

HENRY PURCELL

(1659-1695)

Hail! bright Cecilia

Ode for St Cecilia's Day, 1692

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|----|--|--------|
| 1 | Symphony | [9'27] |
| 2 | Hail! bright Cecilia
soli and chorus | [4'11] |
| 3 | Hark, each tree
soprano and bass duet | [4'13] |
| 4 | 'Tis Nature's voice
alto solo | [4'03] |
| 5 | Soul of the world
chorus | [2'41] |
| 6 | Thou tun'st this world
soprano solo and chorus | [3'15] |
| 7 | With that sublime celestial lay
2 altos and bass | [3'10] |
| 8 | Wond'rous machine
bass solo | [2'44] |
| 9 | The airy violin
alto solo | [1'28] |
| 10 | In vain the am'rous flute
alto and tenor duet | [5'53] |
| 11 | The fife and all the harmony of war
alto solo | [3'07] |
| 12 | Let these among themselves contest
duet for 2 basses | [3'25] |
| 13 | Hail! bright Cecilia
chorus | [4'11] |

Who can from joy refrain?

Ode for the birthday of the Duke of Gloucester, 1695

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|----|---|--------|
| 14 | Overture | |
| 15 | Who can from joy refrain?
alto solo and chorus | [5'12] |
| 16 | A Prince of glorious race
alto solo | [3'34] |
| 17 | The Father brave
bass solo | [1'29] |
| 18 | The Graces in his Mother shine
soprano solo | [2'00] |
| 19 | Sound the Trumpet
alto solo | [2'29] |
| 20 | Chaconne — If now he burns with noble flame —
Then Thames shall be Queen of Tyber
soprano duet and chorus | [5'31] |

GILLIAN FISHER soprano TESSA BONNER soprano
JAMES BOWMAN countertenor ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP high tenor
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor MICHAEL GEORGE bass

THE KING'S CONSORT

ROY GOODMAN, MILES GOLDING violins JANE COMPTON viola
JANE COE cello PETER BUCKOKE double bass
PAUL GOODWIN, CATHERINE LATHAM oboes GAIL HENNESSY tenor oboe
ANDREW WATTS bassoon
CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS natural trumpet
DAVID MILLER archlute
ROBERT KING chamber organ & harpsichord

ROBERT KING director

Chamber Organ by Justin Sillman 1988, tuned by the maker.
Harpsichord anonymous Italian 16th century, loaned by Christopher Hogwood, tuned by Simon Neal
Pitch: A = 415 Temperament: Valotti

inspired selection of airs, based around an extraordinary collection of compositional devices. *Hark each Tree* is a sarabande on a ground, whilst *Thou tun'st this World* is set as a minuet; *In vain the am'rous Flute* is set to a passacaglia bass, and *Wond'rous Machine* splendidly depicts an inexorably chugging machine with its ground bass. Perhaps the most remarkable solo movement is *'Tis Nature's Voice* where the recitative is so heavily ornamented as to make it melismatic arioso (if we read Motteux clearly it seems that this aria was sung originally by Purcell himself: the composer was noted as possessing both a fine bass and countertenor voice, which suggests that he must have sung the movement in falsetto). With a text full of references to music and musical instruments, the work requires a wide variety of vocal soloists and obligato instruments. Everywhere we find writing of great originality, word setting of the highest calibre, and music of startling individuality.

Hail! bright Cecilia

(poem by Nicholas Brady)

[1] **Symphony** [9'27]

[2] **Hail! bright Cecilia** [4'11]

soprano (GF), alto (JB), tenor (JMA), bass (MG)
chorus & orchestra

Hail! bright Cecilia, Hail!
Fill ev'ry Heart With Love of thee and thy Celestial Art;
That thine and Musick's Sacred Love
May make the British Forest prove
As Famous as Dodona's Vocal Grove.

