

The Cherwell Singers

present

“Orb and Sceptre”

Music for the Coronation Service

James Brown

conductor

Steven Grahl

organ

Sunday, 30th June 2013

The Chapel of Exeter College, Oxford

Programme

My Heart is Inditing <i>Coronation of James II, 1685</i>	Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
The Lord is a Sun and a Shield <i>Coronation of George I, 1714</i>	William Croft (1678-1727)
Let thy Hand be Strengthened <i>Coronation of George II, 1727</i>	G. F. Handel (1673-1741)
The King shall Rejoice <i>Coronation of George III, 1761</i>	William Boyce (1711-1779)

Interval

Behold, O God our Defender <i>Coronation of Elisabeth II, 1953</i>	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
Orb and Sceptre (<i>Organ Solo</i>) <i>Coronation of Elisabeth II, 1953</i>	William Walton (1902-1983)
Te Deum <i>Coronation of Elisabeth II, 1953</i>	William Walton (1902-1983)

Polly Smith	violin
Nia Lewis	violin
Rachel Byrt	viola
Gabriel Amherst	cello
Benjamin Bloor	organ
Steven Grahl	organ
James Brown	conductor

Introduction, Notes and Texts

In the month that has marked the sixtieth anniversary of the coronation, the Cherwell Singers present a concert of music written for that service and for previous coronations.

Since the time of the reformation, at least, the coronations of British monarchs have been the occasions for extreme levels of pomp and ceremony of the highest level.

A particular aspect of coronations has always been a large amount of music, all composed by British-born composers with the single exception of Handel (the Canadian composer Healey Willan who contributed to the last coronation was in fact born in London).

This concert presents music from the first century following the reformation, and from the coronation of the present Queen. The pieces are presented in chronological order. It will be noted that some of the anthems have texts familiar in settings by different composers; this is because the form and texts of each coronation have tended to be carried forward to the next – many of the texts being set to new music, but some using music from previous occasions.

The composers John Blow and his pupil **Henry Purcell** were responsible for the music for the coronation of James II in 1685. One of Purcell's contributions was a setting of *My Heart is Inditing* to be sung during the crowning of the Queen. This is an extended anthem with orchestral symphonies (interludes, in modern parlance) and alternating full and verse (sub-chorus) sections. Charles II may even be given some credit for this form, as he insisted on having instrumental accompaniment in the verse anthems performed in his chapels.

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.

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.

Hearken, O daughter, consider, incline thine ear;
forget also thine own people and thy father's house.
Instead of fathers thou shalt have children
whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise thy God O Sion;
For kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing
mothers. Alleluja.

(from Psalms 45 and 147 and the book of Isaiah)

William Croft is a comparatively little-known composer, but is significant in forming a link between the eras of Purcell and Handel. His setting of *The Lord is a Sun and a Shield* was written for the coronation of George I in 1714. Although Handel was George's Kapellmeister in Hanover, he had moved to London two years earlier, and so was not on good enough terms with him to contribute.

The Lord is a sun and a shield, the Lord will give grace and glory.
Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed, and will hear him from his
holy heav'n, with the saving strength of his right hand.
For the King trusteth in the Lord; through the mercy of the most High he
shall not be moved. His right hand shall find out all his enemies.
His salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who only doth wondrous things, and
blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled
with his glory. Amen.

(from Psalms 21, 72, 84 and 85)

For the coronation of George II in 1727, the composer Maurice Greene was appointed to be in charge of the music; however, the King insisted that **George Friderik Handel** (recently naturalised) should provide the main anthems; he provided four. Of these, *Let thy Hand be Strengthened* is the only one not to include trumpets in the orchestration – this was because the players were required to be elsewhere, ready to play fanfares in an adjacent part of the ceremony.

Let thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand be exalted.
Let justice and judgement be the preparation of thy seat!
Let mercy and truth go before thy face. Alleluia!

(Psalm 89: 14-15)

William Boyce was commissioned to provide all the music for the coronation of George III in 1761. However, he asked for (and was granted) permission to reuse Handel's setting of *Zadok the Priest*, because he felt

that it could not be improved on. This set a strong precedent, because that setting by Handel has been performed at every coronation since. The King asked Boyce not to make the music any longer or more repetitive than necessary; but Boyce pointed out that the music should be sufficiently extensive to be “consistent with the grandeur of the solemnity”, and the single “Hallelujah” at the end of *The King shall Rejoice* may be a gentle dig at this request. The first section of the anthem was written earlier for the marriage, just before the coronation, of George III and Queen Charlotte.

