

A Ceremony of Psalms



St Mary's Singers & Abbey Brass

Paul Drayton & Joseph Wicks

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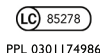
St Mary's Singers
Abbey Brass

Paul Drayton	<i>conductor</i> [04-08, 11-13]
Joseph Wicks	<i>organ</i> [01-03] <i>conductor</i> [09 & 10]
Carolyn Craig	<i>organ</i> [04-09, 11-13]
Paul Thomas	<i>trumpet</i> [01-03]

Recording engineer: Francis Shepherd
Producers: Joseph Wicks [04-08, 11-14] & Francis Shepherd [01-03, 09-10]
Editing & mastering: Francis Shepherd

Recorded in St Michael's Church, Newquay on Saturday 8th June 2019.

Photographs & booklet design by Francis Shepherd.
Booklet cover artwork by Keith Sparrow (© 2019).



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Three Places in Old Cornwall

Paul Drayton

This miniature suite tries to give a flavour of three Cornish locations which are fondly remembered by its dedicatee, the Cornish trumpeter Paul Thomas. The title is a modest homage to an orchestral piece, *Three Places in New England*, by the American composer Charles Ives.

Carn Brea with its fortress-like edifice is one of Cornwall's highest points. Amid the rolling landscape the sturdy outcrop affords us a glimpse of the mighty granite backbone of the region, from which (in the slower middle section) we can marvel at the panoramic view around us.

On the sands at Perranporth the distant sea rises and falls. A dog scampers to and fro. Another dog appears and they play together, the same musical theme chasing itself in canon. After a brief doggy altercation peace is restored.

The nine arches of the great viaduct at Redruth are reflected in the nine-beat rhythm of the final piece. A series of chords recurs many times over (with variations) in what is known as a passacaglia. Careful listeners may even imagine the sound of a distant steam train leaving Redruth station.

Paul Drayton

Below: Exterior detail of St Michael's, Newquay



A Ceremony of Psalms

Paul Drayton

It is hard to think of a body of literature that contains a wider (or wilder) range of emotions than the biblical Psalms of David. One moment the psalmist is beside himself with joy, the next in a dark pit of despair. We may find a similarly volatile mix of moods in the modern pop song, but in the Psalms the relationship is not with an earthly beloved but with the dangerously short-fused God of the Old Testament.

A Ceremony of Psalms, scored for chorus, brass ensemble, percussion and organ, was written in 2016 for the St. Austell Choral Society. The title is a rather cheeky blend of two of my favourite pieces, the *Symphony of Psalms* by Stravinsky and *A Ceremony of Carols* by Britten. Perhaps I was hoping that some of the magic of these wonderful works would inspire me. The psalms have been set to music so often over the years, and I approached the much-loved Psalm 23 with particular trepidation. I had to banish from my mind so many famous and popular versions, not least that catchy TV signature-tune to *The Vicar of Dibley* by Howard Goodall, once a pupil of mine.

Which version of the text to use? For me it had to be the King James English translation, written in the 17th century. The occasional obsolete turn of phrase is more than compensated for by its poetic imagery. I am like an owl of the desert, a pelican in the wilderness, complains the psalmist. How better to evoke a feeling of desolation and melancholy? Such words are a gift for the composer. Some of the psalms dance with exaltation too, the final movement (Psalm 150) suggesting the kind of toe-tapping rhythm that might be found in Bernstein or Brubeck. The movements are as follows:

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|--|-----------|
| 1. Like an owl of the desert (A Song of Solitude) | Psalm 102 |
| 2. Thou shalt dash them in pieces (A Song of Strife) | Psalm 2 |
| 3. Beside the still waters (A Song of Solace) | Psalm 23 |
| 4. I will lift up mine eyes (A Song of Salvation) | Psalm 121 |
| 5. With the sound of the trumpet (A Song of Celebration) | Psalm 150 |

Paul Drayton

God is gone up Op. 27 No. 2

Gerald Finzi

The second and by far the best-known of Finzi's collection *Three Anthems for Chorus & Organ* (Op. 27), *God is gone up* was written for a St. Cecilia's Day Service at St. Sepulchre's Church, Holborn in 1951. Commonly performed in Ascensiontide, the text is a paean of praise taken from the twentieth of 17th-century Puritan poet Edward Taylor's *Preparatory Meditations*. Finzi contrasts his characteristic lyricism in the central section with the forthright and fanfare-like outer sections, making full use of both the choir's and the organ's resources.

Phos Hilaron

Owain Park

Owain Park was born in Bristol in 1993. His works are published by Novello and have been performed internationally by ensembles including The Tallis Scholars and the Aurora Orchestra. This shorter version of Park's longer work *Phos Hilaron* (2014) is a beautifully simple chant-inspired setting of the ancient Christian hymn, used as part of Vespers in the Orthodox church as well as in some modern Anglican liturgies. In it, a soloist sings John Keble's English translation of the text in a free and declamatory fashion over a hummed accompaniment.

Francis Shepherd

Below: the performers rest between takes.



