

# MUSIC FOR ROYAL OCCASIONS

**CORONATION ANTHEMS** | G.F. HANDEL

*TE DEUM IN C MAJOR* | F.J. HAYDN

*ORGAN CONCERTO IN F MAJOR* | G.F. HANDEL

DR. PHILLIP BRISSON, Organist

Plus more by WILLIAM BYRD, RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS,  
HERBERT HOWELLS, W. MATHIAS, AND PAUL MEALOR



Sunday, April 10, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CELEBRATING OUR 5<sup>TH</sup> SEASON



# MUSIC FOR ROYAL OCCASIONS

April 10, 2016

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our third performance of the 2015-16 season. We are delighted to be presenting an uplifting program of “Music for Royal Occasions.” For this, the final concert of our fifth season, we have chosen works that were either commissioned by or written for Royalty. The works span the time from before Shakespeare’s death (William Byrd, 1543-1623), to the work of a living composer (Paul Mealor, b. 1975). The concert is anchored around the four brilliant “Coronation Anthems” that Handel wrote for the coronation of George II, the first of which, *Zadok the Priest*, has been sung at the coronation of every English monarch since 1727. Be sure to see Millard Dunn’s insightful program notes toward the back of this program.

We are also extremely pleased to be at Calvary Episcopal Church this afternoon. Not only is it a magnificent venue for music, but it holds such wonderful memories for many members of our chorus, board, and concertgoers. Everyone who has participated in or enjoyed great choral repertoire in Louisville over the years knows and fondly remembers the extraordinary work of the Louisville Bach Society and its founders, Melvin and Margaret Dickinson. Calvary helped nurture the LBS and was the backdrop for so many unforgettable performances.

Please be sure to see our preliminary plans for next season inside the back cover of this program and we hope you will plan now to join us as we begin our sixth season.

Sincerely,

Matt Lindblom  
President

Mark Walker  
Artistic Director

TE DEUM NO. 2 IN C MAJOR | Franz Joseph Haydn

I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS | William Byrd

ZADOK THE PRIEST (Coronation Anthem No. 1) | G.F. Handel

O TASTE AND SEE | Ralph Vaughan Williams

BEHOLD, O GOD OUR DEFENDER | Herbert Howells

MY HEART IS INDITING (Coronation Anthem No. 4) | G.F. Handel

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Interval (10 minutes)

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ORGAN CONCERTO IN F MAJOR | G.F. Handel  
Dr. Philip Brisson, *Organist*

THE KING SHALL REJOICE (Coronation Anthem No. 3) | G.F. Handel

LET ALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE, O GOD | William Mathias

UBI CARITAS | Paul Mealor

LET THY HAND BE STRENGTHED (Coronation Anthem No. 2) | G.F. Handel



The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, provides operating support to Louisville Master Chorale with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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## PRE-CONCERT PROGRAM



**Dr. John R. Hale** is the Director of Liberal Studies and Adjunct Professor of Archaeology at the University of Louisville. Dr. Hale is a graduate of Yale University, with a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and is a distinguished instructor and author. His many awards include the Panhellenic Teacher of the Year Award and the Delphi Center Award.

Many know Dr. Hale for his popular preconcert programs with the Louisville Bach Society before its dissolution in 2011. The Louisville Master Chorale is extremely pleased that he has been able to take time from a very busy schedule to sing in some recent performances and that he is able to present our pre-concert program today. His engaging style and commanding knowledge are respected and appreciated by concertgoers throughout our community.

## TEXTS

### TE DEUM NO. 2 IN C MAJOR, “for Empress Marie Therese” Franz Joseph Haydn

English translation from **The Book of Common Prayer, 1662**

*Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum confitemur.  
Te aeternum patrem, omnis terra veneratur.*

We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.  
All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.

*Tibi omnes Angeli: tibi coeli et universae potestates.*

To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.

*Tibi cherubim et seraphim, incessabili voce proclamant:*

To thee Cherubin and Seraphin: continually do cry,

*“Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae.”*

Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory.

*Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus,  
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numerus,  
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.  
Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia:*

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;

*Patrem immensae majestatis;  
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium;  
Sanctum quoque Paracletum Spiritum.*

The Father: of an infinite Majesty;  
Thine honourable, true: and only Son;  
Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.

