

# Holy, Holy, Holy

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2

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

Reginald Heber, an Anglican clergyman, wrote the hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” for use on Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost. Part of Heber’s collection of hymns for use with the Anglican Church calendar, “Holy, Holy, Holy” was acclaimed by the British Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, as “the world’s greatest hymn.” It is perhaps the best known of more than 50 hymn texts by Heber. (Others include “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains,” and “Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning.”)

The son of an Anglican rector, Heber came from an illustrious Tory family noted through generations for loyalty to Church and crown. During his years at Oxford, he distinguished himself in the study of Latin and Greek and was elected in 1804 a Fellow of All Souls College. He cultivated his interest in literature and writing in correspondence with Sir Walter Scott, Robert Southey and others but devoted most of his time to the study of theology. Ordained in 1807, Heber was appointed by his older brother to the church at Hodnet, his family living. In Hodnet, Heber wrote his hymns.

Heber made congregational singing a priority. An Anglican with impeccable theological and social credentials, he helped make congregational song respectable in the Anglican Church. Dismayed by the quality and apparent irrelevance of psalm singing to the sermon and liturgy, he began writing and collecting hymns with the goal of preparing a hymnal organized around the Church of England’s Church Year. He sought (unsuccessfully) official sanction for a collection of hymns. Heber held strong opinions about the language of hymns, objecting vehemently to addressing God “with ditties of embraces and passion, or in language which it would be disgraceful in an earthly sovereign to endure.” His growing corpus of hymns modeled his conviction that such expressions were always “profane.”

Meanwhile, Heber’s many abilities brought him Church preferment. In 1823, he was named Bishop of Calcutta, a jurisdiction which then stretched as far as New Zealand. In the midst of a grueling but rewarding schedule, Heber continued to write hymns and to work on a hymnal. “Holy, Holy, Holy” was first published in 1826, the year of Heber’s premature death, in *A Selection of Psalms and Hymns for the Parish Church of Banbury*. The hymn appeared again in Heber’s posthumous collection, *Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year* (1827). It has been sung in the United States at least since 1850 when it was included in *Cantica Laudis, or The American Book of Church Music*.

Since the publication of the first edition of

*Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861, the text “Holy, Holy, Holy” has consistently been set to the tune NICAEA. Composed by John Bacchus Dykes, a child prodigy who at the age of ten became the organist at his father’s parish church in Kingston upon Hull, NICAEA was written especially for “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Dykes was born in 1823, the year Heber left England for Calcutta. He studied at Cambridge, took ordination in 1847, continued his education in music at the University of Durham, and served various Durham congregations. The Oxford Movement, with its High Church tendencies and revitalization of Anglican worship, beckoned Dykes who soon became one of its principal composers. He provided some 300 singable tunes for England’s prolific hymn writers. Dykes’ tunes quickly became standard repertory for major American hymnals.

From its first publication in North America in 1850, “Holy, Holy, Holy” set to NICAEA has been included in more than 1,200 American hymnals. In the vast majority, the text and tune are identical to the definitive rendering in the 1861 English hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. Over the years, Americans have also published the hymn many times in translation, most frequently in German, Swedish and Spanish. Many constituencies, some surprising—Liberal Catholics (1921), Unitarians (1857), Jehovah’s Witnesses (1921), Swedenborgians (1899)—have at one time or another adapted this text and tune for use in worship.

K. Lee Scott

K. Lee Scott (b.1950) is widely known throughout the United States as a conductor and composer of choral music. His more than 250 published compositions, arrangements, and editions are represented in the catalogues of 15 publishing companies. In addition to many choral works, he has written an opera and has published works for organ, solo voice, and brass.

A graduate of the University of Alabama School of Music with two degrees in choral music under the tutelage of Frederick Prentice, Scott has served as an adjunct faculty member at both the University of Alabama School of Music and the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Music. His appearances as guest conductor and clinician have taken him throughout the United States, to Canada, and Africa.

This hymn arrangement is sponsored by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187, through a grant from The Lilly Endowment. The ISAE exists to encourage and support research on evangelical Christianity in North America.

# Holy, Holy, Holy

SATB, organ, opt. congregation, brass quartet, timpani, and percussion

Isaiah 6:3; hymn text Reginald Heber, 1827, alt.

NICAEA, John B. Dykes, 1862;  
setting by K. Lee Scott, 2000

With great drama (♩=88)

The musical score is written for SATB choir, organ, and optional instruments. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'With great drama' with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The score begins with a piano introduction in the organ part, featuring a series of triplet chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand, marked *f marcato*. The organ part includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'Ho - ly!' on a long note. The organ accompaniment continues with triplet patterns. The score includes a large diagonal watermark that reads 'FOR REVIEW ONLY'.

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4

7

*marcato* 3

LORD God Al - might - y! Heav - en and earth are full of thy

*marcato* 3

10

glo - ry, heav - en and earth are full of thy glo - ry!

13

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 4-7) features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 8-10) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 11-13) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The fourth system (measures 14-16) shows the piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *marcato* and articulation marks like accents and slurs. There are also triplet markings (3) and a star symbol (\*) above a measure in the piano part.

\* Play cue-size notes in the absence of brass.

Ⓐ Broadly (♩=88)

5

*f* Unison choir + opt. cong.

16

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly,

19

ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y! Ear - ly in the

23

morn - ing our song shall rise to thee; ho - ly, ho - ly,

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6

27

ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y! God in three

31

(B)

Per - sons, bless - ed Tri - ni - ty.

*f* T.B. + opt. cong. men

2 Ho - ly, ho - ly,

*mf*

Ped. *f*

35

ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee, cast - ing down their

39

gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea; cher - u - bim and

43

ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,

46

who wert, and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.

© *mf* Choir only

50

S.A.

3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Though the dark - ness

T.B.

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8  
53

hide — thee, though the eye of — sin - full - ness — thy

Musical notation for measures 53-55, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

56

glo - ry may not see; on - ly thou — art —

Musical notation for measures 56-58, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

59

ho - ly; — there is none be - side — thee, — *f* per -

Musical notation for measures 59-61, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

62

per - fect in power in —  
- - fect in — power — in — love — and — pur - i - ty.

per - fect — in power — in —

Musical notation for measures 62-64, including vocal line and piano accompaniment.

omit when timp. is used

Ped. *f*

Musical notation for measures 65-67, including piano accompaniment and a trill.

D

67 *f* Unison choir + opt. cong.

4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

71 All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and

74 Descant (Soprano + Tenor) *poco rit.* *a little slower*

Unison choir + opt. cong.

sea; ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly!

*ff marcato* *poco rit.* *a little slower*

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10

77

Mer - ci - ful and might - y! God in three

Mer - ci - ful and might - y! God in three

80

per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

83 **E**

86 S.A. *mf* *smoothly* 3 3 *p*  
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Ho - ly,  
 T.B. *mf* *smoothly* 3 3 *p*  
 Ho - - - - - ly!  
*mp* *legato* 3 3 *p*

89 *pp* *rall.*  
 ho - ly, ho - - - ly!  
*pp*

*pp* *rall.*