Gloria

John Rutter

This work was commissioned by *The Voices of Mel Olson*, an American choir which first performed it in May 1974 in Omaha, Nebraska, conducted by the composer. That première was the start of a long and fruitful relationship the composer has had with the USA. The Latin text of the Gloria, known as the Greater Doxology or Angelic Hymn, amplifies the angels' song of praise sung at the birth of Christ, and has formed part of the Mass of the Roman Catholic liturgy from the very earliest times.

This setting is scored for choir, brass, percussion and organ, adding solos in the second movement. One of the Gregorian chants associated with this text is heard at the beginning and end of the work. The text is divided into three movements (fast – slow – fast) as follows:

1. Gloria in excelsis Deo...

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.

2. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis...

Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

3. Quoniam tu solus Sanctus...

For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord: Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art the most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Paul Drayton

Images on opposite page show...

Top: Paul Drayton conducts Abbey Brass and St Mary's Singers during rehearsals.

Bottom left: Joseph Wicks at work in the producer's chair. Bottom right: The engineer's station.



Paul Drayton, after graduating from Oxford University, taught music at New College School, Oxford, then at Stowe School, Buckingham, and Truro College, as well as running many adult education classes. As a pianist his performances have ranged from concertos to jazz, while his composing has centred largely around vocal and choral music. A recent major work, *The Passion of Christ as told by Mark the Evangelist*, was performed in Truro Cathedral by the Three Spires Singers and again as a Good Friday broadcast by the BBC Singers on Radio 3. His third opera *The Three Ruffians*, based on Chaucer, is due for production in 2020. Among his many arrangements is a choral version of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, recently recorded by the Swedish Chamber Choir with the violinist Jennifer Pike (Chandos CHSA5255).

Joseph Wicks is a prize-winning organist who took up the post of Assistant Director of Music at Truro Cathedral at the age of 23. He is also Musical Director of St Mary's Singers, the cathedral's voluntary choir. He came to Truro in September 2017 from St John's College, Cambridge, where he held an Organ Scholarship and later the post of Assistant Organist. At Truro, he accompanied the cathedral choir in a concert performance of Duruflé's Requiem live on BBC Radio 3. As a tenor, he has sung with leading professional choirs and is a founding member of The Gesualdo Six who are fast becoming well-regarded through their concert work and recordings for Hyperion Records. He also founded The Beaufort Singers in 2016 who perform at the annual Boxgrove Choral Festival.

Carolyn Craig, organ scholar of Truro Cathedral for 2018-19, comes from Knoxville, Tennessee, and earned her Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University (IU), where she studied organ with Dr Christopher Young, collaborative piano with Professor Walter Huff and at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria, where she received a Lieder Pianist award and performed in masterclasses for the American soprano Barbara Bonney and Danish opera singer Bo Skovhus. Carolyn served as an accompanist for the IU children's choir FirstVoices. Carolyn has appeared as a soloist on American national radio and has performed recitals throughout the United States, Austria and the United Kingdom, including solo recitals at St Paul's Cathedral in London and Winchester Cathedral.

Paul Thomas read for a degree in music and modern languages at what is now Oxford Brookes University, followed by postgraduate study with Sidney Ellison of the LPO at the Royal Academy of Music. He has performed with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, English Touring Opera, Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Milton Keynes Chamber Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, Oxford Pro Musica, RTE National Symphony Orchestra and others, travelling throughout Europe. Now based again in his native Cornwall, he continues to combine his activities as a trumpet player with organising and managing concerts, masterclasses and tours, mainly in Tuscany and Malta.

St Mary's Singers & Abbey Brass join forces to present the world première recording of Paul Drayton's *A Ceremony of Psalms* (2016), alongside the piece which it was conceived as a companion to, John Rutter's much-loved *Gloria*. Also featured is the first recording of Drayton's *Three Places in Old Cornwall*, a vivid triptych celebrating the unique and beautiful Cornish landscape and played here by its dedicatee, Cornish trumpeter Paul Thomas and organist Joseph Wicks.

Three Places in Old Cornwall Paul Drayton (b.1944)

Paul Thomas *trumpet* Joseph Wicks *organ*

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|------|---|---------|
| [01] | i. Carn Brea | [02:46] |
| [02] | ii. Perranporth Beach (with Pete the dog) | [04:42] |
| [03] | iii. The Viaduct at Redruth | [02:52] |

A Ceremony of Psalms Paul Drayton

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|------|--|---------|
| [04] | i. Like an owl of the desert (A Song of Solitude) | [07:14] |
| [05] | ii. Thou shalt dash them in pieces (A Song of Strife) | [05:28] |
| [06] | iii. Beside the still waters (A Song of Solace) | [05:56] |
| [07] | iv. I will lift up mine eyes (A Song of Salvation) | [04:47] |
| [08] | v. With the sound of the trumpet (A Song of Celebration) | [04:02] |

[09] **God is gone up** Gerald Finzi (1901-56) [04:37]

Joseph Wicks *conductor* Carolyn Craig *organ*

[10] **Phos Hilaron** Owain Park (b.1993) [02:26]

Joseph Wicks *conductor* Esmée Loughlin-Dickenson *alto*

Gloria John Rutter (b.1945)

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------|---------|
| [11] | i. Allegro vivace | [05:36] |
| [12] | ii. Andante | [07:00] |
| [13] | iii. Vivace e ritmico | [06:02] |

Total playing time [63:32]