*Tu rex gloriae, Christe.  
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.  
Tu, ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti  
Virginis uterum.  
Tu, devicto mortis aculeo,  
aperuisti credentibus regna coelorum.  
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris.  
Judex crederis esse venturus.*

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.

*Te ergo quaesumus, famulis tuis subveni: quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.  
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.  
Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hereditati tuae.*

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.

*Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.  
Per singulos dies benedicimus Te: et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum, et in saeculum saeculi.*

Govern them: and lift them up for ever.  
Day by day: we magnify thee; And we worship thy Name: ever world without end.

*Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire.  
Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.  
Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos: quem admodum speravimus in Te.*

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.

*In Te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in aeternum.*

O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

## **I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS | William Byrd**

John 14:18 and 16:22

I will not leave you comfortless. Alleluia.  
I will come to you again. Alleluia.  
And your heart shall rejoice. Alleluia

## **ZADOK THE PRIEST (Coronation Anthem No. 1) | G.F. Handel**

Adapted from 1 Kings, Chapter 1

Zadok, the Priest, and Nathan, the Prophet, anointed Solomon King;  
and all the people rejoic'd, and said:  
God save the King, long live the King, may the King live for ever!  
Amen! Alleluja!

## **O TASTE AND SEE | Ralph Vaughan Williams**

Psalm 35, verse 8

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is:  
blest is the man that trusteth in him.

## **BEHOLD, O GOD OUR DEFENDER | Herbert Howells**

Psalm 84, verses 9-10

Behold, O God our defender,  
And look upon the face of thine Anointed,  
For one day in thy courts is better than a thousand.

## **MY HEART IS INDITING (Coronation Anthem No. 4) | G.F.Handel**

after Psalm 45:1,10,12 and Isaiah 49:23

My heart is inditing of a good matter:  
I speak of the things which I have made unto the King.  
Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women  
Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vesture of gold  
and the King shall have pleasure in thy beauty.  
Kings shall be thy nursing fathers  
and queens thy nursing mothers.

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**Interval (10 minutes)**

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## **THE KING SHALL REJOICE (Coronation Anthem No. 3) | G.F.Handel**

Adapted from Psalm 21

The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord.  
Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.  
Glory and great worship hast thou laid upon him.  
Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness  
and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.  
Allelujah.

## LET ALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE, O GOD | William Mathias

Psalm 67

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 folk 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.  
God be merciful unto us, and bless us:  
And shew us the light of his countenance,  
And be merciful unto us.  
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.  
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.

## UBI CARITAS | Paul Mealor

Early Latin Church Hymn

*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.  
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.  
Exsultemus, et in ipso jucundemur.  
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.  
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.*

Where charity and love are, God is there.  
Christ's love has gathered us into one.  
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.  
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.  
And may we love each other with a sincere heart

## LET THY HAND BE STRENGTHENED (Coronation Antehm No. 2)

G.F. Handel

after Psalm 89, verse 14

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

# THANK YOU FOR FIVE WONDERFUL SEASONS

Today's concert marks the close of our fifth season. We have sincerely appreciated your patronage and support as we strive to present compelling choral works. These first five years have included favorite choral masterpieces and engaging new repertoire:

- December 18, 2011** Handel's *Messiah*
- March 18, 2012** Mozart's Coronation Mass and Lauridson's *Lux Aeterna*
- October 28, 2012** Haydn's *The Creation*
- December 16, 2012** Handel's *Messiah* (expanded program)
- March 10, 2013** Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and six other works based on Psalms
- October 27, 2013** Webber's *Requiem*
- December 22, 2013** Handel's *Messiah* (selections) and Bach's *Magnificat*
- April 13, 2014** Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Gorecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*
- October 19, 2014** Bach's *Ein' Feste Burg* and Burchard's *In Memoriam* (premiere)
- December 21, 2014** Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Handel's *Messiah* (selections)
- March 22, 2015** Vaughan William's *Five Mystical Songs* and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*
- October 26, 2015** Paulus' *To Be Certain of the Dawn* and Haydn's *Israel in Egypt* (excerpts)
- April 10, 2016** Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and Haydn's *Te Deum*

We also were pleased to perform a number of community concerts with St Agnes School, Parkland Boys and Girls Club, Neighborhood House, Belmont Village, and Brownsboro Park.

