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THIS IS THE DAY

Music on royal occasions

The Cambridge Singers

John Rutter

THIS IS THE DAY

Music on royal occasions

Elin Manahan Thomas (*soprano*)

The Cambridge Singers

*Aurora Orchestra (leader: Thomas Gould)

†Andrew Lucas (*organ*)

conducted by John Rutter

Total playing time: 75' 21"

- [1] *This is the day (4' 24")
- [2] *Laudate Dominum (4' 00")
from *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K339
Soprano solo: Elin Manahan Thomas
- [3] *Psalm 23 (5' 05")
for sopranos and altos
- [4] *How lovely is thy dwelling place (5' 28")
from *Ein deutsches Requiem*
- [5] †The spirit of the Lord is upon me (7' 38")
from *The Apostles*
- [6] †We wait for thy loving kindness (2' 59")
Tenor solo: Simon Wall
- [7] Ubi caritas (3' 53")
Soprano solo: Alison Hill
- [8] Ubi caritas (2' 30")
- [9] Holy is the true light (1' 53")
- [10] Song for Athene (5' 43")
(*May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest*)



John Rutter

W. A. Mozart

Franz Schubert

Johannes Brahms

Edward Elgar

William McKie

Paul Mealor

Maurice Duruflé

William Harris

John Tavener

- [11] These Three (5' 24")
- [12] Set me as a seal upon thine heart (3' 14")
Soprano solo: Grace Davidson
Tenor solo: Benjamin Alden
- [13] God be in my head (1' 38")
- [14] I would be true (2' 57")
- [15] *Touch her soft lips and part (1' 33")
from *Henry V*

16–21 Choral Dances from *Gloriana* (9' 25")

- [16] 1. Time (1' 28")
- [17] 2. Concord (2' 08")
- [18] 3. Time and Concord (1' 17")
- [19] 4. Country Girls (1' 05")
- [20] 5. Rustics and Fishermen (0' 56")
- [21] 6. Final Dance of Homage (2' 23")
- [22] *Let the bright seraphim and
*Let their celestial concerts all unite (6' 10")
from *Samson*
Soprano solo: Elin Manahan Thomas
Trumpet solo: Simon Cox

Richard Rodney Bennett

William Walton

H. Walford Davies

Irish folk-tune arr. John Rutter

William Walton

Benjamin Britten

G. F. Handel

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THIS IS THE DAY

Music on royal occasions



This album recollects, and celebrates, some of the choral music heard on royal occasions in England during the lifetime of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The main focus is not on the pomp and pageantry of coronations, but rather on the more personal family events of weddings and funerals where music plays a different role, less ceremonial and more reflective of a

wide range of private emotions, often being chosen by those most closely involved. Ten royal occasions [listed chronologically below] are represented, and the programme – a personal and partial selection, inevitably – is rounded out with Benjamin Britten's Choral Dances from *Gloriana*, the opera he conceived as a loyal tribute in Queen Elizabeth's coronation year.

JOHN RUTTER

Wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip (1947)

McKie: We wait for thy loving kindness

Wedding of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones (1960)

Schubert: The Lord is my shepherd

Wedding of Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvy (1963)

Walford Davies: God be in my head

Wedding of Princess Anne and Mark Phillips (1973)

Walford Davies: God be in my head

Handel: Let their celestial concerts all unite

Wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer (1981)

Handel: Let the bright seraphim

Handel: Let their celestial concerts all unite

Wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson (1986)

McKie: We wait for thy loving kindness

Mozart: Laudate Dominum

Walton: Set me as a seal upon thine heart

Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales (1997)

Irish folk-tune: I would be true

Tavener: Song for Athene

Wedding of Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones (1999)

Durufle: Ubi caritas

Elgar: The spirit of the Lord is upon me

Funeral of HM The Queen Mother (2002)

Brahms: How lovely is thy dwelling place

Harris: Holy is the true light

Wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton (2011)

