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Handel's Coronation Anthems

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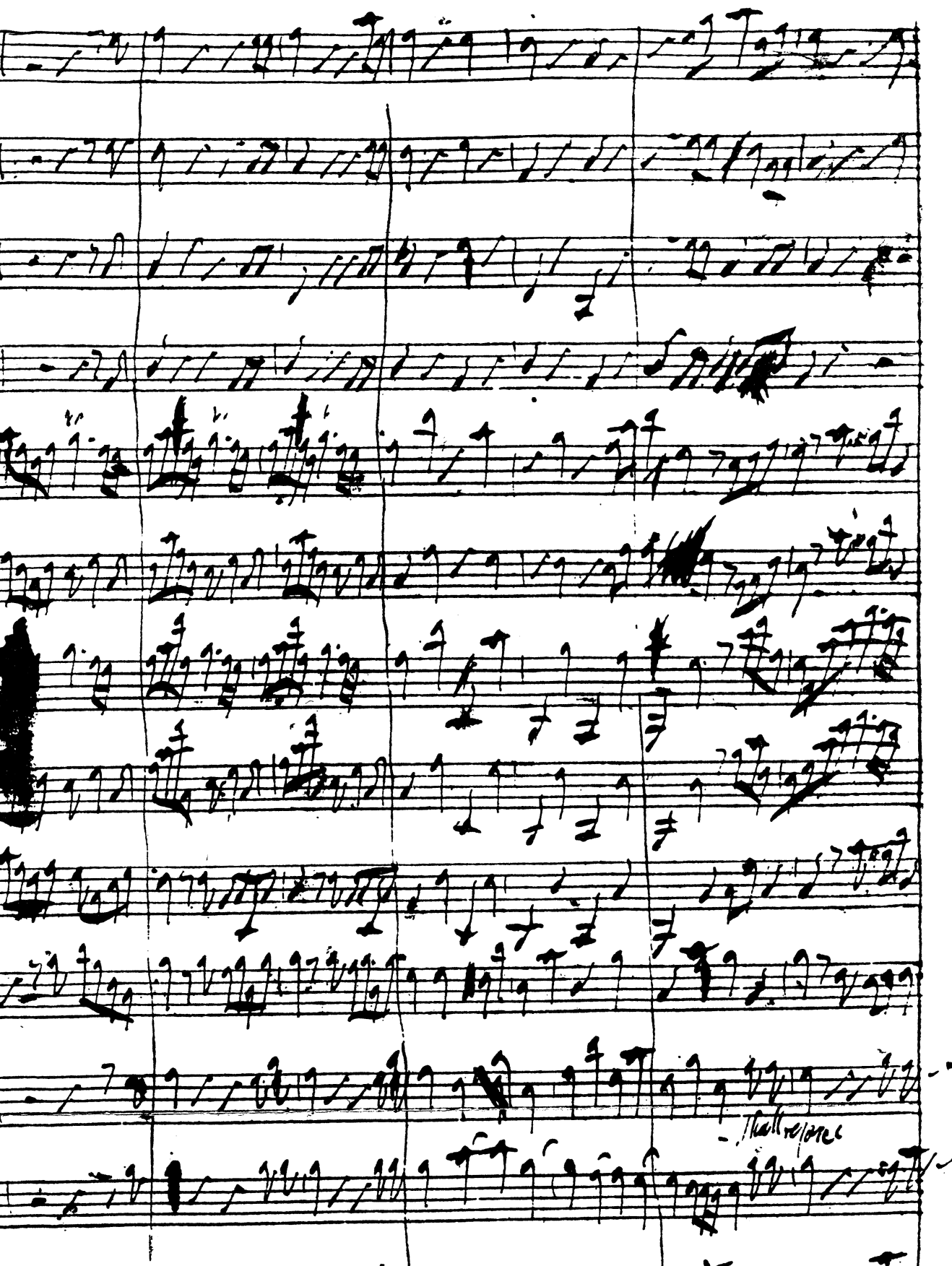
FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF 'THE KING SHALL REJOICE,' IN HANDEL'S HANDW.

Reproduced from the original manuscript at Buckingham Palace, by gracious permission of His Majesty the

A facsimile of a handwritten musical score for the piece 'The King Shall Rejoice' by George Frideric Handel. The score is written on twelve staves, organized into six systems of two staves each. The notation is in a cursive, handwritten style characteristic of the 18th century. It includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and clefs. There are some ink blots and corrections visible on the manuscript, particularly in the middle section. The paper appears aged and slightly discolored.