We also greatly appreciate the support agencies and individuals who have helped make programming possible and the congregations that have hosted our concerts:

- The Kentucky Arts Council
- The Fund for the Arts and powertogive
- Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence
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- Harvey Brown Presbyterian Church
- Saint Patrick Catholic Church
- Church of the Holy Spirit
- Congregation Adath Jeshurun



## ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



**MARK WALKER**, Louisville Master Chorale's Conductor and Artistic Director, has extensive experience in Choral Conducting, Organ Performance, Choral Music Education, and Liturgical Church Music. He currently serves as Organist and Director of Music at Church of the Holy Spirit in Louisville. He has served parishes in Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and North Carolina and has taught in schools in Kentucky and North Carolina. Walker previously served as Assistant Conductor for the Louisville Bach Society. Walker holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Western Kentucky University and a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from East Carolina University.

His conducting experience with extended choral-orchestral works includes compositions by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Vivaldi, Pergolesi and contemporary composers Rutter and Lauridsen. As an organ recitalist, Walker has performed extensively throughout the Eastern and Southern U.S. He regularly serves as conductor and organist for various Diocesan events in Louisville, and during the summer of 2011 served as both choral conductor and guest organ recitalist for the National Associations of Pastoral Musicians Conference. He also served as Dean of the Louisville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists in 2011-12.



**PHILIP BRISSON**, Louisville Master Chorale's Associate and Accompanist, is Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral of the Assumption in downtown Louisville, the country's oldest inland Catholic cathedral in continuous use. In addition to leading the Cathedral's traditional worship, he manages the Cathedral's Keltly Endowed Concert Series and has led the Cathedral Choirs in this country and on concert tours in Europe. Prior to his work with the LMC, he was Chorusmaster for the Kentucky Opera and prepared choruses for performances of works ranging from Verdi to Floyd. As a teacher, Dr. Brisson has served on the faculties of Bellarmine University and Indiana University Southeast. Brisson has a BM in Organ Performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, CUNY, a Master's Degree in Sacred Music from Westminster Choir College and a Doctorate in Organ Performance from the Eastman School of Music.

As an organ soloist, he has given recitals in 35 states and has appeared with the Louisville Orchestra as guest soloist. Brisson is active in the American Guild of Organists and also founded the concert artist cooperative EastWestOrganists.com, which represents several prominent young American organists.



**JACK GRIFFIN** is Concertmaster and Production Manager with the Louisville Master Chorale. He has held the Principal Viola position with the Louisville Orchestra since 1984, having joined the Orchestra during high school. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Louisville and has also studied at The Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and Indiana University.

Griffin owns Commonwealth Musicians which provides ensembles such as string quartets, jazz ensembles and other musicians for functions such as weddings and corporate events.

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Carolyn Makk  
Nancy Nikfarjam  
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Naomi Scheirich  
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Millard Dunn  
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Ian Hooper  
Robert Powell  
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John Erb  
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Ray Weaver

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Patti Sisson

### VIOLIN III

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Becca Neeley

### VIOLA

Laura De St Croix  
Evan Vivic

### CELLO

Yoonie Choi

### BASS

Patti Docs

### OBOE

Jennifer Potochnik  
Katherine Alberts

### CLARINET

Andrea Levine

### BASSOON

Matt Karr

### TRUMPET

Stacy Simpson  
Jon Wysong

### PERCUSSION

John Harris

## PROGRAM NOTES

Our director, Mark Walker, has chosen Royal pieces for us to sing in this concert, pieces that were either commissioned by or composed for English Royalty (except for Haydn's *Te Deum Number 2 in C major*, which was commissioned by the Empress Marie Therese, the wife of Emperor Franz I of Austria; but as we will see, England and the English were very much on Haydn's mind as he worked on this *Te Deum*).

The earliest piece we will sing is William Byrd's "I will not leave you comfortless," first published in 1607. The most recent work is Paul Mealor's setting of "Ubi Caritas," commissioned by Prince William for his marriage to Catherine Middleton on April 29th, 2011.

