

# Heaven's Happiness

*James Cook:*  
*Sacred Choral Music*

*Voces Oxonienses*  
*dir. Michael McCarthy*  
*Rufus Frowde (organ)*

# Heaven's Happiness

## from Triptych:

[1]	Death is yours	[3:17]
[2]	Evening Sacrifice	[2:40]

## Vespers

[3]	The days of an hireling	[0:58]
[4]	When night comes	[1:56]
[5]	Our Father which art in heaven	[1:58]
[6]	Eventide	[1:40]
[7]	Sarabande	[5:02]
[8]	Magnificat	[4:10]
[9]	Nunc Dimittis	[2:07]
[10]	The Lord is my shepherd - Doxology	[4:38]

## Hymnus Divinus

[11]	Heaven is a world of love	[1:07]
[12]	Set your heart on heaven	[1:21]
[13]	I am swallowed up in God	[2:10]
[14]	He whose name is love	[5:23]
[15]	Heaven's happiness	[1:36]
[16]	Heavenly lovers	[2:51]
[17]	Lead me in thy way to heaven	[6:08]

## From Gradualia, book 1 (movements 5 & 7):

[18]	There is no wrinkle on the brow of eternity	[3:48]
[19]	The Saints' everlasting rest	[4:07]

**Total playing time:**

**[57:02]**

## An introduction to the texts

All the texts used in these vocal compositions date from the 16th to the 18th centuries and were gleaned from the theological writings of Christian authors known as Puritans.

The genesis of this religious and literary movement emerged in England during the reign of King Henry VIII. In 1534 Henry renounced the supremacy of the Pope and secured a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Two years later, the first reformed convocation in England took place, where it was stated that "it was his Majesty's pleasure, that the rites and ceremonies of the Church should be reformed by the rules of Scripture, and that nothing should be maintained which did not rest on that authority". This process was aided by new Biblical translations, mostly by William Tyndale but also Miles Coverdale, who may be considered among the first English Protestants.

Henry remained a Catholic to the end of his life and his Six Articles of Religion upheld the doctrine of transubstantiation (the literal changing of the communion bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ). Denial of this doctrine was punishable by being burnt to death as a heretic.

During the reign of Henry's son Edward VI (1547-1553), a more vigorous reformation of the Church was begun. In 1550 altars were replaced by communion tables and in 1552 the 42 Articles and the Book of Common Prayer were drawn up by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. However, these reforms were overturned when

Edward's sister Mary (1553-1558) became Queen. At first, no-one was actually put to death because of their religion, although around 1200 married clergy were turned out of their livings, some were confined and others, including Coverdale, were exiled.

The persecution of non-conformists soon intensified. Protestants were forced to meet in illegal assemblies known as conventicles, and if discovered, were put to death. Many clergy refused to wear the official Church vestments, which one cleric, Dr. Taylor, described as "a fool's coat". At their trials or 'degradations' they were made to wear them again and the wearing of a 'religious uniform' became a major cause of distress when, during Elizabeth's reign (1558-1603), their use became part of the required conformity.

During the latter part of Mary's reign many were burnt alive at the stake, including Archbishop Cranmer. When Elizabeth acceded to the throne in 1558 the first statute to be introduced was the Act of Uniformity. A new court, the Court of High Commission, was established to define what was to constitute correct religious observance. The intention to create a compromise between Catholicism and strict Protestantism, but in 1564 Archbishop Parker's Advertisements compelled the uniformity of the clergy in the wearing of square cap, tippet and surplice.

In 1565, there appeared a stricter line from the Queen herself, who commanded that "ye keep up the unity of apparel" but in Cambridge 300

threw away their surplices in protest, describing them as 'signs of Baal's priests' or 'Romish rags'. In 1566, the first separatists emerged and persecutions for non-conformity began, when people were imprisoned for such crimes as refusing to bow at the name of Jesus, or using loaf bread instead of an unleavened wafer at Communion.

Elizabeth herself did not wish to 'make windows into men's souls.' And "it was her royal pleasure that no bill relating to religion should be introduced". Yet in the following year by Royal Proclamation all archbishops, bishops and Justices of Assizes were compelled to enforce conformity. Apart from refusing to wear the surplice, other offences included singing the hymn *Nunc Dimittis* in the morning; omitting the making of the sign of the Cross in Baptism services, and non-attendance at church. In 1583, even prayer at a private family gathering was prohibited if non-family members were present. Many clerics were forced to undertake expensive journeys to London to be interrogated and were made to pledge an oath declaring their conformity to all religious laws. Some were heavily fined and others put out of their offices, including many Cambridge academics.

