

Green groweth the holly

Green groweth the holly,
So doth the ivy.
Though winter blasts blow never so high,
Green groweth the holly.

As the holly groweth green
And never changeth hue,
So I am, ever hath been,
Unto my lady true.

As the holly groweth green
With ivy all alone
When flowers cannot be seen
And greenwood leaves be gone,

Now unto my lady
Promise to her I make,
From all other only
To her I me betake.

*King Henry VIII
(1491–1547)*

I was asked by the Friends of Winchester Cathedral to write a new carol for the cathedral choir to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday. I chose a text that would make a double royal connection, *Green Grows the Holly* by King Henry VIII; hence my subtitle, 'The Royal Carol'. Although Henry was intending a secular poem, his use of imagery familiar to all carol singers permits a sacred interpretation of the words, as has often been the practice over centuries, especially with this particular Christian festival. Several of my commissions immediately prior to this had been war commemorations, full of anguish, pain and loss and, at the time of composition, I was engaged as a soloist in a staged production of Britten's intensely powerful War Requiem for English National Opera. I was desperate to write something for my own self as an antidote, celebrating love, beauty and the positivity of life. I wanted the choir to enjoy singing it, to revel in some rich harmonies and in the sonority of ensemble singing.

*Commissioned by The Friends of Winchester Cathedral to commemorate the
90th birthday of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.*

*First performed by Winchester Cathedral Choir on the
14th December 2018, conducted by Andrew Lumsden.*

Duration: c. 3 minutes

For my Mother on her own round-numbered birthday
and also for my older brother with admiration and love

Queen Elizabeth's Winchester Carol

King Henry VIII
Founder of the Church of England

Roderick Williams
(b.1965)

Gently flowing, very tender ♩ = 92

pp *dolciss.* *cresc.* *mf* *sempre cresc.*

Soprano
Green grow - eth the hol - ly, So does the i - vy.

Alto
Green grow - eth the hol - ly, So does the i - vy.

Tenor
Green grow - eth the hol - ly, So does the i - vy.

Bass
Green grow - eth the hol - ly, So does the i - vy.

Gently flowing, very tender ♩ = 92

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

6

f *poco dim.* *subito mp dim.* *p*

Though win-ter blasts blow ne-ver so high, Green grow-eth the hol-ly.

f *poco dim.* *subito mp dim.* *p*

Though win-ter blasts blow ne-ver so high, Green grow-eth the hol-ly.

f *poco dim.* *subito mp dim.* *p*

Though win-ter blasts blow ne-ver so high, Green grow-eth the hol-ly.

f *poco dim.* *subito mp dim.* *p*

Though win-ter blasts blow ne-ver so high, Green grow-eth the hol-ly.

11

pp *cresc.* *mf sempre cresc.*

As the hol-ly grow-eth green And ne-ver chan-geth hue,

pp *cresc.* *mf sempre cresc.*

As the hol-ly grow-eth green And ne-ver chan-geth hue,

pp *cresc.* *mf sempre cresc.*

As the hol-ly grow-eth green And ne-ver chan-geth hue,

pp *cresc.* *mf sempre cresc.*

As the hol-ly grow-eth green And ne-ver chan-geth hue,