We will also sing pieces by two important English composers from the middle of the 20th century: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958) "O Taste and See" and Herbert Howells (1892 - 1983) "Behold, O God Our Defender." These pieces represent two poles of mid-20th century music, one of them simple, direct, and breathtaking, while the other is harmonically and rhythmically complex and challenging. Both of them are extremely moving, but in very different ways. The same comparison could be made between the two pieces composed in the late 20th and the early 21st century that we sing in the second part of the concert. Both composers are Welsh. William Mathias (1934 - 1992) calls on our careful attention to every moment of his very complex "Let All the People Praise Thee, O God," while Paul Mealor (b. 1975) in his setting of "Ubi Caritas" takes us to the clear, melodic, polyphonic heart of music. Both of these pieces are beautiful and moving, too, but in very different ways that perhaps parallel the differences between the Vaughan Williams and the Howells.

### TE DEUM NO. 2 IN C MAJOR | Franz Joseph Haydn

When, just before sunset on the first of August, 1798, Horatio Nelson's English fleet rounded the point of Aboukir Bay, 15 miles NE of Alexandria, Egypt, they discovered Napoleon's Mediterranean fleet anchored in a defensive line. The French admiral decided that it was far too late in the day for a naval battle, and would wait for morning. The rest, as they say, is history. Nelson attacked immediately, using a battle plan he had worked out and gone over in detail with his captains. By dawn the next morning it was clear that the French had suffered a devastating defeat.

One biographer of Nelson suggests that when Haydn heard the news in Vienna, he changed the title of the mass he was in the process of writing from *Missa in Angustiis* ("Mass in a Time of Crisis") to *Nelsonmesse* on the spot. It almost certainly wasn't that immediate, and Haydn never officially changed the name of the piece himself, but it is true that soon after he had finished the mass it acquired the nickname *Nelson Mass*. Today it is known by both titles. According to H. C. Robbins Landon and David Wyn Jones, in their detailed study of Haydn's life and music, all of the masses Haydn composed between 1796 and 1802 reflected the tensions of the Napoleonic wars, which Haydn had first experienced during his stay in England (1791-1795), and which by the time he returned to Vienna were much closer to home: Napoleon's army was threatening Austria itself. But everything Haydn wrote after his return to Vienna was also enriched by the musical resources Haydn had discovered in himself during his visits to England and expressed in the great symphonies he wrote there.

Roughly two years after the Battle of the Nile, in 1800, Nelson, along with Lady Hamilton and her husband, returning to England by land instead of by sea, stopped in Eisenstadt, the home of Haydn's patron, Nicolaus II of Esterhazy. (Lady Hamilton had refused to travel by sea. It could have been because she was two months pregnant with Nelson's daughter.) While in Eisenstadt, they heard the first performance of Haydn's *Te Deum Number 2, in C*.

We do not know whether or not Maria Therese requested that Haydn write the *Te Deum* already knowing that Nelson would be coming to Eisenstadt. But Nelson was there and heard its first performance. If the music of the *Te Deum* is influenced by current events, Nelson's victory at Aboukir Bay must have been one of them.

The *Te Deum* has a three-part structure, beginning with a celebration that reflects the text: praising God in C major with music that lifts our souls. Haydn based the opening measures on the *Te Deum* plainchant, but the plainchant is hard to detect in the exuberance of the music. Then, at measure 82, at the end of the word *venturus*, there is a pause, a strong pedal C in the orchestra, and the chorus returns softly, slowly, *adagio, piano, pianissimo*, with *Te ergo quaesumus* ... "We pray thee help thy servants whom thou has redeemed with thy precious blood." This covers only one line of the Latin text, it takes only 10 measures, and then we are back in C major, *forte!* In measure 140, Haydn begins a fugue that takes us to the end of the piece. The fugue sets only the last line of the text: "In thee, Lord, have I trusted. Do not confound me for eternity." We hear repeated, again and again, *non confundar in aeternum*. And the song of praise ends (as the text has for centuries) in a prayer for salvation.

### I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS | William Byrd

William Byrd was the second great English composer of the sixteenth century. The first was his teacher, Thomas Tallis (1505-1585). He was probably born in 1543, though the only evidence we have is Byrd's estimates of his age at different times of his life, and his figures don't always add up. We do have one assertion that he was "bred up to music under Tallis," which probably meant that he sang as a boy in the Chapel Royal since in 1543 King Henry VIII had appointed Tallis "a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal" and its organist.

In 1563 the account books of Lincoln cathedral record the hiring of William Byrd to "the post of master of the chorister boys ... [and] the post of player at the organs." Byrd moved from Lincoln to London and became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in February, 1572.

