



1996



1997



1998



1999



2000



2001



2002



2003

SUNDAY TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE; ANDY RAIN/FPA; ANDREW MILLIGAN/REUTERS; JAMES VEYSEY/SHUTTERSTOCK



Former PMs at the abbey, left, included Theresa May, Gordon Brown and David Cameron, left: John Major and Tony Blair, above: Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, below. Top, Rishi Sunak and his wife, Akshata Murty



Quentin Letts Hugs and hoopla — the politicians could have been at a disco

William Walton's *Crown Imperial*, that billowing paradigm of British musical pomp, was swelling just when the European Union's big shots, led by Ursula von der Leyen, arrived via the abbey's cloisters. Pure coincidence, that timing, of course. And then, at the West Door, two motorcades unloaded the political has-beens: our former prime ministers. Both Sir John Major and Sir Tony Blair were in their Garter chains, making them look like Trumpington mayors. Such was the historic day that Gordon Brown and David Cameron shook hands. Boris Johnson's shirt collar was, inevitably, askew and Lady May was in a white coat and orange tuffer that made her resemble a tangerine meringue. Who was that behind them? Oh yes, Liz Truss.

Coronations are, for politicians, another networking opportunity. As congressmen found their seats, various of Westminster's dodgers and card sharks mingled and schmoozed. Grant Shapps was still consulting his mobile telephone as he arrived at the church door. Tom Tugend had had so many medals on his chest, he must have been collecting Kellogg's tokens all year. Michael Gove held a disreputable raincoat and flashed his eyes at various allies. Among Whitehall's illuminati one found Antonia Romeo, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Justice. Having just dispatched Dominic Raab to the glue factory, she looked radiant. Simon Case, who at the time of writing is still the cabinet secretary, wore the whiskers and wary look of an ocelot. Above this neuralgia soared the glorious South African diva Pretty Yende, singing Sarah Class's *Sacred Fire*.

Rory Stewart, the one-time Tory leadership hopeful, had been to his dressing-up box and earned envious glances with an ornate jacket that was part-Flashman, part-pantomime Burtons. Andy Street, mayor of the West Midlands, was for once without his MP consort Michael Fabricant and had to make do with the former cabinet secretary Lord Butler. Giles Brandreth was there. Of course he was. Giles is at everything. He chatted to the political thriller writer Lord Dobbs. Suella Braverman, the home secretary, clip-clopped past in high heels, an explosion of net-curtain on her head. Andy Burnham, the mayor of Greater Manchester, greeted Labour's Baroness Merron with such hugs and hoopla, they could have been at a disco. Talking of music, Lord Lloyd-Webber was in a knot of composers near Sir Bryn Terfel — what

a voice — and the composer Sir Karl Jenkins, who has the best mutton chops in the kingdom. Lloyd-Webber's new treatment of *Psalm 98* was a musical highlight. But the Queen's son Tom Parker Bowles's face during the gospel boogie-woogie act said it all. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the Commons, was preceded by his sergeant at arms. The train of Hoyle's robes was borne by his secretary. She looked a little uncertain about it, as if she was holding some wet washing. Most, though not all, of the men wore uniform or morning coats or, in the case of Scotland's new first minister Humza Yousaf, a dashing kilt. For the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, it was a cocktail-lounge, smoke-blue lounge suit sort of day. As Khan was being taken towards his pew he kept breaking away to squeeze acquaintances' arms and say cooeo to

mates. Incurable. The only one to match him was the Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, sashaying in like a supermodel, acknowledging well-wishers who may quite possibly have been entirely imagined. Up in the choir, Sir Keir Starmer was placed next to the Lib Dem leader, Sir Ed Davey. They sing from much the same hymn sheet, after all. Rishi Sunak read the first lesson. He had pretty much memorised it. Elsewhere Lord Soames, once Charles's Falstaff, sat shrunken next to Earl Peel, who owns much of Yorkshire. Foreign visitors included France's President Macron, who walked up the cloisters with his wife Brigitte on his arm. Macron's first was tightly clenched. Could it have been something Madame Macron said? One searched in vain for John Bercow. Odd that a former Commons Speaker

should have slipped off the guest list. But Andrew Tremlett, the Dean of St Paul's whom Bercow once turned down as his chaplain, was there. There is justice in the world. The lord mayor of London held a little hand mace that could have been a lollipop. And then the procession arrived and we learnt that Brunhilde lives. Penny Mordaunt, braided and bladed like that Old Norse goddess princess, wielded the great Sword of State and stole the political honours. Had there been a flicker of trouble, she'd have swiped its head off there and then with that mighty brand. Forearms of steel were required to keep the sword straight but she was the right woman for the task. Attired in teal, with her hair barleycorned and proud thrust firmly to the fore, HMS Mordaunt will have won a whole new legion of supporters with this stately display.