FILE OF A PAGE OF 'THE KING SHALL REJOICE,' IN HANDEL'S HANDWRITING.

duced from the original manuscript at Buckingham Palace, by gracious permission of His Majesty the King.



Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "The Great King of Kings". The score is written on ten staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The lyrics "The king the king the king the king" are written below the staves, with "The king" appearing on the eighth staff and "the king the king the king the king" on the tenth staff. There are several large, dark ink blotches or corrections on the first staff and the eighth staff. The word "Day" is written at the bottom left of the page. The word "The" is written above the eighth staff, and "the king" is written above the ninth staff. The word "the" is written above the tenth staff. The word "the" is written above the eleventh staff. The word "the" is written above the twelfth staff. The word "the" is written above the thirteenth staff. The word "the" is written above the fourteenth staff. The word "the" is written above the fifteenth staff. 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The word "the" is written above the seventieth staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-first staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-second staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-third staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-fourth staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-fifth staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-sixth staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-seventh staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-eighth staff. The word "the" is written above the seventy-ninth staff. The word "the" is written above the eightieth staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-first staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-second staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-third staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-fourth staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-fifth staff. The word "the" is written above the eighty-sixth staff. 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Day

the Great King of Kings

(The words 'the Great King of Kings' occur in 'Deborah,' in which oratorio Handel subsequently used this chorus.)

THE MUSICAL TIMES

AND SINGING-CLASS CIRCULAR.

MARCH 1, 1902.

HANDEL'S CORONATION ANTHEMS.

*Zadok the Priest.**The King shall rejoice.**Let thy hand be strengthened.**My heart is inditing of a good matter.*

The Coronation of King George the Second and Queen Caroline, in Westminster Abbey, in the year 1727, furnished the occasion for the composition of this quartet of noble choral works. A similar event in the annals of our country—soon, we hope, to come to pass—provides an appropriate opportunity for a few remarks on the history of these regal anthems.

The first question for consideration is: What was Handel's position at Court at that time? The answer may be partly, if not altogether satisfactorily found in Chamberlayne's 'Magna Britanniae Notitia; or the Present State of Great Britain,' for 1727—the *Whitaker's Almanack* of the day. In that useful volume, and under the heading 'The King's Officers and Servants in ordinary above Stairs, under the Lord Chamberlain,' we find—

Composer of Musick for the Chapel Royal
Mr. George Handel.

At that time the office of Composer to the Chapel Royal was held by Dr. Greene, and as Handel's name as 'Composer of Musick' does not appear in Chamberlayne's issue of 1726 or 1728, it seems probable that this appointment was of a temporary nature for the Coronation ceremony. The same book of reference issued in the following year (1728) supplies this official information under 'Establishment of their Royal Highnesses the Princess Royal, the Princess Amelia and the Princess Carolina':—

Dancing-Master, Mr. Anthony L'abbé .. £240
Musick-Master, Mr. George Frederic Handel £200

The names of both these Masters follow the list of 'Pages of the Back Stairs'; and Mr. Anthony L'abbé, the professor of dancing, not only took precedence of Mr. Handel, but received £40 a year more for his light fantastic toe tuition.

That Handel was commissioned to compose Coronation anthems is borne out by the following anecdote related by Burney in his *Commemoration of Handel*, p. 34:—

Handel had words sent to him, by the bishops, for the anthems; at which he murmured, and took offence, as he thought it implied his ignorance of the Holy Scriptures: "I have read my Bible very well, and shall choose for myself." And, indeed, his selection of the words, "My heart is inditing of a good matter," was very judicious, and inspired him with some of the finest thoughts that are to be found in all his works.

Handel was probably unaware that one set of the selected words, 'Let thy hand be strengthened,'

had been used at the Coronation of Charles I., a hundred years earlier.*

Our composer was forty-two years old when he wrote the Coronation anthems. He had been a permanent resident in England for fifteen years, and was a naturalised Englishman of a year's standing.† As everybody knows, he had been in the service of George I. when that monarch held sway as Elector of Hanover before ascending the English throne, and without doubt, Handel was a *persona grata* at the Courts of the first two Georges of these realms.

No time seems to have been lost between the demise of George I. and the assumption of the crown by his son and successor. The death of the former occurred suddenly, on June 9, 1727, and the Coronation of the latter took place on October 11, only four months after. Very little information, unfortunately, is obtainable in regard to the *music* of the gorgeous ceremony and its performance in Westminster Abbey. The late Dr. Chrysander, in his unfinished 'Life' of Handel, states that the rehearsal took place on September 6, *i.e.*, more than a month before the performance! But the *British Journal*, from which he derived his information, is, by reason of a misprint, wrongly dated September, instead of October, and this misinformation has been copied by Rockstro! Chrysander, by the way, in his preface to the German Handel Society's Edition of the Coronation anthems, gives *September 11* as the date of the ceremony, which is exactly one month too soon.

