

Exceeding glad

for SATB

Text from the
King James Bible

Roderick Williams

Allegro vivace ♩ = 168 (♩. = 56)

f Solo* (can be any voice part or the conductor) Tutti

S. Clapping

A. *f* Clapping

T. *f* (Tutti) Clapping

B. *f* Clapping

10

S.

A.

T.

B.

17

S. *mf* < *ff* *f* *mf* < *ff* *f* *mf* < *ff* *f* thigh slap

A.

T. *mf* < *ff* *f* *mf* < *ff* *f* (Beating on chest) r.h. l.h.

B. (Beating on chest) r.h. l.h. clap

A

Exceeding Glad was commissioned explicitly to reflect my personal experience of the Coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. I was extremely fortunate in being asked to perform at the event as well as to contribute some music. In the week leading up to Coronation Day, I was staying in the Westminster area, close to the Abbey, and was able to soak up the extraordinary, almost unreal atmosphere. It was in marked contrast to the air of dignified solemnity that had accompanied the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II the previous year; the Coronation was to be a celebration on a grand scale and spirits were high.

King Charles took a personal, close interest in the music for the whole occasion and commentators noted the breadth and diversity of his choice. The Ascension Gospel Choir made a memorable contribution to the service and certainly added to the joy of the occasion. This sense of joy was present in the noise and brilliance of the amalgamated musicians that day, also in the pealing of the Abbey bells. On the one hand, the day was a showcase for pageantry, precision and expertise; on the other it was one huge party.

A month to the day after the coronation, I was invited to a concert, to be attended by King Charles, at which the four Handel Coronation Anthems were performed. I was seated close enough to observe the King listening to this music and I couldn't help but wonder how the biblical texts, immortalized by Handel's genius centuries ago, would strike the present King. Might he also, as he listened again to *Zadok the Priest*, have been taken back to the moment of his anointment in Westminster Abbey one month previously? How the texts of these anthems must have resounded in his head, possibly in something of a blur. And how strange it felt for us in the audience to have the text and music of these four anthems focused so powerfully on one human being, present right in front of us.

All these reflections are contained within this short choral piece, which seeks to capture some of that joyous atmosphere.

Roderick Williams
February 2024

Duration: 5 minutes approx.

Commissioned by London Handel Festival

*First performed on 6 April 2024 at St Martin in the Fields, London,
by the Chamber Choir of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain,
conducted by Sofi Jeannin*