

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Funeral Music for a Queen

Ivor Atkins: Psalm 122, 'I was glad when they said unto me'
Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, Andrew Nethsingha
James Anderson-Besant, organ

William Croft: O God, our help in ages past (Descant by Martin Neary)
Choir of Westminster Abbey, Martin Neary
Martin Baker, organ

Henry Purcell: Hear my prayer, o Lord
Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, Richard Marlow

Sir Ivor Algernon Atkins (1869 –1953) was the choirmaster and organist at Worcester Cathedral from 1897 to 1950. Dr. William Croft (1677-1727) was appointed Organist of Westminster Abbey in 1709. Henry Purcell's "Hear my prayer, O Lord" is a setting of Psalm 102, verse 1.

Orlando Gibbons: I am the Resurrection and the Life
Stile Antico

Herbert Howells: I heard a voice from heaven from Requiem
Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, Stephen Layton

J.S. Bach: Chorale Prelude: Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, BWV 745
Nicholas Danby, organ
1968 Kemper & Son organ in the Marienkirche, Lubeck, Germany

Translation: "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee"

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) uses John 11:25-26 in his anthem "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "I heard a voice from heaven" is the sixth movement of English composer Herbert Howells' Requiem.

Commentary: The Very Reverend Amy McCreath

Edwin Fissinger: Lux aeterna

Woodley Ensemble, Robert Lehman

Gabriel Fauré: In paradisum from Requiem, Op. 48

Choir of King's College, Cambridge; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir David Willcocks

Dr. Edward Fissinger (1920-1990) was a charter member of the American Choral Directors Association. "In his seven-section Requiem, the French composer Gabriel Fauré distilled some of the most beautiful melodies he ever composed. The creation was almost certainly a musical tribute to his father, who died in 1885, three years before work on the Requiem began.

As with much of Western classical music, the Requiem owes its roots to Christian faith. Traditionally, at its heart, it is a prayerful lament for the dead. Fauré's Requiem was altogether different, though, because here was a composer who, unlike many of his contemporaries, had no clear religious beliefs. By contrast, he was very much a doubter, described by his own son as 'a sceptic'. In place of the sombre nature of many requiems that had gone before, Fauré's is noted for its calm, serene and peaceful outlook. Anyone looking for morose themes is searching in the wrong place. Instead, here we find musical solace in a work that focuses not on the morbid, but on the supposedly restful and fear-free nature of death.

Of all seven sections, the Pie Jesu, Agnus Dei and In Paradisum emerge as the most glorious, filled with rich, soulful melodies. The work garnered the praise of many other composers – not least Camille Saint-Saëns, who thought it divine. It was performed at Fauré's own funeral in 1924. " Source: ClassicFM

Traditional Kiev Melody: Kontakion of the departed
Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Timothy Brown

John Tavener: Song for Athene
Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill

Marcel Dupré: Cortege and Litany, Op. 19 No. 2
Peter Richard Conte, organ
Wanamaker Grand Court organ, Macy's, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"The Russian Kontakion of the Departed is an ancient Kiev chant with its origins in the Russian Orthodox liturgy. This moving chant expresses the sorrow of grief but reminds us of the Christian hope of everlasting life; in the face of sadness, we sing Hallelujahs." Source: Global Christian Worship. Inspired by the accidental death of a young woman, the daughter of a friend, who Tavener had seen shortly before, reading the Greek Athene in Westminster Abbey. It was sung as a recessional at the funeral of Diana, Princess of

Wales. Writing for the LA Philharmonic, Dr. Gregg Wager notes: "Arrangements of Marcel Dupré's (1886-1971) popular *Cortège et Litanie* are numerous and have served remarkably different purposes. First published as Op. 19, No. 2 (one of a set of four piano pieces), it was used as incidental music for a play in 1922, and eventually arranged by the composer for organ and orchestra. *Cortège* consists simply of an opening chorale. *Litanie* follows with a chanting, repetitive pattern that as a whole makes for a catchy melody. After many repetitions of this melody with some development, both the chorale and chant are played simultaneously as if leitmotifs in a Wagnerian denouement."

J.S. Bach: Cantata 25, "Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe"

Holland Boys' Choir; Netherlands Bach Collegium, Pieter Jan Leusink

Marjon Strijk, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto; Knut Schoch, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

The German translates as "There is nothing healthy in my body." The cantata was first performed on August 29, 1723 in Leipzig. This cantata is scored for soprano, tenor, and bass soloists; SATB choir; three recorders; two oboes; strings; and basso continuo. Coronet and three trombones are used in the opening and closing movements.

Giuseppe Verdi: Requiem

Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Riccardo Muti

Barbara Frittoli, soprano; Olga Borodina, mezzo-soprano

Mario Zeffiri, tenor; Ildar Abdrazakov, bass

Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi was justly famous for his operas. So, it comes as no surprise to realize that his Requiem composed in 1874 is an opera in liturgical garb. All the hallmarks of Verdi's operatic craft are there. The thrilling choruses, the dramatic solos, the supple interviewing of orchestra and voice done in a manner which no other composer before or since has been able to achieve so successfully. Grand opera goes to church. Enjoy!

John Rutter: Requiem

Choir of King's College, Cambridge; City of London Sinfonia, Sir Stephen Cleobury

Composed in 1985, John Rutter's Requiem features the composer's fine choral writing.

J.S. Bach: Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582

Olivier Latry, organ

Cavaillé-Coll organ in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris

Olivier Latry made this recording a few months before the devastating fire of April 2015.