

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, July 17, 2022

Plainsong, arr. Richard Proulx: Alleluia, Song of Gladness
Choir of All Saints' Episcopal Church, Beverly Hills, Thomas Foster

Johannes Brahms: Blessed are the dead from A German Requiem
Leipzig Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Kegel

Franz Liszt: Our Father
Swiss Radio Chorus of Lugano, Diego Fasolis

"Alleluia, song of gladness" is a translation by John Mason Neale of an anonymous plainsong hymn. Brahms wrote "A German Requiem" using a text which he himself assembled from the Lutheran Bible. Hungarian composer Franz Liszt composed and performed music in larger than life terms. This exquisite choral setting of the "Pater Noster" is one of the fourteen movements in his oratorio "Christus" which itself runs almost three hours.

John Browne: Salve Regina
The Sixteen, Harry Christophers

Henry Purcell: Benedicite: Song of the Three Children
Cantores in Ecclesia, Michael Howard

Alexandre Guilmant: Offertoire "O filii", Op. 49 No. 2
Robert Delcamp, organ
1961/2004 Casavant organ, Opus 2654 in All Saints' Chapel, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee

Little is known about English Tudor composer John Browne (1453–c. 1500). What music of his that survives can be found in the Eton Choirbook. Benedicite Omnia Opera or the Song of the Three Children is one of the canticles used in the morning service of the Anglican church. Dr. Robert Delcamp is a retired Professor of Music, University Organist and Choirmaster, and past Chair of the Music Department at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He is organist of All Saints' Chapel.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 93, "Wer nur den lieben Gott ..."
Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki
Yukari Nonoshita, soprano; Matthew White, alto;
Makoto Sakurada, tenor; Peter Kooy, bass-baritone

The German translates as "If you but permit God to prevail." This cantata was first performed on July 9, 1724. Bach recycled the fourth movement in BWV 647.

Commentary: Todd Wilson

Gerre Hancock: Prelude & Fugue on Union Seminary
Todd Wilson, organ
Arents Memorial Organ in St. Thomas' Church, New York

Dr. Gerre Hancock (1934-2012) was Organist and Director of Music at St. Thomas Church, New York from 1971-2004.

Alessandro Scarlatti: Salve Regina
Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, Nicholas McGegan
Dominique Labelle, soprano

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) is known more for his operas than his sacred music. In fact one commentator referred to Scarlatti's sacred music as 'comparatively unimportant'. I believe that his setting of 'Salve Regina' refutes that general statement.

Franz Schmidt: The Book with Seven Seals
Vienna Philharmonic; Wiener Singverein, Dimitri Mitropoulos
Hilde Guden, soprano; Ira Malaniuk, alto
Anton Dermota, tenor; Fritz Wunderlich, tenor
Walter Berry, bass; Alois Forrer, organ

Imagine writing music at a time when Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky were the great composers. And you had studied with Anton Bruckner and Robert Fuchs. Against that musical backdrop Franz Schmidt (1874-1939) wrote this magnificent oratorio. There have been a handful of recordings.