[3] **Hark, each Tree its silence breaks** [4'13]

alto (JB), bass (MG)
2 recorders, 2 violins (RG, MG), cello, lute, organ (RK)

Hark, each Tree its silence breaks,
The Box and Fir to talk begin.
This is the sprightly Violin,
That in the Flute distinctly speaks.
'Twas Sympathy their list'ning Brethren drew
When to the Thracian Lyre with leafy Wings they flew.

4 'Tis Nature's Voice

[4'03]

alto(JB)

cello, lute, organ (RK)

'Tis Nature's Voice; thro' all the moving Wood
Of Creatures understood:
The Universal Tongue to none
Of all her num'rous Race unknown.
From her it learnt the mighty Art
To court the Ear or strike the Heart:
At once the Passions to express and move;
We hear, and straight we grieve or hate, rejoice or love;
In unseen Chains it does the Fancy bind;
At once it charms the Sense and captivates the Mind.

5 Soul of the World

[2'41]

chorus, orchestra

Soul of the World!
Inspired by thee,
The jarring Seeds of Matter did agree.
Thou did'st the scatter'd Atoms bind,
Which, by the Laws of true proportion join'd,
Made up of various Parts one perfect Harmony.

6 Thou tun'st this World below

[3'15]

soprano (GF)

2 oboes, bassoon, chorus & orchestra

Thou tun'st this World below, the Spheres above,
Who in the Heavenly Round to their own Music move.

7 With that sublime Celestial Lay

[3'10]

alto (JB), tenor (JMA), bass (SK)

cello, lute, organ (RK)

With that sublime Celestial Lay
Can any Earthly Sounds compare?
If any Earthly Music dare,
The noble Organ may.
From Heav'n its wondrous Notes were giv'n,
(Cecilia oft convers'd with Heaven).
Some Angel of the Sacred Choir
Did with his Breath the Pipes inspire;
And of their Notes above the just Resemblance gave,
Brisk without Lightness, without Dulness Grave.

[8] Wond'rous Machine! [2'44]

bass (MG)

2 oboes, bassoon, cello, lute, organ (RK)

Wond'rous Machine!
To thee the Warbling Lute,
Tho' us'd to Conquest, must be forc'd to yield:
With thee unable to dispute.

[9] The Airy Violin [1'28]

high tenor (RC-C)

2 violins (RG, MG), cello, harpsichord (RK)

The Airy Violin
And lofty Viol quit the Field;
In vain they tune their speaking Strings
To court the cruel Fair, or praise Victorious Kings.
Whilst all thy consecrated Lays
Are to more noble Uses bent;
And every grateful Note to Heav'n repays
The melody it lent.

[10] In vain the Am'rous Flute [5'53]

alto (JB), tenor (JMA)

2 recorders, cello, lute, organ (RK)

In vain the Am'rous Flute and soft Guitar,
Jointly labour to inspire
Wanton Heat and loose Desire;
Whilst thy chaste Airs do gently move
Seraphic Flames and Heav'nly Love.

[11] The Fife and all the Harmony of War [3'07]

tenor (JMA)

2 trumpets, timpani, cello, harpsichord (RK)

The Fife and all the Harmony of War,
In vain attempt the Passions to alarm,
Which thy commanding Sounds compose and charm.

[12] Let these amongst themselves contest [3'25]

basses (SK, MG)

cello, harpsichord (RK)

Let these amongst themselves contest,
Which can discharge its single Duty best.

Thou summ'st their diff'ring Graces up in One,
And art a Consort of them All within thy Self alone.

[13] Hail! bright Cecilia

alto (JB), high tenor (RC-C), tenor (JMA), bass (MG)
chorus & orchestra

[4'11]

Hail! bright Cecilia, Hail to thee!
Great Patroness of Us and Harmony!
Who, whilst among the Choir above
Thou dost thy former Skill improve,
With Rapture of delight dost see
Thy Favourite Art
Make up a Part
Of infinite Felicity.
Hail, bright Cecilia, Hail to thee!
Great Patroness of Us and Harmony!

