

Great Sacred Music

Easter Day

April 9, 2023

Traditional, arr. John Rutter: *Jesus Christ is risen today*

The Choir of Saint Thomas Church, New York City; Saint Thomas Brass, John Scott
Jeremy Bruns, organ

Randall Thompson: *Alleluia*

Harvard University Choir, Murray Forbes Somerville

Joseph Noyon, arr. Gerre Hancock: *Christus Vincit*

The Choir of Saint Thomas Church, New York City; St. Thomas Brass, John Scott
Jeremy Bruns, organ

The lyrics of the "Jesus Christ is risen today" were first published in the 18th century, in a collection of hymns by Charles Wesley, one of the founders of the Methodist movement. The text is based on an earlier Latin hymn, "Surrexit Christus hodie," which dates back to the medieval period. Thompson composed his "Alleluia!" at a time of great upheaval in the world, as World War II was beginning to unfold. He was reportedly inspired by the idea of creating a musical work that would evoke a sense of hope and comfort in troubled times. Joseph Noyon (1888-1962) was born in the city of Roubaix, in northern France, and showed a talent for music at an early age. He studied music at the Paris Conservatory, where he was a student of Charles-Marie Widor and Louis Vierne, two of the most famous French composers of the time.

Henry Ley: *The strife is o'er*

Choir of Liverpool Cathedral, David Poulter
Ian Tracey, organ

Pietro Mascagni: *Regina coeli (Easter Hymn) from Cavalleria rusticana*

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Choruses, Robert Shaw
Christine Brewer, soprano

Diane Bish: *Improvisation on the hymn tune "Duke Street"*

Diane Bish, organ
1969 Walcker organ of the Ulm Cathedral, Germany

Henry Ley's anthem "The strife is o'er" is based on a Latin hymn, "Victimae Paschali Laudes," which dates back to the medieval period. In the opera, the "Regina coeli" is sung by the choir during the Easter procession in the small Sicilian town where the opera is set. The music is characterized by its joyful, exuberant tone, which reflects the festive atmosphere of the Easter season. The Ulm Cathedral is one of the largest Protestant churches in Germany and is renowned for its stunning architecture and impressive organs. The current organ, which was built by the German organ-building firm E.F. Walcker & Cie. in 1969, is the third organ to be installed in the cathedral since the building was completed in the 19th century.

Commentary: The Right Reverend Michael Hunn, Bishop of the Rio Grande

Sir Arthur Sullivan, arr. by Richard Webster: *Welcome, happy morning*
Choir and Congregation of Christ Church, Georgetown, Richard Webster
Thomas Smith, organ; Brandon Almagro, trumpet; Kevin Businsky, trumpet

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford: *Ye choirs of new Jerusalem, Op. 123*
Worcester Cathedral Choir, Donald Hunt
Paul Trepte, organ

Giovanni Gabrieli: *Jubilate Deo a 10*
Gregg Smith Singers; Texas Boys Choir; Edward Tarr Brass Ensemble; Gabrieli Consort "La Fenice",
Vittorio Negri,
E. Power Biggs, organ

J.S. Bach: *Prelude and Fugue in G, BWV 541*
Kevin Bowyer, organ
1962 Marcussen organ in Sct. Hans Kirke, Odense, Denmark

"Welcome, happy morning" is a Christian hymn that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The hymn was written by the 19th-century English clergyman Venantius Fortunatus, and it has been set to music by a number of composers over the years. *Ye choirs of new Jerusalem's* lyrics are based on the Latin hymn "Urbs beata Hierusalem," which was written in the 7th century by the monk and poet Fulbert of Chartres. Stanford's setting of the hymn features a majestic, uplifting melody and rich, harmonious choral parts that create a sense of grandeur and celebration. "Jubilate Deo" is a sacred choral composition by the Italian composer Giovanni Gabrieli, written for ten-part choir and published in 1615 as part of his collection of sacred music, the "Symphoniae sacrae." The piece is notable for its use of antiphonal choirs, which was a hallmark of Gabrieli's style. The 1962 Marcussen organ in Sct. Hans Kirke, Odense, Denmark is a significant instrument that has gained acclaim for its excellent sound quality and innovative design. The organ was built by the Danish organ builder Marcussen & Søn and was inaugurated in 1962.

J.S. Bach: *Easter Oratorio, BWV 249*
Taverner Consort & Players, Andrew Parrott
Emily Van Evera, soprano; Caroline Trevor, alto; Charles Daniels, tenor; Peter Kooy, baritone

Throughout the Easter Oratorio, Bach showcases his skill at crafting complex musical structures that are both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant. The piece is a testament to his mastery of the Baroque musical style and his ability to express deep religious sentiments through music. Today, the Easter Oratorio remains one of Bach's most beloved and frequently performed works, and it continues to inspire and uplift audiences around the world.

Alexander Grechaninov: *Song of the Cherubim*
Chamber Choir "Lege Artis", Boris Abalyan

The Song of the Cherubim has become one of Grechaninov's most frequently performed and recorded works, and it has gained a reputation as a masterpiece of Russian Orthodox choral music. The piece is beloved for its lush harmonies, soaring melody, and powerful sense of spiritual transcendence, and it remains a staple of choral repertoire in both religious and secular contexts.

Marcel Dupre: *Prelude and Fugue in B, Op. 7 No. 1*

Haig Mardirosian, organ

2010 Dobson organ, Op. 89, in Sykes Chapel, University of Tampa, Florida

Marcel Dupré's *Prelude and Fugue in B, Op. 7 No. 1*, is a keyboard composition for organ that was first published in 1920. It is one of a set of twelve preludes and fugues that Dupré composed for organ, which are considered among his most important works.

Hector Berlioz: *Te Deum, Op. 22*

European Community Youth Orchestra; London Symphony Chorus; London Philharmonic Choir, Claudio Abbado

Francisco Araiza, tenor; Martin Haselbock, organ

The first performance of Hector Berlioz's *Te Deum, Op. 22*, took place on April 30, 1855, at the church of Saint-Eustache in Paris. The performance was part of the Exposition Universelle, a major international exhibition that was held in Paris that year. The performance was a massive undertaking, involving a choir of over 900 voices, a large orchestra, and a massive organ. Berlioz conducted the performance himself, and he reportedly spent many months rehearsing the musicians in preparation for the event.

John Rutter: *Te Deum*

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

Rutter's *Te Deum* is structured in three movements, with each movement setting different sections of the Latin text of the *Te Deum* hymn. The opening movement is a grand and joyful choral and orchestral introduction, featuring a lively and upbeat melody that sets the tone for the rest of the work.

George Frideric Handel: *Messiah: Part 3*

Les Arts Florissants, William Christie

Part 3 of Handel's "*Messiah*" includes the triumphant "Worthy is the Lamb" and "Amen" choruses, culminating in a jubilant affirmation of faith in the resurrection. Les Arts Florissants is a French Baroque music ensemble founded in 1979 by William Christie, known for their historically informed performances and recordings of operas and vocal music.

Jules Van Nuffel: *Te Deum*

Choir of St. Rombaux Cathedral, Malines, Belgium; Art of Brass, Johan van Bouwelen

Peter Pieters, organ

The cathedral is particularly known for its tower, which rises 97 meters (318 feet) above the city and offers stunning views of the surrounding area. Visitors to the cathedral can also see the magnificent stained-glass windows, ornate chapels, and impressive pipe organ, which dates back to the 17th century.