is the ravishing four-part verse section ‘Remember me, O Lord’ which, with its chromatically-rising theme, its minor tonality and its emotionally-charged, pleading repetitions of the words ‘Remember me’ and ‘O visit me’ gives a taste of the style which reached its peak two years later in the funeral music for Queen Mary (and provides glorious vocal phrases for one of Purcell’s highly talented boy trebles). The intricate alto solo ‘That I may see’ also has hints of a work to come, in this case the Te Deum and Jubilate (first performed the next year) before the four solo voices, in the busy section ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel’, lead us back into a reprise of the joyful opening antiphony.

22 Let mine eyes run down with tears
Verse anthem, Z24 (c1682)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor   CHARLES DANIELS tenor   MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

22 Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease.
For the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.
If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword!
And if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine!
Yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land which they know not.
Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Sion?
Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?
We looked for peace, and there is no good, and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our forefathers, for we have sinned against thee.

Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake; do not, oh do not disgrace the throne of thy glory:
Remember, break not thy covenant with us.
Are there any among the vanities of the gentiles that can cause rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
Art thou not he, O Lord our God? Therefore will we wait upon thee, O Lord, for thou hast made all these things.

Jeremiah 14 vv 17-22

With Let mine eyes run down with tears, dating from around 1682, we come to one of Purcell’s greatest masterpieces. Jeremiah’s desolate text is treated to a five-part vocal texture, accompanied only by basso continuo. The composer’s rich harmonic and melodic language is at its most original, and pictorialisation is present in almost every phrase from the opening downward melisma representing tears, through the desolate setting of ‘broken’, the false relation on ‘great breach’ and the scotch snap and jagged downward leap for ‘very grievous blow’. The tenor and bass are provided with a graphic recitativo-like section at ‘If I go forth into the field’ (with notable word-painting for the word ‘sick’), before the five voices unite for a pathos-laden setting of ‘Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Sion?’. Purcell uses his five voices with consummate skill, passing short phrases such as ‘Why hast thou smitten us?’ mournfully, almost angrily, between them, and then uniting at moments such as ‘And there is no healing for us’.

The build-up at ‘We looked for peace, and there is no good’ is almost unbearable in its tension. The simplicity of the first chorus ‘We acknowledge, O Lord’ comes as a relief from such tensions but desolation quickly returns, with the pleading phrases punctuated with repetitions by each voice in turn of the word ‘remember’ and the desperate cry of ‘Oh do not disgrace the throne of thy glory’. After the tenor’s ‘Are there any among the vanities of the gentiles’ a brighter mood emerges with ‘Art thou not he?’ before the final chorus, more hopeful in its mood of resignation, gives grounds for optimism and closes one of the most remarkable pieces of the age.
**My beloved spake**

Verse anthem, Z28 (before 1678)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  
ROBERT EVANS bass  MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHORI OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

**Symphony**

My beloved spake and said unto me: Rise my love, my fair one and come away.

For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear upon the earth,

And the time of the singing of birds is come. Alleluia.

And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

**Symphony**

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. 
Rise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. Alleluia.

The Song of Solomon II 10-13 16

The expressive, graphic, text from The Song of Solomon, *My beloved spake* has been set with great originality by several British composers over the centuries (including a wonderful setting by another under-rated Englishmen, the twentieth-century composer Patrick Hadley) but no setting has been more original than that of Henry Purcell. Dating from before 1678, *My beloved spake* is one of Purcell’s earliest surviving compositions: it is hard to believe that this skilfully-crafted anthem could be the work of a teenager. With a text full of references to spring, it is remarkable in almost every aspect: for its freshness, its glorious string writing, its extraordinary word-painting and its novel harmonic language.

The single-section Symphony contains music of enormous originality and leads straight into the opening quartet where the coming of spring is treated with ecstatic lyricism, and the word ‘rise’ is thrown between the voices. The passing of winter and the ritornello that takes over from the voices produces more delicious discords before the arrival of the spring flowers is celebrated with a move back to the major key, a joyful quartet and a chorus at ‘the singing of birds is come’. But the most astonishing harmony is reserved for ‘And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land’ where Purcell creates one of the most extraordinary tonal shifts of the era.
The opening Symphony is repeated before the tenor, accompanied by a winding solo violin imitates the fig tree tortuously growing her green figs and the vines slowly putting forth their produce. The ecstasy of the opening returns at ‘Rise, my love, my fair one’, followed by a joyful Alleluia and the final chorus.

\textbf{DISC 2 : CDS44142}

1. **Blessed are they that fear the Lord**  
   Verse anthem, Z5 (1688)

   NICHOLAS WITCOMB, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles  
   ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
   CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

1. Symphony
2. Blessed are they that fear the Lord and walk in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands. O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be. Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thine house; thy children like the olive branches round about thy table.

3. The Lord thy God from out of Sion shall so bless thee that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long. Yea, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace shall be upon Israel. O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.

4. Alleluia.

Psalm 128

At the end of the autograph manuscript of this anthem, held in the British Museum, comes a note, most probably in the hand of the famous bass John Gostling, who would have been the bass singer at the first performance: ‘Composed for the Thanksgiving appointed to be in London & 12 miles round Jan 15. 1687 & on the 29th. following over England for the Queen’s being with Child’. The use of the old style of year dating means that the year was actually 1688, and the work appears to have been a royal commission to celebrate the queen’s pregnancy – the child in question being Prince James Edward, later known as the ‘Old Pretender’. All churches within twelve miles celebrated the ‘solemn and particular office’ on 15 January, and the rest of the country did so a
fortnight later. The text, from Psalm 128, was carefully chosen not only to mention the breeding of children, but also to allude to the benefits that would ensue from continuity of the House of Stuart.

Purcell’s first section of the Symphony is gloriously wistful, with the chromatic harmony, full of suspensions, tensioned and anchored by the bass violins’ opening sustained pedal which descends, after five long bars, to the instruments’ richest depths. The dancing triple-time section which follows sets a more lively mood, though is equally harmonically adventurous. The verse sections are set for four voices – two boy trebles, high tenor and bass – giving ample scope for rich vocal textures. The first verse section exploits these sounds, with expressive discords for the word ‘fear’ and melismas used to picture ‘walk in his ways’. After a short ritornello the soloists are cast as different characters: the solo bass takes the role of the husband, striving in the fields (‘For thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands’), the high tenor takes on a commentating role (‘And happy shalt thou be’), and the two trebles, in thirds over a dominant pedal, repeat the phrase ‘O well is thee’. Throughout, Purcell is superbly alive to the expressive text. Gostling would have taken the section for solo bass ‘The Lord thy God from out of Sion’, whose foursquare metre is interrupted by a poignant repetition by the trebles of their phrase ‘O well is thee’. The tenor sings of the peace that Israel’s children’s children will see (and that England hopes to see from the same continued succession) with marvellously rich harmony for each mention of the word ‘peace’, and leads into the most remarkable section of the anthem. The two trebles repeat their touching ‘O well is thee’, and the idea is then taken up as well by the two lower voices, giving rise to sumptuous harmony. The trebles interrupt with a more lively ‘And happy shalt thou be’, and the two contrasting ideas co-exist and seemingly compete before the homophonic triple-time ‘Lo, thus shall the man be blessed’ breaks through.

The imitation of the final ‘Alleluia’ also shows Purcell’s remarkable craftsmanship, with the vocal entries coming closer and closer together until they are replaced by a lively dotted rhythm and short chorus.

5 Behold now, praise the Lord
Verse anthem, Z3 (c1680)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

5 Symphony

6 Behold now, praise the Lord all ye servants of the Lord.
Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of the Lord our God.
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the Lord, the Lord that hath made heaven and earth. Give thee blessing out of Sion.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 134 vv 1-3

Behold now, praise the Lord is one of Purcell’s earliest anthems, which some scholars have dated as early as 1678 when the composer would have been all of nineteen years old. Whatever the age of its composer, the anthem’s craftsmanship, especially the string writing, is utterly extraordinary. The opening section of the Symphony is one of Purcell’s finest pieces of church string writing. With his daring harmonic and melodic lines Purcell produces a gloriously wistful piece of music. For a composer at the height of his powers such writing would be a highlight; from a teenager it is almost inconceivable. For the second section Purcell resists the temptation to use a contrapuntal, triple-time movement such as his teacher Blow was already using, and instead writes in the more homophonic, dance-like style that Pelham Humfrey had used. In the only autograph source (the second volume of Flackton’s collection, held in the British Library) at the end of the Symphony five bars are added on a separate insert, and between the staves is written ‘NB this wch concludes the Symphony after the verse was most probably Purcell’s ending of this symphony; and therefore inserted to supply what is lost. P. Hayes 1785’. Actually the bars are clearly not by Purcell at all, for they are completely out of character with the rest of the movement (though Hayes, who may have supplied these bars himself, can be forgiven for finding such an individual style difficult to imitate). For this recording Robert King has composed the missing section.

The verse sections are for three voices – alto, tenor and bass – and, following the joyful text, are full of exuberance, though in the opening section Purcell also includes a smoother section ‘ev’n in the courts of the house’ which is expressively picked up in the string ritornello. ‘Lift up your hands’ rises magnificently as its text suggests, and Humfrey’s influence once again surfaces, this time in the magnificently bizarre tenor line at the first cadence of ‘out of Sion’. A lively dotted string ritornello then leads into a large-scale Gloria, over which the young composer proudly wrote ‘10 parts’. Soloists, strings and chorus enter into vigorous antiphony, with the two vocal blocks of sound anchored by more expressive string writing which is able to cut through the heavier textures by careful use of tessitura. At ‘World without end’ the music becomes particularly florid, with some marvellous modulations held by strong pedal notes in the bass violins and an astonishing anthem ends in great opulence.
I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord

Verse anthem, Z20 (c1682-5)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB treble DANIEL LOCHMANN treble
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, even before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
I will worship towards thy holy temple, and praise thy name, because of thy loving kindness and truth; for thou hast magnified thy name and thy word above all things.
When I called upon thee, thou heard’st me, and endu’dst my soul with much strength.
I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, even before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

Symphony

All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, for they have heard the words of thy mouth.
Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord that great is the glory of the Lord.
For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.
As for the proud he beholdeth them afar off.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt thou refresh me.
Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.
The Lord shall make good his loving kindness towards me; yea, thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever.

Psalm 138

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord is contained in one of three large volumes now in the British Museum: the volume which holds this anthem contains fair copies of seventeen of Purcell’s own works (and one by Blow), though it seems apparent that by 1685 Purcell was lacking the time to keep the book properly up to date. It is therefore hard to date the work more accurately than to state it was written between 1682 and 1685, though this writer’s instinct points him towards the earlier end of that period.

The anthem requires five soloists, and is written on a fairly large scale with the Symphony repeated in full at the mid-point. The opening of that Symphony is again in wistful mood, full of extraordinarily
intense harmonies and dropping chromaticism, melancholy yet curiously uplifting in the sadness which pervades so much of Purcell’s music. Again the second part of the Symphony follows the Humfrey pattern in utilising a dance-like, largely homophonic second section which introduces the opening vocal material. With five voices with which to play, Purcell is able to contrast textures which are basically chordal with close imitation, such as at ‘Ev’n before the gods’, where the point swings rapidly between the voices and instruments. A smoother texture is introduced by a solo boy at ‘I will worship towards thy holy temple’ before the five soloists return to their imitation at ‘When I called upon thee’, their falling dotted motif taken up by the strings as the basis for their ritornello. The first section ends with a short chorus which repeats the soloists’ first music, and the opening Symphony is repeated, though seemingly requiring more intensity.

A duet between alto and tenor ‘All the kings of the earth’ begins the second half before the five voices return at ‘Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord’, building up to a marvellous climax at ‘great is the glory of the Lord’.

The centrepiece of the anthem is another vocal tour de force for Purcell’s remarkable bass singer John Gostling. With his singer’s vocal range spanning two-and-a-half octaves, and clearly inspired by the text ‘For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly’ Purcell exploited every possible inch of pictorialisation, pushing his friend and colleague to the highest and lowest extremes of his range.

There is little wonder that this particular anthem can be so rarely performed, but how effective is Purcell’s writing when there is a singer able to cope with stratospheric and subterranean vocal ranges and also with subtle nuances such as the stark vocal colour required to sing ‘Though I walk in the midst of trouble’. After such a showcase, Purcell ends the work in high spirits with chorus, soloists and strings joining together exultantly.

My song shall be alway
Verse anthem, Z31 (1690?)

MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

My song shall be alway of the loving kindness of the Lord; with my mouth will I ever be showing forth thy truth from one generation to another.
O Lord, the very heavens shall praise thy wondrous works,
and thy truth in the congregation of the saints.
For who is he among the clouds that shall be compared unto the Lord?
And what is he among the gods that shall be like unto the Lord?

God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints,
And to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him. Alleluia.

Symphony

O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto thee?
Thy truth, most mighty Lord is on every side.
Thou rulest the raging of the sea; thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise.
Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.
Righteousness and equity are the habitation of thy seat; mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Alleluia.

Psalm 89 vv 1 5-9 13-15

M y song shall be alway exists in two versions – one for solo soprano, the other for solo bass.
The first printed score is not until Playford’s Harmonia Sacra (1703) but no source suggesting soprano exists from before this time, whereas at least three, all scored clearly for bass, date from before then. It may be reasonable to assume therefore that Playford was responsible for the re-scoring for soprano. In any case, there is no difference between the two versions save in register, but the most authoritative early manuscript, held in the Bodleian Library and probably copied in the hand of Henry Knight of Wadham College, is in the bass version, carefully annotated and even bearing the inscription ‘H.P. Sep: 9/90’, from which scholars have dated the work.

The anthem is unusual in many ways. Despite being composed on a large scale, there is, after the opening Symphony (repeated at the mid-point), almost nothing for the upper strings to do. The choir is treated even more lightly, singing only two brief and identical Alleluias. The Symphony is however a fine one, with the opening rising arpeggio creating a rich texture over its sustained bass notes, and the harmonies of the lilting triple-time reminiscent at times of the music of Georg Muffat, whose Armonico Tributo was influencing the early development of the concerto grosso during the 1680s. Although the style of the Symphony is still clearly that of Purcell, this late anthem does show interesting contrasts with the string writing of earlier works. After the Symphony, the solo bass dominates, first in a tuneful arioso movement, but then, more characterfully, in the first section of recitativo, ‘O Lord, the very heavens’. Here we find Purcell at his most Italianate, heavily influenced by the century’s developments in opera, changing pace and mood with great subtlety. A more lively section follows (‘For who is he among the clouds’), full of imitation between soloist and continuo,
and concluded by the shortest of ritornelli, before the recitativo style returns at ‘God is very greatly to be feared’, with an especially poignant colouring used for the word ‘reverence’. The choir briefly interrupt with seven bars of triple-time Alleluias, and the strings repeat the Symphony.’

‘O Lord God of hosts’ finds Purcell at his most imaginative in this style, poised and dramatic – straight out of Monteverdi in the sustained high notes, under-pinned by a descending continuo scale, that mark the word ‘mighty’. Here is music that would be completely at home in the opera house. Next Purcell pictures the raging sea in splendidly descriptive fashion, full of running semiquavers and blustering effects. ‘Thou hast a mighty arm’ is perhaps less remarkable, set over a modulating ground bass, but the writing at ‘mercy and truth shall go before thy face’ is delicious in its ‘blue’ harmonies. As is so often the case, Purcell’s concluding ‘Alleluia’ is restrained and quietly understated, all the more effective for being so, and beautifully shaped in its bloom towards the end. It is then left to the choir to repeat their earlier Alleluia.

**Te Deum laudamus and Jubilate in D**

Verse anthem, Z232 (1694)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, DANIEL LOCHMANN, TIMOTHY BOWES, PHILIP HALLCHURCH trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.
To thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein.
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee.

The Father of an infinite majesty;
Thine honourable, true and only Son; also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When thou took’st upon thee to deliver man,
Thou did’st not abhor the Virgin’s womb.
When thou had’st overcome the sharpness of death,
Thou did’st open the Kingdom of Heav’n to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,
Whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be number’d with thy Saints, in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.
Govern them, and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify thee,
And we worship thy name, ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

Ambrosian Hymn

For the annual celebrations of St Cecilia’s Day in 1694 Purcell did not produce an ode (which would have been his fifth dedicated to the patron saint of music) but instead produced a setting of the Te Deum and Jubilate which was performed in St Bride’s Church in Fleet Street. Being a major musical occasion, Purcell utilised not only a full string orchestra but also added the brilliant colour of two trumpets to texts which are often celebratory. But alongside the spacious visions of heaven echoing to choirs of angels the texts also have moments of intimacy, giving Purcell an ideal vehicle in which to display his greatest skills, both in compositional devices and in word-painting. Despite the grandeur of the sections for full choir and orchestra it is perhaps the chamber movements which contain the greatest gems.

The opening of the Te Deum is as spacious as one would expect: the two trumpets enter into vigorous dialogue with the strings, whilst the bass violins enjoy their repeated bottom Ds. The trio of male soloists appears first, taking on the trumpets’ vigorous dotted opening motif, and Purcell reserves the full choir for the section ‘All the earth doth worship thee’, where the build-up on ‘all’ is especially effective. Compositional devices abound in the setting, and ‘the Father everlasting’ is the first example of these, with Purcell demonstrating his masterly control of close counterpoint in both voices and instruments.
Pictorialisation too is everywhere: the solo trio melismatically picture the angels crying aloud, two solo boys imitate Cherubim and Seraphim, and the full forces enter for three block-busting chords on the word ‘holy’. Heaven and earth are represented graphically, the alto and high tenor’s dotting covering celestial matters, the bass left alone and low to reflect our earthly state, and the full assembly pictures the full majesty of God’s glory. Next, each of the three male soloists takes on a role: the alto tells of the ‘glorious company of Apostles’, the tenor more lyrically shows the ‘goodly fellowship of the Prophets’, and the bass portrays the firm and ‘noble army of Martyrs’ before once again all join together, trumpets in defiant octaves, to portray the Church throughout the world.

The Holy Trinity is pictured in matched pairs of voices, linked by a pair of solo violins: vocal melismas represent the infinite majesty of the Father, a second pair of boys the Son, and the two alto voices the Holy Ghost. Next comes an extraordinary piece of double counterpoint, ‘Thou art the King of Glory’, where two themes, one strongly rising, the other more rhythmic and falling, combine effortlessly in seven parts, the trumpets rising above the whole ensemble before block chords end the section. A more intimate atmosphere is created with the alto and bass duet ‘When thou took’st upon thee to deliver man’, full of word-painting: the sharpness of death is enhanced with a diminished chord, and the Kingdom of Heaven is opened with a rising phrase before the two boys once again interrupt in close imitation at ‘Thou sittest at the right hand of God’.

A brief trio ‘We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge’ and another interpolation from the boys introduce one of the most remarkable moments of the work. The text is now supplicatory (‘O Lord, save thy people’) and Purcell is immediately on his best territory with ardent repetitions of the word ‘save’. But the finest moment is kept back: with the two octave rising phrase ‘and lift them up for ever’, starting in the bass, transferring to the tenor and finally taken up by the countertenor, rising to the top of his register, we have one of the most glorious vocal phrases in Baroque music. Another short imitative chorus ‘Day by day’ follows, jubilant and ingenious as ever in its tight counterpoint.

The centrepiece of the work, which finds Purcell at his most personal, is ‘Vouchsafe, O Lord’, set for the composer’s favourite countertenor voice. It is a genuine plea from the heart, made all the more poignant when we realise that exactly a year later Purcell himself was dead. Here is the composer at his profound best, piling up sequences and dissonances and pleading for mercy in the most ravishing vocal and string writing. The serenity with which the movement ends, and the strong affirmation of the final chorus, suggests that this is one prayer which may be answered.
O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands,
Serve the Lord with gladness,
And come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise,
Be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting,
And his truth endures from generation to generation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 100

Whilst in his setting of the Te Deum Purcell utilises for the most part quite short sections (perhaps because he has a lot of text to set), in the shorter Jubilate he achieves longer musical spans. The opening is an extended duet between the countertenor and a solo trumpet, quite restrained in its joyfulness except in three interruptions by the full orchestra and choir. Once again it is in the more pastoral movements that Purcell shines best, with the duet between boy treble and countertenor ‘Be ye sure that the Lord he is God’ an especially touching one in its simplicity: Purcell’s use of sequence and gentle harmony creates a movement full of pathos. Next comes a rather austere four-part canon, ‘O go your way into his gates’ which is followed by an extended duet for countertenor and bass; again the plea for mercy draws Purcell into particularly effective writing.

The contrapuntal techniques employed in the Gloria are quite breathtaking. First the theme is treated to close imitation (‘Glory be to the Father’), then is inverted and imitated (‘Glory be to the Son’) and then, at ‘World without end’ a new theme is added, treated to the same techniques as before but also stretched out in the bass in a huge and powerful augmentation. At the final Amen the strands come together and, with the trumpets’ entries soaring above the whole choir and orchestra, a work of great technical and musical ingenuity ends in a blaze of sound.
Blow up the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people and sanctify the congregation.
Assemble the elders; gather the children and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.
Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say: spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.
Spare thy people, O Lord. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

Joel 2, v 15-17

Probably written during 1678, this ten-part full anthem is an astonishing work and would show extraordinary mastery of large-scale vocal textures by any composer, let alone one still in his teens. The text, from the book of Joel, is traditionally a Lenten one, but Purcell’s opening is anything but penitent, with ringing trumpet fanfares thrown between the seven solo voices. At ‘sanctify a fast’ the key changes from C major to three flats, and Purcell’s rich harmonic language is immediately to the fore: a ‘solemn assembly’ is called, and there is a marvellous build-up through the vocal entries of ‘and sanctify the congregation’. The chorus interrupt briefly, restating the joyful opening music and ending on a marvellous ten-part chord of C major which must have rung spectacularly through the Chapel Royal. Next Purcell contrasts groups of lower and upper voices, the lower voices portraying the elders and the bridegroom, the upper voices children and the bride.

There is daring augmented harmony at ‘let them weep’, but even this pales into insignificance when set alongside the imploring ‘Spare thy people, O Lord’: the harmonic shift from ‘people’ to ‘O’ is one of the most devastating moments in all Purcell’s church music. Once again the chorus make a brief entrance, repeating the rich material from the preceding section, and then the soloists enter with an imitative ‘Wherefore should they say amongst the people’: the point is stated some twenty times
before block chords demand ‘Where is their God?’. The chorus repeats the same section, their added numbers lending weight both to the question and to Purcell’s marvellous inner vocal parts.

The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient

Verse anthem, Z53 (date unknown)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, DANIEL LOCHMANN trebles
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient:
He sitteth amongst the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.
The Lord is great in Sion, and high above all people.
They shall give thanks unto thy name, which is great, wonderful and holy.
O magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end, Amen.
Alleluia.

Psalm 99 vv 1-3 5

The writing for two solo trebles in *The Lord is king, be the people never so impatient* is clear proof that the Chapel Royal was blessed with two especially fine choristers (probably, we can assume, during the early 1680s). Purcell’s setting is highly Italianate and florid, at times almost instrumental, and is a vocal *tour de force* to which only two highly talented boys could have done justice.

The opening section contains all these extrovert qualities, the two voices overlapping and intertwining while the earth rumbles away in its melismatic disquiet. ‘The Lord is great’ is beautifully set, lifting the voices exultantly through their upper registers, and joyfully giving ‘thanks unto thy name’. The return from the bouncing triple-time to a duple measure at ‘which is great’ is highly effective, but even more so is the gradual change to awestruck wonder as the section ends ‘is great, wonderful and holy’. The chorus maintains this deferential mood, the word ‘fall’ given word-painting such as only Purcell could, before the two boys return for an even more florid Gloria. Their section culminates in a thoroughly violinistic outflow of notes before a simple choral Alleluia closes a unique verse anthem.
Begin the song, and strike the living lyre!
Lo! how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance
And to my song with smooth and equal measures dance.
Whilst the dance lasts, how long so e’er it be,
My music’s voice shall bear it company
Till all gentle notes be drown’d
In the last trumpet’s dreadful sound,
That to the spheres themselves shall silence bring,
Untune the universal string:
Then all the wide extended sky
And all the harmonious worlds on high
And Virgil’s sacred work shall die;
And he himself shall see in one fire shine
Rich Nature’s ancient Troy, though built by hands divine.
Whom thunder’s dismal noise
And all that prophets and apostles louder spake
And all the creatures’ plain conspiring voice
Could not, whilst they liv’d, awake,
This mightier sound shall make
When dead to arise
And open tombs and open eyes
To the long sluggards of five thousand years,
This mightier sound shall make its hearers’ ears.
Then shall the scatter’d atoms crowding come
Back to their ancient home,
Some from birds, from fishes some,
Some from earth and some from seas,
Some from beasts and some from trees,
Some descend from clouds on high,
Some from metals upward fly
And, where th’attending soul naked and shivering stands,
Meet, salute, and join their hands,
As dispers’d soldiers at the trumpet’s call
Haste to their colours all,
Unhappy most, like tortur’d men,
Their joints new set, to be new wrack’d again;
To mountains they for shelter pray,
The mountains shake and run about no less confus’d than they.
Stop, stop, my muse, allay thy vigorous heat,
Kindled at a hint so great;
Hold thy Pindaric Pegasus closely in,
Which does to rage begin
And this steep hill would gallop up with violent course
’Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth’d horse
Fierce and unbroken yet,
Impatient of the spur or bit,
Now prances stately and anon flies o’er the place,
Disdains the servile law of any settled pace,
Conscious and proud of his own natural force;
’Twill no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure.

Abraham Cowley, ‘The Resurrection’– A Pindaric Ode

Begin the song, and strike the living lyre is one of two settings Purcell made of poems by Abraham Cowley. Cowley (1618-1667) was the leading English poet of his time, responsible for introducing the irregular Pindaric Ode form which was later taken up by Dryden and others. Like Purcell, his talent was obvious at an early age, for his first poem was written when he was only ten years old. Cowley’s writing was much admired. Charles II said at his death “that Mr Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England”, and the poet was buried in Westminster Abbey. Purcell clearly enjoyed setting Cowley’s graphically descriptive, classical ode The Resurrection, and the result is a striking composition on that rare commodity in Purcell’s time – a first-rate piece of poetry. Purcell’s music alternates between sections of semi-recitative and arioso: everywhere word painting abounds.

Cowley’s first twelve lines are omitted. Purcell prefers to start with a commanding arpeggionic ‘Begin the song’, the classical lyre suitably illustrated. Moving quickly into an arioso section, the composer’s genius for setting words is immediately evident: the dance is wonderfully ‘smooth’, ‘long’ is exactly that, and ‘music’ comes in for special treatment. The mood changes for ‘all gentle notes’, altering just as quickly again for the ‘trumpet’s dreadful sound’, and the ‘universal string’ is
graphically ‘untun’d’ in a descending chromatic scale. The music opens up for ‘All th’ harmonious worlds on high’, and ‘Virgil’s sacred work’ dies at the bottom of the singer’s register. The text becomes yet more colourful, and Purcell grandly illustrates ‘Thunder’s dismal noise’ and the hubbub created by ‘all that prophets and apostles louder spake’. The ‘long sluggards of five thousand years’ are as serpentine as one could imagine, and the ‘mightier sound’ increases in volume and length in its two repetitions to close the section. In more ordered triple metre the ‘scatter’d atoms’ reassemble themselves, descending and ascending from all quarters of the earth. Back in recitative their distress at their newly-imposed forms brings wonderful harmonic and melodic colours from Purcell after a suitably military trumpet call: phrases such as ‘unhappy most, like tortur’d men’ and ‘new wrack’d again’ are superbly enhanced. Even escape to the mountains is hopeless, for the mountains too ‘shake and run about’, their confusion pictured in the angular vocal line. The muse is commanded to stop, and the ‘Pindaric Pegasus’, an ‘unruly and hard-mouth’d horse’, is halted before further damage can be caused: the piece ends with the poet’s mount held just in control, though from the music we sense that beast is ready to be upset again at any moment and to fling ‘writer and reader too that sits not sure’.

 Thy word is a lantern unto my feet
Verse anthem, Z61 (date unknown)

JAMES BOWMAN COUNTERTENOR   CHARLES DANIELS tenor   MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgements.
I am troubled above measure: Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.
Let the freewill offerings of my mouth please thee O Lord, and teach me thy judgements.
The ungodly have laid a snare for me, but yet I swerved not from thy commandments.
Thy testimonies have I claim’d as mine heritage for ever:
And why? They are the very joy of my heart. Alleluia.

Psalm 119 vv 105-108 110-111

This verse anthem appears in many manuscripts copied during the twenty years after Purcell’s death, suggesting that it was an especially popular piece around the British cathedrals. The majority of the work is for an alto/tenor/bass trio, and the chorus appears briefly twice, with material that an average choir could learn rapidly. Perhaps the Chapel Royal choir was busy or just rather
weak when Purcell wrote the anthem: with no known date of composition we can only guess, though
the indications are that it is maybe one of Purcell’s later works. The vocal writing in the opening
section is quite simple, with the main triple-time theme passed between the three solo voices. The
mood changes briefly at ‘I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed’, and there is graphic rising
chromaticism for ‘I am troubled above measure’: the dancing triple metre returns for ‘Quicken me’,
the ‘O’ of ‘O Lord’ neatly thrown between the upper and lower voices, and this material is repeated
by the full chorus. ‘Let the freewill offerings’ is delightfully tuneful in its back-dotting, with ‘and
teach me thy judgements’ equally charmingly treated. The light mood briefly disappears at ‘The
ungodly have laid a snare for me’ but the lilting triple time returns for the melismatic ‘They are the
very joy of my heart’ and leads into a final Alleluia. Simple the individual melodic phrases may be,
but the overall effect is perfect in its balance.

