

A New Source of Restoration Cathedral Music in Illinois: Previously Unknown Works by William Turner

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[\[Click to view SLIDE 1\]](#)

SHARPE

The closing Hallelujah section of Turner's anthem "Try me O God" performed by the WIU Singers. More on this later.

One does not expect to receive an unsolicited seventeenth-century manuscript of English church music in the mail, but this is what happened at Western Illinois University (WIU) in Macomb, IL, in November, 2010. The packet containing such a manuscript was sent to the School of Music anonymously, the postmark 'Scarboro, ME' being the only clue to the donor's identity. [\[SLIDE 2\]](#) At face value, the manuscript purports to be a Whole Service in F by Henry Aldrich – settings of the Te Deum, Jubilate, Kyrie, Creed, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis - together with two anthems signed by William Turner – *Behold now praise the Lord* and *Try me, O God* - the whole in Turner's hand. Knowing nothing about Aldrich at the time, from the article in Grove I saw that he had written four services, including one in F for five voices; but the one we had was for four. Was this, perhaps, an undocumented setting by Aldrich (or the adaptation of an existing one)? To find out more, I *Googled* Robert Shay, the author of the Aldrich article in Grove, and discovered that he was teaching at the "nearby" University of Missouri in Columbia. I emailed him a description and questions about the manuscript, and, as intrigued by it as I was, he graciously agreed to drive over to Macomb to take a look at what we had. There was never any

doubt as to the authenticity of the document. [\[SLIDE 3\]](#) Turner's penmanship was confirmed by John Milsom at Christ Church, Oxford, where they have samples, but the service did not match any of the Aldrich sources there. This response raised several possibilities: the title page attribution to Aldrich is a mistake; the whole manuscript is the work of Turner; the service music is by some other composer. Apart from the title page, support for Aldrich's authorship occurs in Bumpus's *A History of English Cathedral Music* where he twice refers to this manuscript, then in his possession ¹ [\[SLIDE 4\]](#). He apparently saw no reason to question the title page, even though it is in a different and certainly later hand. Particularly intriguing was the fact that Turner had signed both anthems but not the service. I did not feel I was in any way qualified to answer these questions, so I began to consider the possibility of organizing an event of some kind to act as a forum for discussion. This is how the Restoration Cathedral Music Symposium held at WIU on March 17, 2013 came about. As well as discussing the manuscript's authorship we also talked about a likely date and place for its composition, and the purpose of the score (file copy, commission, presentation copy?). Our deliberations also considered the work of scholars who had contributed to the discussion but were unable to attend the symposium. This paper is largely based on the deliberations of that event.

SHAY

Let me start by echoing Rod Sharpe's comments: the process of developing a full and—what we now believe to be—accurate understanding of the manuscript has been a true team effort, and the comments I am about to make have certainly been shaped by the symposium participants and others who have commented on the manuscript in their correspondence.

¹ John S. Bumpus, *A History of English Cathedral Music* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC), 147,183.

While brought into this team through Aldrich connections, I wanted to determine early on what the physical “makeup” or codicology of the manuscript might have to tell us about its origins. The first thing I should say is that the WIU manuscript clearly began its life as a bound book of music paper. This is not unusual. In Restoration London, amateur and professional musicians alike regularly purchased books of ruled music paper, much of this commerce flowing through the shop of John Playford, who offered both loose music paper and bound books of it, as indicated by a bookplate found inside the front cover of the WIU manuscript itself [\[SLIDE 5 & SLIDE 6\]](#): “ALL sorts of the best *Dutch* Rul’d paper, and all sizes of Rul’d books for *Musick*, sold by *John Playford* and *Zachariah Watkins* at their shop in the Inner Temple.” (More on this shortly.)

Upright quarto in its format, the manuscript’s paper measures approximately 23 by 18 centimeters, and the consistency and position of the watermarks (and occasional countermarks), together with visible stitching, shows that the book was regularly quired. The watermark is the common Angoumois fleur-de-lis (without an additional factor’s mark), and the countermark (indicating the paper maker), visible in three places, is that of Abraham Janssen, a Dutch paper merchant who resided in Angouleme, France. In other words, this is French paper exported to England through Holland, explaining the reference to “*Dutch* ... paper” in the Playford bookplate. The Janssen countermark without a corresponding factor’s mark provides strong evidence for a date of manufacture in the 1670s. Rastrology indicates that someone, in Playford’s shop presumably, ruled all the paper with the same complex, four-staff rastrum, with an overall span of 89.5 millimeters. The one bit of discord in this story comes from the bookplate: Playford and Watkins (Playford’s former apprentice) only partnered from 1664 to

1665, but a supply of the plates must have been used into the 1670s, due to the paper's Janssen countermark.

