



A CHILD'S PRAYER

Text by Siegfried Sassoon

Song for Voice and Piano
by

Cyril Bradley Rootham

VOCAL SCORE



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The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

Matthew W. Mehaffey

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Source Information

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Vocal Score:

Royal College of Music Library

Oxford University, Bodleian Music Section, Weston Library

Royal Academy of Music Library

Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation

Unknown

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Reference Material and Software

Notation Software: Finale v. 26 *Audio Software:* Garritan Personal Orchestra 5 *Graphic Software:* Adobe Photoshop CS5

Document Software: Adobe In Design CS5 *Music Notation Reference:* Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

Cyril Bradley Rootham (5 October 1875 - 18 March 1938) was born in Redland, Bristol, to Daniel Wilberforce Rootham and Mary Rootham (née Gimblett Evans). His father was a well-known singing teacher whose students included Clara Butt, Eva Turner and Elsie Griffin, and he was also a director of the Bristol Madrigal Society.

After attending Bristol Grammar School, Rootham initially entered St John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar in 1894 to study classics. Graduation in 1897 was followed by a second bachelor's degree, this time in music, which he completed in 1900. Rootham continued his musical education at the Royal College of Music where he studied under Marmaduke Barton, Walter Parratt, Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford, among others.

Rootham's first professional appointment was as organist of Christ Church, Hampstead, where in 1898 he succeeded the composer Walford Davies. This was followed by a brief period as organist at St. Asaph Cathedral in north Wales in 1901. In the same year, Rootham was appointed organist at St John's College, Cambridge, a post he held until the end of his life.

In 1909, Rootham married Rosamond Margaret Lucas who supplied him with support and encouragement. Their son Jasper St John Rootham was born in 1910.

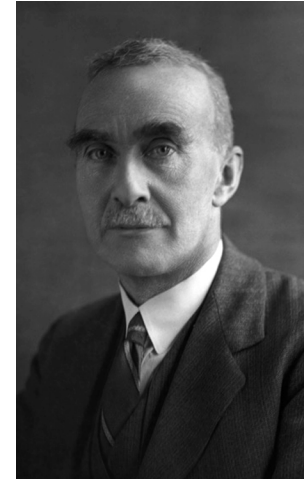
In 1912, Rootham became conductor of the Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS). Under his enterprising leadership and programming, the CUMS exerted a significant influence on English musical life of the time. Rootham revived Handel oratorios, Mozart operas and other currently neglected works by Purcell and others. E. J. Dent and others are usually credited with the textual preparation, but Rootham was responsible for their musical success. The CUMS concerts also promoted modern music such as Zoltán Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*, Arthur Honegger's *Le roi David* and Ildebrando Pizzetti's Mass and Piano concerto, all led by Rootham. In 1930 Rootham invited several contemporary composers to the concert; Manuel de Falla, Kodály and Honegger attended, as did Kathleen Long. Rootham's genial manner and enviable physique (as a student he had excelled in athletics) made him highly popular amongst students. This popularity helped the success of the CUMS concerts, all of which were largely extracurricular.

In 1914 Rootham had become a Fellow of St John's after taking over the post of University Lecturer in Form and Analysis of Music. In 1924 he was made Senior Lecturer in Counterpoint and Harmony. Rootham was also a much appreciated teacher of orchestration. His many students included Arthur Bliss, Arnold Cooke, Christian Darnton, Armstrong Gibbs, Patrick Hadley, Walter Leigh, Basil Maine, Robin Orr, Bernard Stevens and Percy Young.

As much as he promoted the works of other composers, Rootham did relatively little to push his own compositions into the repertoire. He conducted the first performance of his opera *The Two Sisters* in 1922 and three years earlier his own setting of Laurence Binyon's *For the Fallen* (which sparked a controversy as Elgar's setting of the same poem was published shortly after Rootham's, though neither composer was individually responsible for starting the dispute). Rootham's continued involvement with the CUMS included a performance of Handel's *Semele* and the revival of the tradition of triennial performances of Greek plays with newly composed music, a tradition which continued even after his death.