The only rehearsal information quoted by Chrysander is thus briefly recorded in the *British Journal* of October (misprinted September) 7, 1727:—

Yesterday the fine Anthem composed by Mr. Handel, for their Majesties' Coronation was rehearsed in Westminster Abbey.

Here is another account, not referred to by any previous writer on the subject:—

Yesterday there was a Rehearsal of the Musick that is to be perform'd at their Majesties' Coronation in Westminster Abbey, where was present the greatest Concourse of People that has been known.—*The Weekly Journal, or the British Gazetteer*, October 7, 1727.

Yet another, which has escaped the notice even of Chrysander, as well as every other biographer of Handel. It is to be found in a funny little quarto newspaper, bearing the alliterative title, *Parker's Penny Post*. Here is the extract, from the issue of Wednesday, October 4, 1727, in an exact reproduction:—

Mr. Hendle has compofed the Muſick for the Abbey at the Coronation, and the Italian Voices, with above a Hundred of the beſt Muſicians will perform; and the Whole is allowed by thoſe Judges in Muſick who have already heard it, to exceed any Thing heretofore of the fame Kind: It will be rehearſed this Week, but the Time will be kept private, left the Crowd of People ſhould be an Obſtruction to the Performers.

* See a valuable article on 'Coronation music of the past' in the *Athenæum* of January 4, 1902, p. 25.

† See THE MUSICAL TIMES, May, 1901, p. 313.

This is important. In the first place it appears that Handel enlisted the services of his Italian opera company for the Coronation music-making, though it may be assumed that the choirs of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey also assisted. The 'above a hundred of the best musicians' evidently refers to the orchestral players, and enables us to form some idea of the magnificence of the performance. Dr. Chrysander, who was evidently unaware of the above statement in *Parker's Penny Post*, draws certain conclusions from some memoranda by Handel in regard to the names and number of singers; but these probably refer to a subsequent concert performance. The order in which the four anthems were sung is doubtful; but that they all formed a part of the ceremony is proved by a German account of the Coronation ceremony.

The following extract refers to the organ used on the memorable occasion, the instrument being erected 'above the altar':—

The fine Organ made by Mr. Schrieder, which was set up in Westminster Abbey, and used on the Day of the Coronation, has been presented to the said Abbey by his Majesty. It is accounted one of the best Performances of that Maker.—*The British Journal, or the Censor*, February 10, 1728.

This instrument was shortly afterwards enlarged and rebuilt, as a note in one of the Abbey records states:—

The new organ, built by Mr. Schrider and Mr. Jordan, was opened on the 1st August, 1730, by Mr. Robinson; the Anthem, Purcell's "O give thanks."

The newspapers of the day confirm the above information. Mr. Robinson—the John Robinson of double-chant-in-E-flat fame—was then organist of the Abbey, and the designation 'new organ' was doubtless attributable to the added *Swell* organ, invented by Abraham Jordan. This reconstruction of the organ was probably the occasion upon which the instrument was removed to the screen, the position it has ever since occupied in Westminster Abbey.

The official account of this Coronation (of George II.) states that the Children of the Chapel Royal wore surplices with scarlet mantles over them; that the Choir of Westminster were surpliced and walked 'with their Musick books'; and that the Gentlemen of the King's Chapel were clad in scarlet mantles. We also learn that 'The Way from the steps of the Throne in Westminster Hall to the Choir in Westminster Abbey, was Floor'd with Boards, and cover'd with Blew Cloth.' In the procession there followed after the choir 'The Organ Blower, Two Sackbuts, and a Double-Courtell.* This official account contains some curious information. The 'solemnities' included the throwing about of medals on the floor of the Abbey, and 'The noise ceasing' is another indication of

what would strike us nowadays as irreverence in so sacred a fane.

