

# The Heavenly Anchorage

Songs for soprano and harp  
by James Cook

Abigail Smith soprano  
Elizabeth Scorah harp

EP  divine art

# The Heavenly Anchorage

|   |                                   |       |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | The Heavenly Anchorage            | 4.18  |
| 2 | The refulgent signatures of love  | 3.28  |
| 3 | Hope's richest Treasure           | 2.50  |
| 4 | How shall I hit my way to heaven? | 2.58  |
| 5 | Lullaby                           | 2.05  |
|   | total duration                    | 15.40 |

**Abigail Smith** soprano

**Elizabeth Scorah** harp

all compositions by **James Cook**  
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# The Music

The five songs in this programme are taken from James Cook's collection of thirty-six 'Songes and Ayres' (2007-2008) originally for high voice with harp/organ accompaniment but later orchestrated. All the texts of the songs, here recorded in their original versions, are extracts from the prose writings of a variety of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Christian authors commonly referred to as 'Puritans'.

The composer writes:

***The Heavenly Anchorage***, the first song in the album from which it takes its name originates as Songes and Ayres Book 2 No. 1. The words are by Richard Baxter (1615-1691), a prayer in which he expresses both a longing and a fear of death, this topic being a major theme of his prolific literary works and which is encapsulated in his 'Dying Thoughts' of 1683. Richard Baxter suffered from ill health all his life which he partly attributed to the over-eating of apples and pears scruiped from neighbours' orchards in his childhood.

***The refulgent signatures of love*** (Songes and Ayres Book 3 No. 1).

Again Richard Baxter is the source of the words together with Thomas Watson (1620-1686). Both writers wear their hearts on their sleeves and their words blend well together in this hymn in praise to Christian love.

***Hope's richest treasure*** (Songes and Ayres Book3 No. 2) contains words by another pair of authors – Thomas Brookes (1608-1680) and Thomas Case (1598-1682) – which express ardent longing for happy fulfilment in the heavenly life to come.

***How shall I hit my way to heaven?*** (Songes and Ayres Book 2 No. 7) comprises text by three different authors: Richard Alleine (1611-1691), Thomas Watson and George Swinnock (1627-1673). The words again share the theme of heavenly longing but this time with a more up energetic and rhythmic accompaniment.

***Lullaby*** (Songes and Ayres Book 3 No. 12) again has a text by Richard Baxter with additional words by Thomas Adams (1583-1656). The song shares the same preoccupation with death as *Heavenly Anchorage*, likening the body to a worn out lute cast aside for something better at life's end.

Musical puns and metaphors abound in the work of the Puritan writers and Richard Baxter compares his highly strung young wife Margaret to the strings of a lute (she sadly predeceased him in 1681). Although Richard Baxter's words date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century the musical language is more redolent of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the richness and emotion which are perhaps more colourfully perceived in the orchestrated versions.

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# The Musicians

**Abigail Smith** studied at The Royal Academy of Music where she received the Guinness Music in Community Prize. She has sung solo roles in several operas including premiers and has performed at venues such as The Wigmore Hall and St. Martins-In-The-Fields.

**Elizabeth Scorah** began to learn the harp at the age of six and progressed from The Purcell School to The Royal Academy of Music. She enjoys a busy and vibrant career as a freelance harpist and recently became a member of the group 4 Harps 4 Girls.

**James Cook** is a composer of orchestral music, songs, symphonies and a sacred music drama in three acts 'Dorothy', an extract of which has been recorded and is due for release by Amemptos Music in 2014.

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This collection was recorded on 21 July, 2009 at St. Mary's Church, Gilston, Hertfordshire  
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Produced by James Cook  
Booklet and cover design by Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)  
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**Elizabeth Scorah (left)**

**Abigail Smith (right)**



**James Cook**

# The Texts

## [1] The heavenly anchorage

O give me that peace, which says a soul who is so near the harbour, even the world of endless peace and love! I would desire that my soul may not pass with distrust and terror, but with suitable triumphant hopes, to endless pleasures. So call home this soul by the encouraging voice of love, that it may joyfully hear and say: It is my Father's voice.