5 Tell me, some pitying angel (The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation)
Devotional song, Z196 (1693)

LYNNE DAWSON soprano

*The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation;
when our Saviour (at twelve years of age) had withdrawn himself.*

Tell me, some pitying angel, quickly say,
Where does my soul’s sweet darling stay,
In tiger’s, or more cruel Herod’s way?
O! rather let his tender footsteps press
Unregarded through the wilderness,
Where milder savages resort:
The desert’s safer than a tyrant’s court.
Why, fairest object of my love,
Why dost thou from my longing eyes remove?
Was it a waking dream that did foretell
Thy wondrous birth? no vision from above?
Where’s Gabriel now that visted my cell?
I call; he comes not; flatt’ring hopes, farewell.

Me Judah’s daughters once caress’d,
Call’d me of mothers the most bless’d;
Now (fatal change!) of mothers most distress’d.

38
How shall my soul its motions guide,
How shall I stem the various tide,
Whilst faith and doubt my lab’ring thoughts divide?
For whilst of thy dear sight I am beguil’d,
I trust the God, but oh! I fear the child.

NAHUM TATE

tell me, some pitying angel (The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation) is one of two sacred pieces that Purcell wrote to words by Nahum Tate, the librettist for Dido and Aeneas and also for Purcell’s last four odes (including Come ye Sons of Art). Published in 1693 in Harmonia Sacra (Volume 2), here is one of the most extraordinary examples of Purcell’s genius for setting words and capturing changing emotions. The twelve-year-old boy Jesus has gone to the temple with his mother, and is now missing: the thoughts racing through Mary’s mind conjure up the terrible things that she imagines may have happened to him. Tate’s text captures the sense of desperation and anxiety that all parents feel when their offspring disappear without notice, and Purcell’s music vividly evokes Mary’s rapid thoughts and changes of mood. We do not know for whom Purcell wrote the work, but it seems unlikely to have been a boy from the Chapel Royal: despite its religious setting, the writing is overtly operatic, and furthermore the sentiments are those of a mother, not of a child, far better suited emotionally and musically to a dramatic soprano.

The opening is urgent, with Mary demanding and repeating that ‘some pitying angel’ should tell where her son has gone: mention of her ‘sweet darling’ brings an affectionate richness to both melody and harmony. Memories of Herod’s slaughter of the innocent children draws an angular melisma on the word ‘cruel’, immediately countered by the contrasting, gentle phrase ‘Oh, rather let his little footsteps press’, leading to the winding melisma on ‘through’, which represents the arduous journey that Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus made to escape from Judaea. The ‘milder savages’ (Tate’s splendid oxymoron) are treated to calm harmony, a total contrast to the vehement, high-tessitura ‘tyrant’ that expresses all Mary’s loathing for Herod’s court. The four repetitions of ‘Why?’, each one higher in pitch, show the mother’s concern for her lost child, and Purcell’s repetition of ‘was i’, Mary’s growing disbelief in reality – that everything may have been ‘a waking dream’ that foretold ‘Thy wondrous birth’. Purcell finds delightful word-painting for the two rising notes with which he sets ‘above’, and Mary calls for Gabriel, her trumpet-like phrase ‘I call’ rising to a repeated top G: she demands, four times, the archangel’s presence. He does not appear, and again four times Mary calls his name. Her confidence wanes as the phrase progresses, and by the fourth call, reality has struck: the phrase ‘flatt’ring hopes, farewell’ illustrates her utter desolation with wistfully falling harmony.
Temporarily we leave the recitative style for the short aria ‘Me Judah’s daughters’, set in a gently swinging triple metre, but the mood is quickly broken with the sudden harmonic shift back to recitativo for ‘Now (fatal change!)’: the acute interval for each repetition of ‘mother’ is capped by the Italianate gorgia on the final ‘distressed’ – as near to a musical sob as any composer could notate. For ‘How shall my soul’ Purcell returns to aria, voice and bass line in close imitation throughout, and with words such as ‘motions’ and ‘various’ pictorially treated with his customary skill.

The final section of recitative is a mini-masterpiece: the extraordinary interval Purcell uses in the voice for ‘dear’ creates an astonishingly effective discord, and the switch from major to minor (coupled with a rich suspension) on ‘I trust’ brings even greater contrast with the following ‘I fear’. The final melisma on ‘But oh!’ deliciously winds voice and continuo around, slowly falling to the final poignant phrase: the agonies Mary has suffered during the piece have brought confirmation that hers is no ordinary child.

6 Hear my prayer, O Lord
Full anthem, Z15 (c1680-82)

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.

Psalm 102 v 1

Hear my prayer, O Lord is part of a larger piece that Purcell seemingly did not complete. The anthem is the last item in the autograph manuscript held in Cambridge’s Fitzwilliam Museum, after which come a number of blank pages. Purcell’s barline at the end of the manuscript (going through the staves and not through the intervening spaces) is the type which usually indicates another section is to follow: indeed he usually marks the end of a piece with an elaborate flourish. But how fortunate we are to have this section of the anthem, for it is a masterpiece!

Dating from 1680-82, the work is in eight parts, and sets the first verse of Psalm 102. With a despairing text and large vocal forces at his disposal, Purcell’s imagination was raised to its highest level, yet the melodic material is, on its own, quite simple. The first phrase, ‘Hear my prayer, O Lord’, uses just two melancholy notes a minor third apart, but it is the turning chromaticism of ‘crying’ that gives the scope for such plangency. The harmonic language, always (after the opening phrases) in at least six parts, is exceptional, even for Purcell, but the most extraordinary feature of the anthem is the build-up which Purcell orchestrates from the outset – here is an inexorable vocal crescendo lasting over three minutes, culminating on a monumental discord on the last repetition of ‘come’. With such a powerful piece, we felt that to edit together more than one ‘take’ would detract
from the extraordinary atmosphere that this anthem generates: the version performed here is that comparative rarity on modern recordings, a whole ‘take’, without an edit from start to finish – a genuine performance of one of the truly great anthems of the English church music repertory.

7 Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes
Anthem, Z136 (c1680)

MARK KENNEDY, DANIEL LOCHMANN trebles
CHARLES DANIELS teno  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes,
When thou dost kindly me chastise;
But thy fierce wrath I cannot bear;
O, let not that against me rise.
Pity my languishing estate;
And those perplexities I feel
While crushed by thy heavy hand,
O, let thy gentler touches heal.
Lord, for thy goodness’ sake, return,
And save my life; for in the grave
None can remember thee, nor thou
Thankful acknowledgements canst have.
See how I pass my weary days
In sighs and groans, and when ‘tis night,
I drown my bed and self in tears;
My grief consumes and dims my sight.
Depart, ye wicked foes; your hopes
Are dashed; for this my mournful voice
Will bring God nearer to my aid,
When you come flocking to rejoice.
The Lord hath heard my prayer;
And those that gap’d upon me as their prey
Will vex themselves at their defeat,
And with confusion turn away.
Alleluia.

John Patrick Psalm 6, first version
Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes is an early work, dating probably from around 1680, and one of nine settings that Purcell made of John Patrick’s paraphrases of psalms. The scoring is for four solo voices and the opening mood desolate in the extreme. A pleading, lone treble begins, his chromatic inflection on ‘O’ especially effective, setting the scene for a remarkable passage of four-part writing, ‘Pity my languishing estate’: the dropping chromaticism, augmented triads and overlapping vocal entries are unbearably tortured in their anguish, and there is no let-up with the increasingly extreme intervals to which Purcell sets the word ‘crush’. The bass briefly relieves the tension, but with the return of the two trebles, mournfully passing their ‘weary days in sighs and groans’, we are again in the depths of despair, graphically drowning ‘my bed and self in tears’, grief consuming the two boys in wonderfully intertwining vocal lines. But hope is at hand, and the two lower voices forcefully banish the ‘wicked foes’: the enemy turns away in confusion, the full ensemble celebrates the Lord hearing their prayers, and then rejoices in a final Alleluia.

8 O Lord, our Governor
Anthem, Z39 (c1680)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, MARK KENNEDY, DANIEL LOCHMANN trebles
MICHAEL GEORGE, ROBERT EVANS basses
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world;
Thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies that thou might’st still the enemy and the avenger.
For I will consider thy heavens, ev’n the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.
Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man, that thou visitest him?
Thou mad’st him lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship.
Thou mak’st him to have dominion of the works of thy hands,
and hast put all things in subjection under his feet.
All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the sea.
O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world!
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 8
Lord, our Governor is a particularly early verse anthem, written certainly before 1679. It may well be Purcell’s earliest surviving sacred work, possibly dating from as early as 1676 when he would have been only sixteen years old! No autograph survives, and the writing is at times unlike that in any other of Purcell’s anthems. The solo and verse writing is wonderfully individual and responsive to the text and the overall effect quite majestic: even the kindest critic would have to admit that Purcell’s youthful desire to maintain strict counterpoint (when a few years later he would have bent the rules a little) does lead him into some highly individual harmonic moments in the choruses!

The opening is glorious with a wistful five-bar solo, high in its register, for the bass violin, leading to an extended passage for solo bass extolling the majesty of the Lord in marvellously expansive style. The ‘very babes and sucklings’ are represented by three solo trebles, innocently stilling ‘the enemy and the avenger’ in charming three-part close harmony, and two basses consider the creation of matters celestial before the section is brought to a close by a short chorus. Again the solo bass muses on mankind’s good fortune before the two trebles and two basses, later joined by the third treble, joyfully celebrate man’s dominion of the world in typically Purcellian style. The chorus take on the role of the animals that inhabit the world, the sheep and oxen in thoughtful style, and ‘the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea’ in joyful (if somewhat bizarre) counterpoint. The music of the opening returns, this time ingeniously multiplied to occupy two basses in exact imitation, all the more grand in their wonder of the Lord’s creation.

The Gloria is quite old-fashioned in its style – it was only a few years previously that Purcell would have been singing just this sort of music as a treble in the Chapel Royal – but blossoms beautifully at ‘World without end’ and closes with a serene and harmonically individual ‘Amen’.

9 Remember not, Lord, our offences

Full anthem, Z50 (c1680-82)

CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Remember not, Lord, our offences,
Nor th’ offences of our forefathers;
Neither take thou vengeance of our sins,
But spare us, good Lord.
Spare thy people, whom thou has redeem’d
With thy most precious blood,
And be not angry with us for ever.
Spare us, good Lord.

From the Litany
The five-part full anthem *Remember not, Lord, our offences* (dating from around 1680) is a masterpiece. Purcell’s use of harmony and discord, his startlingly effective word-setting and his mastery of drama are all magnificently demonstrated in a short piece. The atmosphere is created with the very first word, set as a simple block chord, and then reiterated as the phrase moves forward to ‘offences’: the first phrase of text is repeated again, still in homophonic style, but this time in the relative major. The first touches of counterpoint appear at ‘nor th’ offences of our forefathers’, and the tension begins to increase with ‘neither take thou vengeance of our sins’, always simultaneously countered in at least one voice with the rising phrase ‘but spare us, good Lord’. Gradually the calls for mercy, to ‘spare us’, begin to dominate, and the chromaticism and unbelievably daring use of discord increases: the music climaxes with a massive, desperate plea, ‘Spare us, good Lord’. Quickly the mood returns to supplication: Purcell’s harmony relaxes deliciously onto ‘redeem’d’ and the tenors’ dominant seventh clashes exquisitely with a second inversion chord on ‘precious’. It is the tenors again who have a wonderfully subtle inner line at ‘for ever’ and, after such passion, the anthem ends, as it began, with a calm prayer for salvation.

**10 Hosanna to the highest**

Devotional song, Z187 (date unknown)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor    MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Hosanna to the highest. Joy betide
The heavenly bridegroom and his holy bride.
Let heav’n above be filled with songs; let earth triumph below;
For ever silent be those tongues that can be silent now.
You rocks and stones, I charge you all to break
Your flinty silence if men cease to speak;
You that possess the sacred art
Or now or never show it, plead not your Muse is out of heart:
Here’s that creates a poet.
Be ravish’d, earth, to see this contract driv’n
Twixt sinful men and reconcil’d heav’n.
Dismount, you quire of angels,
Come, with men your joys divide;
Heav’n never showed so sweet a bridegroom,
Nor earth so fair a bride.

Anonymous
Only one score of *Hosanna to the highest* survives, and this is a manuscript dating from after Purcell’s lifetime, but here, amongst all the church music, is one of the finest examples of a Purcellian ground bass. This one is four bars long, dropping first for four long notes, then returning to its tonic and rising for five: its simplicity and stark modality is hypnotic in the fifteen, slow-moving repetitions. Over this harmonic anchor a solo bass voice weaves its melodic spell, with Purcell treating the text, not in an extrovert manner, but with controlled, quiet ecstasy: from the outset we see that here is not an earthly marriage, but one far greater, conceived in heaven. The author of the text is unknown, but these are marvellously graphic words and sentiments which clearly stimulated the composer, for Purcell’s vocal writing is glorious, the tessitura of the solo bass creating sounds of great nobility. Everywhere we find marvellous word-painting and expressive harmony: the rising phrase ‘Let heav’n above’ contrasts with ‘Let earth triumph below’, the tongues are silenced with a long note, and ‘you rocks and stones’ are suitably gravely commanded ‘to break your flinty silence if men cease to speak’. The ‘sacred art’ is treated to rich harmony, and the word ‘plead’ is subjected to especially plaintive treatment.

After such rich sounds, the entry of a higher, second voice (at ‘Be ravish’d, earth’) is breathtaking: earth and heaven are linked in their ‘contract’, the two voices closely imitating each other’s phrases as the piece climaxes at ‘heav’n never showed so sweet a bridegroom, Nor earth so fair a bride’. Throughout his music Purcell rarely fails to beguile the listener with ravishing sounds, but here he brings to a close an example of his genius at its most startlingly original.

### O God, thou hast cast us out

Full anthem, Z36 (c1680-82)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, MARK KENNEDY trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O God, thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad. Thou hast also been displeased;
O turn thee unto us again.
Thou hast moved the land and divided it: heal the sores thereof, for it shaketh.
O be thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man.
Through God will we do great acts, and it is he that shall tread down our enemies.

Psalm 60 vv 1 2 11 12
The full anthem *O God, thou hast cast us out*, with its text taken from Psalm 60, dates from around 1680-82 and falls into three clear sections: the outer pair are for six-part full choir, and the short centre section for six soloists. The opening is strongly imitative, with the rising minor arpeggio created by the first two notes of the voices (‘O God’) contrasted with a more angular line for ‘thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad’. Purcell’s mastery of contrapuntal texture is, as we would expect, complete, and his word-painting as effective as ever, with a rising figure for ‘thou hast also been displeased’ and an imploring, falling line for ‘O turn thee unto us again’: he saves the rich harmony of the full vocal texture for the latter part of the section ‘heal the sores thereof, for it shaketh’. In the central verse section the three lower and upper voices answer each other’s phrases, move then into five-part harmony, and finally combine for the last statement of ‘for vain is the help of man’. The last chorus is positive, with a strong and optimistic text. The opening ‘Through God will we do great acts’ is in block chords, and the enemies are firmly trodden underfoot by a descending motif which permeates throughout the whole choral texture, culminating in a splendidly solid final statement by the basses of the choir that takes them and the continuo section right down the musical scale and into a final Amen.

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**DISC 4 : CDS44144**

1. **Behold, I bring you glad tidings**

Verse anthem, Z2 (1687)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.
For unto you this day is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.
Glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
Glory to God on high, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.
Alleluia.

St Luke 2, vv 10 11 14

**Behold, I bring you glad tidings** dates from 1687 and, from its text (three verses from Chapter 2 of St Luke’s Gospel), we can be fairly sure that it was written for Christmas in the Chapel Royal. Surprisingly, it is Purcell’s only anthem composed specifically for the Feast of Christmas.
Manuscript copies are fairly widely spread throughout the cathedrals of Britain, with versions now in the libraries of York, Ely, Durham and Tenbury, suggesting that it was quite a popular work.

The overture is a fine one, with the rising arpeggios of the slow opening creating a suitably mystical mood. The imitative second section is busy, containing much interplay between the four instrumental lines, and setting off the dropping sequences of continuous quavers against a smoother, more syncopated countersubject. The slow opening arpeggios return, and the strings provide a sumptuous accompaniment to the bass solo, originally written for John Gostling: once again, the composer stretches his friend and colleague’s wide vocal range to its furthest extremes. Purcell’s ability to convey in music both the miracle and the majesty of the birth is especially remarkable. The two other solo voices enter in joyful triple time bearing the glad tidings, and the section concludes with a graceful string ritornello.

The heavenly host arrives, first in the form of the soloists, then with the block chords majestically taken on by the full choir. ‘And on earth, peace, good will’ is set to a gently swinging triple-time metre, which is interrupted by the choir in a brighter key. Once again the triple metre takes over, only to be interrupted again by the heavenly host. This time the choir alternate with the soloists in bringing ‘peace, good will towards men’, and the strings close matters with another elegantly poised ritornello. Soloists and strings answer each other in joyful Alleluias, but it is Purcell’s heavenly choir which has the last say as they glorify ‘God on high’ in ringing block chords.

### 2 Since God so tender a regard

Verse anthem, Z143 (c1680)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor   CHARLES DANIELS tenor   MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Since God so tender a regard
To all my poor requests did give,
My best affections he shall have,
And best devotions whilst I live.
Assail’d with grief and pain that seem’d
The sad forerunners of the grave,
To thee I made my request, O Lord,
Nor did I cry to God in vain,
Nor did his mercy come too late;
But when my skill was at a loss,  
His kindness rais’d my low estate.  
God and thyself, my soul, enjoy  
In quiet rest, freed from all fears;  
Who sav’d thy life, uphold thy steps,  
And dried up all thy falling tears.  
The solemn payment of the vows  
I made to God shall be my care;  
Who sav’d me from approaching death,  
And show’d my life to him was dear.  
By all engagements, Lord, I’m thine,  
Thy servant whom thou hast set free;  
The very bonds which thou hast loos’d  
Shall tie me faster unto thee.

John Patrick, Psalm 116, first version

This is a relatively early work, dating probably from around 1680; its autograph manuscript is now in the British Museum. The work is one of a number of settings which Purcell made of psalm paraphrases by the poet John Patrick, and one of a number which he set for three men’s voices.

The composer’s use of ground basses in the church music is relatively infrequent (especially if compared, for instance, with the odes), but here is an exception, with the anthem anchored by seventeen repetitions of a simple eight-note bass line. Purcell achieves his usual astonishing variety over such a potentially limiting framework by employing ingenious variations of tonality, texture and tempo. The ground itself never wavers, though (as with all the best examples) one can easily forget its presence. For the first three repetitions of the ground the higher of the two tenors is given a tuneful solo, but the mood changes at ‘Assail’d with grief and pain’, with the three voices now in close proximity to each other, leaning off each other’s suspensions and creating densely-packed harmony. For ‘Nor did I cry to God in vain’ the metre switches to triple time, and the bass is given a brief solo before the trio returns for ‘God and thyself’. The setting of ‘In quiet rest’ and ‘all thy falling tears’ is especially effective. With the second tenor’s solo ‘The solemn payment of the vows’ the opening metre returns, and in four-part harmony (for the bass singer and continuo have independent lines) Purcell reinforces the writer’s commitment that he is ‘thine’. 
Early, O Lord, my fainting soul
Thy mercy does implore;
No traveller in desert lands
Can thirst for water more.
I long to appear as I was wont,
Within thy holy place,
Thy pow’r and glory to behold,
And to partake thy grace.
For life itself, without thy love,
No relish can afford;
No other joys can equal this,
To serve and praise the Lord.
I’ll therefore make my pray’rs to thee,
And bless thee whilst I live;
This, like the choicest dainties, will
Both food and pleasure give.
When others sleep, my wakeful thoughts
Present thee to my mind;
And in the night I think how good
My God has been, and kind.
Since thou alone hast been my help,
To thee alone I fly;
And on thy watchful providence
With cheerfulness rely.
Dangers, whilst thou art near to me,
Do threaten me in vain;
When I keep close to God his care
And pow’r will me sustain.

John Patrick Psalm 63
Early, O Lord, my fainting soul is another of Purcell’s settings of psalm paraphrases by John Patrick, dating from around 1680. Set for four voices, it is one of the composer’s finest anthems for solo voices, full of delicious harmony and subtle illustrations of the text. Purcell must have had two particularly fine boy trebles in mind.

The characterful opening immediately catches the supplicatory mood of the text, with the bass’s phrase answered by the first treble, both leaning on the word ‘fainting’. The remaining two voices enter, the tenor set high in its register, allowing it to cross with the two intertwining treble parts, and Purcell gives especial emphasis to ‘implore’. The music becomes homophonic for ‘No traveller’ and drops in tessitura for ‘desert lands’: the rising repetitions of ‘can thirst’ are especially poignant. The first treble takes ‘I long to appear as I was wont’, his lilting triple time leading into the bittersweet false relations of ‘For life itself without thy love’: the repeated word ‘relish’ is harmonised with much affection, as are the ‘choicest dainties’ which give ‘both food and pleasure’. Only the solo bass remains ‘when others sleep’, his expressive semi-recitative leading to the most extraordinary section of the anthem. ‘Dangers, whilst thou art near to me’ leads into sensuous vocal suspensions and daring harmony at ‘do threaten me in vain’, with the four voices moving to within only a fifth of each other at ‘when I keep close’, before a more optimistic mood closes this perfect Purcell miniature.

4 Sleep, Adam, and take thy rest
Devotional song, Z195 (1683)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano

Sleep, Adam, sleep, and take thy rest;
Let no sad thoughts possess thy breast;
But when thou wak’st, look up and see
What thy creator hath done for thee;
A creature from thy side is ta’en,
Who till thou wak’st she wants a name;
Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
A mate most fit for thee alone.
Wake, Adam, wake, to embrace thy bride,
Who is newly risen from thy side;
But in the midst of thy delights beware
Lest her enticements prove thy snare.

Anonymous
The author of ‘Adam’s Sleep’ is unknown, but Purcell’s 1683 setting of *Sleep, Adam, and take thy rest* (making this his earliest solo devotional song) displays all the characteristics of skilful pictorialisation which culminated ten years later in ‘The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation’. The opening finds Adam sleeping quietly, the voice low in its range but quickly rising as the sleeping man awakes to see what God has done whilst he rested. The key brightens as the woman (sprung from Adam’s side and so new that she has not yet been named Eve) is viewed for the first time; her appearance ushers in the brief seven bars of arioso ‘Flesh of thy flesh’. ‘Wake, Adam, wake’ comes with more emphasis as Adam greets his new bride, but the caveat is delicious in its sinewy, serpentine lines for both voice and continuo lest the new-found joy ‘prove thy snare’.

5 **Awake, ye dead**

Devotional song, Z182 (1688)

ROBERT EVANS bass  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Awake, ye dead,
The trumpet calls to sleep no more;
Hark! from aloft the frozen region falls,
With noise so loud it deafs the ocean’s roar;
Alarm’d, amaz’d, the clatt’ring orbs come down.
The virtuous soul alone appears
Unmov’d while earth’s foundations shake,
Ascends, and mocks the universal wreck.

Nahum Tate, ‘The Last Trumpet’

The bass duet *Awake ye dead*, a ‘Hymn upon the Last Day’ by Nahum Tate, dates from 1693 and was published in volume 2 of *Harmonia Sacra*. Tate’s own subtitle for his text was ‘The Last Trumpet’, and the splendid sentiments and words clearly inspired Purcell: his choice of two solo basses (unique in all the anthems) gives the cataclysmic text added emphasis and character.

The opening shakes the dead from their slumbers, the repeated cries of ‘Awake’ mixed with rapid-fire trumpet calls; the only respite comes from the contrasting minor harmony of ‘to sleep no more’. The continuo instruments violently launch us into ‘Hark! from aloft’, their thunderous repeated semiquavers competing with the vocal parts, imitating a ‘noise so loud it deafs the ocean’s roar’: the voices are alternately ‘alarm’d’ and ‘amaz’d’ as the ‘clatt’ring orbs’ tumble from the top of the singers’ ranges. The ‘virtuous soul alone’ enters in gently swinging triple-time, the word ‘unmov’d’
doing exactly that in the music, to be replaced by violent semiquavers as the very foundations of the earth shake. The virtuous soul ‘ascends, and mocks the universal wreck’, whose destruction has been so vividly characterised in just three minutes of chamber music.

6 The earth trembled
Devotional song, Z197 (1688)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB treble

The earth trembled; and heav’ns clos’d eye
Was loath to see the Lord of glory die:
The sky was clad in mourning, and the spheres
Forgot their harmony; the clouds dropp’d tears:
Th’ ambitious dead arose to give him room;
And ev’ry grave did gape to be his tomb;
Th’ affrighted heav’ns sent down elegious thunder;
The world’s foundations loos’d, to lose its founder;
Th’ impatient temple rent her veil in two,
To teach our hearts what our sad hearts should do.
Can senseless things do this, and shall not I
Melt one poor drop to see my Saviour die?
Drill forth, my tears; and trickle one by one,
Till you have pierc’d this heart of mine, this stone.

Francis Quarles

Francis Quarles’s marvellous poem The earth trembled (subtitled ‘On our saviour’s passion’) also sets a scene of worldly destruction, but this time Purcell’s inspired setting is poignantly restrained, and made all the more effective by the use of a solo boy treble, able to put across the enormity of the text with youthful innocence. Everywhere word-painting abounds: heaven closes its eyes with a large downward interval, the mourning of the sky is harmonically and melodically graphic, and the clouds drop tears of great pathos. The dead rise, graves ‘gape to be his tomb’, heaven sends down ‘elegious thunder’, the very foundations of the world are loosened and the veil of the temple is torn in two. But, all this violence now described, desolate sadness returns ‘to teach our hearts what our sad hearts should do’, the central word ‘heart’ given especial emphasis. The key change and pathos of ‘Can senseless things do this’ are almost unbearable, and the tears return, first in an emotional outburst, ‘Drill forth, my tears’, before they slowly trickle down, one by one.
The way of God is an undefiled way
Verse anthem, Z56 (1694)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

The way of God is an undefiled way: the word of the Lord also is tried in the fire;
He is the defender of all them that put their trust in him.
It is God that girdeth me with strength of war, and maketh my way perfect.
Who is God, but the Lord?
He teacheth my hands to fight, and mine arm shall break ev’n a bow of steel.
Who hath any strength except our God?
Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle; Thou shalt throw down mine enemies under me.
I will smite them, that they shall not be able to stand, but fall under my feet.
For this cause I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and sing praises unto thy name.
Alleluia.
Thou hast made mine enemies also to turn their backs upon me; and I shall destroy them that hate me.
I will beat them as small as the dust before the wind, and cast them out as the clay in the street.
They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them: yea, ev’n unto the Lord shall they cry,
but he shall not hear them.
The Lord liveth, and blessed be my strong helper: and praised be the God of my salvation.
Great prosperity giveth he unto his King.
It is he that hath deliver’d me from my cruel enemies, and set me up above mine adversaries:
Thou shalt rid me from the wicked man.
Great prosperity giveth he unto his King, and showeth loving kindness unto David his anointed,
and unto his seed for evermore.
Alleluia.

Psalm 18 vv 30-32 34, 38-42 48-50

The way of God is an undefiled way is one of Purcell’s last anthems, written for the celebrations
that marked the return of King William to London from Flanders on November 11th 1694. The
king had been campaigning on the Continent for several months, and his most notable achievement
had been the taking of Huy. The text of the anthem was carefully chosen from Psalm 18 for its
topical allusions to a victorious king. Purcell’s setting shows many of the hallmarks of his later style,
with the music falling into a number of relatively short contrasting sections, inside which are
condensed many musical devices and compositional techniques.
The opening is smooth, the trio of solo voices anchored by a slowly moving bass line, and key words picked out with melismas. At ‘It is God’ the solo bass (originally John Gostling) takes on the role of the strong warrior, accompanied by a determined, two-note repeated bass figuration: the two upper voices question in thirds ‘Who is God?’, and are answered again by the bass. A longer section of florid semi-recitative for the bass follows, the enemies graphically thrown down the musical scale, and then smitten ‘that they shall not be able to stand’: defeated, they fall to the furthest extremes of the voice. The two upper voices (much in the style of the Te Deum and Jubilate, first performed just ten days later) give thanks in fluid style, their alleluias answered and taken up by the full choir. Once again the bass sings of the destruction of his enemies, beating them ‘as small as the dust’ and weaving intricate melismas on ‘turn’, ‘destroy’ and ‘cast’, his range of over two octaves being used to superb dramatic effect.