Abbey dress code: a rainbow of properly polite pastels

Karen Dacre
Fashion Director

A chance to attend the coronation brings with it quite a dressing dilemma. Throw in the endless drizzle and you had yourself a fashion migraine. Did you go boldly in a vibrant print — sidestepping any worry about overshadowing the main event — or stick to the sanctity of the black dress? The most memorable guests did neither, offering a rainbow of properly polite pastels to welcome their new monarch to the throne. With everything from primrose yellow to duck egg blue and champagne pink on display inside the cathedral, the collective fashion mood was the wearable equivalent of a royal wave — clothes that were cheerful, joy-inducing, even, but not ostentatious. It was the same story for hats, with the most successful choices — spherical saucer shapes, worn to one side — taking precedence over anything that an untrained

eye might consider a laughable offence. Leading in the style stakes were Queen Letizia of Spain, who wore a bubblegum pink jacket and pencil skirt combination to attend the event, and Pippa Middleton, who chose a coat dress in her older sister's favourite shade of primrose. Other cupcake-coloured attendees included Joe Biden's grand-daughter Finnegan, also in lemon, and Zara Tindall, who wore a powder blue ensemble by the British designer Laura Green. There was also the curvball guest list addition of Katy Perry, who turned up on the arm of the Vogue editor Edward Enninful sporting bespoke Vivienne Westwood in a shade so sugary that one couldn't help but think about a trip to the dentist. This was a masterclass in diplomatic dressing, during which a determination to adhere to protocol took precedence over any personal need to win praise, or rack up social media likes. Hem heights were low — on

the knee or below — and a fitted silhouette with a nipped in or belted waist prevailed. Modest necklines, as demonstrated by the prime minister's wife, Akshata Murty, who chose a round neck dress in eau de nil, were also a frontrunner. In decisions that the late Queen would have approved of, florals were almost entirely absent — considered by most to be too gauche to wash in Westminster. She was a pastel enthusiast who steered clear of print because it looked messy in pictures. If it all sounds a little on the dull side, that's because it was supposed to be. After all, coronation outfits are like high school memories — you only remember the bad ones. It is not good news, then, for Theresa May, who, highlighted by an unforgiving BBC camera, peered out from under an orange bucket hat and floral embroidered coat looking more over-dressed Paddington bear than polite in pastel. Liz Truss, a beacon of bad taste in tangerine, also missed the memo.

Among the guests arriving at Westminster Abbey were Brigitte Macron, wife of the French president; Queen Letizia of Spain; James and Pippa Middleton, the brother and sister of the Princess of Wales; and Jill Biden, the US first lady, who visited Downing Street on Friday



2004



2005



2006



2007



2008



2009



2010



2011

Eclectic, soaring: who needs Eurovision?

There were 48 pieces of music played at the abbey, including 12 new compositions. But Andrew Lloyd Webber's bespoke anthem wasn't quite a joyful noise

RICHARD MORRISON



Chief Culture Writer of The Times

Forget the Eurovision Song Contest. Welcome to the Coronation Stakes: a musical competition as sumptuously choreographed and costumed as that small event in Liverpool this week, and just as competitively performed by some of Britain's top classical music soloists and ensembles. It was almost as long too: no fewer than 48 pieces of music (I counted them in and out), spread over four hours before, during and after the service in Westminster Abbey.

The music was an eclectic mixture of Tudor, Victorian, Edwardian (the King's favourite bits, I would guess) and the completely new. It was also overwhelmingly British, from William Byrd and Thomas Weelkes (both of whom died 400 years ago) to the inevitable Elgar and Vaughan Williams, though a couple of items from that faraway place called mainland Europe did creep in.

From the Greek Orthodox Church there was Byzantine chant, sonorously intoned by, well, Byzantine chanters. That was apparently to honour the memory of Prince Philip. And just after the King was crowned there was a fabulous blaze of noise in the shape of a fanfare by Richard Strauss. If you want a bit of brassy pomp to match the climactic moment in a British coronation, you can't beat a German composer.

