

## *Welcome to All the Pleasures*, by Henry Purcell (1659–1695)



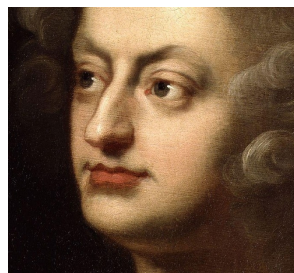
St. Cecilia  
by Artemesia

In 1683, the 24-year old Henry Purcell, organist at Westminster Abbey and composer in the Chapel Royal, together with other professional musicians and “gentleman lovers of musick” established a Musical Society in London to organize annual celebrations in honour of the feast day of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians. Similar traditions had existed in most continental European countries for some time.

Cecilia was an “early adopter” of Christianity who lived either in Sicily in the 2nd century or in Rome in the 3rd; the historical record is ambiguous. The Roman authorities were not sympathetic to her proselytizing and she was executed. It was reported that, even as she died a martyr’s death, she sang praises to God. Legend considerably expanded her musical capabilities: by the 16th century, she was painted by Raphael holding a small organ, by Artemesia playing a lute, and by other artists playing a violin or a bass viol or composing music. When an Academy of Music was founded in Rome in 1584, Cecilia was adopted as their patron saint and November 22nd established as the date of her festival.

The most important component of the Cecilian festivals in London was a first performance of an ode commissioned for the occasion. Purcell himself contributed the first such ode, *Welcome to All the Pleasures* (Z.339) in 1683. The text is by Christopher Fishburn, a poet and dramatist. One of more notable movements is *Here the Deities Approve*, sung (originally by a counter-tenor) over a repeated ground bass, a form that Purcell particularly favoured. The ode concludes with *In a Consort of Voices*, a fugal chorus. Purcell must have been especially proud of *Welcome to All the Pleasures* because he sponsored its publication in full score, an uncommon format at that time.

In all, Purcell composed four Cecilian odes. But on the eve of St. Cecilia’s day in 1695, Purcell died, probably of pneumonia; he was just 36 years old. He is buried close to the organ in Westminster Abbey; his epitaph reads: “He is gone to that blessed place where only his harmony can be exceeded.”



Henry Purcell (1695)  
by John Closterman

## William Boyce (1711–1779)

*There is an original and sterling merit in his productions, founded as much on the study of our own old masters, as on the best models of other countries, that gives to all his works a peculiar stamp and character of his own, for strength, clearness, and facility, without any mixture of styles, or extraneous and heterogeneous ornaments.* (Charles Burney, 1789)

William Boyce was born in London in September, 1711. At the age of 12 he became a choir-boy at St. Paul's Cathedral after his father, a cabinet maker, noticed his son's interest in music. When his voice broke, he was taken on as an apprentice by Maurice Greene, the organist at St. Paul's and a notable English musician and composer. Boyce was subsequently taught composition by the German-born musician Johann Christoph Pepusch. In 1735 Boyce got his first position as an organist and in 1736 he was appointed a composer at the Chapel Royal. By 1755, he was Master of the King's Musick, succeeding Maurice Greene.

The high points of his career were receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 1749 and conducting eight of his anthems at the coronation of King George III in Westminster Abbey in 1761. One of his most significant achievements was to complete the editing and publication of *Cathedral Music*, a massive three-volume historical anthology of English church music, which Maurice Greene had begun but left uncompleted at his death in 1755. Boyce composed the music for *Heart of Oak*, a patriotic song, for a 1759 pantomime by David Garrick. It later became the official march of the Royal Navy.

The middle years of the 18th century in England was an era of intense rivalries as foreign-born musicians (Handel, Geminiani, Loeillet, Pepusch) competed with each other and with British composers (Greene, Boyce, Arne) for audiences and patronage. Yet it seems that *everyone* liked William Boyce:

*A more modest man than Dr. Boyce I have never known. I never heard him speak a vain or ill-natured word, either to exalt himself or deprecate another.* (Charles Wesley)

*There was no professor whom I was ever acquainted with that I loved, honoured, and respected more.* (Charles Burney)

But by the time of Boyce's death in 1779, musical tastes had changed and his jaunty instrumental music, which had been so popular two decades earlier, was almost completely



William Boyce (1749)  
by Thoman Hudson

ignored until it was re-discovered in the 1920s. He is now regarded as the most significant native-born English baroque composer after Henry Purcell.