The duet ‘They shall cry’ finds Purcell at his most appealingly mournful, full of angular intervals and tortured suspensions, before a running bass line returns to a more positive sentiment, that ‘The Lord liveth’. The two upper voices are equally convinced at ‘Great prosperity giveth he’, and the bass is given yet another fine piece of pictorialisation, set high in his voice ‘above mine adversaries’. The theme at ‘Great prosperity’ is extended and developed, this time for all three voices, the word ‘evermore’ suitably illustrated with extremely long phrases, and the anthem ends with ringing Alleluias.

Lord, not to us, but to thy name
Anthem, Z137 (c1680)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Lord, not to us, but to thy name
We give the praise we owe;
To thy free goodness and thy truth,
Whence all our blessings flow.

John Patrick, Psalm 115, second version

Purcell’s setting of Lord, not to us, but to thy name is incomplete, for after twenty-four bars of the autograph score (in the British Museum) he simply writes in a thick stroke through the staves, leaving plenty of unused space in which he would have continued the work. Completed anthems usually receive a flourish to signify their end. Additionally, thirty-two lines of John Patrick’s paraphrase of Psalm 115 are left unset. The section that does survive makes a neat, if short, anthem.
Lord, what is man?
Devotional song, Z192 (1693)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano

Lord, what is man, lost man, that thou should'st be
So mindful of him, that the son of God
Forsook his glory, his abode,
To become a poor tormented man?
The Deity was shrunk into a span,
And that for me, O wondrous love, for me.
Reveal, ye glorious spirits, when ye knew
The way the son of God took to renew
Lost man, your vacant places to supply,
Blest spirits, tell,
Which did excel,
Which was more prevalent,
Your joy or your astonishment,
That man should be assum’d into the Deity,
That for a worm a God should die?
Oh! for a quill drawn from your wing
To write the praises of th’ eternal love;
O! for a voice like yours to sing
That anthem here which once you sung above.
Alleluia.

William Fuller

William Fuller’s ‘divine hymn’ Lord, what is man? was set by Purcell during 1693, and published in volume 2 of Harmonia Sacra – the volume which also contains ‘The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation’. Like that work, Lord, what is man? begins with an extended passage of semi-recitative, full of intricate vocal touches and subtle harmonic emphasis. The opening question is first asked gently, then repeated with more anxiety, the singer amazed that the son of God should become (with a wonderfully crafted melodic phrase) ‘a poor tormented man’. Man is ‘lost’ at the lower end of the singer’s voice, the Son of God’s glory rises optimistically through the scale, only to ‘become a poor, tormented man’. The Deity is graphically ‘shrunk’ into a human lifespan, and ‘wondrous love’ blossoms magnificently. The singer calls on the ‘glorious spirits’ to say ‘which was more prevalent’ – their joy, pictured in a fine melisma, or the dropping interval that represents their
astonishment. The contrast between the ‘worm’ that is man and the exalted position of God is vividly captured in the music.

An arioso section follows, calling for a quill ‘to write the praises’, and then, with Purcell inspired as ever at the mention of music, for ‘a voice like yours to sing that anthem here which once you sung’. An extended section of alleluias closes the work: the compelling variety of moods and phrases create such an inexorable momentum that it is easy to forget Purcell is setting just one word.

**Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth**
Verse anthem, Z52 (1687)

MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Sing unto God, O all ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord.
Alleluia.
Who sitteth in the heavens over all: Lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice.
Ascribe ye the pow’r to God over Israel: His worship and strength is in the clouds.
Alleluia.
O God, wonderful art thou in the holy places, ev’n the God of Israel;
He will give strength and power unto his people.
Blessed be God: Amen.

Psalm 68 vv 32-35

For his setting of Sing unto God, first heard in 1687, Purcell once again turned to the voice of his friend and colleague John Gostling. The first hearing in the Chapel Royal must have turned a few heads, for Purcell was clearly determined to use every available note of Gostling’s ‘stupendous’ vocal range. The first section calls on all the kingdoms of the earth to praise God, involving mainly the agile upper end of the voice in a series of florid runs before the choir’s ‘Alleluia’ gives the soloist a brief respite. ‘Who sitteth in the heavens over all’ was irresistible to Purcell, who responded to ‘Lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice’ by taking the singer from above the musical stave to well below it in a series of breathtaking phrases. ‘Ascribe ye the power’ is more conventional, set in a triple metre and once again leading to Alleluias from the choir. As so often though with Purcell, it is the slow section which is most musically effective: the melismas of ‘O God’ expand majestically (and the key turns from minor to major) onto the word ‘wonderful’. ‘He will give strength and power’ is almost Handelian in its noble mood and smoothly running continuo
line, and the section, having glorified God so expansively, ends quietly. The final statement by choir and soloist ‘Blessed be God: Amen’ is made all the more effective by its restrained breadth.

This splendid anthem is another four-part setting dating from around 1680 of a psalm paraphrase by John Patrick. The opening is jubilant, and the voices alternate between the trumpet-like calls of ‘O, all ye people’ and busy running passagework where they ‘make a cheerful noise’. After brief homophony at ‘declare your inward joys’ the close imitation returns, with ‘his high perfections’ thrown rapidly between the four voices. The trumpet calls continue at ‘In a triumphant state our Lord
is gone’, and the full ensemble and the two boys alternate fanfares and echoes as the instruments ‘proclaim our joys’. ‘Sing cheerful praises to our God’ is more melodic, and God rules harmoniously ‘o’er the heathen people’ before the tempo is broadened as God ‘shall judge the world at last’.

[12] My heart is inditing of a good matter
Coronation anthem, Z30 (1685)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor
ROBERT EVANS, STEPHEN VARCOE, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

[12] Symphony
My heart is inditing of a good matter:
I speak of the things which I have made unto the King.
At his right hand shall stand the Queen all glorious within:
Her clothing is of wrought gold.

[13] She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework;
The virgins that follow her shall bear her company.
With joy and gladness shall they be brought,
And shall enter into the King’s palace.

[14] Symphony
Hearken, O daughter, consider, incline thine ear;
Forget also thine own people and thy father’s house.
Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children
Whom thou may’st make princes in all lands.

[15] Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion;
For kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
And their queens thy nursing mothers.
Alleluia. Amen.

Psalm 45 vv 11 9 13-15 10 16 : Psalm 147 v 12 : Isaiah 49 v 23

The coronation of King James II on 23 April 1685 was an opulent affair which was recorded in profuse detail by Francis Sandford. Trumpeters, drummers and kettle-drummers led the
procession to Westminster Abbey, followed by the eight ‘Children of the Choir of Westminster’, the
twelve boys of the Chapel Royal (all individually named and including the young Jeremiah Clarke)
and the respective adult members of those choirs (32 in number, though not all would have sung:
some were organists and choirmasters). The magnificent service in the Abbey was accompanied by a
large instrumental ensemble, including the vingt-quatre violons (for once at their full strength –
Sandford’s rather inaccurate engravings show some twenty string players), and an organ specially set
up in the Abbey by Purcell in his capacity as ‘organ maker and keeper etc.’. An official payments
register details the finances: ‘To Henry Purcell for so much money by him disbursed & craved for
providing and setting up an Organ in the Abby Church of Westmr for the Solemnity of the Coronacon
and for removing the same... £34. 12s. 0d’. And the paymaster? The Secret Service!

Nine anthems were sung, beginning with Purcell’s setting of ‘I was glad when they said unto me’.
The scholars of Westminster School sang the ‘Vivats’ from the gallery as the queen entered, and
Blow’s anthem *Let thy hand be strengthened* was performed by all the choirs as ‘their majesties
reposed themselves in their chairs of state’. William Turner’s setting of ‘Veni, creator’ was followed
by Henry Lawes’s setting of ‘Zadok the priest’; Blow’s anthem *Behold, O Lord our defender* was
performed before the investing, and afterwards Turner’s ‘Deus in virtute’, followed by William
Child’s ‘Te Deum’ and Blow’s *God sometimes spake in visions*. Finally the queen was crowned, and
Purcell’s specially-composed setting of *My heart is inditing of a good matter* was ‘performed by the
whole consort of voices and instruments’. It must have made a splendid climax to a fine pageant.

Purcell’s setting was conceived on the largest scale, using four-part strings, eight-part choir and eight
soloists. The sound must have been radiant in a crowded Westminster Abbey, for Purcell’s textures,
the lower end dominated by three bass chorus parts, the trebles, altos and tenors taking the middle
and higher ground and the upper strings giving a wonderful sheen to the ensemble, were magnificent.
Anchoring the ensemble was a huge continuo section – in our recording we use no fewer than six
bass violins and four theorbo along with the organ (its twentieth-century costs sadly not funded by
the Secret Service), producing an extraordinary sound and denuding London, just as the coronation
did, of all the best players!

The Symphony to *My heart is inditing* is on the grandest scale, its opening section majestically
spacious, and drawing on the unique sonorities of the royal strings, tuned to their high pitch. The
writing for the bass violins is especially effective, keeping them high in their range for the first
eighteen bars, and only allowing them to drop to their rich bottom strings late on in the section: the
effect is captivating. The triple section dances through adventurous sequences, again exploring
sonorities as well as lilting harmonies, and leads straight into the first chorus section. Purcell brings
in the voices gradually, allowing the texture to build up slowly to its full eight parts: at ‘I speak of
the things’ he uses antiphonal effects between the upper and lower voices, building up chains of suspensions before a brief orchestral ritornello ends the section. Another strongly imitative movement ‘At his right hand’ follows, the pairs of voices joyously dancing in dotted rhythmic figurations at ‘all glorious’, and changing to sumptuous eight-part harmony at the mention of the queen’s magnificently rich ‘clothing of wrought gold’.

The first section of verse writing ‘She shall be brought unto the king’ is for six soloists, with the three upper voices first answered by the lower three before the ensemble joins in six-part harmony. The ‘virgins that follow her’ are pictured in an elegantly dropping phrase before ushering in another dancing, rhythmic section ‘with joy and gladness’, now in seven parts: this is eventually taken up by the full choir and orchestra, the tutti sections separated by joyful instrumental interpolations.

At the mid-point of the anthem the whole opening Symphony is repeated (once Purcell’s orchestra had settled into the occasion a little more comfortably, might they may have played it with even more verve than at the start?). The verse section ‘Hearken, O daughter’ finds Purcell in wistful vein: the pathos of ‘forget also thine own people’ is especially striking and leads to another sumptuous harmonic moment as all eight voices combine at the cadence leading to the new triple section. Here again Purcell begins with antiphony, the lower voices taking ‘instead of thy fathers’ and the upper three answering ‘hearken, O daughter, consider’. When all six voices finally combine the harmony is fulsome, and the thoughtful closing ritornello from the strings especially poignant.

The block chords of ‘Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem’ would have echoed throughout Westminster Abbey, waking even the most tired dignitary (the service would by now have lasted several hours), for here is Purcell at his grandest, writing chords in as many as twelve parts. At ‘For kings shall be thy nursing fathers’ the texture becomes more contrapuntal, the imitataive point busily sounding in every area of the ensemble, contrasted by the closing homophony of ‘and their queens thy nursing mothers’.

Finally comes a spacious ‘Alleluia, Amen’ where two contrasting themes operate simultaneously, the ‘Alleluia’ moving three notes to the bar, the ‘Amen’ slower at bar speed. Gradually the ‘Alleluias’ take over the texture, the entries weaving amongst each other until the music reaches the final phrase of ‘Alleluias’. The whole ensemble joins together, and with block chords which spread sound over three octaves, a coronation anthem of true splendour ends in majestic harmony.
O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.
My soul also is sore troubled: but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?
Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul: O, save me, for thy mercy’s sake.
For in death no man rememb’reth thee: and who will give thee thanks in the pit?
I am weary of my groaning; every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears.
My beauty is gone for very trouble, and worn away because of all mine enemies.
Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul: O, save me, for thy mercy’s sake.

Psalm 6 vv 1-7

Scholars have not ascribed an accurate date to the composition of *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation*, but on stylistic grounds we may guess that the anthem was written during the early 1680s. The desolate text from the Psalms inspired Purcell to produce some of his most moving, Italianate writing for two boy trebles. We can assume that the Chapel Royal must have been blessed with two especially fine choristers.

The boys’ opening melismas run towards a dropping interval which emphasises the word ‘rebuke’; both soloists sing the phrase before joining together. The voices intertwine at ‘neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure’, the falling scale for ‘heavy’ contrasting with the inexorably rising vocal entries. The voices interrupt each other at ‘Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak’, their pleas of ‘O Lord, heal me’ again overlapping and rising. The soul, ‘sore troubled’, rises chromatically before the two singers beseechingly ask ‘how long wilt thou punish me?’ The mood is briefly lightened by a section in triple metre asking for deliverance, but supplication quickly returns with ‘O, save me’, the music once again building as the vocal entries rise over each other before a brief chorus brings the section to a close.

At ‘For in death no man rememb’reth thee’ the mood darkens further, and Purcell’s marvellous word-painting is again to the fore, graphically illustrating weary ‘groaning’: the writing is especially
poignant at ‘every night wash I my bed, And water my couch with my tears.’ The Psalmist’s desolation is complete, for even his ‘beauty is gone for very trouble’: he is ‘worn away because of all mine enemies’. Once again the triple time returns, asking that the Lord should turn ‘and deliver my soul’: the two boys implore they be saved ‘for thy mercy’s sake’, and the chorus again echo their prayer, closing an astonishingly original composition.

2 **With sick and famish’d eyes**

Devotional song, Z200 (1688)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor

With sick and famish’d eyes,
With doubling knees and weary bones,
To thee my cries,
To thee my groans,
To thee my sighs, my tears ascend:
No end?

My throat, my soul is hoarse,
My heart is wither’d like a ground
Which thou dost curse;
My thoughts turn round
And make me giddy; Lord, I fall,
Yet call.

Bowels of pity, hear!
Lord of my soul, love of my mind,
Bow down thine ear!
Let not thy wind
Scatter my words, and in the same,
Thy name!

Look on my sorrows round!
Mark well my furnace! O what flames,
What heats abound!
What griefs, what shames!
Consider, Lord; Lord, bow thine ear
And hear!
Lord Jesu, thou did’st bow
Thy dying head upon the tree;
O be not now
More dead to me!
Lord, hear! shall he that made the ear
Not hear?

Behold! thy dust doth stir,
It moves, it creeps to thee;
Do not defer
To succour me,
Thy pile of dust wherein each crumb
Says ‘Come’?

My love, my sweetness, hear!
By these thy feet, at which my heart
Lies all the year,
Pluck out thy dart,
And heal my troubled breast, which cries,
Which dies.

GEORGE HERBERT

George Herbert’s graphically descriptive ‘religious elegy’ was set by Purcell during 1688, a year in which many of the composer’s finest solo devotional songs are thought to have been written. Herbert (1593-1633) was, as well as a gifted poet and an influential academic figure before he turned to the priesthood, a keen musician whose regular visits to hear the singing in Salisbury Cathedral he described as ‘Heaven upon Earth’. Purcell set seven of the thirteen verses of With sick and famish’d eyes, colouring their ardent sentiments with music of extraordinary intensity and enhancing the words with pictorialisation of great detail.

The opening sets a doleful tone, the writer’s spirit at its lowest ebb, eyes and bones weary to the point of exhaustion. His groans and cries rise with faint optimism through the scale, only for his hopes to be dashed at ‘No end?’ His throat is discordantly hoarse, his heart withered at the lowest point of the scale, and his confused thoughts are represented in musical circles: the voice falls with its subject, yet still clambers back to call again. ‘Bowels of pity’ are suitably discordant, and the singer calls to the ‘Lord of my soul’, hopelessness represented by reaching only the seventh note of the scale: ‘love of my mind’ hits a plangent false relation, and the music bows ‘down thine ear’. Words ‘scatter’, sorrows are desolately harmonised, and the music rises as the flames of the furnace
increase. The interval on ‘griefs’ sadly falls, and ‘shames’ again plunge to the bottom of the voice. The death of Jesus is coloured with mournful harmony, and once again the writer raises his voice as he calls to the Lord.

Desperation is replaced by the faintest of optimism as ‘thy dust doth stir, it moves, it creeps to thee’. He pleads that his prayers, even though he is no more important than lowly dust, will be heard: ‘Pluck out thy dart, And heal my troubled breast’ and, with a monumental discord, ‘heal my troubled breast’. But the emotional outburst is to no avail: the writer, and Purcell’s graphic music, desolately dies.

### 3 How long, great God?

**Devotional song, Z189 (1688)**

**NICHOLAS WITCOMB** treble

How long, great God, must I
Immured in this dark prison lie?
Where, at the grates and avenues of sense
My soul must watch to have intelligence,
Where but faint gleams of thee salute my sight,
Like doubtful moonshine in a cloudy night.
When shall I leave this magic sphere,
And be all mind, all eye, all ear?
How cold this clime!
And yet my sense
Perceives ev’n here thy influence,
Ev’n here thy strong magnetic charms I feel,
And pant and tremble like the amorous steel;
To lower good, and beauties not divine,
Sometimes my erroneous needle does decline;
But yet, so strong the sympathy,
It turns and points again to thee.
I long to see this excellence
Which at such distance stricks my sense;
My impatient soul struggles to disengage
Her wings from the confinement of her cage.
Would’st thou, great love, this pris’ner once set free,
How would she hasten to be link’d to thee.
She’d for no angel’s conduct stay,
But fly, and love on all the way.

JOHN NORRIS, ‘The Aspiration’

John Norris (1657-1711) was a poet, philosopher and rector of Bemerton who was considered to be the last of the Cambridge Platonists, a group which tried to promote a rational form of Christianity in the humanist traditions of Erasmus. Like ‘With sick and famish’d eyes’, his marvellous poem ‘The Aspiration’ received its setting by Purcell during 1688. But whereas George Herbert’s subject is without hope, Norris’s, though similarly imprisoned in life’s torments, sees visionary salvation in words of almost Shakespearean colour and imagination. Purcell responds with one of his finest solo miniatures.

The opening is magical, the voice beginning on a startling discord as he asks God how long he must ‘Immured in this dark prison lie’, the line emphasising ‘how long’ and dropping to its extremities for the ‘dark prison’. Glimmers of harmonic optimism emerge with the ‘grates and avenues of sense’, and continue with the ‘faint gleams of thee’ which, in a delicious vocal line, ‘salute my sight, Like doubtful moonshine in a cloudy night’. The ‘magic sphere’ is tantalisingly harmonised, and the coldness of the clime is warmed as ‘my sense Perceives ev’n here thy influence’. The mood strengthens further as the prisoner feels ‘thy strong magnetic charms’, and the vocal line graphically colours his panting and trembling ‘like the am’rous steel’: the ‘erroneous needle’ of Norris’s compass falls and then, as suddenly, ‘turns and points again to thee’. The section climaxes as he longs ‘to see this excellence’, and the ‘impatient soul’ struggles to free itself. In a lilting triple time, Love is asked to set the prisoner free: full of optimism, the captive would ‘fly, and love on all the way’.

4 Awake, and with attention hear
Devotional song, Z181 (1688)

MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Awake, and with attention hear,
Thou drowsy world, for it concerns thee near,
Awake, I say, and listen well
To what from God I, his loud prophet, tell.
Bid both the poles suppress their stormy noise,
And bid the roaring sea contain its voice.
Be still, thou sea, be still, thou air and earth,
Still as old chaos before motion’s birth.
A dreadful host of judgements is gone out,
In strength and number more
Than e’er was rais’d by God before,
To scourge the rebel world and march it round about.
I see the sword of God brandish’d above,
And from it streams a dismal ray,
I see the scabbard cast away;
How red anon with slaughter will it prove!
How will it sweat and reek in blood!
How will the scarlet glutton be o’ergorg’d
With his food! And devour all the mighty feast!
Nothing soon but bones will rest.

God does a solemn sacrifice prepare,
But not of oxen, nor of rams,
Not of kids, nor of their dams,
Not of heifers, nor of lambs,
The altar all the land, and all men in’t the victims are,
Since wicked men’s more guilty blood to spare
The beasts so long have sacrificed been;
Since men their birthright forfeit still by sin,
‘Tis fit at last beasts their revenge should have,
And sacrificed men their better brethren save.

So will they fall, so will they flee,
Such will the creatures’ wild distraction be,
When at the final doom,
Nature and Time shall both be slain,
Shall struggle with death’s pangs in vain,
And the whole world their fun’ral pile become.
The wide-stretch’d scroll of heav’n, which we
Immortal as the Deity think,
With all the beauteous characters that in it
Whose eloquence, though we understand not, we admire,
Shall crackle and the parts together shrink
Like parchment in a fire.
Th’ exhausted sun to the moon no more shall lend,
But truly then headlong into the sea descend.
The glitt’ring host now in such fair array
So proud, so well appointed and so gay,
Like fearful troops in some strong ambush ta’en,
Shall some fly routed and some fall slain,
Thick as ripe fruit or yellow leaves in autumn fall,
With such a violent storm as blows down tree and all.

And thou, O cursed land,
Which will not see the precipice where thou dost stand,
Though thou stand just upon the brink,
Thou of this poison’d bowl the bitter dregs shalt drink,
Thy rivers and thy lakes shall so
With human blood o’erflow
That they shall fetch the slaughter’d corps away,
Which in the fields around unburied lay,
And rob the beasts and birds to give the fish their prey.
The rotting corps shall so infect the air,
Beget such plagues and putrid venoms there,
That by thine own dead shall be slain
All thy few living that remain.

As one who buys surveys a ground,
So the destroying angel measures it round
So careful and so strict he is
Lest any nook or corner he should miss.
He walks about the perishing nation;
Ruin behind him stalks and empty desolation.

Then shall the market and the pleading place
Be chok’d with brambles and o’ergrown with grass.
The serpents through thy streets shall roll,
And in thy lower rooms the wolves shall bowl,
And thy gilt chambers lodge the raven and the owl
And all the wing’d ill omens of the air,
Though no new ills can be foreboded there.
The lion then shall to the leopard say:
‘Brother leopard, come away;
Behold a land from where we see
Mankind expuls’d, his and our common enemy!’
The brother leopard shakes himself and does not stay.  
The glutted vultures shall expect in vain  
New armies to be slain,  
Shall find at last the bus’ness done,  
Leave their consumed quarters and be gone.  
Th’ unburied ghosts shall sadly moan,  
The satyrs laugh to see them groan.

The evil spirits that delight  
To dance and revel in the mask of night  
The moon and stars, their sole spectators, shall affright.  
And if of lost mankind  
Aught happen to be left behind,  
If any relics but remain,  
They in the dens shall lurk, beasts in the palaces shall reign.

Isaiah 34, paraphrased by Abraham Cowley

A wake, and with attention hear is one of two settings Purcell made of poems by Abraham Cowley. Cowley (1618-1667) was the leading English poet of his time, a notable character (briefly imprisoned on suspicion of being a spy) and was responsible for introducing the irregular Pindaric Ode form which was later taken up by Dryden and others. Like Purcell, his talent was obvious at an early age, for his first poem was written when he was only ten years old. Cowley’s writing was much admired: Charles II said at his death ‘that Mr Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England’, and the poet was buried in Westminster Abbey. Purcell clearly enjoyed setting Cowley’s graphically descriptive, classical ode, full of bloodthirsty sentiments, and the result is a striking composition on a first-rate piece of poetry. Purcell’s astonishing music alternates between sections of semi-recitative and arioso; everywhere word-painting abounds.

The opening is dramatic. The ‘drowsy world’ is commanded to listen as the ‘loud prophet’ brings his message. The two poles are to ‘suppress their stormy noise’ – even the raging sea is miraculously calmed. A ‘dreadful host of judgements’ rises inexorably up the chromatic scale to ‘scourge the rebel world’, marching around in a winding melisma: the sword of God wreaks its dreadful revenge (‘from it streams a dismal ray’ is especially blue in its harmonic colouring), copious amounts of blood are spilled and eventually nothing but bones are left. In the first section of arioso it is calmly announced that a sacrifice will be prepared by God, not of animals, but of mankind. In a momentous section we hear that mankind will violently fall, and even ‘Nature and Time shall both be slain’: the ‘wide-stretched scroll of heaven’ will burn and the sun will ‘headlong into the sea descend’. In a dolorous
minor section, we hear that the few people who remain will be poisoned by the debris. Purcell’s genius for setting words rarely was given such graphic material!

The ‘destroying angel’ rhythmically struts his territory in a short section of arioso, surveying his chosen ground before an even more desolate scene of destruction is outlined, with serpents rolling in the streets, wolves howling, and the ‘wing’d ill omens of the air’ living in the ‘gilt chambers’ of mankind; even the leopard ‘does not stay’. Unburied ghosts ‘sadly moan’ and satyrs cackle horribly at their groaning discomfort. To complete the destruction, evil spirits angularly ‘dance and revel in the mask of night’. Mankind’s folly has ensured that the world has been turned topsy-turvy.

5 O God, thou art my God

Full anthem, Z35 (c1680-2)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB, JEROME FINNIS trebles
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor CHARLES DANIELS tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee.
My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh also longeth after thee in a barren and dry land where no water is.
Thus have I look’d for thee in holiness that I might behold thy power and glory.
For thy loving kindness is better than life itself: my lips shall praise thee.
As long as I live will I magnify thee on this manner, and lift up my hands in thy name.
Because thou hast been my helper, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.
Halleluia.

Psalm 63 vv 1-5 8

The full anthem O God, thou art my God is a relatively early work dating from 1680-82, whose subsequent popularity is indicated by the considerable number of manuscripts, spread throughout Britain, in which it appears. Even a hymn tune was based on its final pages. The style is uncomplicated, suggesting perhaps that Purcell’s choir was not at its strongest when he was writing the anthem, and also showing the young composer’s familiarity with the works of Tallis, Byrd and Gibbons, whose music he would have copied from an early age.

The opening demonstrates those influences, with the first homophonic phrase leading to a brief imitative section ‘early will I seek thee’. The verse section for lower voices ‘My soul thirsteth for thee’ shows a greater degree of melodic and harmonic inventiveness and leads back to another short
chorus section, based on another two imitative points. The upper voices are provided with a touching solo trio, the word ‘loving’ treated affectionately and, with the full choir, counterpoint returns, climbing through the musical scale for ‘and lift up thy hands in thy name’. At ‘therefore under the shadow of thy wings’ Purcell turns to antiphony between decani and cantoris, the two sides of the choir. With the ‘Halleluia’ churchgoers will find themselves on familiar ground, for later hymn arrangers, always keen to spot a fine tune, did so with this, naming Purcell’s melody ‘Westminster Abbey’.

We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear
Devotional song, Zl99 (1688)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano   MICHAEL GEORGE bass

We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear,
Our songs, let him who gave us voices hear!
We joy in God, who is the spring of mirth,
Who loves the harmony of heav’n and earth;
Our humble sonnets shall that praise rehearse,
Who is the music of the universe.
And whilst we sing we consecrate our art,
And offer up with ev’ry tongue a heart.

NATHANIEL INGELO

Purcell’s short setting of Nathaniel Ingelo’s *We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear* dates from 1688 and was published in volume 1 of *Harmonia Sacra*. Once again the composer demonstrates his responsiveness to the text, pointing important words and phrases. The imperative ‘hear’ leaps up an octave, the ‘spring of mirth’ curls down the scale, and ‘harmony’ is richly scored. The ‘humble sonnets’ rise as they ‘that praise rehearse’, and Purcell’s harmony ingeniously sorts itself out for ‘music’. For the chorus the soprano is joined by a bass, and they dance ‘whilst we sing’ and ‘consecrate our art’: the music rises gloriously as they ‘offer up with ev’ry tongue a heart’. 
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
Who forgiveth all thy sins: praise the Lord;
Who healeth all thine infirmities: praise the Lord, O my soul;
Who saveth thy life from destruction: praise the Lord;
Who crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness, praise the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits.
The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long suffering and of great goodness.
He will not alway be chiding, neither keepeth he his anger for ever.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.
For look how high the heaven is in comparison with the earth;
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
Look also how wide the east is from the west; so far hath he set our sins from us.
Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him:
For he knows whereof we are made; He remembereth that we are but dust.
O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion;
Praise thou the Lord, O my soul.

Psalm 103 vv 1-4 8-14 22

The principal source of this large-scale anthem is Purcell’s autograph manuscript, now in the British Museum. It dates from around 1682-85, the period when Purcell was writing the majority of his major anthems with strings. The string writing is glorious, and the solo writing, in six parts, is especially rich.

The Symphony is a fine example of a French overture: the opening is full of sparkling dotted rhythms and ingenious harmonic turns, and the second section dances in its triple metre, whilst still containing under that surface jollity the wistful character that makes Purcell’s music so unique – the falling bass line after the first, repeated eight bars of triple time is especially striking in its harmonic daring. The six solo voices first answer each other antiphonally, the upper voices calling to the lower
trio, and then joining in sumptuous harmony. The imitative point at ‘and all that is within me’ grows amongst the solo voices until all six join for ‘praise his holy name’ and lead into a fine string ritornello. Vocal antiphony returns, but Purcell quickly strikes out on new ground, four soloists in turn naming one of the Lord’s qualities whilst the two trios respond ‘praise the Lord’. Again the vocal texture builds back to the full six parts, and the section closes with another fulsome string ritornello.