Arriving at Western Illinois in a somewhat fragile state, the spine having come apart and its original calf-bound boards rather brittle, the volume has now been handsomely restored and rebound.

The volume's size bespeaks a book intended for some domestic or personal purpose: the prevalence of folio or oblong (as opposed to upright) quarto formats among the many extant scorebooks of anthems and services from this period suggests that copyists preferred wider pages, making continuous copying easier, with fewer stops of the pen. Turner in this case, however, may have been repurposing a book previously owned and used by someone else. An early inscription, inside the front cover [\[SLIDE 7\]](#), suggests the involvement of a Frenchman: "Monsieur de la fuile [or "fuite"] de l[a?] m[?]ez i[?]." Who this was and what his relationship to the manuscript might have been cannot be answered at this time, at least by us. I should note that a later owner pasted a partial plain sheet over the original here, cutting out a window so that the bookplate remained visible [\[SLIDE 8\]](#). A complete accounting of the pages indicates someone removed one or more previously used ones before Turner began his copying, possibly Turner himself. Not wanting to waste, he took the first fully usable page as his first page. This is now the verso of the first extant ruled folio [\[SLIDE 9\]](#), the recto having been pasted over with a plain sheet, which later became the title page [\[SLIDE 10\]](#). Bleed-through indicates that the first staff of the recto had been previously used for music copying. This appears to be an instrumental line (in triple time with a two-flat signature) not in Turner's hand: the form of the G

clef is not his, and the note shapes, while not completely clear through the pasteover, seem more compressed than Turner's usual practice. This line was crossed out, possibly by Turner himself while preparing to take over use of the book. The rest of the bleed-through on this page is from Turner's writing on the other side.

The ascriptions on the title page [\[still SLIDE 10\]](#) inevitably proved to be the starting point for our examination of the music itself. Why not a previously unknown service by Aldrich? After all, most of the manuscript collectors in the eighteenth century and after—we believe this ascription was added some years after Turner's copying was completed—were well-educated connoisseurs, who often got these things right. If we look carefully, we see two layers of writing on the title page: “In Dr. Turner's handwriting” is written over a partially erased line, possibly reading (though this is mostly my conjecture) “transcribed by Dr. Aldrich.” Someone who knew Turner's hand, but who was unable to help with the attribution of the service, partially improved the information on this page, which Bumpus in his *History* then repeated, apparently uncritically. As we will shortly see, the answer here lies not so much in eliminating Aldrich's chances as the composer of the service, but, rather, in making the case for it being Turner's work. That said, my first impression of the service was that it was relatively free of the idiosyncrasies I associate with Aldrich's efforts; this was music, in my opinion, by a traditionally educated composer (which Aldrich was not). Further, considering how comprehensively and carefully Aldrich preserved his works at Christ Church, I could scarcely imagine him completing a service and then neglecting to include it in his own manuscripts. As for the two anthems, we should note before going further that there is no question of Turner's authorship, given his signature at the

end of each. Significantly, *Behold now praise the Lord* is an otherwise unknown work, and *Try me, O God* has a final “hallelujah,” unique to this source.

SHARPE, contd.

The most compelling evidence for Turner’s authorship of the entire manuscript was proposed by Nicholas Temperley at the WIU Symposium. Intrigued by the correction slip on the first page of the Te Deum [[back to SLIDE 9](#)], he wondered what might be hidden underneath. Either it corrected a copying error or it was a re-composition. What allowed him to make a convincing case for the latter is the fact that the bleed-through, visible on the recto of this sheet, provided a partial glimpse of Turner’s first intentions [[SLIDE 10](#)]. Using this information he was able to conjecture an original version [[SLIDE 11](#)]. Comparing the two, it is easy to see that the corrected version is a more elaborate setting of the phrase “all the earth doth worship Thee.” One imagines Turner looking over his work, finding the original a bit drab, and thinking he ought to do better! It’s unlikely that he would deign to improve Aldrich’s or someone else’s work, but he might well wish to take the opportunity to improve his own. We know from the 1998 article by Rebecca Herrisone that Turner was not averse to revising subsequent versions of his work².

Since Turner took the trouble to sign the two anthems [[SLIDE 12](#) & [SLIDE 13](#)] we can be sure that both are his work. Why, therefore, did he not sign the service? One explanation suggested by John Milsom and others is that *Behold now praise the Lord*, in the same key (F) as the service,

² Rebecca Herisone, “The Revision Process in William Turner’s Anthem ‘O Praise the Lord,’” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 123, no. 1 (1998): 1-38.

is its companion anthem³. (Turner provided companion anthems to at least two other services). It is conceivable, then, that the signature that follows the first anthem lays claim to all the music preceding it.