The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord! Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation. Thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness, and shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

His honour is great in thy salvation. Glory and great worship shalt thou lay upon him.

Thou shalt give him everlasting felicity, and make him glad with the joy of thy countenance. Hallelujah!

(from Psalm 21)

After George III’s coronation, at which nearly all the music was written by a single composer, subsequent coronations have always included the work of several; and by the time of the coronation of Elisabeth II in 1953 no single composer provided more than a fraction of the music for the whole occasion (Vaughan Williams and Walton provided the greatest amount, with three pieces each).

Some of this music was bombastic, to suit the scale of the occasion, but much was balanced and thoughtful, as befits a church-based ceremony. **Herbert Howells** is particularly notable for the luscious, even sensual, harmonies pervading his works - created by the carefully graded use of discords - and the introit *Behold, O God our Defender* is a fine example.

Behold, O God our Defender, and look upon the face of thine Anointed.

For one day in thy courts is better than a thousand*.

(Psalm 84: 9-10)

* read as: “is better than a thousand elsewhere”.

William Walton wrote two orchestral marches used in the last coronation. His march *Crown Imperial*, written for the coronation of Edward VIII, and played for that of George VI, was played again, and he also wrote a new march *Orb and Sceptre*, which we hear in the arrangement for organ made by Sir William McKie, who was in charge of the music for the service.

Walton himself described his setting of the *Te Deum*, also written for this coronation, as “rather splendid”. It came at the end of the service, but deliberately ends quietly rather than loudly in order to provide a contrast with the following fanfares leading into the National Anthem.

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 tookest upon thee to deliver man:
thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven 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 numbered 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: 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.

(Early Christian hymn, attributed to St Ambrose)

More information on music for British coronations can be found in the recently published book: *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations*, by Matthias Range, a member of this choir.

Steven Grahl organ

Steven enjoys a varied career as both organist and conductor. He combines the post of Assistant Organist at New College, Oxford with that of Organist & Director of Music at St Marylebone Parish Church, London, and he was acting Director of the New College Choir during Trinity Term 2010. He is a member of the Oxford University Faculty of Music. Since 2006 he has held the Principal Conductorship of the Guildford Chamber Choir.

Recent years have seen performances in America, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, and at numerous prestigious UK venues, such as Westminster Cathedral and St John's Smith Square.

A prize-winning graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford (where he was Organ Scholar) and the Royal Academy of Music, Steven gained the Limpus (highest mark) and Dixon (improvisation) prizes in his FRCO examination, and he is also a holder of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Medallion.

James Brown conductor

James was Organ Scholar of Girton College, Cambridge and upon graduating studied organ at the Conservatoire de Musique, Geneva with Lionel Rogg. After two years working as an organist in Texas, James returned to England where he is currently Organist of the University Church, Oxford and a lay clerk in New College Choir, with whom he tours this year to the USA, France and the Netherlands as well as participating in broadcasts and recordings. He is also a pianist for the operatic trio Canteremo, and performs with them on the Swan Hellenic Cruise line and has recently completed a five nation tour of South East Asia.

James teaches organ at Abingdon School and New College School and performs regularly with various choirs and choral societies.

James has conducted the Cherwell Singers since 2007.

The Cherwell Singers

Soprano

Penny Jaques
Janet Johnson
Clare Scott-Dempster
Alice Stainer
Stephanie Sumner-Jones
Lucy Watson
Steph White
Lucinda Williams

Alto

Virginia Allport
Rachel Bryans
Katherine Butler
Julia Middleton
Lizzie Newton
Joanna Poulton
Sally Prime

Tenor

Iain McLean
Guy Peskett
Matthias Range
David Sutton

Bass

Dominic Hargreaves
Neil Herington
Paul Hodges
Jonathan Mapley

The Cherwell Singers is looking to recruit voice members in all parts. If you are interested in joining us please contact James Brown at:

director@cherwellsingers.org

Please visit our web site to learn more about the choir, and listen to some of our recordings online. Use the web form to register yourself on our email list, to ensure you receive notification and full details of future concerts.

www.cherwellsingers.org