For the middle section Purcell is in more introspective mood, and the vocal texture is reduced to a male trio. The Lord’s ‘compassion and mercy’ builds over a pedal, and Purcell colours his ‘long suffering’ magnificently. A tenor solo ‘He hath not dealt with us after our sins’ comes next and leads back to a repeat by the strings of the triple time of the Symphony. Following this is yet another of Purcell’s splendid bass solos: the exalted position of the heavens is contrasted with the lowly state of the earth, the east is separated from the west by a suitably spacious interval, and the father graphically ‘pitieth his own children’. The mercy of the Lord is nobly portrayed, as the continuo line drops, for he ‘rememberereth that we are but dust’. The antiphonal trios return, but this time the strings are added, creating a ten-part texture of three choirs. With the six voice parts now united, the music builds as we are exhorted to ‘speak good of the Lord’ everywhere, ‘in all places of his dominion’. The voices’ ecstatic lines are capped by a glorious string ritornello which leads into the final, brief exhortation from the choir, ‘Praise thou the Lord, O my soul’.

8 O, I’m sick of life
Devotional song, Z140 (c1680)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

O, I’m sick of life! nor will control
My passion, but in bitterness of soul
Thus tear the air: what should thy wrath incense
To punish him who knows not his offence?
Ah! dost thou in oppression take delight?
Wilt thy servant fold in shades of night,
And smile on wicked counsels? Dost thou see
With eyes of flesh? Is truth conceal’d from thee?
What, are thy days as frail as ours? Or can
Thy years determine like the age of man,
That thou should’st my delinquencies enquire
And with variety of tortures tire?
Cannot my known integrity remove
Thy cruel plagues? Wilt thou remorseless prove?
Ah! wilt thou thine own workmanship confound?
Shall the same hand that did create now wound?
Remember, I am built of clay and must
Resolve to my originary dust.

O, since I have so short a time to live,
A little ease to these my torments give,
Before I go where all in silence mourn,
From whose dark shores no travellers return:
A land where death, confusion, endless night
And horror reign, where darkness is their light.

GEORGE SANDYS, paraphrasing Job 10

Purcell’s devotional trio *O, I’m sick of life*, a setting of one of George Sandys’ dark paraphrases of the book of Job, dates from around 1680. Sandys (1578-1644) was an especially well-travelled graduate of Oxford University, a liberal intellectual and a member of Viscount Falkland’s learned circle who spent ten years in America as the treasurer of the Virginia Company, but also found time to translate Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and write a considerable amount of his own poetry. With Sandys’ despairing text, taken from his *Paraphrase upon the Divine poems* (1676), Purcell was on fertile ground, and his setting does not disappoint.

The tortured harmonies of the first bars create an astonishing opening, and the sequence of solos, duets and trios that come after are of equally high musical stature. After the opening comes a tenor solo, illustrating the darkness of night, before the trio returns to ask ‘What, are thy days as frail as ours?’. The tenor solo ‘cannot my known integrity’ is especially dolorous and sets the word ‘remember’ (a particular favourite of Purcell’s) with particular poignancy. With so little time left to live, the author asks that he may be granted ‘a little ease to these my torments’, and the music winds down to ‘where all in silence mourn’. The ending is as extraordinary as the opening, with the empty ‘land where death, confusion, endless night and horror reign’ coloured in the most desolate music.
O God, the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only son Jesus Christ with great triumph into heaven: we beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place where our saviour Christ is gone before us.

Amen.

Collect for the Sunday after Ascension

O God, the King of glory is one of Purcell’s earliest surviving full anthems, written in the ‘old’, largely homophonic style that had been prevalent in churches and chapels throughout Britain for many years. Purcell’s setting was composed by February 1679 and survives in the Gostling part-books now held in the library of York Minster. In this brief work, probably written for performance before the Collect for the Sunday after Ascension, the composer’s youthful individuality surfaces in the divergent chromaticism of ‘leave us not comfortless’.

Let the night perish (Job’s Curse)

Let the night perish; cursed be the morn
Wherein ‘twas said: there is a manchild born!
Let not the Lord regard that day, but shroud
Its fatal glory in some sullen cloud.
May the dark shades of an eternal night
Exclude the least kind beam of dawning light;
Let unknown babes, as in the womb they lie,
If it be mentioned, give a groan, and die;
No sounds of joy therein shall charm the ear,
No sun, no moon, no twilight star appear,
But a thick veil of gloomy darkness wear.
Why did I not, when first my mother’s womb
Discharg’d me thence, drop down into my tomb?
Then had I been as quiet, and mine eyes
Had slept and seen no sorrow; there the wise
And subtle counsellor, the potentate,
Who for themselves built palaces of state,
Lie hush’d in silence; there’s no midnight cry
Caus’d by oppression and the tyranny
Of wicked rulers; there the weary cease
From labour, there the pris’ner sleeps in peace;
The rich, the poor, the monarch and the slave
Rest undisturb’d and no distinction have
Within the silent chambers of the grave.

JEREMY TAYLOR, ‘Job’s Curse’

Like Sandys, Jeremy Taylor too paraphrased some of the darkest moments from the Book of Job. Taylor (1613-1667) was educated at Cambridge, later becoming a Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford and then Rector of Uppingham before the Royalist defeat in the civil war ensured his retirement to Wales (where he wrote most of his poetry, some books of sermons, a manual of daily prayers and a famous argument for toleration). At the Restoration, Taylor’s fortunes rose, and he was made Bishop of Down and Connor.

In Let the night perish Job is at his lowest ebb, sitting in a desert covered in sores and bitterly wishing that he never been born. He longs for death to relieve his misery. Armed with such sentiments, Purcell’s setting is graphic. The opening points words such as ‘perish’ and ‘cursed’, and Job prays that the Lord will forget the day of his birth, shrouding ‘its fatal glory in some sullen cloud’. The composer’s dark colouring continues with the ‘dark shades of an eternal night’, which is to exclude all light, and the music groans to illustrate unborn babies dying in the womb at the mere mention of that awful day. Briefly the tone rises for the ‘sounds of joy’, but there is ‘no sun, no moon, no twilight star’, just ‘gloomy darkness’. Word painting abounds: ‘discharg’d’, ‘drop down’, ‘as quiet’ and ‘sorrow’ are all imaginatively illustrated by Purcell. There is a hushed silence before the ‘midnight cry’ rises up an arpeggio, only to be felled by a delicious harmonic slide at ‘oppression’. Job’s vision of the calm that death brings to the weary soul, where the prisoner ‘sleeps in peace’, is illustrated in a short, sad triple-time aria, performed once by the soprano, and then in duet with the bass. The rich are, musically, still higher than the lowly poor, but it is the desolation of the ‘silent chambers of the grave’ which closes the piece.
When on my sick bed I languish
Devotional song, Z144 (c1680)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

When on my sick bed I languish,
Full of sorrow, full of anguish,
Fainting, gasping, trembling, crying,
Panting, groaning, speechless, dying,
My soul just now about to take her flight
Into the region of eternal night;
O tell me, you
That have been long below,
What shall I do?
What shall I think, when cruel Death appears
That may extenuate my fears?
Methinks I hear some gentle spirit say:
Be not fearful, come away!
Think with thyself that now thou shalt be free
And find thy long-expected liberty;
Better thou may’st, but worse thou can’t not be
Than in this vale of tears and misery.
Like Caesar, with assurance then come on,
And unamaz’d attempt the laurel crown,
That lies on t’other side Death’s Rubicon.

THOMAS FLATMAN, ‘A Thought of Death’

Thomas Flatman (1637-1688) was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, and was as famed as a painter of miniatures as he was as a poet. He was the author of the ode set to music by Purcell in 1684, ‘From those serene and rapturous joys’ that celebrated the return of Charles to Whitehall. His Poems and Songs (1674) contained three important works on the subject of death, of which When on my sick bed I languish was one.

The opening text is full of mournful words, and Purcell sets these with great harmonic poignancy, the melody falling towards ‘languish’: the triple-time at ‘fainting, gasping, trembling, crying’ is as
desperate and effective as we would expect from this master of word-painting. The solo bass is given the section beginning ‘O tell me, you that have been long below’, but Purcell ingeniously re-arranges the lines of the poem to pre-empt ‘Methinks I hear some gentle spirit say’ with the tenor’s ‘be not fearful, come away’. The melodic interval for the ‘vale of tears’ sadly droops, before a more up-beat chorus ‘attempt the laurel crown’ of heaven: but the final sentiment depressingly reminds us that first they must cross ‘Death’s Rubicon’.

12 Rejoice in the Lord alway (‘The Bell Anthem’)
Verse anthem, Z49 (c1682-5)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor CHARLES DANIELS tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHORI OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing, but in ev’ry thing by pray’r and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.

Philippians 4 vv 4-7

Purcell’s famous ‘Bell Anthem’, dating from his prolific period for anthems with strings of 1682-5, seems to have acquired its title early on in its career, for an early eighteenth-century copy in the British Museum (which is also the source for the second violin and viola parts, missing from the autograph) labels it ‘Rejoice in the Lord … with a Symphony imitating Bells (it was originally call’d the Bell Anthem)’. Tudway’s score of 1716 simply calls it ‘The Bell Anthem’.

In the glorious opening ‘Prelude’ (not given the more usual label of ‘Symphony’) the pealing of bells is everywhere, not only in the bass part where Purcell’s ten-beat ground is repeated five times, but also in the intertwining upper parts where the juxtaposition of joyous scales with Purcell’s wistful harmonies give the music a delicious bittersweet quality. The use of the Chapel Royal’s high pitch gives the string writing a wonderful sheen, and the two theorbos colour the texture with their constantly descending scales. Finally three solo voices break in with the eight bars of triple-time they reiterate throughout the anthem, and their new tune is quickly taken up and extended by the strings, the more lyrical middle section of Purcell’s Symphony contrasting with the dancing opening. The trio repeat their eight bars and the briefest of instrumental comments closes the section. The soloists call
that ‘your moderation be known unto all men’ and the choir joyfully breaks in, their rejoicing interspersed with the solo trio’s exhortation ‘and again’. The instruments take the instruction literally and we are treated to a complete repetition of the Symphony.

The solo bass brings a more staid tone with his instruction to prayer and supplication ‘Be careful for nothing’, and the triple time is replaced by a more thoughtful passage of homophony for ‘and the peace of God which passeth all understanding’. The strings develop the idea, but they are interrupted by the return of the soloists’ triple section: eight bars of this, repeats of both the instrumental ritornello and the chorus (complete with the soloists’ cries of ‘and again’) bring to a close one of Purcell’s most endurably popular anthems.

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DISC 6 : CDS44146

1 Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?
Verse anthem, Z65 (c1682-85)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor CHARLES DANIELS tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying:
Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us.
But he that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: He shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure; yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion.
I will preach the law whereof thou hast said unto me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee;
Desire of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the sea for thy possession.
Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.
Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.
Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice in him with reverence.
Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way; if his wrath be kindled (yea, but a little), blessed are all they that put their trust in him.
Alleluia.

Psalm 2
This dates from 1682-85, the period in which many of Purcell’s finest anthems with string accompaniment were composed. The youthful Purcell collected seventeen of these anthems together and copied them into one manuscript, now in the British Museum (although for Why do the heathen? at least six other manuscript sources still survive). The anthem’s words were taken from Psalm 2 (a source to which Handel turned some forty years later for four movements of Messiah), providing a text which begins in a splendidly bellicose fashion.

But before the singers enter we are treated to one of Purcell’s glorious string symphonies: the slow opening is marvellously wistful in its rich harmony, and the triple-time that follows dances elegantly in Purcell’s inimitably crafted style. A solo bass interrupts with his blustering first question ‘Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?’, his irritation given added emphasis by the repetition of ‘Why?’. The two tenors join in as ‘the kings of the earth stand up’ against the Lord, and lively running figures depict the breaking of bonds and casting away of cords. God’s answer to this challenge of his authority is to ‘laugh them to scorn’, illustrated by the solo bass’s jagged scotch snaps. The two tenors’ lines intertwine tantalisingly at ‘and vex them in his sore displeasure’ before more gentle triple-time writing brings the first section to a close.

Purcell instructs the strings to play ‘The Tripla of the Symph again’, introducing a more thoughtful section of semi-recitative and another substantial solo for his friend the bass John Gostling, whose graphic vocal illustration (over two octaves) of the ‘uttermost parts of the earth’ would have brought a smile to the royal face. The tone of the text moderates, and the two tenors gently advise wisdom as a better course than provocation. Purcell sets the word ‘reverence’ with especial deference, dropping the top voice nearly an octave. John Gostling’s bass still dominates: it is he who sings ‘If his wrath be kindled’, and the two tenors who timidly add ‘yea, but a little’, but homophony returns with the final advice that ‘blessed are all they that put their trust in him’. A short instrumental ritornello, including Purcell’s own instructions for echoes, links into a short choral repetition of the trio and a final, positive ‘Alleluia’.

**Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth?**

Verse anthem, Z26 (c1677)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor  PAUL AGNEW tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults. Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me: and so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence.
Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 19 vv 12-14

This verse anthem is one of Purcell’s earliest surviving sacred works, maybe written as early as 1677 when the composer would have been only seventeen or eighteen years old. The three verses from Psalm 19 are set for a trio of solo male voices, with the choir entering at the conclusion for the Gloria. Much of the writing is in the imitative style which looks back to church music of the previous fifty years, but nestling amongst these sections are moments which show the strongly emergent harmonic and melodic individuality of the teenage composer. Immediately after the opening phrases, given in turn to each voice and then reiterated by the trio, comes rich harmony and overlapping chains of suspensions for ‘O cleanse thou me from my secret faults’. The more conventional styles of the past return for ‘keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins’, each voice presented with the point, but Purcell’s individuality again comes to the fore with the homophonic writing at the central point of the anthem, ‘Let the words of my mouth’: the strong musical commitment of ‘O Lord, my strength and my redeemer’ is impressive.

The Gloria begins in conventional homophonic style, and we see confident handling of imitative techniques at ‘as it was in the beginning’ before the dropping augmented interval of the final ‘Amen’ provides a serene ending.

3 O Lord, grant the king a long life
Verse anthem, Z38 (1685)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor CHARLES DANIELS tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

O Lord, grant the king a long life, O grant him a long life, that his years may endure throughout all generations.
Amen. Let all say Amen.
He shall dwell before God for ever. O, prepare thy loving mercy and faithfulness, that they may preserve him.
As for his enemies, clothe them all with shame; but upon himself let his crown flourish.
Amen.

Psalm 61 vv 6-7; Psalm 132 v 18
**O Lord, grant the king a long life** appears in the index of Purcell’s collection of anthems in the ‘Royal’ Manuscript but was not, in the event, copied in. Most probably it was written during Charles II’s last illness in the final months of 1685, since the next anthem to appear in the collection is the first Purcell wrote for James II, the coronation anthem *My heart is inditing*. The work is interesting, for it shows the way in which Purcell’s larger-scale works with orchestra were developing: he utilises a smaller quantity of text, repeating phrases and sentences more often than in earlier anthems, and the music is divided up into more clearly defined sections of greater contrast.

The mellifluous opening Symphony, scored for two violins and continuo, falls into two halves and leads directly into a vocal trio based on the orchestral material, punctuated by chordal Amens from the full choir. The Symphony is played again and leads into the trio ‘He shall dwell before God’, over which Purcell superimposes the two violins to create a five-part texture and antiphonal effects between voices and instruments. Musically the most interesting section is the minor-key movement, ‘O prepare thy loving mercy’, where we find the imploring writing that characterises many of Purcell’s great later works: there are phrases which look forward to the Te Deum and Jubilate of 1694, and a poignant closing instrumental ritornello.

For his final movement Purcell returns to the style of the first trio and chorus, the king’s crown flourishing in a suitably melismatic fashion. Within a few months Charles was dead and Purcell and the royal musical establishment were faced with a monarch for whom they were to discover they had very little love.

**4 Hear me, O Lord, the great support**

Devotional song, Z133 (1680-82)

CHARLES DANIELS, PAUL AGNEW tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Hear me, O Lord, the great support
Of my integrity;
Thou hast my former troubles eas’d,
Now to my pray’rs draw nigh.
Fond men! that would my glory stain,
My government despise;
How long will ye pursue vain hopes,
And please yourselves with lies?
Know that the Lord does righteous men
With special favour own:
Though you despise me, he ne’er will
On my petitions frown.
Sin not, but fear; let quiet thoughts
Instruct and make you wise;
Join a pure heart with trust in God
As the best sacrifice.

Though others in distrust of thee
To other succours fly,
Thou art our hope; Lord, cast on us
A favourable eye.
Thy love more cheers my heart than when
Their corn has wish’d increase;
Or when a happy vintage makes
Their wine o’erflow the press.

Down will I lie in peace, and sleep
Shall close my wearied eyes;
No fears disturb me, whilst I know
In God my safety lies.

JOHN PATRICK, after Psalm 4

John Patrick’s skilful paraphrases of psalms provided Purcell with the texts for nine devotional songs in the early 1680s. His setting of *Hear me, O Lord, the great support*, a version of the nine verses of Psalm 4, is found in at least four sources, but the principal manuscript is one of Purcell’s three large collections, now housed in The British Library. The particular volume in which this piece is found has been rather carelessly rebound and contains vocal and instrumental works, some of which are dated from between June 1680 and February 1683.

‘Hear me, O Lord’ is a testament to the craftsmanship of a composer only just in his twenties. The opening is set for all three voices, with the bass voice often moving away from the continuo line to create a rich, four-part texture that often finds the voices close to one another. The smooth opening is contrasted with the defiant question ‘How long will ye pursue vain hopes?’ posed by each singer in turn. The middle voice is given a solo section, rhythmically pointing the word ‘special’, but is interrupted by the bass’s stern command ‘Sin not’ and the higher tenor’s addendum ‘but fear’. The homophonic writing at ‘Join a pure heart’ is especially effective, and the imploring ‘Lord, cast on us
a favourable eye’ beautifully written. The high tenor solo ‘Thy love more cheers my heart’ brings a lighter, more optimistic tone, but is soon replaced by ‘Down will I lie in peace’, which drops slowly down the musical scale and leads to the serene closing conviction that ‘No fears disturb me, whilst I know in God my safety lies’.

5 Thou wakeful shepherd that does Israel keep (A Morning Hymn)

Devotional song, Z198 (1688)

NICHOLAS WITCOMB treble

Thou wakeful shepherd, that does Israel keep,
Rais’d by thy goodness from the bed of sleep,
To thee I offer up this hymn
As my best morning sacrifice;
May it be gracious in thine eyes
To raise me from the bed of sin.
And do I live to see another day?
I vow, my God, henceforth to walk thy ways,
And sing thy praise
All those few days
Thou shalt allow.
Could I redeem the time I have mis-spent
In sinful merriment,
Could I untread
Those paths I led I would so expiate each past offence,
That ev’n from thence
The innocent should wish themselves like me
When with such crimes they such repentance see.
With joy I’d sing away my breath,
Yet who can die so to receive his death?

WILLIAM FULLER

Purcell’s setting of William Fuller’s ‘morning hymn’ dates from around 1688, the year when most of Purcell’s finest solo devotional songs emerged to be published in Harmonia sacra. Comparison with Fuller’s text (as published in Nahum Tate’s collection Miscellanea sacra: or poems on Divine & Moral Subjects) shows that Purcell made numerous changes before setting the poem:
indeed, nearly half of the words in Purcell’s setting are not by Fuller but by the composer-turned-poet. The result is a poignant text that is more contemplative and, in the end, less optimistic than Fuller’s.

The singer wakes, by God’s goodness, to see another day, his first slow actions pictured in gently-moving harmony. His hymn is offered up through the scale, and the key brightens as he offers his ‘best morning sacrifice’, but humility quickly returns with ‘may it be gracious’, harmonically uncertain in its first statement, melodically unsure on its second in only reaching the seventh note of the scale. The ‘bed of sin’ is suitably gravelly, contrasted by the heights of ‘And do I live to see another day’ and the glorious melisma of ‘And sing thy praise’. But after brief optimism, regret quickly returns as the poet remembers ‘the time I have mis-spent in sinful merriment’ (Fuller writes ‘in senseless scenes of merriment’), and the pitch rises as he sings that if he could, he would undo the offences of the past. The innocent are pictured at the lowest end of the voice, the author’s crimes richly harmonised. ‘With joy I’d sing away my breath’ is set to a short burst of lilting arioso, but the breath is, quite literally, stopped to usher in the final desolate question.

6 Who hath believed our report?
Verse anthem, Z64 (c1679/80)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS, PAUL AGNEW tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?
For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness in him, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, and we hid as it were our faces from him: He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet did we esteem him, stricken and smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, so opened he not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers, dumb: so openeth he not his mouth. He was taken from prison to judgement: who shall declare his generation?
For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53 vv 1-8

The verse anthem *Who hath believed our report?* dates from around 1679: its autograph manuscript is contained in one of two volumes, now in The British Library, collected in the eighteenth century by William Flackton. The desolate text is from the Book of Isaiah, much of it also selected sixty years later by Handel for Part 2 of *Messiah*.

Purcell employs four soloists who work together as a consort and are also provided with solo sections: the role of the chorus is slight, perhaps because the choir at the Chapel Royal was not strong at the time. Purcell’s imagination was clearly fired by the strong text: the opening word ‘Who’ is repeated no fewer than seven times, first by the three lower voices and then by the quartet (with a daringly open false relation in the second tenor). ‘For he shall grow up’ rises inexorably, the ‘tender plant’ affectionately droops, and the ‘dry grass’ is pictured with a bare fifth. The solos that follow are full of word-painting: the ‘under tenor solus’ is provided with another delicious false relation against the continuo at ‘there is no beauty’, and the ‘upper tenor solus’ contrasts the anger of ‘he was despised and rejected’ with the dejection of sorrows and griefs. The bass is more noble in his comments, rising only for ‘stricken and smitten’, and the countertenor completes the doleful picture, mournfully recounting the wounds and bruises and graphically illustrating the flogging ‘stripes’. The refrain ‘All we like sheep have gone astray’, sung first by the quartet, and then taken up by the choir, is largely homophonic, and all the more moving in its quiet simplicity, especially the falling repetitions of ‘hath laid on him’.

The second section opens with overlapping entries from the soloists for ‘he was oppressed’ which rise up through ‘so opened he …’ only to fall at ‘… not his mouth.’ Isaiah’s parallels with a dumb lamb brought to the slaughter, and of a sheep in front of his shearsers are colourfully set for the lower tenor, but it is the first tenor who is given the most Italianate, declamatory writing at ‘who shall declare his generation?’ This is followed by a triple-time air ‘For he was cut off’, complete with Purcell’s own echoes, and the final direction to ‘Repeat the Chorus All we like sheep and so conclude.’
I will love thee, O Lord
Verse anthem, ZN67 (?1679)

MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my stony rock and my defence:
My saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge.
I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be prais’d: so shall I be safe from mine enemies.
They prevented me in the day of my trouble, but the Lord was my upholder.
The sorrows of death compassed me, and the overflowings of the ungodly made me afraid.
The pains of hell came about me and the snares of death overtook me.
In my trouble I will call upon the Lord and complain unto my God.
So shall he hear my voice out of his holy temple, and my complaint shall come before him: it shall enter ev’n into his ears.
For he shall send down from on high to fetch me, and shall take me out of many waters.
He shall deliver me from my strongest enemies, and from them which hate me, for they are too mighty for me.
They prevented me in the day of my trouble, but the Lord was my upholder.

Psalm 18 vv 1-6 16-18

A letter dated 8 February 1679 from Thomas Purcell to John Gostling, at that time Chanter at Canterbury Cathedral, mentions that Gostling ‘may have a summons to appear among us sooner than you imagine’, and indeed, on 25 February, Gostling was given an appointment at the Chapel Royal. But of more interest to us is that Gostling was told in the same letter that ‘my son is composing wherein you will be chiefly concerned.’ The Purcell scholar Zimmerman suggests that the young Purcell was writing an anthem for Gostling, and it seems possible that the work in question may have been the verse anthem *I will love thee, O Lord*. Certainly there are neat parallels between the chosen biblical subject matter of David and Absalom and the political situation of Charles II at that time, fighting off the first of Monmouth’s uprisings, and the musical writing would appear to date from around 1680. For original manuscripts we are not best served: that in Oxford’s Bodleian Library is not a reliable source, and Purcell’s name is added in a later hand than that of the copyist. Instead, scholars have turned to a manuscript held in Gloucester, where the solo bass part is complete and the attribution to Purcell apparently more contemporary.
Whatever the anthem’s source or exact date of composition, it is a vocal tour de force for the solo bass, mixing sections of semi-recitative with passages of arioso. The opening declaims the psalmist’s faith in God’s mighty strength: in the short aria he sings of the protection that God brings him from his enemies. The full choir also comment that in times of tribulation ‘the Lord was my upholder.’ The text becomes more sombre, and Purcell’s writing more striking: melismatically the composer surrounds the psalmist with mournful ‘sorrows of death’, and builds tension through ‘the pains of hell’ and the ‘snares of death’. In a chromatically rising phrase he calls upon the Lord, and then, with great force, complains ‘unto my God’. ‘So shall he hear my voice’ is set to another passage of lilting arioso, leading to the remarkable phrase ‘For he shall send down from on high to fetch me’, which traverses one and a half octaves. But a moment of even greater strength is still to come, with the four rising repetitions of ‘for they are too mighty for me’ which take the voice to its uppermost reaches. The anthem closes with the repetition of the short chorus ‘They prevented me in the day of my trouble.’

Great God, and just

Great God, and just! How can’st thou see,
Dear God, our misery,
And not in mercy set us free?
Poor, miserable man! How wert thou born,
Weak as the dewy jewels of the morn,
Wrapp’d up in tender dust,
Guarded with sins and lust,
Who, like court-flatterers, wait,
To serve themselves in thy unhappy fate!
Wealth is a snare, and poverty brings in
Inlets for theft, paving the way for sin;
Each perfum’d vanity doth gently breathe
Sin in thy soul, and whispers it to death.
Our faults like ulcerated sores do go
O’er the sound flesh and do corrupt that too.
Lord, we are sick, spotted with sin,
Thick as a crusty leper’s skin;
Like Naaman, bid us wash, yet let it be
In streams of blood that flow from thee.
Then will we sing,
Touch’d by the heav’nly dove’s bright wing,
Alleluias, psalms and praise
To God, the Lord of night and days,
Ever good, and ever just, whoever must
Thus be sung, is still the same;
Eternal praises crown his name.

JEREMY TAYLOR, Penitential Hymns II

The author of ‘Great God, and just’, the Cambridge-educated preacher Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), was a chaplain to Charles I who survived capture during the Civil War to become a bishop in Ireland. This ‘penitential hymn’ is an example of his colourful literary style, full of remorseful sentiments and not sparing on graphic description. Purcell’s imagination must have revelled in such a text, and his setting is one of his most extreme, creating a considerable technical test for any singer to tackle. He sets the majority of the work for a solo treble, stretching his voice (much as he did the adult John Gostling) over nearly two octaves: only a boy with remarkable assurance could have sung such a piece! Purcell includes a second treble and the bass only for the closing chorus. In every phrase word painting is to the fore, both in the angular vocal line and also in the harmonic backing.

The first note sears through the texture, ‘misery’ plunges to the lower end of the voice, and the harmony of ‘and not in mercy set us free’ is especially imploring. Man’s miserable state is constantly illustrated at both ends of the vocal range, whether compared to base ‘dust’, or the shrill reminder that ‘wealth is a snare’: Purcell’s setting ‘and whispers it to death’ is especially effective. A catalogue of physical comparisons – ‘ulcerated sores’, corrupt flesh, a ‘crusty leper’s skin’ – is characterfully set, and the central cry, ‘Lord, we are sick’, highly charged. The singer asks that we may wash away all our sins, not in water, but in streams of Jesus’s blood. After such desperate wretchedness the short chorus is mercifully positive in its praise of God’s greatness and closes an extraordinarily extreme piece of church music.
Plung’d in the confines of despair

Devotional song, Z142 (c1680)

CHARLES DANIELS, PAUL AGNEW tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Plung’d in the confines of despair,
To God I cried with fervent pray’r;
O, lend to me a gracious ear;
Not sunk so low but thou can’st hear.
Should’st thou against each evil deed
In strict severity proceed,
Who would be able to abide
Thy censure, and be justified?
But thou forgiveness dost proclaim
That men may turn and fear thy name.
To thy rich grace, O Lord, we fly,
And on thy promises rely.
My soul less brooks thy seeming stay,
Than guards that wait th’approach of day.
O, therefore let the good and just
In God alone repose their trust.
The frailty of our state he knows;
His plenteous mercy ever flows.
To humble souls he gracious is,
And pardons what they have done amiss.

JOHN PATRICK, after Psalm 130

Plung’d in the confines of despair is one of several settings which Purcell made of psalm paraphrases by the poet John Patrick around 1680. Two autograph sources survive, one in Birmingham’s Barber Institute, and another, probably a more definitive version, in the British Museum. The subject matter of most of Patrick’s psalms is doleful, and his version of Psalm 130 is no exception.