Geoffrey Webber, of Gonville and Caius, Cambridge, who directed the only CD recording exclusively devoted to works by Turner, is confident that the service is by him⁴. Among other things he points to the similarity between the Jubilate in F and the one in E, and particularly at the phrase “and into his courts with praise” [\[SLIDE 14\]](#). This is nothing more than a triad, of course, but it is significant that it would have struck his aural memory.

Guessing a date or place for this service is more problematical than its authorship. Of the surviving 6 services by Turner, the three associated with the opening of St. Paul’s (in A, D, and E) are full with verse, as is the *St. Cecilia* service in D. Our service and the setting of the Sanctus and Gloria in G are full throughout. Of Turner’s fifty or so extant anthems, only five are full. He was a high-end composer writing mainly verse and symphony anthems for the Chapel Royal and full with verse anthems and services for the newly-rebuilt St. Paul’s. Bryan White’s stylistic assessment of the Service in F presented at the Symposium, drew attention to a number of traits that were ‘out of sync’ with the cluster of 1690’s services and led him to favor an earlier date. His observations included: less flexible and more schematic contrapuntal writing, some awkward progressions, less-sensitive word setting, absence of “English” cadences, and lack of variety in texture. Indeed, the Service in F seems to conform to the characteristics of the short service defined by Spink as those that composers attempted to revive in the 1660s: four parts

³ John Milsom, email message to author, April 6, 2011.

⁴ Geoffrey Webber, e-mail message to author, October 15, 2012.

throughout, antiphonal, predominantly homophonic with occasional imitative points, more elaborate counterpoint (including canon) restricted to the doxology, and modest word painting⁵. However this analysis suggests one further possibility. As Spink notes: “There was, indeed, a reaction against theatricality in church music in the early eighteenth century, and Blow’s four late services, modelled on the short services of a century earlier, are a reflection of this move in favour of simple dignity⁶.” Could not this also have been the motive behind Turner’s Service in F? If so, the pairing in our MS with the anthem *Try me O God* makes more sense. The copy of this anthem, which uniquely appends a closing Hallelujah, may be a later version than that found in the Durham and Bodleian part books that Spink dated c. 1697.

SHAY

Taking stock, we have a previously unknown service and anthem, and a new version of another anthem, all by William Turner, unquestionably one of Restoration England’s top-tier composers. These have come down to us in an important new source, one that fortuitously found its way to Macomb, Illinois, where it has found an excellent home. Its whereabouts after John Bumpus’s death can only be guessed at. A. Hyatt King briefly described the magnitude of Bumpus’s collection and his anxiety about its dispersal, noting in *Some British Collectors of Music* that “A ten-page list in his hand, headed ‘Sacred Music with English Words,’ [now British Library Add. 50202] certainly does not represent the whole.” The collection, which was not auctioned off, fell into a variety of hands, with many items presumably slipping into obscurity in personal libraries.

Perhaps we can do better than this in considering the manuscript’s earlier history. A number

⁵ Ian Spink, *Restoration Cathedral Music 1660-1714* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 20-21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

of factors suggest a connection to the music manuscripts of the Filmer family, Kentish nobility for whom Charles II established a baronetcy, in 1674, in recognition of the first Sir Robert Filmer's loyalty to the throne during the Civil War. At Yale University since 1946, the Filmer music manuscripts—the Filmers served as music patrons and encouraged their children's musical pursuits—have yet to receive comprehensive scholarly attention, although Gregory Oehm's 2012 thesis on Turner includes a careful reconsideration of the Filmer-Turner connection, strengthening a case (made by others) that Turner served as a music tutor to more than one generation of Filmer children, a reasonable surmise given that Turner's handwriting appears in various Filmer manuscripts, at times copying music intended, it seems, for pedagogical purposes. As noted above, the WIU manuscript's upright quarto format gives it the appearance of a domestic volume, and like various Filmer manuscripts it was started by one copyist and taken up by another. The bit of French writing on the inside cover may also indicate a connection, since the Filmers seem to have had unusual, early access to the works of Lully.

Turner may have therefore taken over a lightly used Filmer volume, some years after its manufacture, carefully copying in it a service and two anthems for the purpose of transmission or presentation. This would further explain how the book strayed from the Filmer collection.

Oehm, who learned of the WIU manuscript late in his thesis research, shows that the form of Turner's signature in the WIU manuscript is closest to that of Filmer 17, a volume Turner demonstrably used from the 1690s into the 1710s. This lends additional support to Rod's conclusion that the four-voice Service in F may well be a product of the first years of the eighteenth century. Beyond concerns about theatricality in church music, it may be that the vast acoustical space of the new St. Paul's required some rethinking of the composition of service

music and a return to its stylistic roots.