

Pride Motets

for SATB voices (divisi) and piano

Christopher Churcher

(2025)



Sonnet 16

*poem by Richard Barnfield
(language adapted by the composer)*

Long have I long'd to see my love againe
Still have I wish'd, but never could obtaine it;
Rather than all the world (if I might gaine it)
Would I desire my love's sweet precious gaine.
Yet in my soule I see him everie day,
See him, and see his still sterne countenance,
But, ah, what is of long continuance,
Where majestie and beautie beares the sway?
Sometimes, when I imagine that I see him,
(as love is full of foolish fantasies)
Thinking to kiss his lips, as my love's fees,
I feel but aire: nothing but aire to be him.
Thus, kiss I clouds in vaine:
Thus, feel I endles paine.

Jesus at the Gay Bar (extract) *text by Jay Hulme*

my beautiful child
there is nothing in this heart of yours
that ever needs to be healed.

i carry your heart with me *poem by e.e. cummings*

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)
i fear
no fate(for you are my fate, my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

Composed between April 2023 - 2025
Premiere 8/6/25 by Somerville College Choir

Pride Motets

a choral cycle for SATB voices (divisi) and piano

- i - my love (7)
- ii - my beautiful (3)
- iii - my heart (5)

Total duration: **ca.15'**

Composer's Note

Pride Motets began with a setting of e.e. cummings' poem "I carry your heart with me", written for the Pride Contemplation at Somerville College in June 2023. It was a short piece, but one that really resonated with the choir. Later that year, the Choir of York Minster asked me to write something for their Pride Compline, and from that commission the idea for a larger project emerged: a short cycle of pieces for Pride Month, drawing together different aspects of the queer experience through choral music. The result was *Pride Motets*: three movements, each setting a text that speaks to queer life in some way. Rather than a grand statement, these pieces are personal reflections on love, heartbreak, shame, longing, resilience, self-acceptance and joy.

The cycle opens with a sonnet by Richard Barnfield, written at the turn of the seventeenth century. From the first time I read it, I knew it had to begin the cycle. The language is tender and direct, and—remarkably, given its date—open in its portrayal of same-sex love. It captures both the pain of unrequited love and the quiet shame that can so often accompany queer longing. The second movement acts as a pivot. It sets a short extract from Jay Hulme's "Jesus in the Gay Bar"—a brief but powerful declaration of unconditional love. The final movement is my setting of e.e. cummings. For me, this poem is one of the most moving declarations of love in the English language. In a queer context, it takes on an added resonance: a celebration of being able to express vulnerability, devotion and trust for your lover; the joy of loving openly and freely.

The first movement ends with a baritone solo, supported by soft, sustained choral textures. These background lines should remain light and understated—present, but never drawing attention away from the solo line. The second movement opens with short aleatoric fragments, marked "a few voices". These should be sung by a small group of around six to eight singers. The entries should feel natural and unforced, emerging imperceptibly, like gentle voices murmuring out of earshot.

Christopher Churcher

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for Ollie Barker

i -

my love

Richard Barnfield (1574-1620)

Christopher Churcher
b.2004

With momentum, but never hurried ♩ = 96

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

mf

mp dolce

Long

5

S

A

T

B

mp dolce

Long

Long

Long

9 *mf dolce* *mp* *mp*

S Long Long

A *mf* *mp* *mp* Long

T

B

13 *p* Long *mp* *p* Long *p* Long *p* Long

S Long Long Long Long

A Long Long Long Long

T Long Long Long Long

B Long Long Long Long

The musical score is for a SATB choir and piano. It consists of two systems, measures 9-12 and 13-16. The key signature has four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat). The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in both hands. The vocal parts have various dynamics and phrasing marks. A large watermark 'Not for performance' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

ii -

my beautiful

Jay Hulme (b.1997)

Tranquil ♩ = 68

p dolce 3 *each singer sings phrase independently and in own rhythm*

A Few Voices

my beau - ti - ful

p dolce 3 *each singer sings phrase independently and in own rhythm*

my beau - ti - ful

S
A

ca. 30 seconds

my beau - ti - ful child

T
B

Tranquil ♩ = 68

ppp

Piano

7

Choir

p 3 *mp* 3 *mf* **Tutti** *mf*

my beau - ti - ful child

my beau - ti - ful child

there is

With a sense of wonder $\text{♩} = 68$

13 *p sub.* *cresc. sempre poco a poco*

S. no - - - thing, there is no - - - thing

A. *p sub.* *cresc. sempre poco a poco*

A. no - - - thing, no - - - thing,

T. *p sub.* *cresc. sempre poco a poco* *mp*

T. no - - - thing, no - - - thing, there is

B. *p sub.* *cresc. sempre poco a poco*

B. no - - - thing, no - - - thing,

17 *mp cresc.* *mf* *f* *meno*

S. no - - - thing, there is no - - - thing in this

A. *mp cresc.* *mf* *f* *meno*

A. no - - - thing, no - - - thing in this

T. *mf* *f* *meno*

T. no - - - thing, no - - - thing in this

B. *mp* *mf* *f* *meno*

B. no - - - thing, no - - - thing in this

21 *f warm* *p* *pp* *mp semplice*

S. heart of yours that e - ver needs, that

A. *f warm* *p* *pp* *mp semplice*

A. heart of yours that e - ver needs, that

T. *f warm* *p* *pp* *mp semplice*

T. heart of yours that e - ver needs, that

B. *f warm* *p* *pp* *mp semplice*

B. heart of yours that e - ver needs, that

iii -
my heart

e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

Tender $\text{♩} = 58$

Choir 1

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts for Choir 1, featuring *pp* dynamics and *ooh* vocalizations.

Choir 2

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts for Choir 2, featuring *pp* dynamics and *ooh* vocalizations.

Piano

Piano accompaniment, featuring *p* and *pp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

4

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts for Choir 1, featuring *p* and *mp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) parts for Choir 1, featuring *p* and *mp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts for Choir 2, featuring *p* and *mp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) parts for Choir 2, featuring *p* and *mp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

Piano (Pno.)

Piano accompaniment, featuring *p* and *mp* dynamics, and *sim.* (sostenuto) markings.

i car - ry your heart with me

i car - ry your heart with me

i car - ry your heart with me

7

S
A

car - ry it in my heart)

T
B

car - ry it in my heart)

mp *p*

my *p*
my

S
A

p my heart

T
B

p my heart

Pno.

Red *Red sim.*

10

S
A

heart

T
B

heart

pp *mf* 3

(a - ny - where i go you go, my

S
A

mp i am ne - ver with - out it

T
B

mp i am ne - ver with - out it

Pno.

pp sempre leggiero