

Music, Tradition, and Memory: A Royal Celebration in Long-Term Care

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The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III as King of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms took place on May 6, 2023, at Westminster Abbey. Here in Ontario, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor was hard at work planning and hosting a [series of events](#) to commemorate the occasion.

For one such event, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell partnered with [Concerts in Care](#) to bring the atmosphere of the Coronation to long-term care homes across the province. This concert featured music from past coronations.

“Through the transformative power of music, these concerts built connections among elders, caregivers, and loved ones while engaging powerful emotions which can activate memory and improve mood for seniors in care who may be isolated and withdrawn,” said Her Honour in opening the concert.

Organist Christopher Dawes and the Venuti String Quartet performed this concert virtually for dozens of long-term care residents, broadcasting from the Rosedale Presbyterian Church in Toronto.



The Venuti String Quartet Plays Music for the Royal Fireworks, by George Frideric Handel

I had the privilege of listening in to the concert along with the residents and learned so much more than I expected. Though the theme of the program was “coronation,” Dawes

was brimming with interesting musical facts about each piece, their history, and why they were chosen for inclusion in the program. And as he said during the concert, there is something compelling about this small ensemble of musicians performing this grandiose music.



Organist Christopher Dawes plays Trumpet Tune by Jeremiah Clarke.

Beginning the program with Handel's "Music for the Royal Fireworks," we learn that it was originally written to be performed by wind instruments in an outdoor celebration of a battle victory. However, the ensemble here has repurposed it for strings, in this intimate indoor setting.

We then begin to notice a musical pattern emerge in the following pieces, and Dawes informs us that what we are hearing is a dotted rhythm and that this is often associated with royalty in musical themes. The remainder of the concert continues much the same: beautifully played pieces and fascinating facts to go along with each.

After performing the concert, a number of times live, Concerts in Care and the musicians produced a recorded version I am pleased to be able to share with you. Whether you tune in for the coronation theme, the history, or just the music, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

<https://vimeo.com/838738978> [Video to be embedded in article]