One wishes that good, gossipy Mrs. Delaney—a veritable feminine Pepys—had been present in the Abbey. She was then twenty-seven years of age, very fond of music, and knew Handel well. She did, however, attend a portion of the ceremony, but, unfortunately, only that which took place in Westminster Hall. She tells us that she started out at half-past four in the morning, that she was squeezed nearly flat, and that she lost her cloak! 'The room [Westminster Hall] was finely illuminated,' she goes on to say, 'there were eighteen-hundred candles besides those on the table, and all were lighted in three minutes by an invention of Mr. Heidegger's.' This gentleman candle-lighter was Handel's opera manager, and further noted as being the ugliest man of the time. Mrs. Delaney, who visited at Court, records that the Queen had twenty-four thousand pounds' worth of jewels on her coronation petticoat! Lord Harvey supplies more detailed information concerning this article of queenly attire:—

The dress of the Queen on this occasion was as fine as the accumulated riches of the city and suburbs could make it; for besides her own jewels (which were a great number and very valuable), she had on her head and on her shoulders all the pearls she could borrow of the ladies of quality at one end of the town, and on her petticoat all the diamonds she could hire of the Jews and jewellers at the other.

Handel's autograph manuscripts of the Coronation Anthems are the property of the King, who has inherited them, through successive Sovereigns, from King George III. They, with the other books in the Royal Music Library, are preserved in a fire-proof room in the basement of Buckingham Palace, and are under the care of Sir Walter Parratt, Master of the Music to the King. It is exceedingly interesting to turn over the pages of the volume, bound in royal red, containing these anthems, and to touch the paper on which the master's hand has written down the notes in 'his rough pot-hooks and hangers.' On the first page of *Zadok the Priest* there is a large circular stain, as if Handel had unwittingly ornamented his score by placing his coffee-pot or kettle upon it. None of the anthems are dated, and the age-stained pages are very free from alterations. In one place, Handel has written in bold letters, and with a broad-pointed pencil, the word 'cut.' He has followed his usual custom of using up some of the material of these anthems for other works. The last movement of 'Zadok the Priest' serves a similar purpose in the Occasional Oratorio (1746), and three of the numbers of 'The King shall rejoice' were made to do duty in the oratorio of 'Deborah' (1733), as shown in the following table:—

THE KING SHALL REJOICE.

DEBORAH.

The King shall rejoice.	The great King of Kings.
Thou hast prevented him.	O celebrate his sacred name.
Allelujah.	Allelujah.

* Courtaul, cortaul, cortal. An ancient instrument of the bassoon kind. The old English sackbut, or sagbut, was a bass trumpet, with a slide like the trombone.—(Stainer and Barrett's *Dictionary of Musical Terms*.)

The music of the first chorus of 'Let thy hand be strengthened' was also used in 'Deborah,' and adapted to the words 'Let thy deeds be glorious.' Rockstro, in his 'Life of Handel,' states that 'Let thy deeds be glorious' were the *original* words; but an examination of the Buckingham Palace score clearly shows that this is an error, and that the interlining of them,

as used in 'Deborah,' took place *after* 'Let thy hand be strengthened' had been written by Handel, and *not* before.

His Majesty the King has graciously given permission for a page of the autograph of 'The King shall rejoice' to be reproduced in facsimile, as a special supplement to this article on Handel's Coronation Anthems. F. G. E.

A VISIT TO ELY CATHEDRAL.

The glory of Ely is its Cathedral. The little city *per se* has not such interesting historical associations as Winchester, for instance, nor can it boast of a great public school. No distinguished man seems to have been born there, and its eight thousand inhabitants doubtless live content under the shadow of the lovely sanctuary which forms so prominent a feature in the heart of Fenland.

It is a far cry to the year 673, when Queen Etheldreda founded the Monastery of Ely—a double house of monks and nuns, of which she was the first Abbess. Two hundred years later the Danes destroyed the Monastery, which was reconstituted in 970 for monks only. Two interesting historical facts relating to music are recorded during the second Monastery period. Edward the Confessor, who had been brought to



PRIOR CRAUDEN'S CHAPEL, IN THE CATHEDRAL PRECINCTS.

(Photograph by the Photochrom Co., Ltd.)

Ely in infancy, and offered by his parents on the altar, was educated there, and Bentham tells us that 'it was a constant tradition with the Monks that the young Edward used to take great delight in learning to sing Psalms and godly Hymns, among the children of his own age, in the Cloister, on which account he always retained a favourable regard for the place, after he became King.' Canute the Dane, and King of all England, had a love of minstrelsy and a taste for ecclesiasticism.

On one occasion he went to Ely to keep the Feast of Purification with the monks. As he approached the city in his barge, he heard pious strains rising from the church which prompted the words of this song, said to have been made at the time:—

Merrily sung the monks of Ely
As Cnut the King was passing by:
'Row, boatmen, nearer,' said the King,
'And let us hear these sweet monks sing.'