Purcell’s opening is masterful, playing falling chromaticism against the rising tension of the vocal entries and climaxing with ‘to God I cried’. ‘O, lend to me a gracious ear’ is more gentle in its harmony, and each voice in turn falls down the musical scale at ‘Not sunk so low’. The bass
majestically questions ‘who would be able to abide thy censure?’ and melismatically illustrates the turning of men before a trio ends the first section. The first tenor begins ‘My soul less brooks thy seeming stay’ alone, but is joined, with a wonderful shift into the minor, by his two colleagues at ‘The frailty of our state he knows.’ ‘To humble souls he gracious is’ takes each voice to the lowest extreme of its range, slowly building through eight statements of the point to the final sentence ‘And pardons what they have done amiss’. Here Purcell gives the bass voice a line independent of the continuo part, creating harmony which is especially rich.

10 O praise the Lord, all ye heathen
Verse anthem, Z43 (c1681)

CHARLES DANIELS, PAUL AGNEW tenors
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

O praise the Lord, all ye heathen: Praise him, all ye nations.  
For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us, 
and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Alleluia. 
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, 
and ever shall be, World without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Psalm 117

This short verse anthem appears both in the British Museum’s ‘Egerton’ Manuscript collection and also in the York ‘Gostling’ partbooks. The copy of O praise the Lord in this latter collection was written out by Stephen Bing, and so we can be certain that Purcell composed the anthem before December 1681 when Bing died. The choir interject only two brief Alleluias; the remainder of the anthem, showing strongly Italianate influences, is given to two tenors.

The first section is in joyful triple metre, the soloists answering and prompting each other with their calls for the whole world to praise the Lord: the ‘merciful kindness’ ushers in an adventurously falling bass line, and the ‘truth of the Lord’, which ‘endureth for ever’, is illustrated with a sustained single note in both voices which cuts through the texture before it is interrupted by the first spirited chorus of Alleluias. For the Gloria the metre changes to duple time, the two voices again engaging in animated dialogue which grows in its complexity through to the extrovertly florid ‘world without end, Amen’ and the choir’s repeat of their animated Alleluias.
My heart is fixed, O God: I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have.
Awake up my glory; awake, lute and harp: I myself will awake right early.
I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people, and I will sing unto thee among the nations,
For the greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto the heav’ns, and thy truth unto the clouds.
Set up thyself, O God, above the heav’ns, and thy glory above all the earth. Alleluia.

Psalm 57 vv 8-12

This verse anthem with strings is a splendid work. It dates from the period 1682-85 when most of Purcell’s finest large-scale anthems were written, and the principal manuscript source is again the ‘Royal Music’ manuscript now in the British Museum. This was one of three volumes which Purcell made of his compositions before, in 1685, he appears to have become too busy to compile his largest works together in such a convenient manner. The text was once again from the Psalms, this time five joyful verses from Psalm 57.

Purcell chooses not to start with an instrumental symphony, instead launching straight into a lively triple-time movement with the three solo voices. Word-painting is immediately to the fore: the heart is ‘fixed’ with a sustained note, and ‘sing’ is illustrated with a swinging, dotted melisma. The reason for the displaced symphony becomes apparent as the voices command ‘awake up my glory; awake, lute and harp’: only now do the instrumentalists obediently make their first sounds, but even then, before the royal violins are allowed their conventional contribution the voices have one more section, the lyrical ‘I myself will awake right early.’ Finally the instruments sound, their symphony based on that tuneful vocal material just performed. It has been well worth the wait, for here is Purcell’s instrumental writing at its compelling best, stylishly melodic, gloriously harmonised and with an especially fine part for the bass violins. The voices return at ‘I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord’, jauntiness mixed with just the right degree of nobility. ‘For the greatness of thy mercy’ is wonderfully spacious and leads into a reprise of the symphony, which lends itself especially well to ornamentation on the repeats: King Charles (and his royal violinists) must have adored such joyous yet elegantly dancing music. From here onwards the build-up is brilliantly handled. Over the three voices and continuo at ‘Set up thyself, O God’ Purcell superimposes the two violins, creating a luxurious six-part texture: the inexorable harmonic progressions at ‘and thy glory above all the earth’
are anchored by strong continuo foundations before another marvellous string ritornello leads into the Alleluias. Here too we find Purcell at his most compelling, melodically innovative, harmonically individual and building musical tension in a way that none of his contemporaries ever managed. A brief, dancing string ritornello overlaps the close of the section, maintaining interest for the entry of the choir’s strong block chordal Alleluias, over which the violins exult in the dotted rhythmic patterns that so captivated the royal ear.

DISC 7 : CDS44147

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A consort of four genuine ‘flatt trumpets’ are heard for the first time in nearly three hundred years on this recording. The instruments were made by Frank Tomes and lent by Andrew Pinnock. The larger two flatt trumpets were built especially for this recording. Rehearsals were made possible by funding from The Arts Council.

[1] I was glad when they said unto me
Coronation anthem, 1685

CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

I was glad when they said unto me: we will go into the house of the Lord.
For thither the tribes go up, ev’n the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
For there is the seat of judgement: ev’n the seat of the house of David.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.

Psalm 122 vv 1 4-7

F or the opulent coronation of James II on 23 April 1685 (described and illustrated in great detail by Francis Sandford), Purcell composed two new anthems. At the end of the service, after the Queen’s coronation, the combined choirs and orchestra performed the massive verse anthem My heart is inditing of a good matter (recorded on Disc 4 in this set): for the entrance of the king and
queen at the start of the service Purcell wrote a new setting of Psalm 122, *I was glad when they said unto me*. Sandford reports that “By this time [i.e. after the peers had taken their seats] the King and Queen being entered the Church, were received by the Dean and Prebendaries, who, with the Choir of Westminster, proceeding a little before Their Majesties, sung the full Anthem following”, and added in his margin that the anthem was “Composed by Mr. Hen. Purcel, a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and Organist of St Margarets Westminster”. James Hawkins, the eighteenth-century compiler of the Ely Manuscript now in the Cambridge University Library, mistakenly ascribed the anthem to John Blow, and it is only fairly recently that its authorship has been restored to Purcell. Unlike *My heart is inditing*, this anthem was scored for the more modest forces of five-part choir, including two treble lines. Although it is not indicated in the Ely manuscript, it seems likely that a continuo part would have been included as well.

The opening section is suitably celebratory, using rich five-part harmony and joyful dotted figurations for the word ‘glad’. The various tribes of the Lord appear one by one as they congregate from their various corners, joining in homophony as they ‘give thanks unto the name of the Lord’. At ‘O pray for the peace of Jerusalem’ the mood alters to one of supplication, the trebles provided with an especially appealing line, before the lighter, triple-time metre returns with the hope that peace and plenteousness will bless the royal palaces.

The Gloria begins exultantly, with the opening word repeated three times: at ‘as it was in the beginning’ Purcell returns, as he did near the outset, to imitation, but he saves his compositional *tour de force* for ‘world without end’: the imitative point (a four-note descending scale) is first treated conventionally, then in inversion (rising), then in inverted augmentation in the bass line (rising at half speed), and finally, as the trebles and altos contest the theme at the original speed in real and inverted form, the tenors take over the single inverted augmentation, and simultaneously the basses triumphantly halve even this speed to present Purcell’s theme in double augmentation.

2 O consider my adversity
Verse anthem, Z32 (date unknown)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor CHARLES DANIELS tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O consider my adversity and deliver me, for I do not forget thy law.
Avenge thou my cause: O quicken me according to thy word.
Health is far from the ungodly, for they regard not thy statutes.
Great is thy mercy, O Lord: O quicken me as thou art wont.
Many there are that trouble me and persecute me, yet do I not swerve from thy testimonies. It grieveth me when I see the transgressors, because they keep not thy law. Consider, O Lord, how I love thy commandments: O quicken me according to thy loving kindness. Thy word is true from everlasting: all the judgements of thy righteousness endureth for ever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Psalm 119 vv 153-160

The verse anthem *O consider my adversity* appears in three separate manuscripts collected together by James Hawkins, organist of Ely Cathedral from 1682-1729 for use by his choir. Hawkins transcribed considerable amounts of his contemporaries’ work (including much by Purcell) during his extraordinarily long career at the Cathedral, and on at least one occasion got into trouble with his Dean and Chapter for spending too much money on copyists’ bills. Scholars have not ascertained the date of composition for Purcell’s anthem, but the writing is quite sectionalised and appears to date from later in his compositional career, possibly around the same time as *Thy word is a lantern* (recorded on Disc 3).

The text takes eight verses from Psalm 119, setting them largely for a solo trio: the scale of the anthem is surprisingly extended. At the start each voice in turn sings Purcell’s opening phrase over a descending continuo line, with the dropping interval of ‘consider’ creating an imploring mood: at ‘For I do not forget thy law’ the three soloists’ lines move close together and lead to plangent suspensions between the two higher voices. The bass changes the mood with a call to action ‘Avenge thou my cause’ which rises through the voices and leads to a lively triple-time section calling on God to ‘quicken me according to thy word’. The second tenor has a more lyrical section ‘Health is far from the ungodly’ (under which we hear elements of the opening continuo descending scale), showing a pitying, rather than an angry, attitude towards his enemies’ failure to ‘regard thy statutes’. The trio returns for ‘Great is thy mercy, O Lord’, set powerfully with the voices at the higher ends of their registers before the bouncing triple time returns with the repeated call to ‘quicken me’, heard first homophonically, then in imitation. The chorus repeat the confident, chordal assertion ‘Great is thy mercy O Lord’, and also take up the imitative call to God to inspire and animate them.

In a section of semi-recitative the solo bass mournfully recounts that there are many ‘that trouble me and persecute me’, but in more regular arioso affirms his steadfastness even in the face of such massed opposition. The tenor interrupts in Italianesque declamation to state that ‘it grieveth me when I see the transgressors’, a sentiment which is taken up by all three soloists. Another short, lyrical section ‘Consider, O Lord, how I love thy commandments’ follows, leading into a repeat of the dotted figuration ‘O quicken me’, but this time moving into a legato section, richly harmonised,
‘according to thy loving kindness’ and a short closing continuo ritornello. The final solo section is positive, with God’s omnipotence thrown between the voices in a lively rhythm, broadening majestically during the closing bars.

The Gloria looks back in construction to the choral writing of some of the Renaissance composers whose work Purcell studied closely, but draws strongly on the composer’s own armoury of unique harmonic and melodic language. ‘World without end, Amen’, again based on a falling scale (now heard in both real and inverted form), is an extraordinary piece of imaginative counterpoint.

3 Beati omnes qui timent Dominum
Devotional song, Z131 (c1680)

EAMONN O’DWYER, MARK KENNEDY trebles
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Beati omnes qui timent Dominum;
Qui ambulant in viis eius.
Labores manuum tuarum quia manducabis:
Beatus es, et bene tibi erit.
Uxor tua sicut vitis abundans,
In lateribus domus tuae:
Filii tui sicut novellae olivarum,
In circuitu mensae tuae.
Ecce, sic benedicetur homo
Qui timet Dominum.
Alleluia.

Blessed are all they that fear the Lord:
And walk in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands:
O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.
Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine
Upon the walls of thine house.
Thy children like the olive branches
Round about thy table.
Lo, thus shall the man be blessed
That feareth the Lord.
Alleluia.

Psalm 128 vv 1-5

We are not certain when Purcell actually married Frances Peters but, from the baptismal registers of the Church of All Hallows the Less for 9 July 1681, which state that ‘Henry son of Henry and Frances Purssell’ was baptised there (the youngster survived only a few days), we can assume that Purcell must have married the previous year, perhaps during the summer. Purcell only wrote three anthems in Latin, for there was no call for such Catholic texts at the Chapel Royal: instead, for the reason for the short, four-part anthem Beati omnes qui timent Dominum we need to look elsewhere. It seems likely that Purcell may have written the work for his own wedding. Frances came from a well-known Catholic family to whom a Latin text would have been quite
acceptable, and the text, taken from Psalm 128, was certainly suited to such an occasion: ‘Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thine house; Thy children like the olive branches round about thy table’.

The triple-time opening is gentle in nature, and well suited to performance by a small consort of singers: at ‘Labores manuum tuarum’ (‘thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands’) the metre changes, and ‘Beatus es, et bene tibi erit’ (‘O well is thee and happy shalt thou be’) is especially affectionately set with gently discordant false relations. The bass is given the majority of the middle section of the anthem as he talks of his wife being ‘as the fruitful vine’ (perhaps an autobiographical indication that Purcell, when he sang in the choir, was a bass), surrounding ‘lateribus domus’ (‘the walls of thine house’) with two melismas, and a solo treble is, suitably, given ‘Filii tui sicut novellae olivarum’ (‘Thy children like the olive branches’). The four voices return at ‘Ecce, sit benedicetur homo’ and lead into the closing alleluias. Here Purcell builds up from a simple beginning to a florid series of interchanges between the four voices before the final bars return to more conventional block harmony.

4 I was glad when they said unto me
Verse anthem, Z19 (1682/3)
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

I was glad when they said unto me: we will go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself,
For thither the tribes go up, ev’n the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel,
and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
For there is the seat of judgement: ev’n the seat of the house of David.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions’ sake I will wish thee prosperity.

Psalm 122 vv 1-8
Purcell’s first setting of *I was glad when they said unto me* dates from 1682 or 1683, the period when he is thought to have composed many of his finest verse anthems with strings. The text, from Psalm 122, is often associated with coronations but would also have been suitable, with its prayers for peace and prosperity, for a variety of other occasions. Purcell’s setting takes an understated line on the celebratory side of the text, picturing instead a contemplative scene of a country apparently at peace with itself.

The Symphony provides a ravishing start, full of the drooping melodic lines and wistful harmonies that make Purcell’s work so appealing: the triple-time second section too has pastoral, even melancholy, undertones beneath its surface jollity, which continue as the high tenor soloist takes the first verse of the psalm text. His glorious melodic lines (including two wonderful melismas on the word ‘O’) are continued in the concluding instrumental ritornello. The three soloists combine at ‘Jerusalem is built as a city’, rise up the scale at ‘the tribes go up’ and, returning to triple-time, give thanks to God. The ritornello which follows looks ahead in the anthem for its material, rather than repeating the material just sung, and we are treated to a wonderfully melodic section which leads into the tenor solo ‘For there is the seat of judgement’. Purcell has already used this latest material instrumentally so now introduces a new section: his mid-anthem Symphony, in the tonic minor, is glorious. The solo voices quietly appeal for peace to come to Jerusalem, and that ‘they shall prosper that love thee’. The choir make their first entrance, asking first in block chords for peace, and then in more lively style that there may be ‘plenteousness within thy palaces’, and the soloists call too for prosperity, before returning to the more formal ‘peace be within thy walls’. They briefly share this request with the choir who bring the anthem to a close in simple vein.

5 **In the black dismal dungeon of despair**

Devotional song, Z190 (1688)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano

In the black dismal dungeon of Despair,
Pin’d with tormenting care,
Wrack’d with my fears,
Drown’d in my tears,
With dreadful expectation of my doom
And certain horrid judgement soon to come,
Lord, here I lie,
Lost to all hope of liberty,
Hence never to remove
But by a miracle of Love,
Which I scarce dare hope for, or expect,
Being guilty of so long, so great neglect.
Fool that I was, worthy a sharper rod,
To slight thy courting, O my God!
For thou did’st woo, intreat, and grieve,
Did’st beg me to be happy and to live;
But I would not; I chose to dwell
With Death, far from thee,
Too near to Hell.
But is there no redemption, no relief?
Jesu! Thou sav’d’st a Magdalen, a thief;
Thy mercy, Lord, once more advance,
O give me such a glance
As Peter had; thy sweet, kind, chiding look
Will change my heart, as it did melt that rock;
Look on me, sweet Jesu, as thou did’st on him;
’Tis more than to create, thus, to redeem.

WILLIAM FULLER

Setting William Fuller’s doom-laden text of a fallen Christian, Purcell was on splendid form with the devotional song In the black dismal dungeon of despair, published in 1688 in Harmonia Sacra, subtly colouring the text in every conceivable way and producing one of his finest, most impassioned solo settings.

The opening is desolate, the lost soul tormented in the ‘dismal dungeon of Despair’ at the bottom of the voice and accompanied by stark harmony. The repeated notes of ‘dreadful expectation’ threaten ominously, and Purcell menacingly angles the jagged line of ‘certain horrid judgement’. The Christian is resigned to his fate, but one hope remains: the music rises towards ‘a miracle of Love’ but he realises that he ‘scarce dare hope for, or expect’ redemption for, as the line again soars, he is guilty of ‘so long, so great neglect’. With his self-rebuke ‘Fool that I was’ the soul chastises himself for his failure to take up God’s offer, for (in a phrase wonderfully set by Purcell) ‘thou did’st woo, intreat, and grieve’ him to be ‘happy and to live’: yet he chose instead, as the voice drops, ‘to dwell with Death, far from thee’, the phrase stretched out to show the growing distance from God.

A flicker of hope surfaces in the question ‘is there no redemption, no relief?’: the music rises as the question is repeated, interrupted first by the timid call ‘Jesu!’ then by the recollection that God saved even a thief and finally by a heartfelt cry to Jesus for one more chance of redemption. ‘O give me
such a glance’ is poignantly repeated: ‘Thy sweet, kind, chiding look’ is all that is required to retrieve this soul, for it ‘did melt that rock’ and so convert St Peter. After such passion, the singer calmly hopes that Jesus will look on him ‘as thou did’st on him’ [Peter], for a soul redeemed is an even greater victory than one created.

6 Save me, O God
Full anthem, Z51 (c1679)

MARK KENNEDY, JAMES GOODMAN trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Save me, O God, for thy name’s sake, and avenge me in thy strength.
Hear my prayer, O God, for strangers are risen up against me, and tyrants which have not God before their eyes seek after my soul.
Behold, God is my helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.
An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praise thy name O Lord, because it is so comfortable.
For he hath deliver’d me out of all my trouble, and mine eyes have seen his desire upon mine enemies.

Psalm 54 vv 1-4 6-7

The anthem Save me, O God is an early composition which was included in a set of partbooks copied by Stephen Bing for York Minster. The set later passed on to John Gostling, after whom it was named: Bing’s death in November 1681 provides a convenient ‘terminus ante quem’ for Purcell’s anthem. The principal source is however Purcell’s own autograph manuscript, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

The five-part opening shows the influence of earlier composers in its use of imitation, but combines this with Purcell’s unique harmonic vocabulary, although his working out of the contrapuntal ideas is rather brief, suggesting that the anthem may be a very early work. At ‘Hear my prayer, O God’ Purcell moves to a solo trio and briefly introduces the same melodic motif that begins his great eight-part setting of the same text (recorded on Disc 3), probably composed within a few years and also contained (but later in the volume) in the Fitzwilliam manuscript. ‘For strangers are risen up’ moves up through the three voices but the chorus counter with their confident affirmation that ‘God is my helper’. ‘An offering of a free heart’ is charmingly set for three upper solo voices, and the anthem closes positively with another five-part chorus and the neatly worked out five-part piece of counterpoint ‘and mine eyes have seen’, proudly marked by the young composer in his manuscript as being ‘5 in one’.
7  Te Deum in B flat

Z230 (c1681/2)

MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’DWYER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  NIGEL SHORT countertenor
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE, ROBERT EVANS basses
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

8  Jubilate in B flat

Z230 (c1681/2)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

TE DEUM

We praise thee, O God. We acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heav’ns and all the powers therein.
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee.
The Father of an infinite majesty;
Thine honourable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When thou took’st upon thee to deliver man,
Thou did’st not abhor the virgin’s womb.
When thou had’st overcome the sharpness of death,
Thou did’st open the Kingdom of Heav’n to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,
Whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be number’d with thy saints, in glory everlasting.
O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.
Govern them, and lift them up for ever.
Day by day we magnify thee, and we worship thy name,
Ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

Ambrosian Hymn

JUBILATE

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves.
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.
Be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name.
For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endures from generation to generation.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.

Psalm 100

Purcell’s ‘Complete Service’ in B flat, a setting of ten canticles, though not unique, is a comparative rarity for its time. Alongside a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (and their alternatives, the Cantate Domino and Deus misereatur) for performance at Evensong, Purcell wrote a Te Deum, Benedictus, Benedicite and Jubilate for Morning Service and Kyrie and Nicene Creed for the Communion service. The setting must have been extremely useful to cathedral and other choirs for the service appears, either complete or in part, in numerous different manuscripts all over Britain and has been included on service lists almost ever since. Compared to the anthems, the B flat service settings appear conservative, the harmony usually remaining relatively simple and often homophonic. However, they do contain ingenious canonic and other contrapuntal devices, and their choruses alternate with sections of verse which are usually split between three upper and three lower solo voices. A payment of thirty shillings is registered in the accounts of Westminster Abbey for Michaelmas 1681 ‘for writing Mr Purcell’s service and anthem’.
[All ten canticles of the ‘Complete Service’, Z230, are recorded in this series on the following discs: Disc 7 (this one): Te Deum and Jubilate; Disc 8: Benedicite; Disc 9: Cantate Domino and Deus misereator; Disc 10: Benedictus; Kyrie eleison iand Nicene Creed; Disc 11: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.]

The Te Deum and Jubilate are of course very different to the more famous 1694 settings in D major (recorded on Disc 2), for the B flat service was not written for a grand public celebration of St Cecilia’s Day. But the earlier setting is nonetheless beautifully crafted, alternating sections of chorus and verse and adding further variety in the choral sections with antiphonal effects between the two ‘sides’ of the choir, decani and cantoris. Purcell also skilfully colours his text by the allocation of his forces: in the Te Deum the lower solo trio sing ‘To thee all angels cry aloud’, the three upper voices (two trebles and a tenor) depict the ‘Cherubin and Seraphim’ (two of the highest of the nine orders of angels, associated respectively with knowledge and love) and the full choir take on the role of the Heavenly Host and their continual cries of ‘Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth’.

Purcell relaxes the mood for the more reflective central section of the Te Deum ‘When thou took’st upon thee’ and the chorus that follows, especially the setting of ‘We therefore pray thee’ is particularly effective. At ‘Vouchsafe, O Lord’ (for which in the 1694 setting Purcell produced one of his very greatest movements) Purcell changes the soloists’ distribution, adding a second bass and creating the only moment when treble and bass soloists sing together. The result is especially touching. The Jubilate has a text considerably shorter than the Te Deum and Purcell’s aim is, again, to get through the text speedily. At ‘O go your way into his gates’ he skilfully incorporates a double canon in contrary motion — ‘per arsin et thesin’: the trebles exactly copy the tenor line but in inversion, and the altos do the same with the separate line first heard in the basses. There is one short section of verse, ‘For the Lord is gracious’, which is heard before the concluding Gloria.

### Thy way, O God, is holy
Verse anthem, Z60 (1687)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Thy way, O God, is holy: who is so great a god as our God?
Thou art the God that doth wonders; thou hast mightily delivered thy people.
The waters saw thee, O God: the depths also were troubled.
The clouds poured out water. The air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad.
Thy way, O God, is holy: Who is so great a god as our God?
The voice of thy thunder was heard round about; The lightening shone upon the ground:
The earth was moved and shook withal.
Thou art the God that doth wonders; Thou hast mightily delivered thy people.
Thy way, O God, is holy: Who is so great a god as our God?
Alleluia.

Psalm 77 vv 13-18

Thy way, O God, is holy appears in an unusually large number of sets of cathedral part-books, including sets in York (the Gostling part-books), Worcester, St Paul’s, Ely, Durham, Gloucester, Lichfield, Lincoln and Windsor. Apart from a short concluding Alleluia, the anthem is set for two solo voices, a high tenor (or, rather less dramatically, a countertenor) and a bass. Scholars have ascribed the anthem to 1687, the same year as Sing unto God and Behold, I bring you glad tidings (both recorded on Disc 4).

Purcell’s lyrical opening duet is treated as a vocal ritornello, for it returns twice more during the course of the anthem, separating sections of marvellously dramatic music. The first of these is ‘Thou art the God that doth wonders’: the opening two bars are theatrically repeated, transposed a third upwards, before the tenor joyfully celebrates, at the top of his vocal register, the God who has ‘mightily delivered thy people’. The bass rumbles away to represent the troubled depths of the sea, and the clouds pour out their contents: scales tumble from both singers as the air thunders and arrows fly. Calm is restored as the opening triple time returns and a short continuo ritornello leads into another vocal storm as ‘the voice of thy thunder was heard round about’. Lightning flashes in the voices and the earth moves and shakes. Once again the two singers joyfully assert that ‘Thou art the God that doth wonders’ before peace is restored with another repetition of ‘Thy way, O God, is holy’. The choir closes the anthem with a series of joyful alleluias.

❖ ❖ ❖
MUSIC PERFORMED AT THE FUNERAL OF QUEEN MARY (1695)

Drum Processional

March Z860

FUNERAL SENTENCES

Man that is born of a woman
Anthem, Z27
MARK KENNEDY treble
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and ne’er continueth in one stay.

The Book of Common Prayer, 1662, after Job 14, 1

In the midst of life
Anthem, Z17b

In the midst of life we are in death; of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord? Who for our sins art justly displeased. Yet, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, Deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

The Book of Common Prayer, 1662

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts
Verse anthem, Z58b
Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts
Full anthem, Z58c

CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts.
Shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayers; but spare us, Lord most holy,
O God most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour,
Thou most worthy judge eternal,
Suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from thee.
Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, 1662

Canzona Z860

Drum Recessional

The funeral of Queen Mary was an awesome occasion. Much loved by the people, she died on 28 December 1694 of smallpox. Initially the Privy Council had decided that a private funeral was in order, but the public demanded otherwise. In the event, what with a mixture of very cold weather, the continuing worry of the smallpox outbreak and bureaucratic delays, the lying-in-state did not begin until 21 February. The funeral was fixed for 5 March. An extraordinary procession made its way through the streets of London, the surroundings made all the more sombre as Christopher Wren, the ‘Surveyor General of His Majesty’s Works’, had covered the rails lining the procession from Whitehall to Westminster Abbey with black. Narcissus Luttrell states that three hundred old women led the funeral procession wearing long black gowns, each woman having a boy as her trainbearer. The ceremony ‘was performed with great solemnity, and all the shops in the city were shut’. The diarist John Evelyn estimated that the whole ceremony cost £100,000 and, much moved, wrote: ‘Was the Queen’s funeral infinitely expensive, never so universal a mourning; all the Parliament men had cloaks given them, 400 poor women, all the streets hung, and the middle of the streets boarded and covered with black cloth: there was all the nobility, mayor, and aldermen, judges etc’. In that procession were the state trumpeters and drummers, and also, according to the official ‘Order and Form’ ‘the Gentlemen of the Chapel and Vestry in capes and the Children of the Chapel’. Purcell, in his capacities as both the leading composer of the day and as Organist of Westminster Abbey, produced marvellous music for the major parts of the service.
Much has been hypothesised about the presence and role of the drums, timpani and flatt trumpets in
the funeral procession and service. The King’s Trumpeters and the Royal Drummers took a leading
part in the procession as they escorted the coffin through the streets and may have played traditional
funeral marches. One theory is that the trumpets were symbolically silent. The Lord Chamberlain’s
accounts report that the five side-drums were muffled in ‘20 yards of black baize’ which cost 3s.6d.
per yard, and the kettledrums, mounted on their horse (or possibly carried on a man’s back) also took
up eight yards of cloth. But it is inconceivable that these outdoor instruments, played by parade-
ground soldiers, would have played inside the Abbey. That task would have fallen to the highly
skilled household musicians. For the occasion, we know that Purcell reworked choral settings he had
made fifteen years earlier of the Funeral Sentences, and wrote a new anthem which was, according to
the former Chapel Royal chorister Thomas Tudway, who was present at the funeral, ‘accompanied
with flat Mournfull Trumpets’. For those four ‘flatt trumpets’ Purcell also composed a March and
Canzona. Though Purcell’s copy of the instrumental music does not survive, Tudway carefully
transcribed what he heard (or perhaps saw in manuscript). It is significant to note that he makes no
mention of any sort of drum (kettle- or side-) playing during these pieces, nor is there any
contemporary account of any drummer in the Abbey during this or any other similar service. The flatt
 trumpets were almost certainly played by John Shore, his uncle William Shore, Theophilus Fitz and
Edmund Flower.

For this recording we used a genuine consort of four flatt trumpets. These instruments (first recorded
as having been played in London in 1691 after their introduction by the Moravian composer Gottfried
Finger) were trumpets with a reverse slide (i.e. one that moves behind the player’s shoulder — the
opposite direction to the slide of a trombone or sackbut. The playing technique required is,
consequently, difficult even for a highly skilled sackbut player). The flatt trumpet’s primary advantage
over the more conventional ‘natural’ trumpet was that the slide allowed a whole range of extra
chromatic notes which, for instance, enabled the musicians to play in minor keys. For a funeral, the
instruments’ clear connection with the sackbut, often used to symbolise death, made it all the more
suitable for a solemn funeral (whereas a trumpet was normally symbolic of triumph and celebration).

