

Thaxted

Words by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, set to a melody by Gustav Holst.

Thaxted is a hymn melody by the English composer Gustav Holst, based on the stately theme from the middle section of the *Jupiter* movement of his 1914 orchestral suite *The Planets*. The hymn's name, *Thaxted* is named after Thaxted, the English village where Holst resided much of his life. In 1921, Holst adapted the melody to fit Cecil Spring-Rice's patriotic poem "I Vow to Thee, My Country," and it was sung as a unison song with orchestra. The song did not appear as a hymn-tune called *Thaxted* until Holst's friend Ralph Vaughn Williams included it in hymn collection, *Songs of Praise*, in 1926. *Thaxted*, the hymn, was sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. The hymn remains popular to this day, although the first verse is often omitted, and the second verse, which supposedly refers to a heavenly kingdom and a religious sentiment, is the focus of the melody.

Verse 1

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

Verse 2

And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.