## Four 17th Century Anthems:

Weelkes Hosanna to the Son of David (??)
Tomkins O Sing unto the Lord (? before 1625) Purcell Hear my Prayer Z. 15 (1680-82)
Gibbons
O Clap your hands (1622)
Arranged for Wind Octet by Toby Miller (2019)

Weelkes: for 6 voices, words from Matthew 21 \& Luke 19
Tomkins: for 7 voices, words from Psalm 149 vv. 1-2
Purcell: for 8 voices, words from Psalm 102 v. 1
Gibbons: for 8 voices, words from Psalm 47 (ex. v. 9 pt 1)
(see notes at end of score)

Thomas Weelkes
Thomas Tomkins
Henry Purcell
Orlando Gibbons
(?1575-1623)
(1572-1656)
(1659-1695)
(1583-1625)

## Hosanna to the Son of David

Score (instrumental pitch)
arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller
Weelkes





O Sing Unto the Lord
Score (instrumental pitch)
transcr. for wind octet by Toby Miller
Tomkins














Score (instrumental pitch)












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These 4 anthems were all written in England in the 17th century (probably: those by Weelkes and Tomkins are not dateable and could conceivably be earlier). These composers were of the same generation as Gibbons; Purcell however was not born till three years after the death of Tomkins. Thomas Tomkins was the great survivor, despite suffering personally and professionally from the Civil War (referred to in his Sad Pavan; for these Distracted Times) and Cromwell's destruction of the established church and its musical apparatus. It has been argued that the longevity of Tomkins, along with the relatively short break in the functioning of the Chapel Royal during the Cromwell years, were the major factors in ensuring that the English choral tradition did not die out, unlike those of much of continental Europe. A large collection of Tomkins' music was supervised by his son Nathaniel for publication as Musica Deo Sacra after the Restoration in 1668, by which time his already old-fashioned musical style would have seemed very odd outside England. O Sing Unto the Lord builds to a climax of false relations in the final Alleluias. About the life of Thomas Weelkes we know little beyond unflattering detail in the records of Chichester Cathedral, where he was organist and master of the choristers for most of 20 years. He seems to have become an alcoholic and was sacked for unauthorised absence and rowdy behaviour; having been reinstated, he peed on the Dean from the organ loft... Today he is best known for his madrigals, which show Italian influence; his church music is more conservative (his 7-part anthem O Lord Arise clearly borrows from Tomkins' O Sing Unto the Lord), but this Hosanna is a dramatic piece also still frequently performed today. Orlando
Gibbons was a musical genius whose life was cut short by his sudden death in 1625 at age 41. Already 20 years earlier he had been appointed senior organist at the Chapel Royal, with the older Tomkins as his assistant. O Clap your Hands was (appropriately) written to be performed at the ceremony in 1622 where he and a friend were awarded the title of

Doctor of Music at Oxford, and possibly also to fulfil the requirements. Some performances take the whole piece at a uniform fast speed but I have suggested more light and shade in pace as well as dynamics. The three older pieces alternate polyphonic writing (all parts entering independently, imitating each other) with sections that are homophonic (entering together in chords - Weelkes) or antiphonal (half the parts answering the other
half - Tomkins and Gibbons). So I suggest that the 'first' players sit opposite the
'seconds', rather than in the normal octet formation by pairs of instruments. Hear My Prayer by Henry Purcell stands somewhat apart from the other pieces by its later composition (1680-82), although still written in old-fashioned polyphonic style. It is the opening of an unfinished work (space was left in the manuscript), but despite this stands alone as a masterpiece of word setting - the most powerful 37 bars of music I have ever heard, its dissonances building slowly to an unbearable climax. Play it slowly ( $21 / 2$ minutes is a typical timing) and pay great attention to blend of sound and equal articulation in all parts, as well as control of dynamics over the whole arc of the piece.