Walton: Touch her soft lips and part

Rutter: This is the day

Mealor: Ubi caritas

Commissioned for other royal events

Richard Rodney Bennett: These Three (*for the diamond wedding anniversary of HM The Queen and Prince Philip*)

Benjamin Britten: Choral Dances from *Gloriana* (*in honour of the coronation of HM The Queen*)

THE CAMBRIDGE SINGERS

Sopranos: Grace Davidson, Juliet Fraser, Amy Haworth, Alison Hill, Katy Hill, Kirsty Hopkins, Emilia Hughes, Sophie Jones, Amy Wood

Altos: Ruth Gibbins, Carris Jones, Ruth Massey, Martha McLorinan, Kathy Nicholson, Caroline Trevor

Tenors: Benjamin Alden, William Balkwill, Ben Breakwell, George Pooley, Alastair Putt, Simon Wall

Basses: Neil Bellingham, James Birchall, William Gaunt, Edward Grint, Gareth John,

Richard Latham, Alexander Learmonth

NOTES AND TEXTS

[1] **This is the day** John Rutter (*b.* 1945)

Commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey as a wedding gift for Prince William and Kate Middleton, this anthem was composed early in 2011, with a brief that it should be about 4–5 minutes in length, for choir and organ, with a text from the psalms. The composer writes: ‘My first thought was that the text should embrace both rejoicing and blessing, and I chose verses from five psalms which seemed to encompass what I wanted to express on behalf of us all. My next thought was that I wanted to write music which would be welcoming in spirit to the royal couple, their families, and to the many people witnessing this happy occasion all over the world.’

This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.

O praise the Lord of heaven: praise him in the height.

Praise him, all ye angels of his: praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars and light, let them praise the

Name of the Lord;

For he shall give his angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways.

The Lord himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;

So that the sun shall not burn thee by day: neither the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: yea, it is even thee that shall keep thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in: from this time forth for evermore.

He shall defend thee under his wings.

Be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

Psalm 118 (line 1), 148 (lines 2–4), 91 (lines 5 and 10), 121 (lines 6–9), and 27 (line 11).

[2] **Laudate Dominum** W. A. Mozart (1756–91)

Unforgettably sung at the wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson by Arleen Augér only seven years before her untimely death, this ravishing aria is the sixth of the seven movements comprising Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de confessore* of 1780, one of the

last of his Salzburg church compositions written before the move to freelance life in Vienna the following year ended his contractual obligation to write sacred music. Operatic influence is clearly to the fore, a sign of the direction Mozart’s life was to take in the final decade of his life.

Laudate Dominum omnes gentes:

Laudate eum omnes populi:

Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus:

Et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.

Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen.

Psalm 117 with doxology

(Praise the Lord, all ye people: praise him, all ye nations: for his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. 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.)

[3] **Psalm 23** Franz Schubert (1797–1828), orchestrated by John Rutter

Schubert composed this setting – originally not of the text in English, as heard here, but of Moses Mendelssohn’s German version of the renowned psalm – in 1820. It was written for a soirée given in Vienna by four musical sisters, the Fröhlichs, one of whom was a singing teacher. The piece quickly became a favourite and (unusually with Schubert) was soon published. The piano accompaniment, which bears traces of an imagined orchestral version, was orchestrated for this recording.

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall lack nothing.

He feedeth me in pastures green, yea, he leadeth me beside still waters.

The Lord restoreth all my soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteousness to praise his holy Name.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark shadowed valley, yet I will fear no evil, for thou dost shelter me: thy rod and staff they comfort me.

Thou shalt prepare a table for me before the face of all my foes, thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

Thy goodness and thy mercy, they shall ever follow me;

Yea, I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for evermore.

Psalm 23: 1–6 (English version by John Rutter)

[4] How lovely is thy dwelling place Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

This is the fourth of the seven movements of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1868). Its fluently melodious, gracious style, reminiscent of the composer's *Liebeslieder* waltzes, established it as a favourite in its own right, and in English translation it soon found a place in the Anglican anthem repertoire.