There were high hopes amongst Protestants at the start of the reign of James I (1603-1625) when he gave offence to prelates, describing their vestments 'badges of Popery', but he soon turned on the Puritans also, stating that he would "make them conform, or harry them out of the land". In 1604 he issued a Proclamation demanding that all people conform or suffer

banishment, life imprisonment or the denial of a Christian burial. James I tended to be inconsistent. He demanded harsh penalties for non-conformists, yet in 1611 he oversaw the production of the King James Bible which had the most profound influence on the life of the nation in many ways, not least its language and literature.

Upon the accession of King Charles I in 1625, there was initially greater tolerance in matters of religion. However, while he decreed that all proceedings against Catholics should cease, at the same time the use of the Star Chamber against non-conformists increased. In 1626 persecutions of Puritan dissent took a new and sinister turn when on the instruction of the notorious Archbishop Laud, Dr. Alexander Leighton had his ears cut off, his nose slit, his face branded, was whipped, pilloried and fined £10,000.

Many were punished quite arbitrarily: Mr Kendal was suppressed for preaching a sermon of over an hour's length and Mr Cornish for preaching a funeral sermon in the evening. Mr Prynne was branded on his cheeks with the initials "S.C." for seditious libel, but because he had already had his ears removed, the remaining stumps were cut off too. For the crime of wearing his hat in town, Mr Edward Moore, an Oxford student, was whipped. The situation changed, however, when civil war came, a war fought in large measure over religious freedom. In 1641 the Star Chamber was abolished and much ecclesiastical law repealed and in 1643 an Assembly of Divines was established at



Westminster, a body responsible for such measures as the Confession of Faith and the longer and shorter Catechisms.

The "Commonwealth" period (1649-1659) ended shortly after the death of Oliver Cromwell, with the restoration of the monarchy and the accession of King Charles II (r.1660-1685). In the light of the previous struggles, the new king was reluctant to make religion a major issue. In 1662, however, laws were passed requiring conformity to one pattern of religious observance. One of the results was that 2500 ministers were forced out of their livings ("the great ejection") and 60,000 families were said to have been impoverished. Amongst the later Puritans caught up in these troubles were those responsible for most of the texts used in my vocal pieces.

It has to be said that inflexibility and contrariness plagues both sides of this dispute, with results that though often tragic, can seem humorous to us now; In 1590, the Rev. Edward Snape refused to baptise children with non-biblical names, but Mr Malancthon Jewell named his daughter "The Lord is Near". And although Thomas Hooker was persecuted, his treatment was quite mild compared to that meted out to others - a violinist was hired to play outside his church to disturb his preaching! Perhaps the most unusual example of intolerance concerned the construction of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Originally built facing North-South to avoid superstition, it was, on the orders of Queen Elizabeth, demolished and rebuilt in an East-West position.

Today, the only Puritan writers whose names are widely recognised (by the general public) are probably John Milton and George Herbert. Perhaps this is because poetry, rather than prose, was their main creative outlet. The writers represented here loved words, enjoyed using colourful language, and were fond of a kind of parallelism in which two similar-sounding words are combined in the same phrase. For example Henry Smith's "Marriage doth signify merry-age", a sentiment also found in John Trapp's writings: "Marriage may be to thee a merry age". This demonstrates the knowledge which these writers had of each others work, a fact which led to cross-fertilization of ideas and something of a homogenous style. This in turn has allowed me to "pick and mix" from the work of different authors when compiling texts for my music.

The texts of the pieces on this CD are taken from the works of the following writers: Isaac Ambrose, John Boys, Thomas Brooks, John Bunyan, Thomas Case, Thomas Doolittle, Jonathan Edwards, Christopher Fowler, Thomas Goodwin, Robert Harris, Thomas Manton, Samuel Rutherford, Richard Steele, George Swinnoek, Robert Traill and Thomas Watson.

In addition, Bible verses, extracts from the Book of Common Prayer and the occasional word or two of my own have been used. Some of the texts have also been slightly amended by the addition omission or substitution of the odd word here and there.