For the lifetimes of Tallis and Byrd (both of them lived to be 80), religion in England was volatile: 1534—The Act of Supremacy making Henry VIII Supreme Head of the Church of England; 1549—under Edward VI, The First Act of Uniformity made the Roman Catholic mass illegal and the first *Book of Common Prayer* changed church services from Latin to English; 1554—under Mary I, Parliament re-established Catholicism in England and the persecution of Protestants began; 1559—under Elizabeth I the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity restored the Protestant Church of England and made Elizabeth its Supreme Head. And in 1603, as James VI of Scotland was riding south to become James I of England, a group of clergymen calling themselves Puritans presented him with a petition to reform the Church of England and make it even less Catholic than it had been under Elizabeth. Thomas Tallis wrote music for the Chapel Royal under the first four of these monarchs, and William Byrd under the last



three. Clearly to be a member of the Chapel Royal during these times required a certain amount of musical agility.

Byrd was openly Catholic all his life. Many of his well-placed friends were either Catholic or Catholic sympathizers. But his strongest supporter was Queen Elizabeth herself. She allowed him to remain a member of the Chapel Royal, in spite of his being frequently fined for recusancy (i.e. refusing to attend Anglican services). Byrd's last service with the Chapel Royal was the funeral of James I's Queen Anne, in 1619. Elizabeth understood and appreciated the quality of Byrd's music, and she saw no serious threat to her person in his being Catholic. There were a few instances, however, in which his association with other Catholics caused the authorities to watch him closely.

Most of Byrd's Anglican music seems to have been written early in his life, much of it while he was in Lincoln. Towards the end of his life, Byrd published two volumes that were clearly organized around the schedules of the Catholic liturgy: *Gradualia I* (1605) and *Gradualia II* (1607). "I will not leave you comfortless" was first published as number 37 in Byrd's second volume. It was published in Latin: "Non vos relinquam orphanos," the sixth entry for the Feast of Pentecost.

William Byrd's music did not show up in a British coronation until 1937. Scholars suggest two reasons for this: first, by the time Elizabeth died it would not have been politic to use the music of a well-known Catholic and notorious recusant in the coronation of a Protestant king, and second, over the ensuing years Byrd and his music were simply forgotten. But on the 12th of May, 1937, two of Byrd's works were featured during the Eucharistic service as part of the coronation of George VI: his *Short Service* during the Creed and a selection from his *Mass for 5 Voices* during the Sanctus. Several lists suggest that Byrd's "I Will Not Leave You Comfortless" was scheduled to be sung during the coronation of Elizabeth II, but recordings of the coronation seem to indicate that it was omitted.

## ZADOK THE PRIEST (Coronation Anthem No. 1) | G.F. Handel

George Frideric Handel was appointed Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover (George I, in the wings) in June of 1710. Shortly after his appointment, the Elector's mother, Sophia (dowager Electress of Hanover and, by the 1701 English parliament's Act of Settlement, heir to the throne of England) wrote to her daughter about the new Kapellmeister that he "plays the harpsichord marvelously to the enjoyment of the Electoral Prince and Princess."

Before the end of the year the new Kapellmeister was in England, still employed by the Elector and possibly under orders to keep his employer informed about matters in England related to the Elector's inheritance of the throne. Handel was as successful in England as he had been in Italy and in Hanover. But when Queen Anne asked Handel to write a *Te Deum* to celebrate the Peace of Utrecht, which Handel's Hanoverian employer strongly opposed, Handel received an unexpected communication that he was fired. The Hanoverian representative in London, not a lover of music but politically astute, rushed to Handel's defense and, among other things, assured the Elector that Handel "will continue to tell me all he knows." This last sentence was in a code that only the representative and the Elector could read.

Handel succeeded in England at first by writing Italian operas, which for a while were immensely popular with the English aristocracy. The king, George I, liked his music. The Prince of Wales (George II in the wings) and his wife adored Handel's music. But as the popularity of Italian opera waned, accelerated by a growing indifference to performances sung in a language the audience did not understand, and by the popularity of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728, a satire of Italian opera, and in English), Handel discovered that oratorios in English, less expensive to produce and easier to understand, would bring him a much wider audience among the general public. And while they did not present the expensive-to-produce spectacle that opera did, Handel could more than make up for that with his music.

