John Bennet

O God of Gods

Typeset 2022 by Hugo Janacek from manuscripts held at the Rowe Music Library, the Royal College of Music Library, the Perne Library, Christ Church Library, Oxford, and the Durham Cathedral Library.

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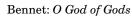
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Text:

O God of Gods, O King of Kings, Eternal Father of all things, in heav'n and earth and everywhere, by whom all Kings their sceptres bear, Great God of Charles our King, King of peace, King of peace, Heav'n's darling, England's happiness, for him we pray thee in this song, that he may live and prosper long.

And we beseech thee, mighty Lord, to us such favour to afford, that his triumphant festival, his holy day Imperial, to his Inaug'ring consecrated, may be so often celebrated, that finally it be not done till the great coming of thy Son, and that his health, his joys, and peace, may as his reign and years increase.

To the Almighty Trinity, three persons in one Deity, all glorious in heav'n, in heav'n, all praise, all thanks, all laud be giv'n, with organs, trumpets, and with flutes, with cornets, viols, and with lutes, with harps, with cymbals, and with shawms, with sacred anthems, hymns, and psalms, with notes of Angels and of Men, sing Halleluia, Amen.

Notes:

Bar lengths have been standardised.

Note values have not been halved.

All accidentals and markings in brackets are editorial.

Notes in small type are editorial.

Spelling and grammar has been modernised, but the original text setting has not been changed.

The bass viol part is not known to survive in any sources. Thankfully, as the lowest part in the texture, it is effectively preserved in the bass line of the surviving organ parts. The editor has therefore reconstructed this part from the organ bass line. This reconstruction is indicated by notes in small type.

The editor has provided a realisation of the organ part. As the skeleton organ part and viol parts are consistent, this realisation simply consists of a reduction of the surviving viol parts. While this results in an accompaniment that is necessarily complex, it preserves all of the composer's original material. The accompanist should feel free to use this realisation, or to improvise one of their own, as may have been the custom of those playing from the original organ part.

These different vocal sources agree in terms of harmony and structure, but differ in the details of the part writing. These differences can sometimes be quite significant. For example, it is not uncommon for polyphonic entries to placed in a variety of different parts; one source may have an entry in the Dec Alto part, another in the Can Alto, and another in the Tenor. Likewise, Tenor and Bass entries are occasionally switched. These part changes do not always occur for a whole phrase, so that the opening of a polyphonic line in one source may lead into the mid-phrase of another part in another source. The result is a group of sources with the same overall effect, but with very different internal structure. None of these vocal sources, when taken individually, preserve all of the harmonic structure seen when they are taken together.

The editor has dealt with this complexity by, in general, preferring the reading of the partbooks in the Rowe Music Library. While these manuscripts are not the oldest consulted, the music is copied from an early pre-Restoration source that no longer survives. The copy appears to be a faithful one. Texted to King James, the music is one of the oldest copies preserved. The editor has altered some of the vocal lines when necessary, using material from other sources, to preserve what appears to be the complete harmonic structure of the work. These alterations have been kept to a reasonable minimum, to preserve as much of the integrity of the Rowe parts as possible. They occur entirely in the chorus sections. In addition, one note of the tenor viol part was altered, in bar 93 of this edition, to avoid a parallel with the Rowe's Dec Alto part.

To represent the reigning monarch at the time this edition was produced, the editor has used the name 'Charles', as found in the sources from the Perne Library and the Royal College of Music Library. If performers would prefer to use the earlier text, 'James' should be substituted for 'Charles'. Performers should feel free to substitute this name for future monarchs as appropriate, as this appears to have been the custom in the period in which this work was written.

This edition is thankfully dedicated to M.E.F.B..

The editor would like to thank the Digital Archive of Medieval Music, and the Sibley Music Library, for providing access to digital copies of some of the source material. He wishes to thank the Perne Library, Christ Church Library, and the Royal College of Music Library for allowing this material to be displayed publicly. The editor also wishes to thank Christ Church, and Durham Cathedral, for allowing material in their possession to be used in the creation of this edition. Music from Durham's manuscripts has been reproduced by kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral.

Sources:

Partbooks, Rowe Music Library, King's College, Cambridge, GB-Ckc MSS 10-17.

Peterhouse Partbooks: Former Caroline Set, The Perne Library, Peterhouse, Cambridge, GB-CP MSS 33, 34, 39, 47, 49.

John Barnard's Partbooks, Royal College of Music Library, London, GB-Lcm MSS 1045-1051.

Partbooks, Christ Church Library, Christ Church, Oxford, GB-Och MS Mus. 56-60.

Organ Book, Durham Cathedral Library, Durham, GB-DRc MS A6.