## Notes on the Programme

### From **Triptych: Death is Yours and Evening Sacrifice**

The Triptych (2002) explores the idea of female self-sacrifice; perhaps Jephtha's daughter giving her life for her tribe, or maybe Buffy jumping to save her friends. In Handel's oratorio Jephtha, Iphis is swept up to heaven by angel's wings, whereas my heroine in Death is Yours swims to heaven in a sea of tears. In the second movement Evening Sacrifice, three verses from a hymn, taken from the Book of Common Prayer, are set lyrically with a lilting accompaniment in the organ. The organ accompaniment to Triptych (a rarity in my work) takes full advantage of the wonderful organ at St. Jude's, recently restored at the date of this recording. The deep bass pedal register adds greatly to the gravity and emotion in these movements.

### Vespers

The word "vespers" means "evening", and the pieces contained in this set are either those traditionally sung at the close of the day at Evening Prayer (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis), at the close of life in the Funeral Service (Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer) or where evening is used as a metaphor representing the close of a human life. In the first two movements God is seen as a Father calling his children home

as night falls. The third section is a setting of the Lord's Prayer, and the fourth concerns the consoling hope of heavenly rest after the labour of life. The fifth movement, Sarabande (the dance of death) further explores that subject during which the choir is divided into two antiphonal groups each of SATB.

The evening service canticles of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis follow, and the piece ends with a setting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and the Doxology (Gloria Patri), which forms an extensive coda.

### Hymnus Divinus (2002)

Hymnus Divinus (Hymn of Heaven) uses texts which aim to capture the nature of, and portray the mystical journey to, the heavenly realm. The work is introduced by a short meditative chorale-like movement, Heaven is a World of Love. The second movement Set your Heart on Heaven is a fughetta (small fugue). The third section, I am swallowed up in God, is again chorale-like but with material richer and more expansive than heard previously.

Heaven's Happiness explores the harmonic similarity and contrast between chords of F major and A minor/ The sixth section, Heavenly Lovers, sees the music build up to a climax in a slow canon, or round, and in the finale Lead me in the Way to Heaven, an ethereal atmosphere is evoked in a kind of sacred chanting, although the music is punctuated by material of a more ardent nature. The movement is rounded off by repeating the chorale-like music of the first movement but with altered harmonies.



Throughout the work, wide intervals are employed, octaves and double-octaves creating a sense of spaciousness, distance and timelessness.

### From **Gradualia, Book 1 : Movements 5 and 7 (1999)**

In *There is no Wrinkle on the Brow of Eternity*, a solo soprano and tenor sing a duet against the main body of the choir. The soloists sing a melodic palindrome (the music being the same backwards and forwards). A canonic section creates overlap in the harmony and causes violent harmonic turbulence between soloists and choir. The music sounds eerily disjointed because the soloists sing in 3/4 time against the 4/4 (Common Time) of the supporting voices, adding to the hallowed, spectral feel of the music.

The *Saints' everlasting Rest* uses some of the same techniques but on a grander scale. The choir is divided into SATB soloists against SATB ensemble. The music confines itself to the seven notes of the C major scale and makes full use of all possible dissonances available. A feature of the movement is the use of C major contrasted with A minor, its harmonic shadow and relative minor key. The movement ends, however, unequivocally in the radiant light of C major.

Notes © James Cook 2003

**James Cook** studied composition at Oxford University, was briefly employed at Eton College and for some time has specialised in the writing of sacred music for choir.

**Voces Oxenienses** is a choir formed from top British professional singers, with a wealth of choral experience. They are directed by **Michael McCarthy**, a highly respected singer and choir conductor. The organ part is played by **Rufus Frowde** who was organ scholar at Merton College, Oxford and is now a successful freelance musician.



## **From TRIPTYCH:**

### **Death is Yours**

Heaven is the jointure and death is one of the servants or slaves of her that is the spouse of this Lord. Death is yours, and ye are Christ's. Death is yours. Your servant to strip off your rags of sin and misery, and to clothe you with the robes of joy and glory. When the soul is going out of the body, it should swim to heaven in a sea of tears.

### **Evening Sacrifice**

The sun is sinking fast, the daylight dies;  
Let love awake and pay her evening sacrifice.  
As Christ upon the cross His head inclined,  
And to His Father's hands his parting soul resign'd;  
So now herself my soul would wholly give  
Into His sacred charge, in whom all spirits live.

## **VESPERS**

### **The days of an Hireling**

Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? Thou mightest like a weary child call to be laid to bed, knowing that it will send thee to thine everlasting rest.

