

## Restoration Cathedral Music

### Oral Introductions at Concert

Welcome to our recital of Restoration cathedral music, part of the day-long symposium being held here on campus and also the associated L.I.F.E. class. The idea for the symposium was prompted by the receipt by WIU of a very important and valuable manuscript of music from the late seventeenth century. The choir is about to present a program of church music from this period by several of its leading composers. This is music composed primarily for the Chapel Royal – the monarch’s private chapel – by leading musicians of the day employed as singers and composers for that institution. Some of this music gradually filtered out in copies to other cathedrals around the kingdom – which is why we have called the symposium Restoration Cathedral Music, not Chapel Royal music. All of these composers are inter-connected in some way. Most of them started out as boy choristers and grew up together to become professional colleagues, performing each others’ music on a regular basis. The music you will hear today falls into one of two categories: service music or anthems. In the Anglican (i.e. Episcopalian) Rite certain passages of scripture were set aside to be sung at either morning or evening services: the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis belong to this category being canticles for the evening service known as ‘Evensong’ sung daily in cathedrals. The big difference between this and the Roman Catholic ritual being that these were sung in English not Latin. Anthems were settings of scripture to be sung at particular points in the service but not with ‘appointed’ words – composers were given more latitude as to choice of texts. We will begin with an anthem to the text “I was glad” set by Henry Purcell, regarded as the most accomplished musician of his time – indeed of any time!

#### I was glad – Henry Purcell

The anthem you have just heard may or may not have been sung at the coronation of King James II, 23 April 1685! We know that an anthem to these words by Purcell was performed on that occasion, but for many years it was thought to be lost. Then, in 1977, a scholar, Bruce Wood, claimed something to the effect that “You know, there’s an anthem to those words in a manuscript from Ely cathedral, which is tentatively ascribed to John Blow, but it sounds more like Purcell’s music to me. I think this is the lost coronation anthem.” Scholars are somewhat divided in their acceptance of this thesis. There is no question that the piece displays remarkable contrapuntal skills. This situation illustrates two important issues that we will be dealing with in the next session of the symposium: misattribution and stylistic analysis. I shall have more to say on this subject when we get to the music of Aldrich and Turner later. One person who could have solved this mystery is the composer of our next item, Jeremiah Clarke. As a young boy of 10 or 11 he had sung in the choir at the coronation. You can tell from his dates that he belongs to a slightly older generation than our other composers. He was a pupil of John Blow and very influenced by Purcell. You can see how closely related to the court these musicians were. Clarke’s anthem ‘Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem’ was written for the coronation of James II’s younger daughter Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart monarchs, in 1702.

#### Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem – Jeremiah Clarke

Poor Jeremiah! He died just 5 years later around the age of 33 of a self-inflicted wound; a suicide the result of unrequited love. A contemporary said of him: “his mind was naturally of a melancholy cast.”

What can be said about Henry Aldrich? He was one of the most remarkably brilliant and versatile men of his age. Born in London, he attended Oxford University and after graduating stayed on to become Dean of his college, Christ Church, in 1689, and serving as Vice Chancellor of the University from 1692-95. He was a fervent defender of Anglicanism, resisting pressure from Catholics on the one hand and Presbyterians on the other. He wrote books on logic and heraldry; he was a practicing architect (Peckwater Quadrangle), draftsman, engraver, and printer (he was the first to attempt the printing of music scores through the use of movable type). In addition he managed to fit in a little composing on the side. His music is very accessible and was widely disseminated to other cathedrals from the late 1670s. He was an amateur musician in the true sense of the word and insisted on the highest standards of music making in his cathedral services. The setting of the Magnificat we are about to here is taken from his service in G, the most conservative and best-known of his four settings. It is written in a deliberately simple, straightforward homophonic, rather old-fashioned style (sometimes referred to as ‘short service style’), such that the words can be clearly heard. His technique is melodious and pleasing, and exemplifies a style that met the approval of the authorities as a model for Anglican worship.