When George I died in June of 1727, it was the Electoral Prince who had so loved Handel's harpsichord playing back in Hanover, now George II, who personally insisted that Handel write the music for his coronation.

The first thing to clear up about Handel's Coronation Anthems is their numbering, which seems to have become traditional. It has nothing to do with the order in which they were sung at the coronation they were written for. In fact, no one is sure what order they were sung in since we have conflicting reports of George II's coronation. We have a program printed for those participating in the ceremony, we have a book written about the ceremony that was popular enough to go through several printings, and we have we have a different order listed in the Chapel Royal Cheque Book. We have the Archbishop of Canterbury's copy of the program, and he has written beside the words of Handel's first anthem, "The Anthem in Confusion: All irregular in the music." Since the choir of the Chapel Royal and the choir of Westminster Abbey were separated and unable to see each other, it's possible that each choir started a different anthem. The only thing we can be certain of is that "Zadok the Priest" was sung during the Anointing and "My Heart is Inditing" was sung during the coronation of the Queen.

Almost every discussion of Handel's Coronation Anthems includes two stories. The first is that one of George I's last acts was to make Handel a naturalized British citizen. The second is that when a bishop tried to give Handel the texts he was to use in his four anthems, Handel is reported to have said, "I have read my Bible very well, and will choose for myself."

Handel knew which texts had been used, particularly in the 1685 coronation of James II, since a careful and detailed record of that spectacular event had been kept. And so he began with those.

"Zadok the Priest" is a good example. Verse 38 of the first chapter of I Kings tells the story of the anointing of Solomon. The setting in the 1685 coronation of James II was by Henry Lawes. Handel takes the story and strips it to its essentials: the anointing (with a reduced cast), the rejoicing, and then "God Save the King" and an Alleluia/Amen. The opening of the piece is justifiably famous, a pulsing crescendo that build anticipation slowly and powerfully until a fortissimo choral entry. The piece ends with a rousing "God Save the King," Alleluia, and Amen. The music historian David Starkey says in his BBC series *Music & Monarchy* that it would make a great national anthem, if it weren't so hard to sing.

## O TASTE AND SEE | Ralph Vaughan Williams

For a man who almost all of his adult life purported to be an agnostic, Ralph Vaughan Williams has written some of the loveliest, and some of the best known, Anglican music in the 20th century. “O Taste and See” is no exception. It was commissioned in 1952 to be sung during the communion service at the coronation of Elizabeth II. Frank Howes says of the melody of “O Taste and See” that it is an example of “the simple diatonic formula that was to serve many a turn in the future, [for example] “For all the saints” (hymn tune *Sine nomine*) in *The English Hymnal*.” The text is from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1928), Psalm 34, verse 8. One verse: simple, beautiful, and profoundly moving.

## BEHOLD, O GOD OUR DEFENDER | Herbert Howells

Even though Herbert Howells’ family was not particularly musical, he grew up with music. His father did play the organ at a Baptist church, but he worked as a tradesman—plumber, painter, decorator, and builder. And he was not a good businessman. And at some point in the young Howells’ life, he went bankrupt. This weighed on Howells for the rest of his life. But by the age of 11 Howells began to sing as a choirboy in the local Church of England. He was also allowed to be “unofficial deputy organist.” He was on his way.

In 1910 he heard Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* for the first time. He describes the experience: “there, conducting a strange work for strings, RVW himself, a comparative (or complete?) stranger ... He left the rostrum, in the non-applauding silence in those days, thanks be! And he came to the empty chair next to mine, carrying a copy of [the score of Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius*, and presently was sharing it with me, while Elgar was conducting ...” Howells’ evaluation of the experience: “For a music bewildered youth of seventeen it was an overwhelming evening.” Howells and Vaughan Williams remained friends until Williams’s death in 1958.

Howells tells us that he wrote “Behold, O God our defender” on Christmas day, 1952, for the coronation of Elizabeth II on June 2nd, 1953. If Vaughan Williams’s “O Taste and See” is an example of the power of a simple melody set polyphonically, Howells’ piece is an example of how exciting, of how powerful music that draws on all the complex, surprising rhythmic and harmonic resources of mid-twentieth-century music can be.

The text of “Behold O God our defender” is from the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer*, Psalm 84, verses 9 – 10.

