



# JAMES COOK OLYMPUS AND APOLLO

Kevin Bowyer, organ

Organ Symphony No. 8 ["Olympian"]  
and Organ Symphony No. 9 ["Apollonian"]

James Cook  
Olympus & Apollo  
Organ Symphonies Nos. 8 & 9  
Kevin Bowyer, organ

**Organ Symphony No. 8 ("Olympian")**

**48:56**

- |    |      |           |       |
|----|------|-----------|-------|
| 1. | I.   | Soliloquy | 15:28 |
| 2. | II.  | Anglaise  | 5:15  |
| 3. | III. | Pastorale | 8:32  |
| 4. | IV.  | Expansum  | 19:41 |

**Organ Symphony No. 9 ("Apollonian")**

**34:03**

- |     |      |              |       |
|-----|------|--------------|-------|
| 5.  | I.   | Introduzione | 1:09  |
| 6.  | II.  | Allegro      | 4:59  |
| 7.  | III. | Allegretto   | 4:02  |
| 8.  | IV.  | Alla Marcia  | 1:57  |
| 9.  | V.   | Presto       | 1:20  |
| 10. | VI.  | Prestissimo  | 1:49  |
| 11. | VII. | Adagissimo   | 18:47 |

Total playing time 83:04

# Notes on the Music

The ***Olympian Symphony*** is my eighth symphony and was composed in 2006. It is my longest symphony and consists of four movements:

I. Soliloquy - II. Anglais - III. Pastorale - IV. Expansum

The title refers to Mount Olympus, the home of the gods of Greek mythology.

*Soliloquy* uses music of a meditative nature which combine to build up to a large climax before fading away.

*Anglais* is an angular dance in 2/2 time of a robust nature. A tune of leaping intervals is set against one of a scalar nature.

*Pastorale* is a nocturnal night scene, which is mostly quiet but with a much louder central section before the music recedes down to *ppp* at the end of the movement.

*Expansum*, as its name suggests, is expansive music on a grand scale consisting of noble chords and long scalar passages which never quite arrive at a final destination.

I have prefaced the symphony with this quote:

‘Should we not be as serious and sedulous in building staircases for heaven as the wicked are in digging descents to hell’ *John Trapp* (1601-1669)

My ***Apollonian Symphony*** is my ninth symphony and was composed in 2006; as the name suggests, it is a symphony of light and movement. The work consists of seven movements, the first six are short and fast and the seventh is very long and slow. In my mind’s eye the work depicts a long, hot summer’s day excursion to the seaside in Victorian or Edwardian times. As the day progresses, the pace quickens until the day (and the music) recede into the night.

I have set this quote (my own words) as the title of the finale:

‘Fractious day yields to sublime night’.

**First movement: *Introduzione***

Dawn on a summer's morning

**Second movement: *Allegro***

Excitement at the start of the day's adventures

**Third movement: *Allegretto***

A mellower mood at noon

**Fourth movement: *Alla Marcia***

A military band marches past in the afternoon

**Fifth movement: *Presto***

A street urchin mocks the band as it passes by

**Sixth movement: *Prestissimo***

The mood becomes more fractious as the late afternoon heat diminishes and the early evening revelries begin

**Seventh movement: *Adagissimo***

The visitor heads inland to escape the turbulence and spends the night in the forest before the rays of a new dawn herald a new day

*James Cook, 2024*

# James Cook, composer

James Cook has been a composer since a child and has written nine organ symphonies which he later orchestrated. He has composed a large body of sacred vocal music, both accompanied and unaccompanied, however since 2010 he has specialised in writing opera. His first opera Dorothy was staged at Theatre N16 in Balham in 2015 and an extract was recorded for Amemptos in the University of Glasgow Memorial Chapel in 2013 with Kevin Bowyer organist and James Grossmith conducting, but which sadly, was never released.

Since 2010 he has composed eight operas, four of which form a 'Biblical Ring Cycle', three using stories from the Old Testament and the last one, 'Mary Magdalene' from the New Testament. His eighth opera 'Epithalamium' is a mystical allegorical opera about Christ's pursuit of His Bride throughout the ages of time to their marriage in heaven. He is currently working on a ninth opera 'Thekla and Paul' which tells the story of a young aristocratic woman from Iconium who falls in love with the Apostle Paul when he preaches there in AD 60.

Some of his music can be found on the Divine Art record label; his most recent recording is a song cycle called 'Liebestod Symphony' a series of five songs for soprano and piano with texts mostly about Richard Wagner.

Other significant works include 'A Carrollian Symphony' 1986-1992, a choral symphony, setting words by Lewis Carroll and the 'Jude the Obscure Symphony' 1991-1993, a programme symphony inspired by Thomas Hardy's controversial novel of the same name.

He lives in Cambridgeshire and often attends the service of Compline at Pembroke College Cambridge.



# Kevin Bowyer, organ

Kevin Bowyer was born in Southend-on-Sea in 1961 and attended the Royal Academy of Music in London, studying with Christopher Bowers-Broadbent and Virginia Black. Subsequent studies were undertaken with David Sanger.

He won first prizes in five international organ competitions (St Albans, Paisley, Odense, Dublin, and Calgary) and had early success in recording, turning out more than 100 solo CDs in a career spanning forty years. He gained a reputation for playing “impossible” music, most notably that of Kaikhosru Sorabji. A disc of organ works by the reclusive American composer Gordon Sherwood was recently released on the Sonus Eterna label.

He played in many parts of the world and was for nine years (1999-2008) Senior Lecturer in Organ at the Royal Northern College of Music.

