

Heaven, full of heavenly music of course, rich in melody and harmony, beauty beyond our imagining, angelic voices pitch perfect, singing praises to God. But this same God loves us – imperfectly pitching our notes, groaners and shouters, exquisite trebles, shattering sopranos, steady altos, soaring tenors, grounding basses, grumbling, struggling others, silent mouthers. And he loves our world – so just stop and listen to the world around, the children playing next door, the dog barking with joy on the country park...

Listen, just stop and listen
The wind in the trees
Susurrating with the leaves
Children playing,
Parents saying,
Wood being sawn
Mowers on the lawn

Listen, just stop and listen
Halyards chinking
Bike bells tinkling
Voices talking
boots walking
flowers a-buzz with bees
hay fever sneeze

listen, just stop and listen
birds singing
man whistling
mosquito's whining
helicopter whirring
radio playing
news reader saying

listen, just stop and listen
to the sounds of this day
hanging on the stave
of summer sunshine
evening moonshine
music unwritten
sounds unbidden
filling the air
reaching everywhere

listen, just stop and listen
to our hymn of praise
the efforts of our days
our labour and our prayer
to God, somewhere,
out there.

Listen, O God, just listen
To the prayers we pray
The words we say
As we work and play
Through the busy day
All unknowing as we write
a symphony of praise, day and night
Listen, O God, please listen, Amen
VMW

As we return to church after the lockdown one casualty of the virus will be hymn singing. For Adrienne and the Choir this is a great blow, especially as there is no indication of when that might change. Singing God's praises in church has been an act of service and of love by all choristers, a use of the gifts he has given us and an offering of heartfelt prayer. So today we turn to the Royal School of Church Music for our prayers for the day. Please hold Adrienne and our choir in your prayers and pray for a quick return to our wonderful musical heritage.

From the Royal School of Church Music

Creator God,
You have made us in your image to reflect your goodness.
You have called us to use our gifts to build your kingdom.
Give us wisdom and help us to use our skills to your glory
and for the building up of the people we serve.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Cont.../

The Choristers Prayer:

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants,
who minister in thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips,
we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts,
we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

About the Chorister's Prayer

The Chorister's Prayer seems to have first appeared in *The Choirboy's Pocket Book*, published by the School of English Church Music (the former name of the RSCM) in 1934. Despite being so well known, the prayer is not given an author in this source (some say it was the RSCM's founder, Sir Sydney Nicholson, while others link it to Cosmo Gordon Lang, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1929).

And the prayer set to music by Philip Stopford

The Chorister's prayer, by Philip Stopford

<https://youtu.be/RGNTyZjHL8I>