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

My soul ever longeth and fainteth for the blest courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh rejoice in God, yea in the living God.

Blest are they who dwell within thy house, they praise thy Name evermore.

Psalm 84, vv. 1, 2

[5] The spirit of the Lord is upon me Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

This solemn, impressive chorus, expansive and symphonic in scale, forms the prologue to Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles* (1903), which was written three years after *The Dream of Gerontius* and intended to be the first part of a trilogy (only two-thirds completed, in the event) on the theme of the early history of the Christian church. As with Brahms's *How lovely is thy dwelling place*, the enterprising publishing firm of Novello made a successful Anglican anthem out of an extract from a larger work, in this case skilfully reducing Elgar's highly idiomatic orchestral writing for organ.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Isaiah 61, vv. 1–3, 11

[6] We wait for thy loving kindness William McKie (1901–84)

Sir William McKie was a key figure in the musical history of royal occasions in Britain. Born in Australia, he came to London to study at the Royal College of Music and later went to Oxford as organ scholar of Worcester College. Following a period of teaching at Clifton College and a temporary return to Melbourne in 1930, he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey in 1941, a post he held until 1963. During his tenure he directed the music for the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip in 1947, the coronation in 1953, and the wedding of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones in 1960. *We wait for thy loving kindness* is one of only a handful of his published compositions and was written in 1947 for the first of these occasions in a richly romantic style not unlike that of his organist-composer contemporaries Harris and Bairstow. The opening organ intonation carries a hint of the Gregorian chant *Veni Creator Spiritus*, seeming to invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the royal couple.

We wait for thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of thy temple: Alleluia.

O God, according to thy Name, so is the praise unto the world's end.

Thy right hand is full of righteousness: Alleluia.

We wait for thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of thy temple.

O Lord send us now prosperity. Amen.

Psalms 48, vv. 8–9; 118, v. 25

[7] **Ubi caritas** Paul Mealor (*b.* 1975)

The inclusion of this unaccompanied motet in the 2011 royal wedding by special request brought Welsh composer Paul Mealor to international prominence. His compositional background is solidly academic: early studies with Nicola LeFanu and with Hans Abrahamsen in Denmark have led him to find an individual voice heard in a growing and diverse catalogue of work, which he has combined with a professorship of composition at the University of Aberdeen. *Ubi caritas*, a specially reworked version of his secular choral piece *Now sleeps the crimson petal*, shares something of the mystical atmosphere and harmonic techniques of the music of Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre while remaining distinctively his own. In the closing bars a quotation of the Gregorian chant used in Duruflé's setting of the text [see track 8] creates an appropriate historical resonance.

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.*

Antiphon for Maundy Thursday

[8] **Ubi caritas** Maurice Duruflé (1902–86)

For most of his career Duruflé was organist at the church of St Etienne-du-Mont in Paris and a professor at the Conservatoire. His body of published compositions, the *Requiem* of 1947 foremost among them, is slender but highly valued among musicians for its impeccable craftsmanship and affectionately individual absorption of Gregorian chant, an influence dating from his early years at Rouen Cathedral. *Ubi caritas* (1960) is the first of a set of four short motets 'based on Gregorian themes', in this case the one used as an antiphon at the ceremony of the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday.

[Text as for Track 7]

[9] **Holy is the true light** William Harris (1883–1973)

Harris's life was filled with royal connections, as organist at the chapel of St George's

Windsor from 1933 to 1961 and as piano teacher to the young princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. *Holy is the true light* was composed around 1947 in memory of Evelyn Ley, the wife of his friend and colleague Henry Ley, Precentor of Eton College. The text was very possibly drawn to his attention by Herbert Howells, who had recently set it in the final movement of his *Hymnus Paradisi*. Harris's setting is far simpler, though it shares a similar sense of rapt mysticism and has an atmospheric beauty which made it an apt choice for inclusion in the Queen Mother's funeral service (which she herself had planned in meticulous detail).