### ***Trio Sonata No. 2 in F***



Dr William Boyce  
by Sir Joshua  
Reynolds

The *sonata a tre* (trio sonata) was the most important form of instrumental music in the baroque era. It is a trio in the sense that there are three melodic lines, to be played on three or sometimes two instruments, or even on a *single* instrument as in J.S. Bach's trio sonatas for pedal harpsichord. The melodic instruments would often be accompanied by additional instruments, such as harpsichord, bass lute, or organ, to support the bass line or fill out the harmony. Boyce published a set of twelve such sonatas for two violins and *basso* in 1747 when the baroque trio sonata was already giving way to the classical sonata. But, according to Charles Burney, Boyce's trio sonatas were "more generally purchased, performed and admired than any productions of the kind in this kingdom, except those of Corelli," and that they were "in constant use, as chamber music, in our theatres, as act-tunes, in public gardens, as favorite pieces, during many years." The long list of subscribers included Handel, Arne, Pepusch and Greene.

### ***Symphony in B♭ (Opus 2, No. 1)***

In the middle of the 18th century, a *sinfonia* (symphony) was the instrumental prelude or overture to a vocal work, intended to grab the attention of the audience. In 1760, John Walsh published a set of *Eight Symphonies* by William Boyce. All were adapted from earlier works such as the bi-annual odes he composed for the King's Musick or theatrical music composed for David Garrick's Drury Lane Theatre. Symphony no. 1 is in the Italian style with three movements in the fast-slow-fast pattern. It was originally the overture to *Hail, Hail Auspicious Day*, an ode for the New Year, 1756. In the fast movements, Boyce doubled the violin parts with oboes; in the slow movement, the oboe players switched to "flutes" (i.e., recorders).

### ***Organ Voluntary No. 1 in D***

This is the first of a set of ten voluntaries published in London in about 1785, a few years after Boyce's death. A pensive *larghetto* leads into a lively *vivace* with trumpet-like figurations.

## ***Te Deum and Jubilate in A***

Boyce was a church organist for most of his life until he had to retire from these positions because of deafness. This morning service attributed to Boyce was preserved in the manuscript organ book of F. S. Blount, organist of Wimborne Minster from 1835 to 1863. The *Te Deum* is a hymn of praise to God dating back to the 4th century. *Jubilate Deo* is the Latin title of Psalm 100 and is traditionally paired with the *Te Deum*.

## ***Concerto Grosso No. 3 in E Minor***

A *concerto grosso* is essentially a trio sonata augmented by so-called *ripieno* (“fill in”) strings who play along with the primary melody instruments (the *concertino*) when the composer wants contrast or emphasis. Only three *concerti grossi* by Boyce (and a fragment of a 4th) have survived; none were published until 1968. Concerto no. 3 is in the French *overture* form: a stately dotted-rhythm introduction leads into a robust fugue; the middle movement is a pastoral *siciliana* for the *concertino* trio, and the last movement is a sprightly minuet. The date of its composition is not known, but is thought to have been fairly early because the work is stylistically less *galant* than the trio sonatas or symphonies.

## ***Music, All Powerful* by Thomas Forbes Walmisley (1783–1866)**

Thomas Forbes Walmisley was the organist at St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields church in Trafalgar Square for 40 years and is primarily known as a composer of “glees”: unaccompanied part songs for male voices, consisting of sequences of short contrasting sections. He composed 59 of them, many of which were published in collections. Most were composed for men’s clubs, such as the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club of London, founded in 1761 and still in operation, but the texts, like that of *Music, All Powerful* by poet H. K. White, were more respectable in character than those of the notoriously bawdy “catches” of earlier eras.



The Musical Group  
(Hogarth, 1733)