*Richard Baxter (1615-1691)*

## [2] The refulgent signatures of love

\*Love is a lovely grace. 'Love thinketh no evil'. It puts the best interpretation upon another's words, for love is a well-wishes, and it is rare to speak ill of him we wish well to.

§Thou needest not look on heaven through a multiplying glass, open but one casement that love may look in. Do but speak out, and love can hear, do but reveal these things, and love can see, give it but a glimpse of the back parts of God. And thou wilt find thy self presently in another world.

\*Love is that which cements Christians together; It is the healer of division, and the hinderer of slander. It is not how much we do, but how much we love does love command the castle of your hearts?

*\*Thomas Watson (1620-1686)*

*§Richard Baxter (1615-1691)*

### [3] Hope's richest treasure

\*When you can sow your fields with grace and fill your barns with sheaves of saffron. When the Lord Jesus is your wine, the bosom of Christ your bed of love...not till then, you may write happiness upon these things. These are the pleasures which are forever more. Here you may find that which your soul seeketh for. Here is the mine, here is the vein, here is the spring of happiness, "Ever with the Lord".

§Hope's richest treasure, and choicest friends, and chiefest delights, and sweetest contents, are in the country above.

*\*Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

*§Thomas Case (1598-1680)*

### [4] How shall I hit my way to heaven?

^How shall I hit my way to heaven, to the right way that leads thitherwards?

By running the race looking to Jesus. Christians set their faces heavenward and there they bend their course. They are set for another country, for another world. The path of the just must shine more and more unto perfect day. Grace must be growing until it be swallowed up of glory.

§Life is made up of a few flying minutes, a taper, a vapour soon blown out.

\*A coming a going, a flood and an ebb, and then thou art in eternity.

*^Richard Alleine (1611-1691)*

*§Thomas Watson (1620-1686)*

*\*George Swinnock (1627-1673)*

## [5] Lullaby

\*I must depart from this body, it is but an instrument laid by,  
when all its work is done.

When his service is ended a servant is dismissed, when his work is done.

§The soul was not made for the body, as the lute is not made for the case, but the body for the soul, as box  
for the jewel. As I cast by my lute when I have better employment, it is only my shell and not my soul.

*\*Richard Baxter (1615-1691)*

*§Thomas Adams (1583-1656)*



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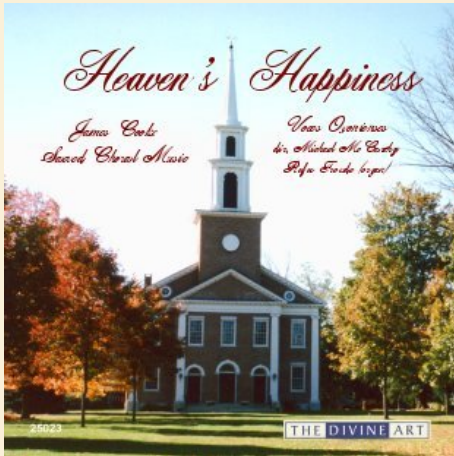
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## Music by James Cook also available from Divine Art

### Sacred choral works



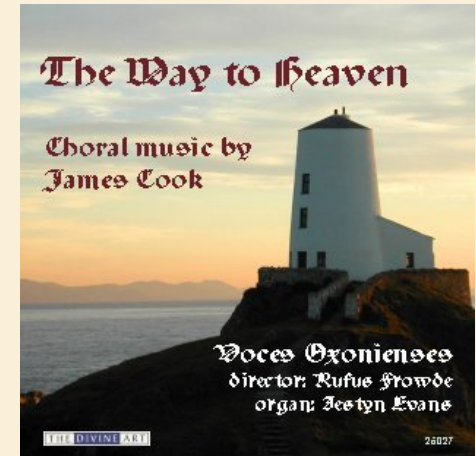
#### **Heaven's Happiness Divine Art DDA 25023**

