

by her that ys yowrs

for mezzo soprano and piano

Christopher Churcher

(2025)



Composed October 2025

First performance: 7/02/2026 by Isabella Bartels (mezzo soprano) and Ashley Wagner (piano)

by her that ys yowrs

for mezzo soprano and piano

My Lord I send you my most humble and hearty commendations, being desirous know how ye have done since I saw you. I pray you be not offended with me in that I send sooner to you than I said I would [...] I would not have you to think that this mine honest goodwill towards you to proceed of any sudden motion or passion. For as truly as God is God, my mind was fully bent the other time I was at liberty to marry you before any man I knew. Howbeit, God withstood my will therein most vehemently for a time and, through His grace and goodness, made that possible which seemeth to me most impossible [...] If I live, I shall declare it to you myself. I can say nothing but, as my Lady of Suffolk saith, "God is a marvelous man."

By her that is yours to serve and obey during her life,
Kateryn, the quene, KP

Catherine Parr (1512-1548)

Total duration: *ca.* 7'

Composer's Note

This piece was written as a companion to Libby Larsen's song cycle *Try Me, Good King*. Larsen's cycle sets five texts drawn from the final letters and gallows speeches of the first five of Henry VIII's first wives, but it omits the words of his sixth: Catherine Parr, who outlived him.

My song sets words from Parr's letter to Lord Thomas Seymour dated February 1547. Seymour was Parr's great, tragic love. Before Henry VIII caught her attention, she and Seymour had already fallen deeply in love, and Parr writes in this letter that she would have married him before the king had it not been for the will of God. After Henry's death in January 1547, the newly widowed queen was at last free to determine her own future. She and Seymour soon reunited and secretly married.

Although Parr died not long afterwards, in 1548, my setting seeks to convey not only her turmoil and tribulation in overcoming adversity and negotiating the difficult position of Queen of England, but also the peace and happiness of having survived and emerged into a freer, happier life. Heard after Larsen's cycle, it offers a gentle and reflective conclusion to the work.

Christopher Churcher

© 2025 Christopher Churcher
www.christopherchurcher.com

by her that ys yowrs

A Dramatic Scene for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Catherine Parr (1512-1548)

Christopher Churcher

(b.2004)

With urgency ♩ = 98

Mezzo-Soprano

Piano

pp

con Sord.

p

My Lord

4

S. Solo

Pno.

I send you my most hu -

8

S. Solo

Pno.

- mble and hear ty com - men - da - ti - ons,

12

S. Solo

Pno.

mp

be - ing

mf *mp*

p cresc.

15 *mf*

S. Solo

de - si - rous to know how

Pno.

(b) ∞ :

18 *mp* *p*

S. Solo

ye have done since I saw you.

Pno.

p

21

S. Solo

(b) ∞

Pno.

24 *pp* *pp*

S. Solo

I pray you

Pno.

pp

27

S. Solo

be not of - fen - ded with me

Pno.

mp

p

30

S. Solo

in that I send soo - ner

Pno.

pp

p

33

S. Solo

than I said I

Pno.

37

S. Solo

would.

Pno.

pp

41 *mp*

S. Solo

I would not_ have_ you to think_ that

Pno. *mp*

44

S. Solo

this_ mine_ ho - nest_ good - will to -

Pno.

46 *mf*

S. Solo

wards you to pro -

Pno. *mf*

48 *f*

S. Solo

ceed_ of a - ny sud - den_

Pno.

ad lib. 5

f marcato

50

S. Solo

Pno.

f

mf

mo -

52

S. Solo

Pno.

f

molto accel.

tion or pas-sion.

cresc.

f

55

S. Solo

Pno.

A Tempo

p molto legato

59

S. Solo

Pno.

p brooding

mp

For as tru - ly as God is God

pp

63

S. Solo

as God is God, *p*

Pno.

67

S. Solo

pp my mind was fully bent *mp*

Pno.

71

S. Solo

was bent the other time. *mf*

Pno.

75

S. Solo

pp the other time I was at liberty to

Pno.

pp

Not for sale

78 *p* *mp* *mf*

S. Solo

mar - ry you to mar - ry you to

(8)

Pno. *p*

82 *f* *pp dim.*

S. Solo

mar-ry you to mar - ry you

(8)

Pno. *mp* *ppp*

86

S. Solo

be - fore

(8)

Pno.

89 *p* rit.

S. Solo

a - ny man I knew

(8)

Pno.

93 With urgency $\text{♩} = 60$

S. Solo

Pno. *mp*

S. Solo

Pno.

mf

How - be - it, God God

S. Solo

Pno. *mf*

with - stood my will

S. Solo

Pno.

mf *mp*

there - in most ve - he - men - tly