

ABOUT TODAY'S MUSIC

Fourth Sunday of Easter
3 May 2020



The prelude for this morning is a contemporary trumpet voluntary by Christopher Tambling. A “voluntary” is a piece of music, usually for organ, played at the beginning of a church service. The term was often used by English composers during the late Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods. Originally, the term was used for a piece of organ music that was free in style, and was meant to sound improvised (the word voluntary in general means

"proceeding from the will or from one's own choice or consent"). Later, the voluntary began to develop into a more definite form, though it has never been strictly defined.

Besides the fugal type of voluntary, two other common forms developed: the trumpet voluntary and the cornet voluntary. These two were usually non-fugal, but still contained movements with contrasting tempos. These voluntaries were meant to feature the stops for which they are named.

Christopher Tambling was born in 1964 and educated at Christ's Hospital, Horsham, Surrey, where he studied the organ with Malcolm McKelvey. He went on to become Organ Scholar at St. Peter's College, and Organist and Choirmaster of Pusey House, Oxford, before taking up a teaching appointment at Sedbergh School in Cumbria.

He has been Director of Music at Glenalmond College in Perthshire since 1989, and has more recently been appointed Conductor of the Perth Symphony Orchestra. He spends much of his spare time composing. Recent commissions have included church and organ music, and a brass quintet to mark the 800th anniversary celebrations of the city of Dundee. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

Our Choral Scholars will provide a setting of “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow” by Thomas Tallis for the Offertory. In about 1674, Bishop Thomas Ken wrote three hymns for morning, evening, and midnight as an addition to his *A Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester College*. These hymns were published by Ken in a pamphlet in 1694, and were included in the *Manual* in its 1695 edition. “Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow” was the text of the final, doxological stanza for all three of them. It is now well-known on its own as a doxology, or as a concluding stanza for other hymns, such as “All Creatures of Our God and King,” or “All People That on Earth Do Dwell.”

The tune was composed by Thomas Tallis (b. Leicestershire, England, c. 1505; d. Greenwich, Kent, England 1585). He was one of the few Tudor musicians who served during the reigns of Henry VIII: Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I and managed to remain in the good favor of both Catholic and Protestant monarchs. He was court organist and composer from 1543 until his death, composing music for Roman Catholic masses and Anglican liturgies (depending on the monarch). With William Byrd, Tallis also enjoyed a long-term monopoly on music printing. Prior to his court connections Tallis had served at Waltham Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. He composed mostly church music, including Latin motets, English anthems, settings of the liturgy, magnificats, and two sets of lamentations. His most extensive contrapuntal work was the choral composition, “Spem in alium,” a work in forty parts for eight five-voice choirs. He also provided nine modal psalm tunes for Matthew Parker's Psalter (c. 1561).