But what the music world really wanted to hear, and dissect mercilessly, were the new pieces by 12 specially commissioned composers. Just as much as Eurovision, this was a contest, fierce and passionate, to see who could best tickle the ears of the King – not to mention a television audience expected to exceed by some distance Eurovision's puny 200 million viewers.

At least, that was the prize for those composers included in the service itself. But just as in football, the Coronation Stakes turned out to have a premier league and a kind of Division 2. The six composers in the first category, who of course included Lord Lloyd Webber, had their pieces heard by the King and that huge global TV audience. For the other six, however, the exposure was, shall we say, more parochial. Their pieces were premiered in the abbey by the Coronation Orchestra (a terrific all-star band comprising players from eight different orchestras, conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano) in a pre-coronation concert, heard only by the assem-

bling dignitaries and listeners to BBC Radio 3.

Which was a pity, because there was much to enjoy. A film and TV composer new to me, Sarah Class, wrote a gorgeously lyrical ballad, *Sacred Fire*, which was wonderfully sung by the South African soprano Pretty Yende. Roderick Williams went into full birdsong-in-the-shires mode for his variation on the hymn *Be Thou My Vision*. And an amazing organ piece by Iain Farrington, called *Voices of the World*, cleverly combined tunes from across the Commonwealth with Fats Waller-style jazz and boogie-woogie, and was virtuosically delivered by Matthew Jorys. Few present could have heard a cathedral organ sound so inebriated.

Other new pieces, however, came across as insubstantial when compared with what surrounded them. Not really surprising when the latter included stunning Bach and Bruckner from Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir, and vibrant performances of such evergreens as Elgar's *Nimrod* and Holst's *Jupiter*, conducted by Pappano.

Then, via a spine-tingling performance of Parry's 1902 coronation classic *I Was Glad* (incorporating startling shouts of "Vivat Regina Camilla!" from Westminster School scholars), we were into the service proper. The sight of mingled boys and girls in the choir, for the first time in coronation history, was heartwarming, but even more so the glorious sound produced under Andrew Nethsingha's nerveless direction by the massed choristers of Westminster Abbey, the Chapel Royal, Truro Cathedral and the Methodist College in Belfast.

The new pieces? Bryn Terfel was nothing if not impassioned leading Paul Meulor's typically lush Welsh setting of the *Kyrie*, but I'm not sure that Debbie Wiseman's *Alléluia* for the specially recruited Ascension Choir was the most gripping piece of gospel music that could have been selected. I loved Roxanna Panufnik's *Sanctus* and Tarik O'Regan's *Agnus Dei*, though – both bringing a welcome degree of aural mysticism into the service. Sadly, Lloyd Webber's anthem, *Make a Joyful Noise*, isn't one I will rush to hear again, if indeed it receives a second performance. The remedy for writing a banal tune is not to repeat it in a different key with louder trumpets.

Happily, it will be the fantastic performance of Walton's *Te Deum* that stays in my memory. That was a truly joyful noise. I hope the assembled great and good took note of how superlatively Britain's musicians rise to a big occasion, and what we would lose if we don't support them.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner leads his Monteverdi Choir. The Ascension Choir performed *Alléluia*, while Bryn Terfel was impassioned and Pretty Yende was wonderful



Julian Payne Camilla, the moderniser with an iPad, is the King's secret weapon

It was 70 years ago that the King attended his mother's coronation at Westminster Abbey – June 2, 1953 – sat by his grandmother's side as a four-year-old child. He once told me he could still remember the main events of that day clearly.

As the King walked down the aisle on his way to be crowned, you could see the emotion in his eyes and also in the faces of those looking on as this symbolic moment had arrived. It felt electric and momentous to see this part of our history unfolding before our eyes. When the congregation sang the national anthem at the end, it felt as if the roof was going to come off.

The service was the culmination of months of detailed weekly planning meetings for the King and Queen and their teams, usually held at Clarence House or Buckingham Palace. From my time working with them, I know Charles will have been writing copious notes in the margins of memos, and Camilla will have preferred to use her trusty iPad.

The format of a coronation dates back to the 10th century, when it was the most important component in ensuring the crown was being placed on the correct head. While the events that took place yesterday were firmly rooted in those origins, they also bore the unmistakable imprimatur of the King and Queen and a more modern age.

Numerous aspects of this service, from the music to the dress code and the opening address by the King, were designed to create a more modern feel and to reflect the theme of service to others – something that sits at the heart

of what he believes the role of sovereign should be.