This recording may well be the first time this century that the sound of a consort of flatt trumpets has
been heard, for previous recordings and performances have used sackbuts for the two lower lines.
Indeed, the two larger instruments did not exist until they were commissioned for this recording! The
two lower trumpets (kindly lent by Andrew Pinnock) were made especially for this project by Frank
Tomes. With extensive prior rehearsal two facts became abundantly clear. It proved almost
inconceivable that the flatt trumpets could have been played whilst ‘on the move’: the playing
technique required simply makes this impractical. Thus Purcell’s March and Canzona would seem to
have been written for static performance in the Abbey (where their sound would have been far more
moving). This fits with Tudway’s description of the service. The instruments produce a surprisingly soft sound and, if they had taken part in the outdoor procession, their playing would have been totally drowned against all the background noise of horses’ hooves, carriage wheels, three or four hundred ladies, the royal trumpeters and, largest competition of all, the royal drummers. Even muffling our drums, as we did for this recording, their sound totally obliterated that of the flatt trumpets: thus the participation of side-drums in Purcell’s March and Canzona is impractical.

Thurston Dart (and others since) have hypothesised that a timpani part was written and played, though there is no mention in Tudway or anyone else’s account. Such theories are based on musical conventions of some decades later, and the belief that trumpets and kettledrums generally played together in Purcell’s day is one that is based on precious little musicological evidence. What Dart wrote, charming though it sounds, is implausible, for it requires four timpani — an orchestration that was not used for another century and a half. Others have attempted to write a part with just two timpani, and the result is equally unsatisfactory. Even assuming that the instruments could be taken off their horse (or if they were carried, as they sometimes were, on a man’s back, unstrapped from him) and unwrapped quickly (and elegantly) enough, and then carried into the Abbey and set up, the music is too complicated harmonically to make any sensible part, and the royal kettledrummer is in any case highly unlikely to have been able to read music! There is no record of a second set of kettledrums being available, let alone set up in the Abbey; nor indeed is there any record of drums even being allowed into the Abbey before the coronation of George II in 1727. And, sadly, a much-trumpeted recent ‘discovery’ of an ‘authentic’ drum part proved to be a very damp musicological squib, based on erroneous and mistaken information.

We have not here attempted a full musical reconstruction of the service, for this would involve performing works by other composers. But, as a dramatic prologue and epilogue, we gathered together a cohort of matching side-drums, modelled on late seventeenth-century originals, and muffled them in traditional style. In 1695 similar instruments accompanied Queen Mary’s coffin to the door of the Abbey. Our drummers (mostly ex-army) marched, in step, nearly a hundred metres from the far distance right up to the microphones: these represent the Abbey door where we assumed our listeners at the funeral to be standing. All the while they beat a traditional, slow funeral rhythm. No curtain raiser to a funeral could be more awesome.

According to Tudway, Purcell’s march, based on some music he had written for a supernatural scene in Shadwell’s revival of The Libertine in 1692, and re-titled The Queen’s Funeral March was ‘sounded before her Chariot’ [i.e. in front of the queen’s coffin as it rested on its bier], suggesting that the four flatt trumpets played their stately march either as the coffin was brought up the aisle of Westminster Abbey, or perhaps played once the bier was in place at the front of the congregation.
Whatever its exact position in the service, Purcell’s noble music was said to have moved the listeners to tears. The March is rhythmically simple, comprising five two-bar phrases, each in the same dactylic metre (long, short, short, long): it is its harmonic progression which makes it such a fine piece. Once this march had been played, twice through, the service proper would have begun and, as far as is known for certain, no further music by Purcell was heard until near the end of the service when, according to the prayer book, as ‘they come to grave, while the corpse is made ready to be laid into the earth, the Priest shall say, or the Priest and Clerks shall sing’ the text beginning ‘Man that is born of a woman’.

Purcell’s setting of the Funeral Sentences, found in The Book of Common Prayer, contains some of his finest vocal music. He had begun work on the Sentences in the early 1680s, and revised his work at least once. For this recording his later version, preserved in two manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (one in the composer’s own hand), has been used as the principal source. The majority of the setting is scored for four soloists: a treble, high tenor, tenor and bass, with the full choir concluding each of the three sections. The first Sentence, Man that is born of a woman, based on a verse from the Book of Job, sets a mournful tone with its stress of man’s mortality. Purcell is highly responsive to his text: the four voices enter in turn, moving down the arpeggio, and the music rises through ‘and hath but a short time to live’ but falls desolately to ‘misery’. Each singer’s phrase rises encouragingly through ‘He cometh up’ but as rapidly falls, and to lower than its starting point, at ‘and is cut down’, terminating with a mournful English cadence at ‘like a flower’. Man’s transience is reiterated, with an elegant setting of ‘fleeth’, and the chorus close the section with a repeat of the soloists’ ‘He fleeth as it were a shadow, and ne’er continueth in one stay’. The second Sentence, In the midst of life we are in death sees some of Purcell’s most individual writing, with harmonic contradictions and deliciously wandering vocal lines all symbolising man’s impermanence, summed up in the angular end of the boy treble’s opening, solo phrase. The tension mounts as the singers ask to whom they may ‘seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord’, rising further as they acknowledge the justification for divine displeasure. At ‘Yet, O Lord, most mighty’, Purcell gives brief respite, imploring in his setting of ‘O holy and most merciful Saviour’: ‘deliver us not into the bitter pains’ rises through inexorable chromaticism with the most powerful melodic and harmonic language, made all the more climactic on the repeat by the might of the full choir.

After such a powerful prayer, the final Sentence is a more personal plea: no secrets can be hidden from God’s omnipotent eye, and the singers implore that he ‘shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayers’. The opening phrases are especially poignant with their realisation of human mortality, summed up in a melodic line that seems to represent man’s naked vulnerability in front of God. But not all is doom: Purcell’s triple-time prayer ‘But, spare us, Lord most holy’ gives hope before the
desolate calm of ‘Suffer us not at our last hour’. Purcell’s last bars implore that man should not, even in the anguish of death, ‘fall away from thee’. The mood of serene resignation and the delicious dropping interval of ‘to fall’ suggest that this is a prayer Purcell was sure would be answered.

Tudway stated that Purcell’s anthem *Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts* was ‘accompanied with flat Mournfull Trumpets’. Though some have questioned the reading that the four flatt trumpets double Purcell’s four voice parts, the lines fit the instruments exactly, and the music even has the same key signature as the March and Canzona. The anthem is chordal almost throughout and maintains a startling control of melodic line and harmony. There could be few prayers more passionately nor more simply stated, asking that God should spare us, and that we should not, even ‘at our last hour, for any pains of death’ turn away from our creator. The setting was noted by many who were present at the funeral as being masterful in its restrained nobility. Thirty years later, when William Croft was composing a new Burial Service, endeavouring ‘as near as possible I could, to imitate that great Master’ he included Purcell’s own setting of the anthem: ‘The reason why I did not compose that Verse a-new … is obvious to every Artist’.

According to Tudway, Purcell’s newly-composed Canzona for the four flatt trumpets ‘was sounded in the Abbey after the Anthem’. Its opening phrases were based on the same music as the March, but now skilfully developed into a four-part contrapuntal piece which showed the influence of Italian models. Over the first repeated notes the instruction ‘tremelo’ is written, indicating that the players should play with the minimum articulation, so producing as smooth a legato as these remarkable instruments would allow. Purcell’s development of his simple theme, his interplay between the upper and lower pairs of instruments (listeners without a score may not realise that the pairs of repeated notes a fifth apart are passed between two players), his harmonic ingenuity and his evident familiarity with the difficulties of playing an instrument which had only been in existence in England for around five years again show ample evidence of a master at work.

As King William leaves the Abbey, so our drummers beat their retreat, slowly turning away from the microphones and marching a hundred and fifty metres into the far distance. Twentieth-century car drivers, stopped to ensure that there was no traffic noise for this part of the recording, watched in amazement as our drummers marched down the road, the drum beats bouncing off neighbouring houses, just as they would have done in Purcell’s London. The effect, as it must have been at the solemn, seventeenth-century occasion, was immensely powerful — perhaps the only possible epilogue to Purcell’s spellbinding music.

Eight months later, Purcell himself was dead. London’s musical world was forlorn, and his friends and colleagues at Westminster Abbey paid him the ultimate tribute. His funeral took place on 26
November 1695 in the same building in which he had served for twenty years. The procession, led by his friend and neighbour Stephen Crespion, entered the Abbey to the March and Canzona Purcell had written for the queen’s funeral, played by the same trumpeters. As Purcell’s coffin was buried in the north aisle of the Abbey, his own settings of the Funeral Sentences were performed by the choir which, just a few days earlier, he had himself directed. It must have been a devasatingly poignant occasion. Every member of the congregation, and every man and child singing and playing, would have known personally – and adored – the man they were mourning. He was irreplacable, as Henry Hall, by now Organist of Hereford Cathedral but also a former Chapel Royal chorister with Purcell, wrote:

Sometimes a hero in an age appears;
But scarce a Purcell in a thousand years.

DISC 8 : CDS44148

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust
Verse anthem, Z16 (c1682)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING'S CONSORT

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion, but rid me, and deliver me in thy righteousness.
Incline thine ear unto me and save me.
For thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for; thou art my hope, even from my youth.
Through thee have I been holden up ever since I was born;
thou art he that took me out of my mother’s womb.
My praise shall be always of thee.
O, what great troubles and adversities hast thou shown me, yet did’st thou turn and refresh me: yea, and brought’st me from the deep again.
Therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God, playing upon an instrument of music,
Unto thee will I sing, O thou holy one of Israel.
My lips shall be fain when I sing unto thee, and so will my soul whom thou hast delivered. Alleluia.

Psalm 71 vv 1 4 5 18 20 21
The verse anthem *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust* dates from around 1682, the middle of the period in which Purcell produced most of his anthems with strings. The autograph manuscript (the ‘Royal’ manuscript in the British Museum) is possibly based on an earlier and rougher autograph in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The symphony is unusual in that it is set on a ground bass: that ground too is unusual as Purcell later re-used it in the song *O solitude, my sweetest choice*. Purcell rarely recycled his own material. The Symphony is in one section, written in gentle, melancholy vein; the six-note rising scale heard in the ground permeates throughout this introduction, creating a continuous, intricately-woven texture which leads into the first vocal section. Purcell’s setting of ‘incline thine ear unto me’ is delightfully angular and leads via a short instrumental ritornello into the duet ‘For thou, O Lord God’. The trio returns at ‘Through thee have I been holden up’, with Purcell colouring ‘Thou art he that took me out of my mother’s womb’ with dropping chromaticism: the section is closed by a lyrical Symphony which is full of the delicious bittersweet harmony that makes Purcell’s instrumental writing so attractively individual.

‘O what great troubles’ is given to a solo bass, accompanied by two violins: Purcell characterfully illustrates the word ‘turn’ and the voice descends for ‘thou brought’st me from the deep’. For the more optimistic ‘Therefore will I praise thee’ Purcell introduces a major key and makes a rhythmic feature of the loosely syncopated ‘playing upon an instrument of music’; once again the section is closed by a fine string ritornello. The alto solo ‘My lips shall be fain’ is set over a gentle running bass and leads into the final Alleluias. This extended section features some delightful interplay between the three solo voices and another splendid ritornello before the anthem is closed by a short chorus.

### 2 Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord

Verse anthem, Z9 (c1688)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; he hath great delight in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the faithful shall be blessed. Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever. Unto the godly there ariseth light in the darkness: He is merciful, loving and righteous. A good man is merciful; he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor; His name shall be exalted with honour. Alleluia.

Psalm 112 vv 1-5 9
According to the Gostling Manuscript, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord* was written to celebrate Founders Day at Charterhouse School, probably in 1688. This event usually took place on December 12th, with the service followed by a feast. In 1688 the preacher was John Patrick, the poet for at least nine of Purcell’s devotional songs. Scholars have suggested that Purcell may have composed the anthem earlier than 1688 with two solo parts, adapting it and adding a third soloist for the Charterhouse performance. We know that two of the soloists in 1688 were Mr Barincloe and the famous bass Mr Bowman. The anthem’s subsequent popularity ensured that it appeared in some twenty manuscripts which are spread all over Britain.

The opening is lyrical, with the word ‘great’ treated to a series of expansive melismas. The key and mood change at ‘His seed shall be mighty upon earth’: the harmony of ‘the generation of the faithful’ is especially rich as the bass singer takes an independent line from the continuo, creating a four-part texture. Triple metre returns at ‘Riches and plenteousness’ and Purcell sets ‘endureth for ever’ with a deliciously dropping motif which is anchored first over a pedal, and then an inverted pedal. A more Italianate section is introduced at ‘Unto the godly’ with a marvellous roulade for the high tenor on ‘ariseth’: ‘a good man’ is passed, almost conversationally, from voice to voice before the introduction of a more lively section, ‘his name shall be exalted with honour’. The solo alleluias begin simply but are gradually expanded and extended by Purcell. At least three different versions of the closing chorus are found in the various manuscript sources: we have used the version contained in the Durham and Liverpool manuscripts.

### 3 Benedicite in B flat

*Full service, Z230 (before October 1682)*

EAMONN O’DWYER, MARK KENNEDY trebles  
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors  
MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:  
Praise him and magnify him for ever.  
O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:  
Praise him and magnify him for ever.  
O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord:  
Praise him and magnify him for ever.  
O ye waters that be above the firmament, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye Sun and Moon, bless ye the Lord:
O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord:
O ye showers and dew, bless ye the Lord:
O ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye dews and frost, ye frost and cold,
O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord:
O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord,
O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O let the earth bless the Lord,
Yea, let it praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye wells, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye seas and floods,
O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O all ye fowls of the air, O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord:
O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O let Israel bless the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:
O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord:
O ye spirits and souls of the righteous,
Ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
O Ananias, Azarias and Misael, bless ye the Lord:
Praise him and magnify him for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

Daniel 3

Purcell’s ‘Complete Service’ in B flat, a setting of ten canticles, though not unique, is a comparative rarity for its time. A payment of thirty shillings is registered in the accounts of Westminster Abbey for Michaelmas 1681 ‘for writing Mr Purcell’s service and anthem’. Alongside a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (and their alternatives, the Cantate Domino and Deus Misereatur) for performance at Evensong, Purcell wrote a Te Deum, Benedictus, Benedicite and Jubilate for Morning Service and a Kyrie and Nicene Creed for the Communion service. The setting must have been extremely useful to cathedral and other choirs for the service appears, either complete or in part, in numerous different manuscripts all over Britain and has been included on service lists almost ever since. Compared to the anthems, the B flat service settings appear conservative, the harmony usually remaining relatively simple and often homophonic. However, they do contain ingenious canonic and other contrapuntal devices.

[All ten canticles of the ‘Complete Service’, Z230, are recorded in this series on the following discs: Disc 7: Te Deum and Jubilate; Disc 8 (this one): Benedicite; Disc 9: Cantate Domino and Deus misereator; Disc 10: Benedictus; Kyrie eleison iand Nicene Creed; Disc 11: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.]

The Benedicite is perhaps the hardest of all the canticles to set: the long text is made up of a great list of God’s creations, interspersed amongst which are constant repetitions of ‘Praise him and magnify him for ever’. Within his self-imposed stylistic limitations Purcell varies his texture: he changes between triple and duple metre and alternates sections of chorus with solos (often with the trio of upper voices answered by the three lower ones). The chorus too provides antiphonal effects with their division into Decani and Cantoris, and Purcell’s colourful harmonic language intermittently emerges through deliberately conventional writing to surprise the ear. The canonic device in the concluding Gloria is one of the simplest in the whole B flat service, with the alto line imitating the trebles, three beats behind, at the fifth.
**Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes**
Motet, Z135 (c1680)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor, MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei!
Quam multi insurgunt contra me.
Quam multi dicunt de anima mea,
Non est ulla salus isti in Deo plane.
At tu, Jehova, clypeus es circa me;
Gloria mea, et extollens caput meum.
Voce mea ad Jehovam clamanti,
Respondit mihi e monte sanctitatis suae maximae.
Ego cubui et dormivi; ego expergefeci me;
Quia Jehova sustentat me.
Non timebo a myriadibus populi,
Quas circum disposuerint metatores contra me.
Surge, surge Jehova; fac salvum me deus mi;
Qui percussisti omnes inimicos meos maxilliam,
Dentes improborum confregisti.
Jehova est salus: super populum tuum,
Sit benedictio tua maxime.

Psalm 3

Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes is one of only two sacred Latin motets by Purcell which, from its autograph manuscript, has been dated around 1680. It is not known why Purcell should have set a Latin Psalm text: it seems highly improbable that such a work could have been performed at the Anglican Chapel Royal. It is just possible, although unlikely, that it could have been written for the Catholic chapel of King Charles’s Queen Catherine. Whatever its purpose, ‘Jehova’ is one of Purcell’s most astonishing church works, combining progressive and conservative styles. Its declamatory solo and choral work shows Purcell at his most highly Italianate, but combines such forward-looking techniques with sections of polyphony which look back to the English masters of the late Renaissance. Harmonically the work shows Purcell at his most adventurous. Elgar is said to have enquired, when orchestrating ‘Jehova’, whether the score he was using contained misprints!
The first section demonstrates Purcell’s choral mastery: over the mysterious opening chords the second trebles float their high entry, building towards the angry ‘Quam multi insurgunt contra me’ and the counterpoint of ‘quam multi dicunt de anima mea’. The entries of ‘non est salus isti in Deo’ (‘There is no help for him in God’) build magnificently to a climax. The tenor solo ‘At tu, Jehova’ is highly Italianate in its declamation, moving into a section of triple-time arioso: the choir answer with the forceful ‘Voce mea ad Jehovam clamanti’ and a contrapuntal section ‘respondit mihi’ which builds to another sumptuous close, in which the choir basses divert from the continuo line to add extra richness to the harmony. ‘Ego cubui et dormivi’ is one of Purcell’s most vividly atmospheric pieces of choral writing, illustrating the psalmist sleeping and awaking, safe in the knowledge that the Lord was sustaining him. Purcell splendidly sets the warlike ‘Non timebo a myriadibus populi’ for solo bass, calling on God to save him. The continuo line at ‘Qui percussisti omnes inimicos meos maxilliam’ [‘maxillam’ would be better grammar] (‘Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone’) falls inexorably before the teeth of the ungodly are broken. The closing chorus is triumphant in its lilting triple metre.

5  **Full of wrath, his threatening breath**

Devotional song, Z185 (date unknown)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor

Full of wrath, his threatening breath
Belching nought but chains and death,
Saul was arrested in his way
By a voice and light
That if a thousand days
Should join their rays
To beautify a day
It would not show so glorious and so bright.
On his amazed eyes it light did fling,
That day might break within,
And by these beams of faith
Make him of a child of wrath
Become a vessel full of glory.
Lord, curb us in our dark and sinful way,
We humbly pray,
When we down horrid precipices run
With feet that thirst to be undone,
That this may be our story.

Jeremy Taylor, ‘On the conversion of St Paul’

The author of ‘Full of wrath, his threatening breath’, the Cambridge-educated preacher Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) was a chaplain to Charles I who survived capture during the Civil War. He was forced to retire to Wales where he wrote most of his poetry, some books of sermons, a manual of daily prayers and a famous argument for toleration. Taylor’s fortunes rose at the Restoration and he was made Bishop of Down and Connor. His literary style was usually colourful, as is demonstrated by this account of the conversion of St Paul on the road to Damascus.

Purcell set three of Taylor’s poems, revelling in their vivid language and sentiments and countering their strong texts by adding his own extraordinary harmonic twists and turns. The continuo rhythmically tramp the road to Damascus whilst Saul is ‘belching nought but chains and death’: Purcell illustrates the light that blinds him with a series of extraordinarily harmonised melismas on ‘glorious’. The inexorable progress of the continuo is briefly halted at ‘On his amazed eyes it night did fling’ before Saul continues his journey, now converted from ‘a child of wrath’ to become a ‘vessel full of glory’. The setting closes with a prayer that God should ‘curb us in our dark and sinful way’, as we ‘down horrid precipices run’. Purcell sets ‘down’ with especial emphasis.

6 Bow down thine ear, O Lord
Verse anthem, Z11 (c1680-82)

MARK KENNEDY treble
MARK PADMORE, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and in misery.
Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I will call daily upon thee.
Comfort the soul of thy servant, for unto thee do I lift up my soul.
For thou, Lord, art good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
Among the gods there is none like unto thee; there is not one that can do as thou doest.
For thou art great and dost wond’rous things; thou art God alone.
Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth: O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name.
And I will thank thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, and will praise thy name for evermore.

Psalm 86 vv 1 3-6 8 10-12
This remarkable setting is the fourth anthem contained in Purcell’s autograph manuscript now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, suggesting it is an early work, copied certainly by 1681 or 1682 and possibly written earlier. The main body is set for four soloists: the chorus appear in two short sections. The right hand of the organ accompaniment for the opening four bars is, unusually, written out: taken up in turn by each of the voices as they enter, the opening looks back in construction to the anthems of the period of Orlando Gibbons. The marvellous harmony, however, is unmistakably that of Purcell and his era, especially in the angular lines of ‘for I am poor and in misery’. The tenor solo ‘Be merciful unto me, O Lord’ is Italianate in its declamatory style: when the four voices appealingly return at ‘For thou, Lord, art good and gracious’ the harmony is enriched with the bass vocal line running independently from the continuo. After a short chorus, Italianate writing returns with a passage of semi-recitative for the solo bass, leading into a section of contrapuntal ingenuity and extraordinary harmony, ‘Teach me thy way, O Lord’. Purcell illustrates ‘O knit my heart unto thee’ by grouping all four voices in close proximity. The final section ‘And I will thank thee, O Lord’ is set in a lilting triple metre, and repeated by the full choir.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G minor

Full service, Z231 (date unknown)

EAMONN O’DWYER, MARK KENNEDY trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour, for he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; for he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He rememb’ring his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

St Luke 1
NUNC DIMITTIS

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes hath seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. To be a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.  
St Luke 2

For an evening service which has long been a regular stalwart on the service papers of churches and cathedrals, it is worth noting that no contemporary manuscript of Purcell’s Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G minor survives. The edition most widely used today is one made by Vincent Novello, said to have been based on a manuscript in York Minster which was destroyed in a fire in 1829. This was probably similar to an early eighteenth-century manuscript in York Minster Library which does still exist. A corroborative bass partbook dating from 1711-1718 containing the service is found in Durham Cathedral library.

‘Purcell in G minor’ is a delightful setting which mixes, as does the more weighty B flat Service, four-part choruses and six-part verses, these latter sections always alternating the upper three voices with the lower adult trio. At the end of the Nunc Dimittis Purcell clearly intended the Gloria to the Magnificat to be repeated, as had been the custom in ‘everyday’ settings of the canticles for a hundred years. However, generations of church musicians have sung a splendidly extended (but hopelessly anachronistic) Gloria which the York manuscript states was written by Thomas Roseingrave (1688-1766), more than doubling the length of Purcell’s Nunc Dimittis. We ignore Roseingrave and follow the composer’s intentions by repeating his simple, nineteen-bar Gloria.

Be merciful unto me
Verse anthem, Z4 (?before 1683)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors  
MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Be merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me; he is daily fighting and troubling me. Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most highest.  
Nevertheless, though I’m sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in thee.
I will praise God because of his word; I have put my trust in God, and will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
They daily mistake my word: all they imagine is to do me evil.
They hold all together, and keep themselves close, and mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul. Shall they escape for their wickedness?
Thou, O God, in thy displeasure shalt cast them down.
In God’s word will I rejoice: in the Lord’s word will I comfort me.
Yea, in God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
Alleluia.

Psalm 56

Though *Be merciful unto me* appears in dozens of manuscripts, some of which date from the end of the seventeenth century, it is not possible to date this verse anthem accurately. Watkins Shaw has argued that it was written before 1687 and maybe as early as 1683. Certainly a number of anthems scored for similar forces (a solo trio and continuo, with a small amount of chorus work) date from around 1680-83.

The opening trio is gloriously scored, full of rich harmony and plangent vocal lines: the writing becomes more active at ‘he is daily fighting and troubling me’, with ‘fighting’ set to a series of busy roulades. The same word is imaginatively illustrated by the solo bass in the following section of semi-recitative. The trio of soloists return for the triple-time ‘I will praise God because of his word’, which is then taken up by the full choir. A short declamatory passage for the tenor introduces a most effective section, ‘They hold all together, and keep themselves close’. Purcell introduces taut suspensions and groups the voices close together before he graphically illustrates God, in his displeasure, casting the evil ‘down, down, down’. At ‘In God’s word will I rejoice’ the key changes to the major. Purcell’s final verse section is an optimistic trio which is closed by an expansive series of choral alleluias.

**10 They that go down to the sea in ships**
Verse anthem, Z57 (1685)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass 
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

They that go down to the sea in ships; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to heaven, and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end.
So when they cry to the Lord in their trouble, He delivereth them out of their distress.
For he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.
Then they are glad because they are at rest;
and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.
O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men,
That they would exalt him also in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the seat of the elders.
O praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men.

Psalm 107 vv 23-32

Towards the end of his life, King Charles II commissioned a yacht which he named ‘Fubbs’, the nickname he had given to his mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth. The historian Sir John Hawkins, always a good embroiderer of a story, recounts that on the first voyage the famous bass John Gostling was invited on board, but did not much enjoy a severe storm in which the boat was caught. On his return to London, so Hawkins says, Gostling selected some verses from the Psalms which were particularly apposite to his experience, and Purcell set them to music. Whether the circumstances are entirely true is debatable, but ‘They that go down to the sea in ships’ appears to have been composed around 1684 or 1685, for in Purcell’s ‘Royal’ autograph manuscript (British Museum 20.h.8) the writing breaks off less than a quarter of the way through the work, after which come two blank pages. In his index Purcell lists two anthems to come after this one, but they too were never copied. Instead there follows the coronation anthem for King James, suggesting that the death of Charles II interrupted Purcell’s fair copying of the anthem. By the end of Charles’s reign, instrumental forces at the Chapel Royal were very depleted, with a rota system of performers in use. We can be fairly sure that only single strings would have played in Purcell’s performance. This anthem was a chamber piece; twentieth-century ears which have been conditioned by other performances may also notice the change in colour brought about by our use of the Chapel Royal’s high pitch.

‘They that go down’ certainly seems to have been written for Gostling’s splendid bass voice. After the attractive opening Symphony King Charles would have heard ‘that stupendous bass’ trawling the depths of the sea at the very bottom of his range and rising up ‘to heaven’ before being carried ‘down again to the deep’, staggering and reeling along the way (as the storm tosses the boat) ‘like a drunken man’. Purcell’s calming of the sea is equally imaginative: the composer’s musical waves become marvellously still as God ‘maketh the storm to cease’ and lead into a fine instrumental ritornello. For ‘Then are they glad’ Purcell adds a third voice to those of the two singers by superimposing a solo
violin, which is joined by the second violin in another ritornello. This leads into the joyful duet ‘O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness’. The final duet ‘That they would exalt him’ is capped by a splendidly busy string ritornello set over a marvellous bass line and leads straight into a joyful chorus. This remarkable anthem closes praising God for his goodness and declaring ‘the wonders that he doth for the children of men’.

DISC 9 : CDS44149

1 The Lord is my light
Verse anthem, Z55 (c1683/84)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; no it shall not be afraid, and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.
For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle; in the secret place of his dwelling, and set me upon a rock of stone.
And now shall he lift up mine head above mine enemies round about me.
Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness.
I will sing and speak praise unto the Lord.
Alleluia.

Psalm 27 vv 1 3 5-7

The Lord is my light dates probably from 1683/84, the middle of the period in which Purcell wrote many of his verse anthems with string accompaniment. Two autographs survive: an early, rough copy now in Birmingham’s Barber Institute (MS 5001), and a fair copy, also in Purcell’s hand, in the famous ‘Royal Manuscript’, the volume into which Purcell copied many of his early sacred works.

The two-section Symphony is a fine one, the slow opening once again demonstrating the composer’s deliciously wistful writing in the most ravishing harmony: the more lively triple-time second section dances in overt joy, but not far beneath the surface, as with so much of Purcell’s string writing in the
anthems, lies the melancholy that makes his music so unique. The soloists’ first entries overlap the
end of the Symphony, graceful both in the French rhythms that had influenced the writings of many
leading British composers, but also in the daring melodic lines that are so very English. Short
instrumental ritornelli preface and close the more dramatic bass solo ‘Though an host of men were
laid against me’ before the trio of voices return at ‘For in the time of trouble’. Here Purcell’s vocal
writing is at its most daring, with chromaticism falling and rising to colour ‘trouble’ and the
immovable ‘rock of stone’ illustrated with long tied notes: as a conclusion the strings are instructed
to play ‘the Triple of the Symph. again’. ‘And now shall he lift up mine head’ is scored for a solo
tenor; the word ‘round’ is treated to three elegant melismas before the strings close the section with
another fine instrumental ritornello. The trio return for ‘Therefore will I offer in his dwelling’, joyful
in their ‘great gladness’ before embarking on an extended series of Alleluias. Once again their varied
material is taken up by the strings before the full choir, in more legato vein, closes a fine anthem.

The Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof

Verse anthem, Z54 (1688)

MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

The Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof: yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.
Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgement are the habitation of his seat.
There shall go before him a consuming fire, and burn up his enemies on ev’ry side.
His lightning gave shine unto the world: the earth saw it, and was afraid.
The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heav’ns have declared his righteousness, and all the people have seen his glory.
O, ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil: the Lord preserveth the souls of his
saints, and deliv’reth them from the hand of the ungodly.
There is sprung up a light for the righteous, and a joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; rejoice and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness.
Alleluia.