Later in his life Rootham was plagued by illness. On developing progressive muscular atrophy following a stroke his active involvement in the CUMS was left to Boris Ord (from 1936). He completed a few works including *City in the West* and his three movement Second Symphony, the orchestration for which was completed by his close friend Patrick Hadley.

Rootham died in 1938, aged sixty-two, while still at the height of his creative powers.



A Child's Prayer

Siegfried Sassoon

For Morn, my dome of blue,
For Meadows, green and gay,
And Birds who love the twilight of the leaves,
Let Jesus keep me joyful when I pray.

For the big Bees that hum
And hide in bells of flowers'
For the winding roads that come
To Evening's holy door,
May Jesus bring me grateful to his arms,
And guard my innocence for evermore.

Siegfried Loraine Sassoon CBE MC (8 September 1886 – 1 September 1967) was an English poet, writer, and soldier. Decorated for bravery on the Western Front, he became one of the leading poets of the First World War. His poetry both described the horrors of the trenches and satirised the patriotic pretensions of those who, in Sassoon's view, were responsible for a jingoism-fuelled war. Sassoon became a focal point for dissent within the armed forces when he made a lone protest against the continuation of the war in his "Soldier's Declaration" of 1917, culminating in his admission to a military psychiatric hospital; this resulted in his forming a friendship with Wilfred Owen, who was greatly influenced by him. Sassoon later won acclaim for his prose work, notably his three-volume fictionalised autobiography, collectively known as the "Sherston trilogy".

Having lived for a period at Oxford, where he spent more time visiting literary friends than studying, he dabbled briefly in the politics of the Labour movement, and in 1919 took up a post as literary editor of the socialist Daily Herald. During his period at the Herald, Sassoon was responsible for employing several eminent names as reviewers, including E. M. Forster and Charlotte Mew, and commissioned original material from writers like Arnold Bennett and Osbert Sitwell. His artistic interests extended to music. While at Oxford he was introduced to the young William Walton, to whom he became a friend and patron. Walton later dedicated his Portsmouth Point overture to Sassoon in recognition of his financial assistance and moral support.

Sassoon was a great admirer of the Welsh poet Henry Vaughan. On a visit to Wales in 1923, he paid a pilgrimage to Vaughan's grave at Llansantffraed, Powys, and there wrote one of his best-known peacetime poems, "At the Grave of Henry Vaughan". The deaths within a short space of time of three of his closest friends – Edmund Gosse, Thomas Hardy and Frankie Schuster – came as another serious setback to his personal happiness.

At the same time, Sassoon was preparing to take a new direction. While in America, he had experimented with a novel. In 1928, he branched out into prose, with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, the anonymously-published first volume of a fictionalised autobiography, which was almost immediately accepted as a classic, bringing its author new fame as a prose writer. The memoir, whose mild-mannered central character is content to do little more than be an idle country gentleman, playing cricket, riding and hunting foxes, is often humorous, revealing a side of Sassoon that had been little seen in his work during the war years. The book won the 1928 James Tait Black Award for fiction. Sassoon followed it with *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) and *Sherston's Progress* (1936). In later years, he revisited his youth and early manhood with three volumes of genuine autobiography, which were also widely acclaimed. These were *The Old Century*, *The Weald of Youth* and *Siegfried's Journey*.

A Child's Prayer

Siegfried Sassoon

Cyril Bradley Rootham

1921

Andante tranquillo. (♩ = about 92)

Voice

Piano

pp

4

p

For Morn, my dome of blue, For Mea - dows, green and

8

gay, ——— And Birds who love the twi - light of the leaves, Let

12

Jes - sus keep me joy - ful when I pray.

16

For the big Bees that hum And hide in bells of

20

flowers; For the wind - ing roads that come To Eve - ning's ho - ly

24 *poco meno mosso*

door, May Jes - us bring me grate ful to his arms, And

poco meno mosso
pp

28 *poco rit.*

guard my in - no - cence for ev - er - more.

poco rit.
pp



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