



## Coda

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### **Treasure No 79: Coda by Ian Sharp** **An Article from Bulletin 276, Summer 2013**

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Early one Sunday morning, two tunes, let's call them ST FREDA and SUNSHINE SONG, were gossiping in the vestry. ST FREDA, being the senior of the two, initiated the conversation.

'I wonder which of us will be used today? I see it's a family service, so I expect it'll be you. I hardly ever turn out in the mornings now, but just occasionally I feature in a Choral Evensong. At least I get sung from time to time, unlike lots of our friends here. Do you know, there are some who haven't been out of the hymn book for years. There's one poor old soul dating from the fourth century who would love to be heard, and has even been given modern notation and supporting harmony, but is totally overlooked these days.'

'Well,' replied SUNSHINE SONG, 'that might be because you all live in a hymn book. In our worship folder we tend to get out and about a bit more, but even there we have plenty of passengers. Of course, you can get too many performances. I know of one tune who almost died from over-exposure recently. But it's still quite remarkable how adaptable we tunes can be. I have recently appeared in several different keys, in arrangements for music group and for full orchestra, and on several radio stations.'

'I heard you,' said ST FREDA, 'when I was being prepared to support a gorgeous descant for a recording of *Your Best-Loved Hymns*. These grand occasions are fun, but our function is always to be in a supportive role. Without words we are quite insignificant; indeed, it's quite remarkable how we can adapt to so many different texts. It's the combination of tune and text which makes our lives really interesting. I venture to suggest that it's always the tune which enables words to be remembered.'

'I quite agree,' said SUNSHINE SONG. 'It's a real privilege to be part of that living tradition of sacred song which helps people, when they sing, to pray even better. I do wish, though, that our leaders would be prepared to be rather more imaginative when they put acts of worship together. "Something old, something new" isn't a bad recipe, and, after all, we two can get on quite well together, especially when we are placed where we both appear to best advantage.'

‘Absolutely,’ answered ST FREDA. ‘There are hundreds of our fellow tunes to chose from, and plenty of new ones are being thought up. It’s great when a composer is inspired to add to our collection. But I’ve got to go. I just heard that I’m appearing in a rather fancy chorale prelude on Radio 3.’

SUNSHINE SONG was quiet, but then she had a text message. She was required immediately, as the worship band was preparing for morning worship.

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