

Benjamin Britten's "Festival Te Deum" is a vibrant and celebratory choral work composed in 1944. The Te Deum is a Christian hymn of praise dating back to the 4th century, traditionally attributed to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. Britten's setting of the text captures the grandeur and exultation inherent in this ancient hymn.

The "Festival Te Deum" is typically scored for SATB choir and organ, though there are arrangements for orchestra as well. It is often performed in festive settings such as church services, concerts, and special events due to its uplifting and majestic character.

The piece is divided into sections that alternate between powerful choral passages and more intimate solo or semi-choral sections. Britten's use of harmony, texture, and dynamics creates a sense of awe and reverence, highlighting the text's themes of gratitude, praise, and devotion.

Overall, the "Festival Te Deum" stands out as a dynamic and joyful addition to the choral repertoire, showcasing Britten's mastery of choral writing and his ability to infuse ancient texts with modern vitality and expression.

## *THE ROBERT SHAW CHORALE*

*Benjamin Britten  
A Ceremony of Carols  
Rejoice in the Lamb  
Festival Te Deum*



"A Ceremony of Carols" is a renowned composition by the English composer Benjamin Britten. It's a choral piece that is particularly associated with Christmas, although its themes and melodies can be appreciated year-round. The work is scored for treble voices (usually performed by a choir of boys or women), harp, and occasionally additional percussion.

The piece is divided into multiple movements, each showcasing Britten's skill in combining medieval and modern musical elements. One of the most famous movements is "This Little Babe," which features rhythmic energy and intricate interplay between the voices and the harp.

"A Ceremony of Carols" is celebrated for its ethereal beauty, intricate harmonies, and the way it captures both the spirit of Christmas and the timeless quality of medieval music. It's a favorite among choirs and audiences alike for its unique blend of old and new musical styles.

"Rejoice in the Lamb" is another notable choral work by Benjamin Britten. It's based on a poem by Christopher

Smart, an 18th-century English poet, and was composed in 1943. The full title of the work is "Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam."

The piece is scored for four soloists (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass), SATB choir, and organ. It's known for its challenging vocal lines, intricate harmonies, and expressive text setting. The text itself is quite unique and eccentric, reflecting Smart's own experiences and religious fervor.

The poem "Rejoice in the Lamb" celebrates the glory of God through the lens of various eccentricities and quirks, including praise for God's creations such as mice, flowers, and musical instruments. Each section of the poem reflects a different aspect of Smart's devotion and unique perspective on the world.

Britten's musical setting enhances the text's eccentricity and fervor, with contrasting sections that range from jubilant and energetic to contemplative and introspective. The work has become a staple in the choral repertoire, admired for its complexity and the way it brings Smart's poetic vision to life through music.

# *THE ROBERT SHAW CHORALE*

*Benjamin Britten*

*A Ceremony of Carols*

*Rejoice in the Lamb*

*Festival Te Deum*

**1 A Ceremony Of Carols 22:11**

**2 Rejoice In The Lamb 25:21**

**3 Festival Te Deum 7:02**

Released by RCA 1964    Engineer – Anthony Salvatore    Producer – Joseph Habig

The Robert Shaw Chorale perform Britten



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