

Anthem Notes for April 9, 2017

Hosanna to the Living Lord! Howard Helvey (b. 1968)

*Hosanna to the living Lord!
Hosanna to the Incarnate Word!
To Christ, Creator, Savior, King,
Let earth, let heaven, Hosanna ring!*

*Refrain: Hosanna, Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!*

*"Hosanna, Lord!" Thine angels cry;
"Hosanna, Lord!" Thy saints reply;
Above, beneath us, and around,
The dead and living swell the sound.*

Refrain.

*To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Be honor, praise and glory given
By earth and all in heaven. Refrain.*



That first Palm Sunday rang with shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David!” Two thousand years later, we and our children still sing hosanna to the Son of David, knowing what the citizens of Jerusalem did not know: that amid the hosannas Christ rode forward to the ultimate sacrifice and fulfillment of God’s plan for our salvation. Today, we see beyond the momentary jubilation, to the awful cost in suffering, humiliation and our Savior’s death on the cross. We sing “hosanna” knowing that the ultimate victory over death is at hand with Christ’s resurrection.



Reginald Heber

Missionary bishop to India, Reginald Heber (1783-1826) penned today’s Palm Sunday anthem text. Heber penned some of the most loved and familiar texts of English hymnody: *From Greenland’s Icy Mountains; Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; Bread of the World in Mercy Broken; God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven* among them.

Heber was born to a minister and his wife in an English village. It is said that by the age of five, he had read the Bible through and could give chapter and verse for Bible quotations. He schooled at Oxford, where he excelled at

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poetry and became fast friends with Sir Walter Scott. He began writing hymns when he succeeded his father as vicar in his family's parish, where he served for 16 years. It was there that he penned all 57 of his hymns, most of which were published after his death. He was appointed Bishop of Calcutta in 1823 and worked tirelessly for three years until the weather and travel took its toll on his health and he died of a stroke. He is buried at St. John's Church, Trichinopoly, Tamil Nadu, India.

Musically, composer Howard Helvey utilizes unison passages in the anthem for emphasis on the text, such as at the beginning on the joyful "Hosanna to the living Lord," continuing to "let heaven hosanna sing!" That is followed by five-part harmony on two distinctive repeats of "Hosanna, Lord!" Following those hosannas, the music breaks into four-part harmony, including some unaccompanied sections which are sung very quietly. There follow two more repetitions of "Hosanna, Lord!" The final section begins in unison and breaks into two parts with the sopranos and tenors and the altos and basses singing together—a somewhat unusual two-part pairing. The anthem closes on a fortissimo and deliberate Hosanna to the Lord!

Helvey (b. 1968), is active as a composer, arranger and pianist and serves as organist/choirmaster of the historic Calvary Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Nationally he is in frequent demand as a guest choral composer, conductor, and speaker. As a pianist, he has collaborated with distinguished artists in concerts and recordings of four-hand and two-piano literature.



Howard Helvey

Welcome to our Choraliars and Bible Blast children who are singing their joyful hosannas this morning.

