

The logo for Castley Music, featuring the word "Castley" in a black serif font and "Music" in a yellow script font, both within a white rectangular box.

Castley
Music

NATHAN JAMES

A vibrant, painterly landscape. The top half shows a bright blue sky with large, billowing white clouds. Below the sky are rolling green hills. In the middle ground, a winding path or stream cuts through golden-yellow fields. A large, stylized white figure with outstretched arms is visible on a green hillside. The foreground features a golden field with several large, cylindrical hay bales. A small brown horse is grazing in the distance, and a flock of white sheep is visible in a green field. The overall style is expressive and colorful.

ON WINDOVER HILL

a cantata for SATB choir and orchestra

VOCAL SCORE

The first performance of *On Windover Hill* was given at Boxgrove Priory, Chichester
7 March 2020
by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra,
Harlequin Chamber Choir and Corra Sound,
conducted by Amy Bebbington



*“The giant keeps his secret and from his hillside
flings out a perpetual challenge”*

Rev. A.A. Evans

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and numerous anonymous donors in the creation of *On Windover Hill*.



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On Windover Hill was conceived as a through-composed cantata though some movements are able to stand alone. Each movement portrays a different perspective on the mysterious figure of the Long Man of Wilmington, which has graced the hills of the South Downs in East Sussex for centuries. No one is sure who created the figure, when it was cut into the turf, or for what reason it was created.

My choice of texts were primarily chosen to represent the different beliefs behind either the giant's creation or meaning. Like the figure, the texts span the centuries and present the audience with fragments of a jigsaw puzzle. The giant may be many things, including an ancient religious site, a medieval folly, a Pagan symbol, a landmark for pilgrims, a Roman site of sacrifice, a representation of St John the Baptist, Beowulf, or if interpreted as a female figure, the goddess, Diana. The first performance of the cantata included a number of extracts from additional authors and poets that were read in-between some of the movements to help set the Long Man in its environment and offer further enlightenment on its symbolism. For more information on these texts, please visit the Castley Music website. Whatever the mythology and folklore behind the figure, my principle interest lies in the human interaction with the figure and how it continues to influence people to appreciate, create, and wonder.

This cantata was conceived for choir and orchestra and the piano reduction published here serves as a helpful support to singers in the absence of instruments. I have tried to extricate as much instrumental interest from the original score so that a performance for choir and piano is equally successful.

Nathan James, 2019

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Orchestration: fl, cl, hn, tpt, timp, strings

Duration: 40 minutes approx.

Front page illustration: 'The Long Man of Wilmington' by Sarah Gregson

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