

# Great Sacred Music

## Sunday, February 27, 2022

Thomas Tallis: Spem in alium  
Taverner Consort and Choir, Andrew Parrott

Thomas Tallis (1505-1585) composed his forty part (eight five part choirs) motet in response to the forty part motet "Ecce beatam lucem" which Italian composer Alessandro Striggio brought to London in 1567.

Josef Haydn: Missa Brevis in F  
Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford; Academy of Ancient Music, Simon Preston  
Judith Nelson, soprano; Emma Kirkby, soprano

Haydn composed this mass in 1749 when he was 17 years old.

Commentary: The Reverend Canon Darwin Kirby Jr.

Henry Purcell: My beloved spake  
Taverner Consort, Choir & Players, Andrew Parrott  
Simon Berridge, tenor; Paul Agnew, tenor  
Ben Parry, baritone; Simon Grant, bass

English composer Henry Purcell (1659-1695) wrote his setting of "My beloved spake" when he was still a teenager.

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Valiant-for-Truth  
Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, John Scott

Herbert Sumsion: Introduction and Theme  
Donald Hunt, organ  
Harrison & Harrison organ in Worcester Cathedral

Vaughan Williams thought highly of John Bunyan. The first line of this work begins "After this it was noised abroad." Ian Carson writes: "It was in and around Gloucester Cathedral that Herbert Sumsion pursued his career in music, first as a chorister, then as organist—a post which involved him closely in the Three Choirs Festival. This Introduction and Theme was composed in 1932 and revised three years later. It takes a simple modal tune in English folk style and makes it the free ostinato basis for a fantasy in Romantic vein. The reiterated theme gradually emerges into the blazing sunlight of full organ before it blends back into the modal mists."

J.S. Bach: Cantata 22, "Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwolfe"  
Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki  
Yoshikazu Mera, counter-tenor; Gerd Turk, tenor; Peter Kooy, bass-baritone

The German translates as "Jesus called to him the Twelve." Simon Crouch notes: "This short but beautiful cantata apparently made up one half of Bach's audition for the cantorate of St. Thomas', Leipzig."

Christopher Tye: Western Wynde Mass  
Choir of Westminster Abbey, James O'Donnell

This early work by Christopher Tye illustrates the point that crossover music is not a new phenomenon. The Western Wynde poem is medieval secular love song that was used in writings by Hemingway and Virginia Wolf, among others.

Cesar Franck: Final in B flat, Op. 21  
Michael Murray, organ  
The Cavallé-Coll organ at Saint Sernin Basilica, Toulouse

The Final was dedicated to Franck's contemporary, the virtuoso organist Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély. I like to think that this explains the music's bravura style.

Joseph Jongen: Messe en l'honneur du Saint-Sacrement  
Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge; London City Brass, David Hill  
Paul Provost, organ

John Scott Whiteley writes: Joseph Jongen composed "the Messe en l'honneur du Saint-Sacrement (generally known as the 'Messe de la Fête-Dieu') to celebrate the seven-hundredth anniversary of the institution of the Corpus Christi festival at St-Martin, Liège."

Michel Corrette: Laudate Dominum  
Vocal & Instrumental Ensemble of Lyon, Guy Cornut  
Colette Alliot-Lugaz, soprano; Régis Oudot, tenor; Philippe Huttenlocher, bass

Lindsay Kemp writes: "The theme of secular music adapted to church use is enterprisingly followed up in the coupling, Michel Corrette's 1766 appropriation of Vivaldi's "Spring" as a setting of the psalm Laudate Dominum. It sounds like a joke but in fact it is a tour de force of quite considerable skill; the way Corrette releases Vivaldi's opening bars adorned with joyous choral singing at the end of a creeping orchestral sunrise is a masterstroke, the finale's stealthy introduction is equally inspired, and the re-ordering and redistribution of familiar material shows taste and resource throughout. In short, an enchanting piece of work."

W.A. Mozart: Missa brevis in C, K. 220 "Spatzenmesse"  
Vienna Boys' Choir; Chorus Viennensis; Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Uwe Christian Harrer  
Peter Jelosits, tenor; Gerhard Eder, bass

A 'spatz' is a 'sparrow'. You can hear the bird-like chirpings of the violin in the Hosanna section.

Felix Mendelssohn: Gloria  
Amadeus Choir; Wurttemberg Philharmonic, Nicol Matt  
Nathalie Karl, soprano; Barbara Werner, alto  
Robert Morvai, tenor; Manfred Bittner, bass

Mendelssohn wins the contest of "Who was the youngest composer?" this morning. He composed this setting of the Gloria at the age of 13.