Voces Oxonienses  
directed by Michael McCarthy  
organ: Rufus Frowde

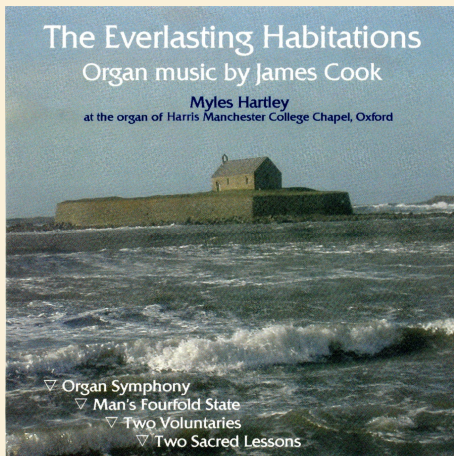
*"On the evidence of this disc James Cook writes sincere, accomplished and assured music. Strongly recommended" – John Quinn (MusicWeb)*

#### **The Way to Heaven Divine Art DDA 25027**

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*"Sincere and moving, written within the accommodating embrace of the Cathedral tradition... sung with total professional commitment" – Rob Barnett (MusicWeb)*

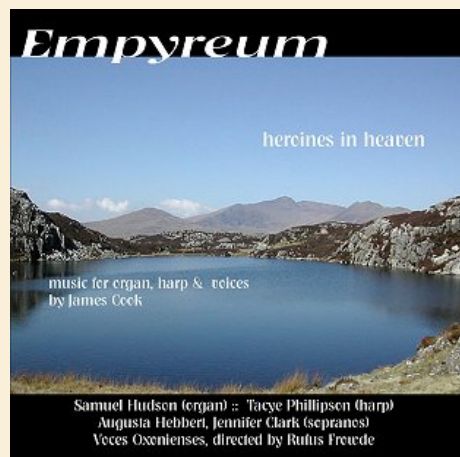


#### **The Everlasting Habitations Divine Art DDA 25031**

Myles Hartley (organ)

*"In [Cook's] organ works one might make a correlation with Messiaen. The [music] is realized in the organ's rich changing colours and sonorities. Myles Hartley is a very persuasive advocate... he is very well recorded indeed." ★★★ (outstanding)— Ivan March (Penguin Guide to Compact Discs)*

## Music for voices, organ and harp



### **Empyreum: Heroines in Heaven**

#### **Diversions DDV 24121**

Augusta Hebbert & Jennifer Clark (sopranos)

Voces Oxonienses, directed by Rufus Frowde

Tacye Phillipson (harp), Samuel Hudson (organ)

*"What is apparent is a sincerity of expression and a real desire to communicate... will prove both comforting and enjoyable." – Marc Rochester (International Record Review)*

### **From Wonderland to Heaven**

#### **Diversions DDV 24123**

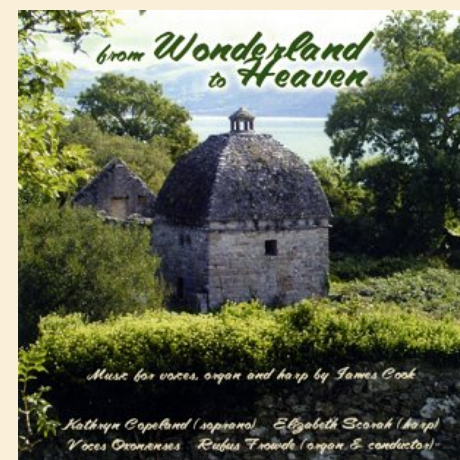
Kathryn Copeland (soprano)

Elizabeth Scolah (harp)

Rufus Frowde (organ)

Voces Oxonienses, directed by Rufus Frowde

*"Gives choral music fans something well out of the ordinary to enjoy. An interesting diversion for old music ears" – Chris Spector (Midwest Record)*



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#### **Divine Art DDA 21206 (2CD)**

Lucy Jack (contralto)

Samuel Hudson (organ)

Samuel Hayes (organ)

*"Clearly and idiomatically written for the organ, the music harks back to an earlier age of church music... this is not to deny the real beauty and emotional sincerity of these finely crafted reveries, meditations and celebrations." – Records International*



**Abigail Smith      Elizabeth Scolah**  
**during the recording sessions**