

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, October 10, 2021

Sir Edward Elgar: Psalm 1
Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, John Scott
Andrew Lucas, organ

W.H. Monk: All things bright and beautiful
Choir of Wells Cathedral, Malcolm Archer
Rupert Gough, organ

Giaches de Wert: Vox in Rama
Pomerium, Alexander Blachly

English organist John Scott (1956-2015) was organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, before emigrating to America to be organist of St. Thomas Church, New York. English author Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895) wrote the words for the hymn "All things bright and beautiful" in 1848. W.H.Monk wrote the tune commonly paired with Mrs. Alexander's text. Flemish composer Giaches de Wert (1535-96) had a famous pupil, namely Claudio Monteverdi.

Trad. African American Spiritual, arr. Hall Johnson: My God is so High
Members of the New York Philharmonic, James Levine
Kathleen Battle, soprano

Nurit Hirsh, arr. Elaine Broad Ginsberg: Oseh Shalom
Chicago a cappella

John Stanley: Voluntary in E minor
Gerald Wheeler, organ
1981 Kar Wilhelm organ in Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

"My God is so high" is a rousing song of praise. Oseh Shalom means "He who makes peace" and is a prayer commonly heard in the Sabbath liturgy. Gerald Wheeler (1929-) was organist of Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral from 1965-1996.

Commentary: Dr. Michael Accurso

Arvo Pärt: De Profundis
Elora Festival Singers and Orchestra, Noel Edison
Jurgen Petrenko, organ

Gregorian chant: Resurrexi
Choir of the Benedictine Nuns of the Abbey of Sainte Marie de Maumont

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (1935-) published his setting of Psalm 130 in 1980. The Benedictine Nuns have lived in the Abbey of Sainte Marie de Maumont in southwest France since the 19080s.

John Rutter: Cantus

Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Wallace Collection, Sir Stephen Cleobury

César Franck: Psalm 150

Mormon Tabernacle Choir; Utah Symphony Orchestra, Julius Rudel

Kiri te Kanawa, soprano

Healey Willan: Elegy

Mark Dirksen, organ

John Rutter's short anthem "Cantus" is dedicated to the memory of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, publisher Don Hinshaw (1934-1996). Belgian composer César Franck's setting of Psalm 150 dates from 1883. English-born composer Dr. Healey Willan spent most of his life in Toronto. He wrote his Elegy in honor and memory of Lynnwood Farnham, a brilliant Canadian organist of the day.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 48, "Ich elender Mensch, wer wird mich erlosen"

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

Marjon Strijk, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto; Marcel Beekman, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

This cantata was written for the 19th Sunday after Trinity and was first performed in Leipzig in 1723. The German translates as "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me."

George Frideric Handel: Athalia

Junge Kantorei; Frankfurt Baroque Orchestra, Joachim Carlos Martini

Elisabeth Scholl, soprano, Athalia; Barbara Schlick, soprano, Josabeth

Friederike Holzhausen, soprano, Joas; Annette Reinhold, contralto, Joad

Markus Brutscher, tenor, Mathan; Stephen McLeod, bass, Abner

From the Naxos CD liner notes: "Athalia was one of his early English oratorios and was first performed at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford in 1733, the day Oxford University were to offer Handel an honorary degree (he did not accept as it involved a fee of £100). The text was originated by Jean Racine, taking its theme from two biblical accounts of the fate of Athalia (Second Book of Chronicles and the Second Book of Kings). But from this base, Racine, Handel's librettist and the composer felt free to change everything in the pursuit of drama. The story is told in twelve scenes spread over three parts, and relates the story of the power of God, who, in the country, who deposes the wicked ruler, Athalia, who worships the icon of Baal."

Anton Bruckner: Three Motets

Corydon Singers, Matthew Best

Gradual: Locus iste a Deo factus est; Vexilla regis; Pange lingua

Despite Anton Bruckner's renown as a composer of great symphonies, he began his career as a church organist. These motets date from those early years.