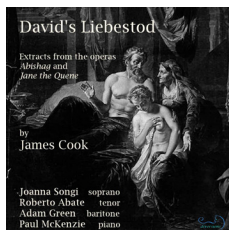
In 2022, he was awarded the Medal of the Royal College of Organists, the institution’s highest honour, and in 2023, the “Lifetime Award” of the German Record Critics – the “Ehrenpreis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik” – who described him as “The most exciting and stimulating organist of our time.” Kevin has been Organist to the University of Glasgow since 2005. He is the author of seven volumes of fiction.

[www.kevinbowyerorganist.uk](http://www.kevinbowyerorganist.uk)  
[www.kevincorbybowyerwriter.uk](http://www.kevincorbybowyerwriter.uk)



Kevin Bowyer

## More recordings of works by James Cook from the Divine Art Recordings Group



### “David’s Liebestod” – Extracts from operas Abishag and Jane the Queene by James Cook

Joanna Songi, soprano; Roberto Abate, tenor; Adam Green, baritone; Paul McKenzie, piano

“This disc will whet the appetite of listeners who are favorably inclined toward contemporary opera composition.” – Mark J. Estren, *Infodad*

DDV 24170



### James Cook: The Liebestod Symphony

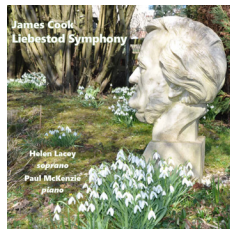
Helen Lacey, soprano; Paul McKenzie, piano

“This piano writing is anything but stereotypically pianistic... It is easy to imagine the orchestra’s colors. Cook’s language is fairly tonal, but the harmonies and the progression of the music contribute to an alluring and effective atmosphere of meditation ... I found this piece compelling.”

—Stephen Estep, *American Record Guide*



DDV 24171



### Exequy and Elysium: Organ music by James Cook

Samuel Hayes, organ; Samuel Hudson, organ; Lucy Jack, contralto

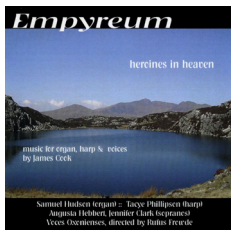
“Clearly and idiomatically written for the organ, the music harks back to an earlier age of church music... this is not to deny the real beauty and emotional sincerity of these finely crafted reveries, meditations and celebrations.”

– Records International

DDA 21206







## Empyreum: Heroines in Heaven

Music for organ, harp & voices by James Cook

Samuel Hudson, organ; Tacye Phillipson, harp; Augusta Hebbert, soprano; Jennifer Clark, soprano; Voces Oxonienses; Rufus Frowde, director

"captivating accounts of two short sun-drenched songs... what is apparent is a sincerity of expression and a real desire to communicate... will prove both comforting and enjoyable." —Marc Rochester, International Record Review

DDV 24121



## James Cook: From Wonderland to Heaven

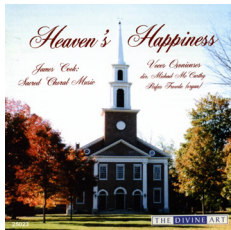
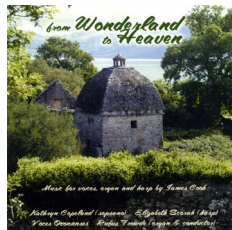
Music for voices, organ and harp

Kathryn Copeland, soprano; Elizabeth Scoriah, harp; Rufus Frowde, organ with Voces Oxonienses

"Gives choral music fans something well out of the ordinary to enjoy. An interesting diversion for old music ears – Chris Spector" —Chris Spector, Midwest Record



DDV 24123



## Heaven's Happiness

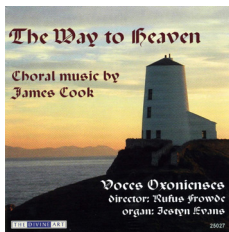
Sacred choral music by James Cook

Rufus Frowde, organ with Voces Oxonienses

"Voces Oxonienses sing with rich tone and expressively, with good diction and excellent breath control. An interesting disc, indeed, and definitely worth hearing." — Church Music Quarterly

DDA 25023





## The Way to Heaven

Choral music by James Cook

Voces Oxonienses; Rufus Frowde, director; Lestyn Evans, organ

"James Cook works within traditional tonal boundaries. Sincere and moving, unglamorous settings written within the accommodating embrace of the Cathedral tradition... sung with total professional commitment " —**Rob Barnett MusicWeb**

DDV 25027

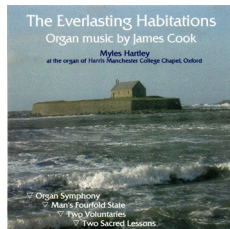


## The Everlasting Habitations

Organ music by James Cook

Myles Hartley, organ

"Technically the music is assured and it seems to be very well played by Myles Hartley... a worthy disc " —**John Quinn MusicWeb**



divine art DDV 25031



## The Heavenly Anchorage

Songs for soprano & harp by James Cook

Abigail Smith, soprano; Elizabeth Scarah, harp

This mini-album is available only as a download and includes five songs for soprano and harp by James Cook, a British composer who specializes in setting 17th century Puritan texts and also writing instrumental music for organ and harp.

DDS 29003



divine art

Recorded at Glasgow University Memorial Chapel 22nd March, 2023  
Engineered by Callum Scott  
Performed by Kevin Bowyer

Photography by James Cook  
Artwork by James Cardell-Oliver, Divine Art

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