Psalm 97 vv 1-6 10-12

This anthem is thought to date from 1688. A comment in the principal source states that the
manuscript was ‘copied from a MS in the Revd. Mr Jon. Gostling’s possession & of Mr.
Purcell’s handwriting’. The anthem contains splendid writing for the soloist that is especially
colourful in its florid Italianate displays.
The stately opening, perfect for Gostling’s remarkable voice, begins with a series of elaborate roulades on ‘glad’ which necessitate a vocal range of over two octaves. ‘Clouds and darkness are round about him’ is set as a triple-metre aria, but dramatic semi-recitativo returns at ‘There shall go before him a consuming fire’. Enemies are consumed and lightnings flash, but the most extraordinary writing is reserved for ‘the hills melted like wax’; voice and continuo graphically portray the result of the earth’s submission at the presence of the Lord. The chorus too add their praise of Jehova’s might. Over a running bass line the soloist gives a stately command ‘O, ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil’, the final word distastefully thrown out at the bottom end of the voice. ‘There is sprung up a light’ returns to a lighter, triple metre, but the florid writing quickly returns with a series of increasingly elaborate displays on ‘joyful’ that are finally taken up by the continuo and then developed in the voice at ‘Rejoice in the Lord’. The choir twice interrupt and finally win the day with a series of Alleluias, but not before Gostling had provided yet another remarkable two-octave demonstration of his astonishing vocal range.

3 Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven

Verse anthem, Z8 (c1680)

CONNOR BURROWES, EAMONN O’DWYER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven and whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
For while I held my tongue, my bones consumed away through my daily complaining.
For thy hand is heavy upon me, day and night, and my moisture is like as the drought in summer.
I will acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my unrighteousness have I not hid.
I said I will confess my sin unto thee, and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.
For this, shall every one that is godly make his prayer to thee in a time when thou mayest be found.
Thou art a place to hide me in, thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.
Great plagues remain for the ungodly, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord mercy embraceth him on every side.
Be glad O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful all ye that are true of heart.
Alleluia.

Psalm 32 vv 1-7 10 11
Blessed is who whose unrighteousness is forgiven is an early work which Purcell transcribed into a volume now in the Fitzwilliam Museum (MS 88); this anthem was the second to be copied, suggesting a date of composition around 1680. Purcell scored his verse sections for six voices, enabling him to achieve rich vocal sonorities. Of the two treble lines, the first is set unusually high; perhaps the Chapel Royal had a promising young soloist within its ranks.

The imitative opening introduces two themes – one melodically angular, the other diatonic – which are passed between the six voices, creating a variety of vocal groupings. Particularly attractive is the rising chromaticism of ‘And in whose spirit there is no guile’. Only at the end of this section does Purcell finally allow all six soloists to sing simultaneously. The bass is provided with a fine solo, ‘For while I held my tongue’, graphically illustrating ‘my bones consumed away’ and the heaviness of God’s hand upon him before the first short choral interjection, ‘I will acknowledge my sin’. ‘I said I will confess my sins’ is richly set for a quartet of lower voices, leading to a lilting tenor solo, ‘Thou art a place to hide me in’, which is concluded by another short chorus. The two trebles are given an attractive duet, ‘Great plagues remain for the ungodly’, which builds up through the rising entries of ‘but whoso putteth his trust’ to the telling suspensions of ‘Mercy embraceth him on every side’. At ‘Be glad all ye righteous’ the key brightens to the tonic major and the four adult soloists return, their entries answered by the two boys’ ‘And rejoice in the Lord’. The texture remains predominantly five-part and imitative, only finally transforming into six-part homophony at the closing ‘and be joyful all ye that are true of heart’ which leads into a series of choral Alleluias.

4 **O Lord God of hosts**
Full anthem, Z37 (1680-82)

EAMONN O’DWYER, JAMES GOODMAN trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with thy people that prayeth? 
Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and giv’st them plenteousness of tears to drink. 
Thou hast made us a very strife unto our neighbours and our enemies laugh us to scorn. 
Turn us again, O God of hosts: shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole. 
And so will we not go back from thee: O let us live, and we shall call upon thy Name.

Psalm 80 vv 4-7 18
Discounting the unique coronation anthem *My heart is inditing*, only three of Purcell’s anthems are scored for eight-part choir. All three are early works. The astonishing *Blow up the trumpet in Sion* was probably the first to be composed, written by 1679: *Hear my prayer*, perhaps Purcell’s finest *a cappella* anthem, was apparently intended to be the opening of a larger work (either lost or never completed) and the third was *O Lord God of hosts*. This verse anthem was probably written in 1680 or 1681, between the two others, and copied along with nine other anthems into a fair manuscript now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. With eight voices at his disposal and a desolate text, Purcell created sumptuous vocal textures.

The opening choral section passes the imitative point between all eight voices in both real and inverted form, combining a slow-moving harmonic pulse with a wealth of internal contrapuntal detail. The melancholy verse ‘Thou feedest them with the bread of tears’ is scored for two trios of soloists, first three lower voices and then, providing added pathos, for two trebles and a tenor. The full choir return at ‘Thou hast made us a very strife’, once again showing Purcell’s skill at handling large-scale contrapuntal textures at ‘And our enemies laugh us to scorn’. For the five-part verse ‘Turn us again, O God of hosts’ Purcell is on fertile ground, calling to God for help in wonderfully rich, imploring harmonies, full of the most appealing dissonances. The final chorus, back in the major key, confidently returns to eight-part counterpoint to close a remarkable work.

5  Let God arise
Verse anthem, Z23 (before February 1679)

CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE tenors
CHOIR OF the king’s consort

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away; and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them also be merry and joyful. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, whou wentest through the wilderness, The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at the presence of God, even as Mount Sinai also was moved at the presence of God who is the God of Israel.

Psalm 68 vv 1-3 7 8

*Let God arise* is a very early work of Purcell’s, probably written before 1679 and copied, along with many other anthems, into a single manuscript (Fitzwilliam Museum MS 117) by B Isaack,
a clerk of Eton College Chapel. The main bulk of the work is scored for two solo tenors who demonstrate Purcell’s colourful approach to word-setting in music of considerable originality.

The opening is splendid, with God’s enemies scattered in flurries of downward scales, and those ‘that hate him’ fleeing before him. Smoke marvellously ‘vanisheth’ at the lowest end of the two voices and wax sinuously ‘melteth at the fire’ as the ungodly perish: the chorus celebrate the joy of the righteous. ‘O God, when thou wentest forth’ leads to the most powerful section of the anthem; twice the earth shakes, the second time with an astonishing harmonic shift, and ‘the heavens dropped at the presence of God’. The concluding chorus ‘Even as Mount Sinai’ is highly angular in its melodic lines, venturing briefly into triple metre before sturdily reaching its conclusion.

6 7 Cantate Domino and Deus misereatur

Full service, Z230 (before October 1682)

EAMONN O’DWYER, AARON WEBBER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

6 Cantate Domino

O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things.  
With his own right hand and with his holy arm hath he gotten himself the victory.  
The Lord declared his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.  
He hath remember’d his mercy and truth towards the house of Israel; and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.  
O shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord all ye lands; sing, rejoice, and give thanks.  
Praise the Lord upon the harp; sing to the harp with a psalm of thankgiving.  
With trumpets also and shawms, O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord.  
Let the sea make a noise, and all that herein is; the round world and all that are therein.  
Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth.  
With righteousness shall he judge the world; and the people with equity.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 98
Deus misereatur

God be merciful unto us and bless us, and shew us the light of his countenance. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee. O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for thou shalt judge the earth righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear him. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 67

Purcell’s ‘Complete Service’ in B flat, a setting of ten canticles, though not unique, is a comparative rarity for its time. A payment of thirty shillings is registered in the accounts of Westminster Abbey for Michaelmas 1681 ‘for writing Mr Purcell’s service and anthem’. For performance at Evensong Purcell provided a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and their alternatives, the Cantate Domino and Deus misereatur; for the Morning service a Te Deum, Benedictus, Benedicite and Jubilate; and for the Communion Service a Kyrie and Nicene Creed. The setting must have been extremely useful to cathedral and other choirs for the Service appears, either complete or in part, in numerous different manuscripts all over Britain and has been included on service lists almost ever since. Compared to the anthems, the B flat Service settings are conservative, the harmony usually remaining relatively simple and often homophonic. However, they do contain ingenious canonic and other contrapuntal devices.

[All ten canticles of the ‘Complete Service’, Z230, are recorded in this series on the following discs: Disc 7: Te Deum and Jubilate; Disc 8: Benedicite; Disc 9 (this one): Cantate Domino and Deus misereator; Disc 10: Benedictus; Kyrie eleison iand Nicene Creed; Disc 11: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.]

The canticle prescribed as an alternative to the Magnificat at Evensong is Psalm 98, the Cantate Domino. The text is predominately joyful and Purcell achieves variety within his own self-imposed limits by alternating sections for the full choir with trios of upper and lower solo voices and by varying the metre between duple and triple time. With word-repetition relatively scarce, the two imitative sections, ‘Rejoice and give thanks’ and ‘the round world’, stand out. So too does the humour in setting ‘Let the floods clap their hands’ in lightweight style for the two solo trebles. ‘With righteousness shall he judge the world’ is more thoughtful in its scoring for four lower voices and leads into a contrapuntally remarkable Gloria; the ‘canon three in one by inversion’ sees the trebles’
line imitated both in inversion at two beats’ distance by the altos and, uninverted, at the octave at four beats’ distance by the tenors.

The *Deus misereatur*, Psalm 67, is the alternative canticle to the ‘Nunc Dimittis’. It is one of the more contemplative movements within the B flat Service, especially in the trio ‘Then shall the earth bring forth her increase’ and the solo quartet ‘God shall bless us’. Purcell’s service contains seven settings of the Doxology, most of which he treats to a variety of contrapuntal techniques. The Gloria to the *Deus Misereatur* is perhaps the most ingenious of all seven, featuring a canon ‘four in one by inversion’. The tenors’ line is treated to real imitation at two beats’ distance by the trebles, and is also taken up one beat away in inverted form by the basses, and at three beats’ distance, also in inversion, by the altos. The young Purcell was clearly wishing to demonstrate his technical skill to his contemporaries; the ease with which this intellectual device sits in the movement proves that this composer was already a master of his art.

Blessed be the Lord my strength
Verse anthem, Z6 (by February 1679)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight;
My hope and my fortress, my castle and my deliverer, my defender in whom I trust:
who subdueth the people that is under me.
Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him; or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?
Man is like a thing of nought: his time passeth away like a shadow.
Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth thy lightnings, and tear them: shoot out thine arrows, and consume them.
Send down thine hand from above: deliver me, and take me out of the great waters,
and from the hand of strange children;
Whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of wickedness.

Psalm 144 vv 1-9

*Blessed be the Lord my strength* is another very early anthem, certainly written by 1679 and copied by Isaack into a manuscript now in the Fitzwilliam Museum. The opening is scored for solo bass who nobly expresses his faith in God. The two tenors ask ‘Lord, what is man?’ in a
delicious series of suspensions before all three soloists join at ‘Man is like a thing of nought’. With the bass singer forging an independent line from the continuo, the harmony of ‘his time passeth away’ is especially rich, and is briefly taken up by the chorus. Purcell sets ‘Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down’ to a typically individual melodic line before setting a more warlike tone at ‘touch the mountains, and they shall smoke’. Lighntings are ‘cast forth’ and arrows are shot to consume the enemy. The closing chorus ‘Send down thine hand from above’ also contains highly original vocal lines as the young composer experiments with contrapuntal choral textures.

9 O Lord, our Governor
Devotional song, Z141 (c1680)

EAMONN O’DWYER, MARK KENNEDY trebles
MARK PADMORE tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

O Lord, our Governor, on earth thy name is excellent:
Thy glory is exalted far above the firmament.
From the weak pow’r of babes, thou mak’st thy vict’ries arise,
They still the triumphs of thy foes, and shame thine enemies.
When I to heav’n, thy glorious work, raise my admiring eye,
And there behold the moon and stars that beautify the sky:
Lord! what is man, that he should have in thy kind thoughts a place;
Why dost thou thus advance and bless his miserable race?
Though lower than the angels made, he wears a glorious crown:
Thy works below all stoop to him, and for their sov’reign own.
The beasts that in the pastures feed or in the deserts lie;
Fishes that move within the seas, and fowls beneath the sky:
These are his slaves; but let no man disown God’s government;
Whose pow’r does rule the world, whose name alone is excellent.
O Lord our governor, on earth thy name is excellent:
Thy glory is exalted far above the firmament.

JOHN PATRICK, after Psalm 8

This devotional song was one of nine settings Purcell made around 1680 of psalm paraphrases by the poet John Patrick; Purcell copied the composition into an autograph score now in the British Museum (Add MS. 30930). Purcell set four of these poems for two tenors and a bass, and the remaining five for two trebles, high tenor and bass: all nine contain music of the highest quality; both Early, O Lord, my fainting soul (on Disc 4) and Plung’d in the confines of despair (on Disc 6) are masterpieces.
O Lord our Governor is one of the few joyous texts, beginning imitatively in a lively triple metre with the phrases rising to ‘exalted far above the firmament’: the metre changes for ‘From the weak pow’r of babes’ but Purcell retains the busy, imitative texture. The bass solo ‘When I to heav’n’ finds the composer on more familiar ground, especially at the introspective ‘Lord, what is man?’ The quartet returns at ‘Though lower than the angels made’, with marvellous pairing of the upper voices and especially felicitous writing for the tenor. Remarkable too is the rising chromaticism of ‘But let no man disown’. The last verse of the psalm repeats the opening words, and Patrick does the same. Purcell’s autograph saves space and time and simply instructs ‘O Lord our Governor: as before’.

10 In guilty night (Saul and the Witch of Endor)
Devotional song, Z134 (1693)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Chorus
In guilty night, and hid in false disguise,
Forsaken Saul to Endor comes and cries:

Saul
Woman, arise, call pow’rful arts together,
And raise the ghost, whom I shall name, up hither.

Witch
Why should’st thou wish me die? Forbear, my son,
Dost thou not know what cruel Saul has done?
How he has kill’d and murder’d all
That were wise and could on spirits call?

Saul
Woman, be bold, do but the thing I wish,
No harm from Saul shall come to thee from this.

Witch
Whom shall I raise or call? I’ll make him hear.

Saul
Old Samuel, let only him appear!

Witch
Alas!
Saul
What dost thou fear?

Witch
Nought else but thee,
For thou art Saul, alas! and hast beguiled me.

Saul
Peace, and go on, what seest thou? let me know.

Witch
I see the gods ascending from below.

Saul
Who’s he that comes?

Witch
An old man mantled o’er.

Saul
Oh! that is he, let me that ghost adore.

Samuel
Why hast thou robb’d me of my rest to see
That which I hate, this wicked world and thee?

Saul
Oh! I’m sore distress’d, vexed sore;
God has left me and answers no more;
Distress’d with war, with inward terrors too,
For pity’s sake tell me what shall I do?

Samuel
Art thou forlorn of God and com’st to me?
What can I tell thee then but misery?
Thy kingdom’s gone into thy neighbour’s race,
Thine host shall fall before thy face.
Tomorrow, then, till then farewell, and breathe:
Thou and thy son tomorrow shall be with me beneath.

Chorus
Oh! Farewell.
The devotional songs that Purcell contributed to Playford’s second book of *Harmonia Sacra* of 1693 – the duet *Awake, ye dead*, the settings of Cowley’s *Begin the song*, Fuller’s *Lord, what is man?* and Tate’s *Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation* – were all remarkable sacred works which reflected not only the composer’s vast experience at the Chapel Royal but also his (by now) equally important work in the theatre. The fifth work Purcell contributed, the dramatic scena *In guilty night*, is unique among Purcell’s sacred music. It fits into no single category, combining elements of the devotional song with that of the cantata and, indeed, the oratorio. Playford simply headed the composition as ‘A paraphrase on the 28th Chapter of the First Book of Samuel, from Verse 8, to Verse 20’. The background to the biblical story is that Samuel, growing old, picks Saul to succeed him as a leader for the Israelites. Saul, however, proves to be unreliable in his devotion to God, especially when he finds his position being usurped by David. In due course Samuel dies and the Israelites are once again at war with the Philistines. According to the Bible, Saul had ‘put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land’, but when he fails to get responses to his prayers from either God or the prophets he has to turn to one of the witches that he has banished. His advisors tell him that one such character remains at Endor: Saul, disguised, goes to visit her.

Purcell’s opening sets Saul’s desolation in starkly graphic style: the three voices enter quietly, one by one, building up the sense of tense theatricality with magical harmony to the first, chromatically dropping entries of ‘Forsaken Saul’: these build to a stunningly powerful climax. Saul demands in dramatic semi-recitativo that the witch ‘call pow’rful arts together’ to raise up a departed spirit; the woman, ignorant of her visitor’s identity, desperately responds that she is fearful to do so, for ‘cruel Saul’ has ‘kill’d and murder’d all that were wise and could on spirits call’. Saul assures her that ‘No harm from Saul shall come to thee for this’, and the witch agrees to his request, asking who it is her visitor wishes to call. Saul replies that it is ‘Old Samuel’. The woman realises who Saul is, and that she will now die; her cries of ‘Alas’ are as powerful as any in Purcell’s output. Saul again reassures her and, asked what she can see, the woman describes ‘the gods ascending from below’ and ‘an old man mantled o’er’. Saul’s visit from the underworld has begun. Samuel angrily demands why he has been robbed of his rest to see ‘that which I hate’ and Saul explains his position, desperately asking in the most expressive music, ‘Oh! for pity’s sake, tell me, what shall I do.’ Samuel looks into the future and grimly replies that Saul’s army will be slain, his kingdom will fall, and that ‘tomorrow, thou and thy son shall be with me beneath’. (In the Bible all three of Saul’s sons are slain, and Saul, already injured, falls on his own sword rather than be taken by the Philistines). The closing chorus, setting just two words, ‘Oh! Farewell’, is a magical ending to one of the most remarkable compositions of the age.
1 I will give thanks unto the Lord
Verse anthem, Z21 (?c1685)

CHARLES DANIELS tenor
COLIN CAMPBELL, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart,
secretly among the faithful and in the congregation.
The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
His work is worthy to be praised and had in honour, and his righteousness endureth for ever.
The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance.
He hath showed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.
The works of his hands are verity and judgement; all his commandments are true.
They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and equity.
He sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant for ever:
Holy and reverend is his name.

Psalm 111 vv 1-4 6-9

This was one of two anthems listed by Purcell in his index to his fair-copy autograph score (the ‘Royal’ manuscript in the British Museum) but which he never copied in. ‘I will give thanks’ may date from around 1685, when Purcell stopped copying works into the volume. The actual source is an early eighteenth-century manuscript, held in the Royal College of Music (MS 2011), which contains fourteen anthems by Purcell. The scoring is unusual, requiring a tenor and two basses as soloists: there is no viola part.

The opening Symphony is a fine piece of work, elegant in the dotted, dancing rhythms which so pleased Charles II, but with the wistfulness that is such a feature of Purcell’s string writing never far beneath the surface. The first joyful vocal entries overlap the Symphony, dropping in tessitura for ‘secretly among the faithful’ before they are overtaken by the strings for a wonderfully lilting ritornello, full of Purcell’s imaginative, unexpected harmonic and melodic twists. A solo bass praises the greatness of God’s works, accompanied by the two violins, before the three voices return for ‘his work is worthy to be praised’. Each voice in turn holds a single note to illustrate God’s righteousness.
enduring ‘for ever’ before the chorus enter, taking up the same joyful triple metre: the strings repeat their earlier, glorious ritornello. ‘He hath showed his people the power of his works’ is set for a solo tenor and the two violins, once again demonstrating Purcell’s inimitable melodic style and, for the word ‘all’, passing the note between soloist and instruments. For ‘They stand fast for ever and ever’ Purcell changes the time to a more spacious duple metre, contrasting imitation with homophonic interchanges between voices and instruments. At ‘Holy and reverend is his name’, Purcell introduces a magically hushed texture, first with the three soloists alone and then, to close, with choir and instruments.

2 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live

Full anthem, Z22 (before February 1679)

MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’DWYER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will praise my God while I have my being.
And so shall my words please him: my joy shall be in the Lord.
As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of all the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end.
But praise ye the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord.

Psalm 104 vv 33-35

I will sing unto the Lord is an early anthem, written by February 1679. It is found in a large number of contemporary and early eighteenth-century cathedral manuscripts, suggesting that it was widely performed. The reason is not hard to see, for this is a first-rate full anthem, scored for five-part choir with divided trebles, and containing an appealing central verse section.

The triple-time opening is basically homophonic, strong in its joyful affirmation of God’s goodness. The rapid-fire entries of ‘And so’ compellingly build up to ‘shall my words please him’, and are followed by a return to triple-metre homophony at ‘my joy shall be in the Lord’. The text, from Psalm 104, switches to recount the fate that awaits sinners, and Purcell introduces a six-part verse which alternates trios of upper and lower voices and then the full choir in rich, slow-moving harmony; here is delicious writing. But joy is not far away, and the anthem ends exultantly in the swinging triple metre of the opening and with a final, grand statement: ‘Praise the Lord’.
How have I stray’d
Devotional song, Z188 (1688)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano  MICHAEL GEORGE bass

How have I stray’d, my God, where have I been
Since first I wander’d in the maze of sin?
Lord, I have been I know not where,
So intricate youth’s follies are;
And age hath its lab’rinths too,
Yet neither hath a wise returning clue.
Thy look, thy call to me
Shall my far better Ariadne be,
O most sweet, dear Jesu.
Hark, I hear my shepherd call away
And in a doleful accent say:
Why does my lamb thus stray?
O, blessed voice,
That prompts me to new choice,
And fain, dear shepherd, would I come,
But I can find no track
To lead me back,
And if I still go on
I am undone!
‘Tis thou, O Lord, must bring me home,
Or show the way,
For poor souls have thousand ways to stray,
Yet to return but only one.

William Fuller

How have I strayed dates from around 1688, when it was published, along with three other of Purcell’s settings of poems by William Fuller, in Harmonia Sacra. Like most of the devotional songs, this seems to have been written for private, penitential use. As ever, Purcell’s unerringly sympathetic setting is full of subtle textual illustrations. The poet despairs at his aimless wanderings in the maze of sin, brought about by his youthful ‘follies’, but he knows that even a single glance from ‘most sweet, dear Jesu’, ravishingly harmonised, will bring him back to the fold. His Shepherd does indeed call, with his Saviour’s ‘doleful’ voice suitably coloured by the harmony, but the lost
soul realises with alarm that he cannot find his own way back: indeed, if he goes further astray he fears he will be beyond redemption. The moral is stated in a touching duet: whilst there are ‘thousand ways’ to leave the track of life, there is only one route to salvation.

**4 Benedictus in B flat**

Full service, Z230 (before October 1682)

EAMONN O’DWYER, AARON WEBBER trebles  
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors  
MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited, and redeemed his people;  
And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David;  
As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.  
That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us.  
To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy covenant;  
To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham,  
That he would give us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear;  
In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.  
And thou, Child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest,  
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.  
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, for the remission of their sins.  
Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,  
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
And to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

St Luke i, 68

Purcell’s ‘Complete Service’ in B flat, a setting of ten canticles, though not unique, is a comparative rarity for its time. A payment of thirty shillings is registered in the accounts of Westminster Abbey for Michaelmas 1681 ‘for writing Mr Purcell’s service and anthem’. For performance at Evensong Purcell provided a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and their alternatives, the *Cantate Domino* and *Deus misereatur*, for the Morning service a Te Deum, Benedictus, Benedicite and Jubilate and for the Communion Service a *Kyrie* and *Nicene Creed*. The setting must have been
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[All ten canticles of the ‘Complete Service’, Z230, are recorded in this series on the following discs: Disc 7: Te Deum and Jubilate; Disc 8: Benedicite; Disc 9: Cantate Domino and Deus misereator; Disc 10 (this one): Benedictus; Kyrie eleison iand Nicene Creed; Disc 11: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.]

The Benedictus is one of the four canticles prescribed for the service of Matins, and is an alternative to the more frequently heard ‘Jubilate Deo’. Purcell achieves variety by alternating passages for full choir (sometimes divided into phrases for the two ‘sides’ of the choir, Decani and Cantoris) with verse sections. These verses too alternate between trios of upper voices (two solo trebles and a high tenor) and lower voices (alto, tenor and bass). The writing for that upper trio is especially appealing. For the Gloria Purcell indulges in what is, for him, a relatively tame canonic device, that of a canon two in one by inversion: the trebles’ melody is mirrored (in inversion) at two beats’ distance by the tenors.

5 **Hear my prayer, O God**
Verse anthem, Z14 (before 1683)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Hear my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my petition.
Take heed to me, and hear me; how I mourn in my prayer, and am vexed.
My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and a horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.
And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I get me away afar off, and remain in the wilderness.
I would make haste to escape because of the stormy wind and tempest.
I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.
In the evening, and morning, and at noonday will I pray, and that instantly, and he shall hear my voice.

Psalm 55 vv 1-2 4-8 16-17
The principal source for *Hear my prayer, O God* is a set of partbooks copied around 1683 for Worcester Cathedral. The majority of the setting is for a solo trio of high tenor, tenor and bass, a combination of voices which often inspired Purcell to produce expressive sacred music. Psalm 55 has a particularly mournful text, and the opening trio appeals that God should ‘hide not thyself from my petition’, the lines graphically falling a seventh onto ‘hide’, and with ‘mourn’ set lachrymosely over a plangent bass line. Purcell sets ‘My heart is disquieted within me’ for the two upper voices, bleakly picturing the fear of death which ‘is fallen upon me’. With trepidation the bass recounts the ‘fearfulness and trembling’ which ‘are come upon me’: the section ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove’ is set for a solo tenor, with a series of particularly inventive melismas for the word ‘fly’. At ‘Lo, then would I get me away’ the trio returns, with ‘I would make haste to escape’ and the ‘stormy wind’ coloured by a series of semiquaver runs.

In extant partbooks the treble line of the final chorus is incomplete: for this recording the missing phrases have been filled in by Robert King.

### 6 Kyrie eleison in B flat

*Full service, Z230 (before October 1682)*

**CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT**

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.
Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.

From the Communion Service

Purcell’s setting of the *Kyrie eleison* is the shortest movements in the B flat Service. The two phrases are the responses to the Priest’s reading of the Ten Commandments at the Communion service. The first phrase (asking God to ‘incline our hearts to keep this law’) would have been sung nine times, once after each of the first nine Commandments had been intoned, and the more extended request (to ‘write all these thy laws in our hearts’) would have been heard after the reading of the Tenth Commandment. The two phrases would not, in liturgical context, have been heard together as they are here.

### 7 Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord

*Verse anthem, Z45 (c1680)*

**MARK KENNEDY treble  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass**

**CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT**

Out of the deep have I called to thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.
O, let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.
If thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, Lord, who may abide it?
But there is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.
I look for the Lord, my soul doth wait for him, in his word is my trust.
My soul fleeth unto the Lord before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.
O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

Psalm 130 vv 1-7

This remarkable verse anthem appears in Purcell’s own hand in the Flackton Manuscript (British Museum Add. MS 30931) and may date from as early as 1680. The verse sections are scored for three soloists: a treble, high tenor and bass. The opening is mournful in tone, the treble crawling out from the lowest depths of his voice and the three voices calling to each other; their cries are further enhanced by false relations and angular intervals in the vocal lines. But there is salvation in God, and first the soloists and then the chorus take up the triple-metre ‘But there is mercy with thee’. The bass solo ‘I look for the Lord’ is a splendid movement, set over a running bass and including two fine melismas on ‘fleeth’ before the trio return with the more positive, major key ‘O Israel, trust in the Lord’. Even here, however, the appealing mood of the opening is not entirely absent, with harmonic tension building during the repetitions of ‘for with the Lord there is mercy’. The chorus enters with a more optimistic section, and the anthem ends confidently.

8 Nicene Creed in B flat
Full service, Z230 (before October 1682)

EAMONN O’Dwyer, JAMES GOODMAN trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
MARK MILHOFER, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made: Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heav’n and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffer’d, and was buried. And the third day he rose again, according to scriptures, and ascended into heav’n, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified. Who spake by the prophets. And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church, I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed (the setting of the Creed which is used at the Communion service, as opposed to the shorter Apostles’ Creed which is used at Morning and Evening Prayer) also comes from Purcell’s service in B flat and, like the ‘Benedictus’ heard on track 4, alternates passages for full choir (sometimes split into Decani and Cantoris) with verse sections. Like the other movements in this ten movement service, the setting is relatively conventional. The central section of the Creed, ‘Who for us men’ is set with especially appealing simplicity, with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection innocently scored for the upper trio of solo voices. All six soloists join together in rich harmony at ‘together is worshipped and glorified’. With no Gloria, Purcell does not include any canonic device at the end of the movement, though the last ‘Amen’ is imitative.