## MY HEART IS INDITING (Coronation Anthem No. 4) | G.F.Handel

This chorus often causes confusion for modern audiences, largely because of what has happened in the English language between 1727 and 2016. One of the defining characteristics of a human language is that it is constantly changing, and in 1727 the word “indite” meant to tell something to someone else. It’s more related to our modern word

“dictate” than it is to the legal term it sounds like. For example, in the *Young Man’s Companion* (1727) William Mather writes about, “Canonical Scripture, which is indicted by the Holy Ghost.” And in 1727 “nursing” as an adjective meant much what our modern word “nurturing” means. So the last two lines of the text put the Queen in good company, nurtured by royalty.

This anthem was specifically intended for the crowning of the Queen. Harry Christophers points out that when Queen Caroline heard “My Heart is Inditing” in 1727, she would have been touched by “its second movement ... full of feminine eloquence [its] sumptuous phrases and sensual harmonies.” Music worthy of a Queen.

## ORGAN CONCERTO IN F MAJOR | G.F. Handel

Dr. Philip Brisson, *Organist*

Handel wrote his organ concertos in order to fill intervals in his oratorio performances. He would play the concerto himself, often introducing it with an unaccompanied improvisation. Six of these concertos were published together as his Opus 4, in 1738, though he may have been playing some of them as early as 1735 or 1736. He completed Opus 4 Number 4 in March of 1735 and first played it during the renewal of his oratorio *Athalia* on the first of April in that year. One critic describes it as a work of “contagious good humor.” An appropriate piece with which to start the second half of our concert.

## THE KING SHALL REJOICE (Coronation Anthem No. 2) | G.F.Handel

In James II’s 1685 coronation, “The King Shall Rejoice” was set by William Turner. It was scheduled to be sung during the crowning, and therefore may be the most exuberant of the four anthems. There are five separate choruses in the score, one for each of the first three lines of the text, a fourth chorus that sets the last two lines, and then a final chorus, “Alleluia.” The “Alleluia” is a joyful double fugue which brings the piece to a monumentally uplifting finish.

## LET ALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE, O GOD | William Mathias

When William Mathias was 50 he was interviewed by his biographer, Malcolm Boyd, who asked him if the wide variety of the music he had written to that point was due to commissions. Mathias replied, “You’re quite right in suggesting that almost everything I’ve written has been asked for by somebody. However (to paraphrase Stravinsky), the secret lies in accepting only those commissions which I feel it’s right for me to do at the time.” Obviously over the years Mathias has felt right doing a lot of very different things. In his obituary *The Independent* described him as having “one of the most versatile musical minds of his generation.” He was famous for his “enormous energy,” which we hear in the rhythmic energy of his music. He told Malcolm Boyd, “The finest music creates its own Time, not the other way around.”

Prince Charles himself commissioned Mathias to write “Let the people praise thee, O God” for his wedding to Lady Diana Spencer in July of 1981. More than one writer has pointed out that, given the television audience around the world watching that wedding, the first public performance of “Let the people praise thee, O God” was heard by more people than the first performance of any other piece in the history of music.

## UBI CARITAS | Paul Mealor

Like his fellow Welshman, William Mathias, Paul Mealor gained a wide audience when his “Ubi Caritas et Amor” was sung at the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011. He is a prolific composer who is influenced by early English music, but without losing touch with more recent music. Consequently, “Ubi Caritas et Amor” can sound both ancient and contemporary. It can move us with the purity of acapella singing and then surprise us with the unexpected. By its quiet ending it has taken us to a rare depth of feeling. This ancient Latin hymn has been set by many composers, but none more feelingly than Paul Mealor.

## LET THY HAND BE STRENGTHENED (Coronation Antehm No. 3) G.F. Handel

For the coronation of James II, “Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened” was set by John Blow. In the coronation of George II, as in James II’s earlier coronation, it was to be sung at the Recognition. Donald Burrows explains that this anthem is the only one of the four with no trumpet parts in the score. The trumpet players would have left the orchestra and taken their places around the cathedral in order to play fanfares.

The text, from Psalm 89, is a prayer for strength, judgement, justice, mercy, and truth. It is in three sections, the last a choral “Alleluia” that ends the piece with a joyful benediction.

*Program notes by Millard Dunn.*

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