Holy is the true light, and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict: from Christ they inherit a home of unfading splendour, wherein they rejoice with gladness evermore. Alleluia.

from the Salisbury Diurnal, translated by G. H. Palmer

[10] **Song for Athene** John Tavener (*b.* 1944)

This moving elegy, written in memory of a young girl killed in a road accident in 1993 and so memorably performed at the close of Princess Diana's funeral service in 1997, was one of the fruits of John Tavener's interest in the music and rituals of the Greek Orthodox Church. Underpinned throughout by a sustained low bass note, the chant-like music alternates between expressions of blessing, grief, and the ultimate promise of resurrection.

Alleluia. May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.*

Alleluia. Remember me, O Lord, when you come into your kingdom.

Alleluia. Give rest, O Lord, to your handmaid who has fallen asleep.

Alleluia. The Choir of Saints have found the well-spring of life and door of paradise.

Alleluia. Life: a shadow and a dream.

Alleluia. Weeping at the grave creates the song: *Alleluia.*

Alleluia. Come, enjoy rewards and crowns I have prepared for you.

*from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
Mother Thekla 1918–2011

[11] These Three Richard Rodney Bennett (*b.* 1936)

Choral music has formed a valuable strand in the wide-ranging output of Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, and his skill in handling the choral medium as well as his love of words made him an imaginative choice for a commission from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey to mark the Diamond Wedding of HM The Queen and Prince Philip. *These Three*, first performed at a special service to mark the anniversary in November 2007, captures the rhetorical grandeur of St Paul's text without unnecessary overstatement, melting into a restrained tenderness at the final appearance of the word 'love'.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become a sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. Love rejoiceth with the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians 13 (American Standard Version)

[12] Set me as a seal upon thine heart William Walton (1902–83)

Walton's musical life began as a chorister at Christ Church Oxford, and from time to time he returned to choral music, generally in response to a specific invitation or commission. *Set me as a seal upon thine heart* was composed in 1938 for the wedding of Ivor Guest (son of Lady Alice Wimborne, with whom Walton was close at the time) and Lady Mabel Fox-Strangways. Within its brief time-span, Walton's setting of these aptly-

chosen lines from the Song of Songs bears recognizable hallmarks of his style – intensity of mood, bitter-sweetness of harmony, and a certain melodic angularity which precludes any hint of sentimentality.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death.
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

Song of Solomon, 8, vv. 6, 7

[13] God be in my head H. Walford Davies (1869–1941)

Prominent in his own day as organist at the Temple Church in London and as a composer and lecturer, Walford Davies is now remembered for just three of his many compositions: the RAF March (he was its musical director), the *Solemn Melody*, and *God be in my head* which he wrote in 1910, a simple and well-loved setting of one of the earliest English prayers.

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

from the Sarum Primer, 1545

[14] I would be true Irish folk-tune, arranged by John Rutter

The Irish folk-melody set to these words is of mysterious origin and first appeared in print in 1855 in *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, a collection edited by George Petrie who stated that it had been noted down by a Miss Lucy Ross – presumably from the playing of a fiddler or piper, as it is wordless. The exceptional beauty of the melody led to many arrangements being made, including several by Percy Grainger; words were written by Fred Weatherley, and the Air became *Danny Boy*. In the sacred sphere, *I would be true* is one of several hymn texts which have been wedded to the tune over the years. The text author, Howard Walter, was an American missionary who wrote *I would be true* in 1906

under the title 'My Creed'. Princess Diana's fondness for the melody prompted its inclusion in her funeral service. The present arrangement for unaccompanied choir was made specially for this recording.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift.

I would be faithful through each passing moment;
I would be steadfast in my love of God;
I would be strong to follow where he leads me;
I would have faith to keep the path Christ trod.
And when my earthly pilgrimage is over,
I would have grace to stand before his throne,
And come at last into the heavenly kingdom,
To see my Saviour's face and know as I am known.