#### Magnificat in G – Henry Aldrich

John Blow and William Turner were among a group of boys conscripted for the Chapel Royal. At the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, in order to bring his chapel music up to standard, the new king, Charles II, directed his chapel organist to search the realm for the most talented boys in cathedrals and large parish churches and bring them to London to be trained. He found Turner in Oxford and Blow in Newark. Blow, as organist of Westminster Abbey, directed the musical proceedings at the coronation of James II in 1685, also contributing three of the anthems. The one we are about to hear, *Let Thy Hand be Strengthened*, was sung immediately after the King and Queen were seated.

#### Let Thy Hand be Strengthened – John Blow

The next pair of items, setting the texts of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, is taken from our manuscript. The title page of this music book states that the service music was composed by Dr. Aldrich. However it is not one of the four versions of his that we already know exist, which means either it’s a previously unknown setting by him or it’s been misattributed and is by someone else. These are both very accomplished and fairly extended settings and follow a common pattern of the time by being relatively homophonic in style for the main text, conforming to the rubric that the words should be intelligible and not obscured by musical texture. Composers tended to take more liberties when setting the Gloria Patri whose words were familiar to everyone and whose praiseful nature encouraged more elaboration. In the case of both of these Glorias the composer employs the use of canon between the treble and alto voices. We are performing these two canticles consecutively, although in the Anglican liturgy they would be separated by a scripture reading.

## Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F – attrib. Aldrich (?Turner)

Having cast some doubt on Aldrich's authorship of the two preceding pieces, we wished to give him credit as an accomplished composer. The following anthem, *Out of the Deep*, is definitely his work and considered one of his best compositions. Choir members have really enjoyed learning and rehearsing this piece. We are using the transcription prepared by Robert Shay, one of the presenters at our symposium.

## Out of the Deep – Henry Aldrich

There are two names associated with our manuscript: Henry Aldrich and William Turner. The title page acknowledges that the handwriting of the entire manuscript is in the same hand, that of William Turner, and we were able to verify that this is indeed his writing by comparing it to known samples of his work at Oxford. In fact, the two anthems, which we will hear shortly, bear his signature, so we have always assumed that these are his compositions. *Try me O God* is the only composition known elsewhere, there being a set of parts for it at York Minster. Thus, as we have pursued our research into the manuscript over the months, the focus of attention has shifted from Aldrich to Turner.

As I said earlier, Anglican service music consisted of settings of certain and anthems. It was quite common for composers to write settings of the canticles together with an accompanying anthem. One of the topics we'll be discussing at our next symposium session is that if we accept the possibility that the service music is wrongly attributed to Aldrich, and Turner composed the whole thing, then it is quite likely that *Behold Now Praise the Lord* is the companion anthem to the service in F.

## Behold Now Praise the Lord – William Turner

William Turner was conscripted to the Chapel Royal from Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where he had begun his career as a chorister under Edward Lowe (with whom Aldrich is also believed to have studied). Shortly after his voice broke he became master of the choristers at Lincoln Cathedral at the age of about 16 in 1667. He was recalled to become a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal two years later. Subsequently, whilst remaining a Gentleman, he became a vicar choral at the newly built St Paul's Cathedral in 1683; he was made Doctor of Music by Cambridge University in 1696 – the citation says: "Purcell alone being more learned." He joined the choir of Westminster Abbey as lay clerk in 1699. Thus he had the distinction of singing in all three of the major London religious musical institutions simultaneously.

So far all the anthems we have heard have been what is known as "Full Anthems," meaning that the choir sings all the way through. Another type known as "Verse Anthems" was also very popular at this time. These could include extended passages of instrumental music, and sections (verses) for solo or combinations of solo voices, as well as short passages for choir. *Try Me O God* is of a kind of hybrid. It doesn't include instrumental passages but it does contain solo vocal passages which contrast with the full choir. It concludes with a rousing fugal Alleluia first sung by the soloists and then the full choir.

Try Me O God – William Turner