

Processionals

45. Prince of Denmark's March

Jeremiah Clarke
(1673-1707)
arr. William Melton

Clarke, Jeremiah

(c. 1674 perhaps in London; died 1 December 1707 in London)

A boy chorister at the Chapel Royal, Clarke was probably a pupil of John Blow. The young man was engaged as organist at Winchester College in 1692. In 1700 he was made a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and four years afterwards became co-organist there (with William Croft). Later posts included those of vicar-choral at St. Paul's and private music tutor to Queen Anne. This last was extremely well paid and brought Clarke into the orbit of the royal court. It would prove his downfall: his own depressive bent was rumoured to have been worsened by an infatuation for a lady of the court, and the unhappy Clarke shot himself. Despite the innuendos in the penny press that followed, Clarke's body was given a dignified burial in the crypt at St. Paul's on 7 December 1797.

Clarke left a quantity of works both sacred and secular, his employment as 'Composer of the Musick to the Theatre Royall' from 1696 to 1707 coexisting peacefully with his church positions. His creations included numerous stage works, incidental and occasional music (he was the first composer to set John Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*), religious music (services, cantatas, twenty anthems, odes), songs and keyboard pieces. One of the latter was 'The Prince of Denmark's March, Round O [Rondeau]', first published in the collection *A Choice Collection of Avres for the Harpsichord* (London: Young, 1700). Widely known as the 'Trumpet Voluntary', it was erroneously attributed to Henry Purcell in a volume of William Sparkes' *Short Pieces for the Organ* and in Sir Henry Wood's popular version for trumpet solo. The roots of the confusion may possibly be traced to Clarke's work with Purcell's younger brother Daniel on *The Island Princess* (which included a well known 'Trumpet Tune in D' that was also long attributed to Henry Purcell). Music historians eventually settled the question of authorship,

and Jeremiah Clarke regained credit for a work which has so often been performed at weddings and other formal ceremonies. Dr. Charles Burney praised Clarke for a style that was as 'elegant as any music of that period'.

Text by William Melton