9 Blessed is he that considereth the poor
Verse anthem, Z7 (?1688)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, MARK PADMORE tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
_CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord preserve him and keep him alive, that he may be blessed upon earth; and deliver not thou him into the will of his enemies. The Lord comfort him when he lieth sick upon his bed; make thou all his bed in his sickness. Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, Glory be to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 41 vv 1-3

Blessed is he that considereth the poor probably dates from around 1688. Set for three solo voices (two tenors and a bass), its appearance in a number of early eighteenth-century manuscripts is testament to the popularity of a remarkable anthem which is especially notable for its harmony. The fluid opening trio is richly scored, making much emphasis of ‘the poor’, and the high tenor solo ‘The Lord preserve him’ is remarkable for its florid melismas. But the most extraordinary section is ‘The
Lord comfort him’ where Purcell’s inimitable harmony comes to the fore; the three voices are frequently only a fourth apart from each other. The astonishing phrase ‘When he lieth sick upon his bed’ could have come from no other pen. The triple-time trio ‘make thou all his bed’ dances along, throwing the word ‘all’ between the voices.

The Gloria is wonderfully extravagant, stretching out the doxology in compelling fashion, first by allowing each voice in turn the complete phrase, then giving each singer one member of the Trinity, and then finally by uniting the three singers. But more is to come, first with a jaunty ‘As it was in the beginning’ and then a marvellously extended series of falling fourths for ‘World without end’ which are countered by a florid ‘Amen’. Some manuscripts also contain a closing full chorus but this is a spurious eighteenth century addition.

10 The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel
Verse anthem, Z69 (?c1680)
MARK KENNEDY treble (Gloria: DAVID NICKLESS treble)
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

The Lord is King and hath put on glorious apparel: the Lord hath put on his apparel and girded himself with strength.
He hath made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved.
Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared; thou art from everlasting.
The floods are risen, O Lord; the floods have lift up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.
The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the Lord who dwells on high is mightier.
Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure; holiness becomes thy house for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Psalm 93

It is clear from *The Lord is king, and hath put on glorious apparel* that Purcell had a marvellously talented boy treble at the Chapel Royal, possibly in the early 1680s. The anthem is a relatively recent discovery, found in one of three manuscripts now belonging to Professor Theodore Finney and ascribed at the end by the copyist to ‘Mr Henry Purcell’. The volumes, copied around the turn of the eighteenth century and once in the collection of John Gostling’s son William, contain a large number of anthems by Restoration composers. Dramatic and Italianate, this unique anthem is a splendid vocal *tour de force* for a treble of stamina and character, full of vigorous words which are skilfully coloured by Purcell.
The triple-time opening is strong, full of confident dotted rhythms: the ‘round world’ is illustrated not only with a roulade but also a time change and wonderfully rich harmony for ‘ever since the world began’. The exultant ‘thou art from everlasting’ is taken up, briefly, by the full choir. The opening of the second section contains powerful music as the floods rise and the waves of the sea rage, yet ‘the Lord who dwells on high is mightier’. After such strong sentiments the main body of the anthem closes with a lilting, contrasting triple-time section ‘Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure’, and ends in awe of God’s holiness.

The choral Gloria that concludes the anthem is also written in confident vein, and contains a short phrase for solo treble. Cathedral trebles’ tradition has always been to give such short solos to a ‘debut’ solo treble and, in ending a remarkable anthem, we follow that tradition.

**[11] Unto thee will I cry**  
Verse anthem, Z63 (c1682-85)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my strength; think no scorn of me, lest if thou make as though thou hearest not I become like to them that go down into the pit.  
Hear the voice, O hear the voice of my humble petitions when I cry unto thee;  
when I hold up my hands towards the mercy seat of thy holy temple.  
O pluck me not away, neither destroy me with the ungodly and wicked-doers.  
For they regard not in their mind the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands; therefore shall he break them down. and not build them up.  
Praised be the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my humble petitions.  
The Lord is the strength of my life; my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.  
Alleluia.

Psalm 28 vv 1-3 5-7

The ‘Royal’ manuscript, one of Purcell’s most important autograph collections copied before 1685, contains fourteen anthems by Purcell, including the magnificent setting of *Unto thee will I cry*. No exact date can be ascribed to this composition, but it was probably written between 1682 and 1685, the period when the majority of Purcell’s anthems with strings were composed.
Throughout the music for strings is wonderfully crafted, beginning with a fine two-section Symphony: the short, imitative opening immediately sets the wistful tone that is such a feature of Purcell’s string writing, and the triple-time section that follows carries, beneath its veneer of courtly dance, a great melancholy. The solo bass’s first entry overlaps the end of the Symphony, and is accompanied by two violins: John Gostling’s astonishing vocal range may have been in Purcell’s mind, for the solo utilises the furthest extremes of the voice, crying at the top of the register and descending to the depths for ‘they that go into the pit’. The countertenor and tenor join the bass soloist at ‘Hear the voice of my humble petitions’, moving into an elegant triple metre for ‘When I hold up my hands’. That theme forms the basis for an extended orchestral ritornello which leads directly to the trio ‘O pluck me not away’. The back-dottings of ‘therefore shall he break them down’ are briefly taken up by the strings in another ritornello before they change key and metre for another instrumental symphony.

This section leads first into the joyful solo trio ‘Praised be the Lord’ and then into a grand, nine-part dialogue between soloists, chorus and orchestra. ‘The Lord is my strength of my life’ is imaginatively set for solo tenor, full of characterful melismas, and leads into the finest part of the anthem, an extended set of Alleluias. Here is Purcell at his compelling best, lilting through wonderfully characterful vocal phrases and building the movement with consummate skill. The orchestral ritornello which follows is a masterpiece, with a viola line which apparently defies all the rules of harmony and counterpoint and yet somehow arrives back in the correct place at the right time before the choir exultantly end a magnificent anthem.

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**DISC 11 : CDS44151**

1  **Praise the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God**  
Verse anthem, Z48 (1687)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass  
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Praise the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious,  
thou art clothed with majesty and honour.  
Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment, and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.  
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.
He laid the foundations of the earth that it never should move at any time.
Thou cover’dst it with the deep like as with a garment; the waters stand in the hills.
At thy rebuke they flee; at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.
They go up as high as the hills and down to the valleys beneath, even to the place which thou hast
appointed for them.
He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men,
That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man.
He appointed the moon for certain seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down.
He made darkness that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.
O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.
So is the great and wide sea also wherein are things creeping innumerable both great and small beasts.
These all wait upon thee that thou mayest give them meat in due season.
When thou givest it them, they gather it, and when thou openest thine hand they are filled with good.
When thou hidest thy face they are troubled; when thou takest away their breath they die and are turned
again to their dust.
When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.
The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever. The Lord shall rejoice in his works.
O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all.

Psalm 104 vv 1-3 5-8 14-15 19-20 24-25 27-31

The copyist of the Gostling manuscript, which contains Praise the Lord, O my soul, adds at the
end of the work ‘Composed by Mr. Hen. Purcell – 1687’. It is not known for what occasion the
anthem was written, but it is one of only four anthems which are known to date from that year. 1687
was the first formal year of James II’s newly established Catholic chape, consequently there were
fewer occasions at the Anglican Chapel Royal when Purcell would have been required to write a
major new anthem with strings.

Praise the Lord is a fine anthem which begins with another of Purcell’s excellent Symphonies
(scored only for two violins and continuo – there is no viola line). The opening is wistful, with the
violins’ desolate lines underpinned by a bass line which descends to the richest reaches of the bass
violins. The second, triple-time section dances in lighter vein, but behind the surface jollity is still the
melancholy which permeates so much of Purcell’s best writing. The opening vocal section is yet
another tour de force written, presumably, for the bass John Gostling. Purcell’s setting of a colourful
text from the Psalms proclaims God’s majesty, testing the furthest extremes of Gostling’s voice in
splendidly characterful writing. After a short instrumental ritornello a second, high tenor, voice enters
and joins the bass in more gentle writing for ‘He bringeth forth grass for the cattle’: for the ‘wine that
maketh glad the heart of man’ Purcell’s music becomes more lively and syncopated. The continuo
line for the tenor solo ‘He appointed the moon for certain seasons’ is an intriguing four-bar, constantly modulating ostinato over which the singer weaves an elegant line.

The mid-point of the anthem, ‘O Lord, how manifold are thy works’, is hushed and reverent, set first for the soloists and then repeated by the choir, after which the opening Symphony is repeated again. The two soloists return at ‘The earth is full of thy riches’ and a short instrumental ritornello leads to the remarkable ‘When thou hidest thy face they are troubled’: Purcell’s setting of ‘when thou takest away their breath they die’ is wonderfully poised. Once again the lilting triple metre returns, broken by the stately ‘The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever’ before the choir return with their awestruck praise of God’s works.

2 Close thine eyes and sleep secure
Devotional song, Z184 (1688)

SUSAN GRITTON soprano, MICHAEL GEORGE bass

Close thine eyes and sleep secure;
Thy soul is safe, thy body sure;
He that guards thee, he thee keeps,
Who never slumbers, never sleeps.
A quiet conscience in a quiet breast
Has only peace, has only rest:
The music and the mirth of kings
Are out of tune unless she sings;
Then close thine eyes in peace and rest secure,
No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.

FRANCIS QUARLES (1592-1644)

The deliciously poised setting of Close thine eyes was one of twelve of Purcell’s devotional songs first published in 1688 in Harmonia Sacra. The text, sometimes misattributed to King Charles, was by Francis Quarles, a Cambridge-educated poet who had made his reputation during the 1620s with a series of biblical paraphrases. As befits its subject matter, Purcell’s setting, for soprano and bass, is restrained and restful, and contains some delicious harmonic turns. There is one short passage with more motion, ‘The music and the mirth of kings’, which is quickly stilled, being ‘out of tune’, and this glorious miniature ends serenely.
Lord, how long wilt thou be angry?
Full anthem, Z25 (c1680-82)

JAMES BOWMAN countertenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Lord, how long wilt thou be angry? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?
O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon, for we are come to great misery.
Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins,
for thy name’s sake.
So we that are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture shall give thee thanks for ever,
and will always be shewing forth thy praise from one generation to another.

Psalm 79 vv 5 8 9 14

Purcell’s autograph of *Lord, how long wilt thou be angry?*, dating from the early 1680s, is contained in Fitzwilliam Museum MS 88 and is a marvellous synthesis of both old and new compositional styles. The reflective, five-part opening choral section is imitative, showing the influence on Purcell’s music of composers such as Byrd and Gibbons, whose work he admired and studied. Over this form Purcell imprints his own angularly chromatic harmonic language, which builds towards the anguished ‘Shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever’. The three-part verse ‘O remember not our old sins’ is reflective, falling in tessitura to ‘great misery’. The homophonic chorus entry ‘Help us, O God’ is declamatory and ‘for the glory of thy name’ impressively builds its close entries before the opening imitative style returns for ‘O deliver us’, still coloured by chromatic lines which rise through ‘and be merciful unto our sins’. The anthem closes with a joyful triple-time section.

Hear me, O Lord, and that soon
Full anthem, Z13a/Z13b (c1679-80)

MARK KENNEDY treble  JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint; hide not thy face from me,
lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
O let me hear thy loving kindness betimes in the morning, for in thee is my trust.
Show thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul to thee.
Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies, for I flee unto thee to hide me.
Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God.
Let thy loving spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.
Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name’s sake, and for thy righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen.

Psalm 143 vv 7-11

Hear me, O Lord, and that soon is a first-rate anthem, perhaps dating from as early as 1679 or 1680: it too is found in Fitzwilliam MS 88. There are four soloists, but Purcell frequently diverts the bass singer away from the continuo line, creating a sonorous, five-part texture which is especially rich. The opening section is contrapuntally complex and dominated by the glorious, falling motif ‘for my spirit waxeth faint’: the angular melody of ‘hide not thy face from me’ is splendidly quirky. ‘O let me hear thy loving kindness’ is set as an appealing duet between treble and bass, with the bass singer once again holding a line independent of the continuo section. The pleading four-part ‘Deliver me, O Lord’ is sung first by the four soloists, and then by the full choir: the harmony of Purcell’s opening block chords is highly individual, as are the melodic lines in the duet that follows for alto and tenor, ‘Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee’. The solo sections close with the quartet ‘Quicken me, O Lord’ whose rapid tonal changes – heading at times into keys infrequently charted by composers of the time – illustrate the need to ‘bring my soul out of trouble’. After such tonal ambiguities, the Gloria, in its bright, five-part D major, seems confident that God will answer this prayer.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in B flat

Full anthem, Z230 (before October 1682)

EAMONN O’DWYER, AARON WEBBER trebles
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is
mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away. He rememb’ring his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

NUNC DIMITTIS

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. To be a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen.

Purcell’s ‘Complete Service’ in B flat, a setting of ten canticles, though not unique, is a comparative rarity for its time. A payment of thirty shillings is registered in the accounts of Westminster Abbey for Michaelmas 1681 ‘for writing Mr Purcell’s service and anthem’. For performance at Evensong Purcell provided a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and their alternatives, the Cantate Domino and Deus Misereatur, for the Morning service a Te Deum, Benedictus, Benedicite and Jubilate and for the Communion Service a Kyrie and Nicene Creed. The setting must have been extremely useful to cathedral and other choirs for the service appears, either complete or in part, in numerous different manuscripts all over Britain and has been included on service lists almost ever since. Compared to the anthems, the movements of the B flat service are conservative, the harmony usually remaining relatively simple and often homophonic. However, they do contain ingenious canonic and other contrapuntal devices.

[All ten canticles of the ‘Complete Service’, Z230, are recorded in this series on the following discs: Disc 7: Te Deum and Jubilate; Disc 8: Benedicite; Disc 9: Cantate Domino and Deus misereator; Disc 10: Benedictus; Kyrie eleison iand Nicene Creed; Disc 11 (this one): Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.]

The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are perhaps the best-known movements, set for two trios of solo voices (two trebles and a high tenor, and an alto-tenor-bass grouping) who alternate with each other and the full choir. The writing for the higher trio is particularly appealing, especially at ‘He hath put down the mighty from their seat’. There are also two sections of writing for the four adult soloists, ‘As he promised to our forefathers’ and, in the Nunc Dimittis, at ‘To be a light to lighten the
gentiles’. The Gloria for the Magnificat features a canon ‘3 in 1’, with the melody, heard first in the
tenors, heard at four beats’ distance in the altos and then, two beats later, in the trebles. The Nunc
Dimittis’s Gloria presents a canon ‘4 in 2’: the altos’ melody is taken up, an octave lower and at four
beats’ distance, by the basses, and the trebles’ line, more rhythmically complex but still at the octave
and four beats later, by the tenors.

7 Turn thou us, O good Lord
Verse anthem, Z62 (undated)

MARK PADMORE, CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned, who turn to thee in weeping, fasting and praying.
For thou art a merciful God, full of compassion, and of great pity.
Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy.
Spare thy people, good Lord, spare them: and let not thine heritage be brought to confusion.
Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great; and after the multitude of thy mercies, look up on us.

Commination Service, last prayer

Turn thou us, O good Lord is a curious work which is found in the first of three volumes
collected together by William Flackton and now housed in the British Museum (Add.30931). The
inscription (in Flackton’s hand) reads ‘The 3.d Collect for the 30 of January. on the Martyrdom
of King Cha- by Henry Purcell’ and at the end the copyist has written ‘Mr. Hen Pursell. of
Westminster’. Those comments notwithstanding, there is must be some doubt as to whether the
anthem is by Purcell: in 1910 the scholar Godfrey Arkright questioned whether Purcell was the
author.

Much of the work is scored, unusually, for a solo tenor: the writing is at times rather ungainly,
especially the word setting. ‘Spare thy people, good Lord’ is set for a trio of soloists and leads into a
choral reworking of a passage, setting the same words, from the magnificent ten-part anthem Blow up
the trumpet in Sion (recorded on Disc 3): cut down to only four parts, the sumptuous textures of that
anthem are sadly absent here. For ‘Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great’ the composer returns to
the solo voice, closing the anthem with a repeat of the trio and chorus ‘Spare thy people’.
**8 O Lord, thou art my God**

Verse anthem, Z41 (c1680-82)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP; CHARLES DANIELS tenors
MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, for thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the cov’ring cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all eyes; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us. Lo, this is the Lord. We will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation. Alleluia.

Isaiah 25, vv 1 4 7-9

O Lord, thou art my God is another anthem to be found in Purcell’s hand in Fitzwilliam MS 88: the composition dates from around 1680-82. At the opening the bass soloist praises God in spacious, noble writing, with a series of grand yet reverential roulades on ‘wonderful’. The two other soloists enter at ‘For thou hast been a strength to the poor’, interrupted by the bass’s warlike ‘And he will destroy in this mountain’. The three voices join for the first time for ‘He will swallow up death in victory’, leading to a hymn-like, homophonic chorus ‘O Lord, thou art my God’. The trio following becomes more animated at ‘We will be glad and rejoice’ and leads into a jaunty series of Alleluias; the final choral section returns to homophony.

**9 Now that the sun hath veiled his light (An Evening Hymn)**

Devotional song, Z193 (1688)

EAMONN O’DWYER treble

Now that the sun hath veiled his light,
And bid the world goodnight,
To the soft bed my body I dispose;
But where shall my soul repose?
Dear God, even in thy arms.
And can there be any so sweet security?
Then to thy rest, O my soul,
And singing, praise the mercy
That prolongs thy days.
Alleluia.

WILLIAM FULLER

The ‘Evening Hymn’ is one of Purcell’s greatest devotional songs. It was published in 1688 in *Harmonia Sacra*. Over the hypnotic anchor of one of Purcell’s most serene ground basses the singer weaves a magical melody, calmly resigned not only to end the day in peace, but also ready to accept the blessings of heaven. The extended final series of Alleluias are personal, far removed from the extrovert settings more usually associated with that word. Purcell learned his musical trade as a chorister at the Chapel Royal: he must have understood the ways and workings of his young charges and been respectful of their professionalism. In adulthood he was a fine choir trainer, writing from time to time for one of the extraordinarily talented trebles with whom he was clearly blessed. The ‘Evening Hymn’, for instance, requires breath control that few choristers are able to sustain.

10 *Awake, awake, put on thy strength*
Verse anthem, Z1 (c1682-85)

ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor  CHARLES DANIELS tenor  MICHAEL GEORGE bass
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab that wounded the dragon? Awake, awake, art thou not it that hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the deep of the sea a way for the ransom’d to pass over?
Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord.
Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. Alleluia.

Isaiah 51, vv 9-11
Awake, awake, put on thy strength is found only in one source, the ‘Royal’ manuscript, copied by Purcell in his early years and now in The British Library. Seventeen of Purcell’s verse anthems with strings are preserved in that collection, all copied before 1685. This particular anthem probably dates from 1680-82. The final chorus was never copied; instead, the manuscript contains a blank page. For this recording Robert King has reconstructed the missing bars, continuing the ground bass and utilising material that is largely Purcell’s.

The Symphony is splendidly grand, the dotted rhythms of the opening underpinned by Purcell’s glorious harmonies and wonderfully-crafted inner parts. The second, triple-time section dances in the joyful, lilting rhythms that so pleased King Charles II and leads straight into the first vocal music: a solo bass, remembering past miracles, loudly calls on God to wake and ‘put on thy strength’. At ‘Therefore the redeemed of the Lord’ a trio of soloists enters in more gentle vein, with especially appealing harmony colouring ‘and sorrow and mourning shall flee away’, and are followed by a reprise of the dancing triple section of the Symphony. This time Purcell continues and extends the section with the three soloists: his Alleluias dance joyously over a swinging, four-bar ground bass, wonderfully compelling in their inexorable momentum, building towards a string ritornello (containing one of Purcell’s expressive sections, sometimes marked ‘drag’ but here the equally direct ‘slow’) and a joyous final chorus.

Notes by ROBERT KING © 1994-2002

Pitch: A = 466Hz (anthems); A = 415Hz (Te Deum and Jubilate and devotional songs).
Temperament: Vallotti
Performing editions by Robert King

Recorded at St Jude’s Church, Hampstead, London, on various dates between November 1991 and April 1994 (Disc 2 recorded in St Giles’ Church, Cripplegate, London)
Recording Engineer PHILIP HOBBBS
Assistant Engineer LINDSAY PELL
Recording Producer BEN TURNER
Post-production JULIA THOMAS, BEN TURNER (Finesplice)
Design TERRY SHANNON
Executive Producers JOANNA GAMBLE, EDWARD PERRY
Chamber organs prepared by Simon Neal and Philip Ridley
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THE KING’S CONSORT

The King’s Consort has made nearly eighty records for Hyperion to date – vocal, instrumental, orchestral and choral – including music by Bach, Boccherini, Kuhnau, Astorga, Telemann, Schütz, Gabrieli, Pergolesi, Mozart, Albinoni, Dowland and Couperin. The Consort is especially renowned for its many recordings of Purcell, Handel and Vivaldi. Current recording projects include a series of sacred music by Bach’s contemporaries, and Vivaldi’s complete sacred music of which eight CDs have already been issued.

Three of the orchestra’s greatest recent successes on disc and in the concert hall have been ‘Lo Sposalizio’, a massive reconstruction of Venice’s ceremonial wedding to the sea, Boccherini’s 1800 setting of the Stabat Mater, and a musical reconstruction of the coronation of King George II.

In addition to this one, the orchestra has recorded two other highly acclaimed series of Purcell’s music: the complete odes and welcome songs on eight CDs, and, on three CDs, the complete secular songs with Barbara Bonney, Susan Gritton, James Bowman, Rogers Covey-Crump, Charles Daniels and Michael George.
The following artists took part in the recordings

THE CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
[EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM director]

THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

THE TREBLES OF THE CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT
The boy trebles for this project were selected from eight of Britain’s leading choirs, the kind co-operation of whose Directors of Music enabling the formation of a unique choir.

Guildford Cathedral PETER WOOD
New College, Oxford JEROME FINNIS, WILLIAM GRESFORD, PHILIP HALLCHURCH, DANIEL LOCHMANN, NICHOLAS WITCOMB
Westminster Cathedral FRANCIS FAUX, MARK KENNEDY, EAMONN O’DWYER, THOMAS ROAD, ANDREW WAITE, AARON WEBBER
St Alban’s Abbey THOMAS PARNELL
St Paul’s Cathedral CONNOR BURROWES, GREGORY HOPKINS, DAVID NICKLESS
Salisbury Cathedral AARON BURCHELL, TOM JAMIESON
Winchester Cathedral JAMES GOODMAN, THOMAS KING, NICHOLAS RICHARDSON
Winchester Quiristers ANDREW GRIFFITHS

THE KING’S CONSORT
DAVID WOODCOCK, MILES GOLDING, LUCY HOWARD, SIMON JONES, JANE CARWARDINE, SUSAN CARPENTER-JACOBS, JAMES ELLIS, FIONA HUGGETT, STEPHEN JONES, MARIE KNIGHT, REBECCA MILES, HELEN ORSLER, CLARE SALAMAN, WILLIAM THORP, MAURICE WHITAKER violin
JANE NORMAN, RUPERT BAWDEN, PETER COLLYER, TREVOR JONES, JANE ROGERS, MELANIE STROVER viola
JANE COE, HELEN GOUGH, RICHARD CAMPBELL, MARK CAUDLE, ANGELA EAST, JENNIFER WARD-CLARKE bass violin
DAVID MILLER, WILLIAM CARTER, ELIZABETH KENNY, JACOB HERINGMAN theorbo
JAMES O’DONNELL, PAUL NICHOLSON, ROBERT KING chamber organ
CRISPION STEELE-PERKINS, MARK BENNETT natural trumpet

In the funeral music for Queen Mary (Disc 7) …

CRISPION STEELE-PERKINS, DAVID BLACKADDER, SUSAN ADDISON, STEPHEN SAUNDERS flatt trumpets
CHARLES FULLBROOK, GEORGE LAWN, JOHN HARROD, STEPHEN HENDERSON, PETER BEAMENT muffled side-drums
The CDs and their contents

DISC 1 : CDS44141

1. O sing unto the Lord, Z44 [13’12]
2. O praise God in his holiness, Z42 [8’12]
3. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, Z46 [7’44]
4. It is a good thing to give thanks, Z18 [11’55]
5. O give thanks unto the Lord, Z33 [9’53]
6. Let mine eyes run down with tears, Z24 [9’17]

DISC 2 : CDS44142

1. Blessed are they that fear the Lord, Z5 [9’36]
2. Behold now, praise the Lord, Z3 [5’55]
3. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Z20 [11’24]
4. My song shall be alway, Z31 [14’42]
5. Te Deum in D, Z232 [14’14]
6. Jubilate Deo in D, Z232 [8’43]

DISC 3 : CDS44143

1. Blow up the trumpet in Sion, Z10 [7’32]
2. The Lord is king, be the people never so impatient, Z53 [4’57]
3. Begin the song, and strike the living lyre, Z183 [8’25]
4. Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, Z61 [4’57]
5. Tell me, some pitying angel (The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation), Z196 [7’40]
6. Hear my prayer, O Lord, Z15 [3’20]
7. Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes, Z136 [5’34]
8. O Lord, our Governor, Z39 [9’55]
9. Remember not, Lord, our offences, Z50 [3’30]
10. Hosanna to the highest, Z187 [5’29]
11. O God, thou hast cast us out, Z36 [4’05]

DISC 4 : CDS44144

1. Behold, I bring you glad tidings, Z2 [10’55]
2. Since God so tender a regard, Z143 [4’30]
Early, O Lord, my fainting soul, Z132 [5'42]
Sleep, Adam, and take thy rest, Z195 [1'50]
Awake, ye dead, Z182 [3'13]
The earth trembled, Z197 [2'1]
The way of God is an undefiled way, Z56 [8'23]
Lord, not to us, but to thy name, Z137 [0'58]
Lord, what is man?, Z192 [6'18]
Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth, Z52 [5'50]
O, all ye people, clap your hands, Z138 [2'31]
My heart is inditing of a good matter, Z30 [16'58]

DISC 5 : CDS44145

O Lord, rebuke me not, Z40 [7'18]
With sick and famish’d eyes, Z200 [5'22]
How long, great God, Z189 [3'48]
Awake, and with attention hear, Z181 [12'49]
O God, thou art my god, Z35 [3'38]
We sing to him, whose wisdom form’d the ear, Z199 [1'27]
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, Z47 [10'24]
O, I’m sick of life, Z140 [5'16]
O God, the king of glory, Z34 [2'00]
Let the night perish (Job’s Curse), Z191 [4'26]
When on my sick bed I languish, Z144 [4'49]
Rejoice in the Lord alway (‘The Bell Anthem’), Z49 [8'24]

DISC 6 : CDS44146

Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?, Z65 [10'47]
Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth?, Z26 [4'15]
O Lord, grant the King a long life, Z38 [8'09]
Hear me, O Lord, the great support, Z133 [5'47]
Thou wakeful shepherd that does Israel keep (A Morning Hymn), Z198 [2'54]
Who hath believed our report?, Z64 [8'27]
I will love thee, O Lord, Z67 [6'05]
Great God and just, Z186 [3'54]
Plung’d in the confines of despair, Z142 [4'41]
O praise the Lord, all ye heathen, Z43 [2'57]
My heart is fixed, O God, Z29 [8'31]
DISC 7 : CDS44147

1. I was glad when they said unto me, 1685 [4’03]
2. O consider my adversity, Z32 [9’25]
3. Beati omnes qui timent Dominum, Z131 [4’29]
4. I was glad when they said unto me, Z19 [8’02]
5. In the black dismal dungeon of despair, Z190 [4’32]
6. Save me, O God, Z51 [3’44]
7. Te Deum in B flat, Z230 [5’44]
9. Thy way, O God, is holy, Z60 [5’13]

THE MUSIC FOR THE FUNERAL OF QUEEN MARY (1695)
10. Drum Processional [1’53]
11. March, Z860 [1’29]

FUNERAL SENTENCES
12. Man that is born of a woman, Z27 [2’15]
13. In the midst of life, Z17b [4’07]
14. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, Z58b [3’53]
15. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts Full anthem, Z58c [2’16]
16. Canzona, Z860 [2’40]
17. Drum Recessional [2’01]

DISC 8 : CDS44148

1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, Z16 [11’50]
2. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, Z9 [6’23]
3. Benedicite in B flat, Z230 [7’28]
4. Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes, Z135 [6’26]
5. Full of wrath, his threatening breath, Z185 [2’46]
6. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, Z11 [7’35]
7. Magnificat in G minor, Z231 [3’27]
8. Nunc Dimittis in G minor, Z231 [1’40]
9. Be merciful unto me, Z4 [7’10]
10. They that go down to the sea in ships, Z57 [9’10]
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<td>10. The Lord is king, and hath put on glorious apparel, Z69 [3'30]</td>
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The Complete Sacred Music of
HENRY PURCELL
(1659-1695)

These eleven CDs contain all the anthems, services and devotional songs of Henry Purcell.

CONNOR BURROWES, MARK KENNEDY, DANIEL LOCHMANN, EAMONN O’Dwyer, NICHOLAS WITCOMB trebles
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JAMES BOWMAN, countertenor
PAUL AGNEW, ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP, CHARLES DANIELS, MARK PADMORE tenors
ROBERT EVANS, MICHAEL GEORGE basses
CHOIR OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
CHOIR OF THE KING’S CONSORT

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