Purcell's last Occasional Ode was written for the birthday, on 24 July 1695, of the six year-old Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, son of Princess (later Queen) Anne. The Queen had eighteen children, all of whom died in infancy except Prince William; his sad life, racked with pain and illness, reached only to the age of eleven. The performance took place in Richmond House, Kew, and was given by a select number of the royal musicians. The Ode contained an important trumpet part, whose warlike tones particularly appealed to the young Prince, and this part was played by the trumpet virtuoso John Shore. The work is far more typical of the majority of Purcell's two dozen Odes than the 1692 Ode, being written for a relatively small group of performers. Four of the singers are named on the autograph manuscript, and they seem to have taken both the solos and the choruses. The instruments all appear to have been played one to a part. The inclusion of woodwind instruments (other than recorders) was a fairly recent development for Purcell, and in this case his clearly-indicated writing for a small oboe band (two oboes, tenor oboe and the recently-introduced bassoon) was particularly effective. The double bass too was by now being both played and made in London, and its use seems justifiable.

The Duke of Gloucester's Birthday Ode shows so much that is wonderful in Purcell's writing: the Overture contains a marvellously rich slow section before the canzona returns, and the solo movements all feature music of the highest order. *A Prince of glorious race descended* in particular demonstrates one of Purcell's familiar techniques,

and one that he used to great effect in so many of his Odes. The movement begins with a ground bass and solo voice, and then, at the mid-point, is transformed into a ravishing four-part string ritornello of quite melting beauty. The last movement too is a compositional tour-de-force: Purcell's extraordinary Chaconne alternates and mixes voices and instruments in a wonderful variety of textures and rhythms. No wonder that, in November of the same year, London's musical establishment was universally mourning the fact that fate had played its foulest and most familiar trick with the death at such a tragically early age of England's 'great Master of Musick'.

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Who can from joy refrain?

[14] **Overture** [4'27]

[15] **Who can from joy refrain** [5'12]

alto (JB)
cello, harpsichord
sopranos (GF TB), tenors (RC-C, JMA), bass (MG)
trumpet, oboes, strings
high tenor (RC-C), bass (MG)
cello, harpsichord

Who can from joy refrain, this gay,
This pleasing, shining, wond'rous day?
For tho' the sun has all
His summer's glories on,
This day has brighter splendour far
From a little rising star.

[16] **A Prince of glorious race** [3'34]

high tenor (RC-C)
cello, lute, organ & strings

A Prince of glorious race descended
At his happy Birth attended
With rosy, smiling hours, to show
He will golden days bestow.

17 The Father brave as e'er was Dane [1'29]

bass (MG)

2 violins, cello, bass, organ

The Father brave as e'er was Dane
Whose thund'ring sword has thousands slain
And made him o'er half Europe reign.

18 The Graces in his Mother shine [2'00]

soprano (TB)

2 oboes, cello, lute, organ

The Graces in his Mother shine
Of all the Beauties, Saints and Queens
And Martyrs of her line.
She's great, let Fortune smile or frown,
Her virtues make all hearts her own:
She reigns without a Crown.

19 Sound the Trumpet [2'29]

tenor (JMA)

trumpet (CS-P), cello, harpsichord

Sound the Trumpet and beat the warlike Drum;
The Prince will be with laurels crown'd
Before his manhood comes.
Ah! how pleas'd he is and gay,
When the Trumpet strikes his ear!
His hands like shaking lilies play
And catch at ev'ry spear.

20 If now he burns with noble flame [5'31]

sopranos (GF, TB)

tutti instruments; tutti voices and instruments

If now he burns with noble flame,
When grown, what will he do?
From Pole to pole he'll stretch his fame
And all the world subdue.
Then Thames shall be Queen Of Tyber and Seine,
Of Nilus, of Indus, and Ganges:
And, without foreign aid,
Our fleets be obey'd
Wherever the wide ocean ranges.