### **When night comes**

When night comes, the father comes to his child and says, "Come my child, come indoors". When death comes, then says God to those that have grace, "Come my children, enter in". Heaven is the Father's house and none can come thither but his own children, such as are

born of God.

### **Our Father (the Lord's Prayer)**

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

### **Eventide**

But in heaven there is no danger, we shall be ever with the Lord. So put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, get you down, the press is full, the fats overflow. Man goeth forth unto his work, until the evening of death.

### **Sarabande**

This is my seed-time, and heaven is the harvest; here must I labour and toil, and there rest. Death gives the soul the wings of an eagle, to fly above all the venomous serpents here below. When thine enemy death beats thee out of the field of life, thou wilt be glad of a God, to whom thou mayest retire, as a city of refuge where every slayer may flee thither that he may live. There is a state of bliss in another world, there is the righteousness of Christ, there is but one straight gate, one door, one Way.

### **Magnificat**

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call

me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

### **Nunc Dimittis**

Lord, now leftest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

### **The Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23) - Doxology**

The Lord is my Shepherd : I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures :  
He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

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

### **HYMNUS DIVINUS**

#### **Heaven is a world of Love**

Heaven is a place of love. Heaven is a place of rest. Heaven is a world of love. The nature of eternal things we shall enjoy, as soon as ever we come to heaven.

#### **Set your heart on heaven**

Set your heart on heaven, that world of love.

#### **I am swallowed up in God**

The Father doth engage to woo us to come to Christ, because he promised His Son when he wooed Him to die for us, and gave Him to us. Oh, says the soul, how sweet is this Rose of Sharon! Has Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath to purchase my peace? Christ can not love me better than He doth. I think I can not love Christ better than I do. I am swallowed up in God.

#### **He whose name is love**

Here was love indeed, a matchless, boundless, bottomless love. Why? Wherein has He expressed so much love? Surely in that we should be called the sons of God, here was the greatest love sealed up. Would we have God unbosom the sweet secrets of His love that passes secretly between Christ and the soul? Grace only can make a stoney heart melt in love; how sad it is to be void of love to God.

So make trial of Him awhile; no one else can know how sweet the Lord is but to those who've proven it.

Now, concerning this blessed sight of God, I can but draw a dark shadow of it. Thus says a soul that hath walked some turns in paradise; What is dross to gold! What is darkness to light! Love cares not what it is nor what it does, so that it may but advance the Lord Jesus, whereby called is He whose name is Love.

### **Heaven's Happiness**

It is part of heaven's happiness to 'know as we are known'. Heaven is the presence chamber of the high and holy one. What a sight will that be when I shall see heaven full of suns, scattering their rays of glory through all those celestial regions! Let us seek that world of peace and love of which we have now heard, where a sweet and blessed rest remains for God's true people. Almighty God, though He be wise and just, yet He is most emphatically called 'Love'. His name is Love.

### **Heavenly Lovers**

Lovers love to dwell together, and we might dwell with Him hereafter. Heavenly lovers will have no doubt of the love of each other.

### **Lead me in thy way to heaven**

Sweet Saviour! Lead me in thy way to heaven and bring me thither, where love to thee shall live and last for ever. In heaven all the saints shall be of a golden disposition and yet they have neither silver nor gold. In heaven righteousness and peace shall kiss each other, and all the Saints shall know as they

are known. Where the banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. In heaven love will be the chief grace, in every heart in heaven love dwells and reigns. Love heaven, and you can not miss it, love breaks through all opposition, it takes heaven by storm. For all in heaven shall flourish in immortal youth and freshness, in that glorious place where the nature of eternal things we shall enjoy as soon as ever we come to heaven. When the banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed and so shall we ever be with the Lord, forever in heaven.

### **From GRADUALIA, Book 1**

#### **There is no wrinkle on the brow of eternity**

In heaven is no war-fare, but all well-fare.

There is no wrinkle on the brow of eternity.

#### **The saint's everlasting rest**

Heaven is a place of rest and joy, sorrow and sighing shall fly away. Think of their happiness who die in the Lord, to them to die is gain, they are as rich as heaven can make them. When the race is ended, and the play is either won or lost, and ye are in the utmost circle and border of time, and ye shall put your foot within the march of eternity, and all the good things of your short night dream shall seem like ash of straw. Eternity is the heaven of heavens, at the last our joy shall be never-ending, everlasting.



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