The guest list, more meritocracy than aristocracy, was born of his determination to see more of "the community of communities" that makes up Britain inside the abbey taking part, rather than outside looking on. The diverse mix of faces in the processions as well as in the congregation showed just how much the UK has changed over those past seven decades.

This also applied to the faith groups, including Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu, that were represented in the service for the first time. This "everybody in" philosophy is a central element of the King's approach, which aims to create a sense of integration and harmony wherever possible.

While the coronation is the symbolic start of his reign, in reality the King has been in the role for almost eight months already. From looking back over that period, it is clear that while things have changed a great deal since the death of Queen Elizabeth II, in many ways they have stayed the same. In a sense this is at the heart of the way the monarchy operates – continuity rooted in duty and service to the nation, but all the time with subtle changes taking place to ensure the institution can continue to play a central role in public life.

Those changes began happening almost immediately. On the day after the death of his mother, when the King and Queen returned to Buckingham Palace, the King decided that he wanted to meet the people outside the palace before seeing the politicians waiting inside.

On arriving at the gates, he asked the car to stop outside the main entrance, where the crowds had been steadily growing. When he stepped out, despite the outpouring of sympathy they had experienced up to that point, nobody knew quite what the reaction would be to a new King's arrival at Monarchy HQ. As it turned out, the crowds could not have been more welcoming. The instant cries of "God save the King" had a powerful and emotional impact on him and the Queen.

When one of the well-wishers gave the King a hug before urging the Queen to "look after him for us", it was an immediate example of how things would be done a little differently from now on. Those cries of "God save the King" took some time for him to adjust to. In fact, in the first weeks of his reign it took several attempts for the team to get his attention with the words "Your Majesty" – he was not used to the new title, which for so long had belonged to his mother.

After the official mourning period, the King and Queen wanted to get round the country to meet people and to thank the teams that had been involved in Operation London Bridge, the codename given to the funeral plans for Queen Elizabeth. In those early visits they were enormously touched by the warm reception they were given by people who came in their thousands to greet them and to show their support.

And it wasn't just in the UK. The first overseas state visit, to Germany, was also a remarkable success, with 20,000 people filling a rain-soaked city square in Hamburg to cheer their arrival. This show

“It took some time for Charles's team to get his attention with 'Your Majesty'. He wasn't used to it

of support also provided confirmation in government circles that the so-called soft power the royal family can offer UK plc is still very much in evidence.

Things haven't all been plain sailing, but it has been reassuring to see how sure-footed Charles and his team have been when problems have reared their heads. The incident at a Buckingham Palace reception involving a charity boss and a Palace representative was dealt with quickly and sensitively, with voices heard and a swift apology issued. The King's support for an independent investigation of historic links between the royal family and the slave trade has also shown that he is not set on preserving the status quo at all costs but is willing to ask difficult questions.

Given the amount of time he has had to prepare, it may not be a surprise that the King has shown the ability to adapt to his new role without missing a beat, but it has been interesting to see the Queen undergoing the transition just as seamlessly. She has brought a sense of the real world to her new role, which has delighted so many people. She will continue to shine a spotlight on important matters, such as domestic violence, female empowerment and literacy, as she has done for nearly 20 years, but only in ways that can make a practical difference rather than simply as a figurehead.

Her passion and determination to use her voice are already making an impact. During the recent debate about the re-issuing of works by Roald Dahl, the Queen was seen to share her views on the matter. Despite some nervousness

within the Palace, her carefully phrased advice in a speech to authors to "remain true to your calling, unimpeded by those who may wish to curb the freedom of your expression" resonated with a great many people including publishers, who in some cases began to rethink their approach to the whole editing endeavour.

It is my own view that in the months and years to come we will see the Queen make an ever-larger contribution to public life – always respectful of the responsibilities that come with her duties as consort but carrying them out with dedication and a large dose of common sense that so clearly connects with the public at large.

In some ways yesterday's service was a salient reminder that we are still at the beginning of a new Carolean age, but I have also been struck by how quickly and naturally the nation seems to have adjusted to the change from mother to son as our head of state and the fortieth to be crowned in Westminster Abbey.

To make something so momentous feel so natural takes a huge amount of work, and I doff my cap to all those involved. As the King and Queen embark on three busy days of coronation celebrations, I hope there will be a moment for them to reflect with some personal happiness and, I am sure, a good degree of gratitude on how far we have all come in such a short period of time.

Julian Payne was communications secretary to the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall from 2016 to 2021