

Matthew Prior, "Hymn to the Sun"

Description

MATTHEW PRIOR

"Hymn to the Sun"

Set by Dr. PURCEL,
And Sung before their Majesties on New-Year's Day, 1693/4.

Light of the World, and Ruler of the Year,
With happy Speed begin thy great Career;
And, as thou dost thy radiant Journeys run,
Through every distant Climate, own,
That in fair *Albion* thou hast seen 5
The greatest Prince, the brightest Queen,
That ever sav'd a Land, or blest a Throne,
Since first thy Beams were spread, or Genial Power was known.

So may thy Godhead be confest,
So the returning Year be blest, 10
As its Infant Months bestow
Springing Wreaths for *William's* Brow;
As its Summers Youth shall shed
Eternal Sweets around *Maria's* Head:
From the Blessings they bestow, 15
Our Times are dated, and our *Aera's* move;
They govern, and enlighten all below,
As Thou dost all above.

Let our Hero in the War
Active and fierce, like Thee, appear; 20
Like Thee, great Son of *Jove*, like Thee,
When clad in rising Majesty
Thou marchest down o'er *Delos* Hills confest,
With all thy Arrows arm'd, in all thy Glory drest.
Like Thee, the Hero does his Arms imploy, 25
The raging *Python* to destroy,
And give the injur'd Nations Peace and Joy.

From fairest Years, and Times more happy Stores,
Gather all the smiling Hours;
Such as with friendly Care have guarded 30

Patriots and Kings in rightful Wars;
Such as with Conquest have rewarded
Triumphant Victors happy Cares;
Such as Story has recorded
Sacred to *Nassau*'s long Renown, 35
For Countries sav'd, and Battels won.

March them again in fair Array,
And bid them form the happy Day,
The happy Day design'd to wait
On *William*'s Fame, and *Europe*'s Fate. 40
Let the happy Day be crown'd
With great Event and fair Success;
No brighter in the Year be found,
But that which brings the Victor home in Peace.

Again Thy Godhead we implore, 45
(Great in Wisdom as in Power,)
Again, for good *Maria*'s Sake, and ours,
Chuse out other smiling Hours;
Such as with joyous Wings have fled,
When happy Counsels were advising; 50
Such as have lucky Omens shed
O'er forming Laws, and Empires rising;
Such as many Courses ran,
Hand in Hand a goodly Train,
To bless the great *Eliza*'s Reign; 55
And in the Typic Glory show,
What fuller Bliss *Maria* shall bestow.

As the solemn Hours advance,
Mingled send into the Dance,
Many fraught with all the Treasures, 60
Which thy Eastern Travel views;
Many wing'd with all the Pleasures,
Man can ask, or Heaven diffuse.
That great *Maria* all those Joys may know,
Which from her Cares upon her Subjects flow. 65

For Thy own Glory sing our Sovereign's Praise
(God of Verses and of Days,)
Let all Thy tuneful Sons adorn
Their lasting Work with *William*'s Name;
Let chosen Muses yet unborn 70
Take great *Maria* for their future Theam:
Eternal Structures let Them raise,
On *William*'s and *Maria*'s Praise:
Nor want new Subject for the Song,

Nor fear they can exhaust the Store,
 â??Till Natureâ??s Musick lyes unstrung;
â??Till thou great God shalt lose thy double Powâ??r;
And touch thy Lyre, and shoot thy Beams no more.

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NOTES:

Subtitle *Dr. PURCEL* Henry Purcell (c.1659-1695), â??English composer of the middle Baroque period, most remembered for his more than 100 songsâ??• (*Britannica*); *Their Majesties* William and Mary, reigned jointly 1689-1694; after Maryâ??s death, William reigned alone until 1702 (*Britannica*).

5 Albion â??The nation of Britain or England, often with reference to past times, or to a romanticized concept of the nationâ??• (*OED*).

8 Genial â??Pleasantly warm or temperateâ??• (*OED*).

21 Son of Jove Mars, the Roman god of war, son of Jupiter and Juno (*OCD*).

23 Delos Remote Greek island where Leto gave birth to Apollo (*OCD*).

26 Python A huge serpent in Greek mythology, slain by Apollo at Delphi (*Britannica*).

35 Nassauâ??s A reference to William III, whose Dutch title was Prince of Orange-Nassau (*Britannica*).

55 Elizaâ??s Reign Queen Elizabeth I, reigned 1558-1603.

60 fraught â??Filled; equipped withâ??• (*OED*).

70 Muses A reference to future poets.

78 Lyre â??A musical instrument of ancient Greeceâ??• (*Britannica*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1709), pp. 39-43. [HathiTrust]

Edited by Eric Sandoval