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Foreword

One hundred years ago, there occurred a landmark in hymn singing with the publication of *The English Hymnal*, edited by Ralph Vaughan Williams. In his preface Vaughan Williams wrote that “a tune has no more right to be dull than to be demoralizing.” I am sure that all of us would say “Amen” to that and, in the maelstrom of tunes composed in recent years, we would all do well to heed the venerable Vaughan Williams' words!

With the hymns of Ian Kellam, you have no worries about “dull and demoralizing.” Ian is a genius with tunes—making them feel wedded to their texts, and writing them in a way that makes them both singable and memorable. I remember the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Dominick Argento commenting to me after singing Ian's tune, *Carelle*, that “composing a good hymntune is the most challenging of all music composition, and Ian has it just right.”

I have known of Ian's choral and vocal music for more than 35 years, and have performed many of his works both in Sunday services at Plymouth Church and in concerts and recitals. In recent years he has taken up hymntunes, and now we can celebrate with this first edition in the USA. Singing an Ian Kellam hymn on a Sunday morning is something the congregation delights in, for he is certainly one of Plymouth's “hymn composers of choice”! I know you will enjoy this rich assortment of wonderful music, and so will your choir and congregation.

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Preface

As a chorister in Sheffield Cathedral for much of my boyhood, I became steeped in all the familiar hymns and anthems, and that has, I suppose, automatically influenced my own writings within the field of church music. I have been asked, “How much of an inspiration does the text play in the creation of a hymn melody”? and “How would I characterise my harmonic language”?

In the days when I was a student at the Royal Academy in London, we were supposed to follow the strictures of harmony as laid down in a book by a certain fellow called Kitson. I was not alone in finding such “laws” very restrictive in those days and, of course, already tossed to one side by most of the great composers of the time. I couldn’t see why consecutive fifths and/or octaves shouldn’t be used if they were a logical and expressive part of the structure of the harmony I was hearing, and often demanding to be part of such expression. Much that in those archaic pages was regarded as sinful dissonance, to be avoided at all costs, now passes unnoticed as an agreeable ingredient of harmony.

For me, colour plays a vital role. There are lovely shades of colour to be found in judicious use of some “dissonances” (7ths, 9ths, and so on), and further colour (and exploration) in moving away from the home key before returning. So much of this occurs in my hymn writing. I also enjoy the challenge of trying to write a complete shape within the limits of a few bars. So melody, colour, and shape are vital in the writing of my hymn tunes, but all must try to reflect and compliment the influence and paramount importance of the text.

I suppose I cannot get away from the fact that I’m an English composer, but I would like to think of my music as having a universal appeal, not simply one confined to the shores of this small island. So I suppose all I’m trying to do is to follow in what I like to think of as the long, “real” tradition of music for worship, and give choirs and congregations—and not forgetting all those wonderful, dedicated choir directors and organists—some enjoyable and uplifting tunes in celebration.

Ian Kellam
Chandlers Cottage, Moreton-in-Marsh
June 2005

15 The Spacious Firmament on High

Joseph Addison, 1672-1719

CARELLE L M D
Ian Kellam

1. The spa-cious fir - ma - ment on high, with all the
2. Soon as the eve-ning shades pre - vail, the moon takes
3. What though in sol-emn si - lence all move round the

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time. It features a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 1. The spa-cious fir - ma - ment on high, with all the; 2. Soon as the eve-ning shades pre - vail, the moon takes; 3. What though in sol-emn si - lence all move round the.

blue e - the - real sky, and span - gled heav'ns, a
up the won - drous tale, and night - ly to the
dark ter - res - trial ball? What though no re - al

The second system continues the musical score. The lyrics are: blue e - the - real sky, and span - gled heav'ns, a; up the won - drous tale, and night - ly to the; dark ter - res - trial ball? What though no re - al.

shin - ing frame, their great o - ri - gi - nal pro - claim. The un -
lis - t'ning earth re - peats the sto - ry of her birth; whilst
voice nor sound a - mid their ra - diant orbs be found? In

The third system concludes the musical score. The lyrics are: shin - ing frame, their great o - ri - gi - nal pro - claim. The un -; lis - t'ning earth re - peats the sto - ry of her birth; whilst; voice nor sound a - mid their ra - diant orbs be found? In.

wea - ried sun from day to day does his Cre - a - tor's
 all the stars that round her burn, and all the plan - ets
 rea - son's ear they all re - joice, and ut - ter forth a

pow'r dis - play, and pub - lish - es to ev - 'ry
 in their turn, con - firm the ti - dings as they
 glo - rious voice; for ev - er sing - ing as they

land the work of an al - might - y hand.
 roll, and spread the truth from pole to pole.
 shine, "The hand that made us is di - vine."

18 Sing Praise to God Who Spoke the Word

Percy Dearmer, 1867-1936, *alt.*

JUBILEE BRUNELLE 87 87 88 87
Ian Kellam

1. Sing praise to God, who spoke the word In
 2. For A - mos, of the proph - ets first The
 3. For Soc - ra - tes who, phrase by phrase, Talked
 4. For all the po - ets, who have wrought Through

dif - f'ring tongues and man - ners, For those great seers a -
 vast con - fu - sion rend - ing, Of man - y gods that
 us to truth, un - shrink - ing, And left for Pla - to's
 mu - sic, words, and vi - sion To tell the beau - ty

lone who heard, Writ truth up - on their
 blest or curst, To find one, good, tran -
 might - y grace To mold our ways of
 of God's thought By art's sub - lime pre -

ban - ners; For those who once blazed out the way, For
 scend - ing; For all who taught the world to rise Out
 think - ing; For all who wres - tled, sane and free, To
 ci - sion, Who bring our high - est dreams to shape And

those who still lead on to - day, To God be thanks, to
 of the old fa - mil - iar lies, To God be thanks, to
 win the un - seen réal - i - ty, To God be thanks, to
 help the soul to find es - cape, To God be thanks, to

God be thanks, to God be thanks and glo - ry.
 God be thanks, to God be thanks and glo - ry.
 God be thanks, to God be thanks and glo - ry.
 God be thanks, to God be thanks and glo - ry.