Howard Walter (1883–1918)
Lines 13–16 added by John Rutter

[15] Touch her soft lips and part William Walton (1902–83)

After the death of Elgar in 1934, Walton was acknowledged as the living English composer best able to capture the essence of royal pageantry in music. He was called into service at both the 1937 and 1953 coronations, writing *Crown Imperial* for King George and *Orb and Sceptre* and the *Coronation Te Deum* for Queen Elizabeth. He was also responsible for the music of three 'royal' Shakespeare films with Laurence Olivier, of which *Henry V* (1944) was the first and most successful. *Touch her soft lips and part* is a

string-orchestra miniature of exquisite tenderness, heard in the film after the death of Falstaff as Pistol and his companions bid farewell to Mistress Quickly on the eve of their departure for France. It was played as part of the introductory music before the 2011 royal wedding, and serves in this recording as a wordless interlude between the mood of reflection preceding it and the rejoicing which follows.

[16] – [21] Choral Dances from *Gloriana* Benjamin Britten (1913–76)

In 1952 Britten, in collaboration with his then favoured librettist William Plomer, conceived the idea of a 'national' opera to mark the dawn of the new Elizabethan age; Elizabeth I was settled upon as the central figure, her relationship with the Earl of Essex providing the mainspring of the drama, and the music was swiftly written. With royal approval, *Gloriana* was made a semi-official part of the 1953 coronation festivities and premièred at Covent Garden just four days after the coronation, but it seems not to have been a success (though accounts differ) and revivals have been few. In 1954 Britten did successfully extract the six choral dances which are heard at the start of Act II as the Queen is welcomed by the people of Norwich with a pageant of 'Time and Concord'. Only minimal editing was needed to turn this episode from the opera into the present attractive suite for unaccompanied choir, which has firmly remained in the repertoire and is perhaps *Gloriana's* most lasting legacy.

[16] 1. Time

Yes he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.

No reaper he
That cries "Take heed!"
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

17 2. Concord

Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endue
With plenty, peace and happiness.

Concord and Time
Each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two can reach.

18 3. Time and Concord

From springs of bounty,
Through this county,
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow.
Where life was scanty,
Fruits of plenty,
Swell resplendent
From earth below!

No Greek nor Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heaven above
As she whose presence
Is our pleasance
Gloriana
Hath all our love!

19 4. Country Girls

Sweet flag and cuckoo flower.
Cowslip and columbine,
King cups and sops in wine,
Flower deluce and calaminth,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay with rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen.

20 5. Rustics and Fishermen

From fen and meadow in rushy baskets
They bring ensamples of all they grow.
In earthen dishes their deep-sea fishes;
Yearly fleeces, woven blankets;
New cream and junkets,
And rustic trinkets
On wicker flaskets,
Their country largess,
The best they know.

21 6. Final Dance of Homage

These tokens of our love receiving,
O take them, Princess great and dear,
From Norwich city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.

William Plomer (1903–73)

22 Let the bright seraphim and

Let their celestial concerts all unite G. F. Handel (1685–1759)

This jubilant 'air and chorus' concludes Handel's oratorio *Samson*, written in 1742 – immediately after *Messiah* – to a text reworked from Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. It

quickly became one of Handel's most often-performed works, and was revised several times by the composer, who added the final chorus *Let their celestial concerts all unite* only as an inspired afterthought. This chorus, on its own, was heard at the wedding of Princess Anne and Mark Phillips in 1973, but was not paired with *Let the bright seraphim* (which is intended to lead into it without a break) until the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana in 1981, where Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's performance, duetting with trumpeter John Wallace, made a memorable impression.

Let the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud, uplifted angel trumpets blow.
Let the Cherubic hosts, in tuneful choirs,
Touch their immortal harps with golden wires.
Let their celestial concerts all unite,
Ever to sound his praise in endless blaze of light.

Newburgh Hamilton (1691–1761), after John Milton (1608–74)



Photo Nick Rutter