

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, April 16, 2023

Cyril Taylor: *Glorious things of Thee are spoken*
Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Sir Stephen Cleobury
Richard Gowers, organ

J.S. Bach: *Et resurrexit from Mass in B minor, BWV 232*
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, Carlo Maria Giulini

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Hallelujah from Christ on the Mount of Olives, Op. 85*
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, Robert Shaw

"Abbots' Leigh" is a hymntune composed by Cyril Vincent Taylor in 1941. The tune is named after the village of Abbots Leigh in Somerset, England, where Taylor was living at the time. Johann Sebastian Bach composed his Mass in B minor, BWV 232 over a period of many years, from the 1720s until the 1740s. It is believed that he began work on the Mass as early as 1724, during his first year as Kantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, and he continued to revise and add to it for the rest of his life. Beethoven was inspired to write this work by his deep religious faith, as well as his admiration for the oratorios of George Frideric Handel, which were popular during his time. He was also motivated by the political turmoil and uncertainty of the time, as Europe was embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars, and Beethoven himself was struggling with his own personal crises, including his advancing deafness.

Michael Praetorius: *Hallelujah: Christ is Risen from Hymns of Peace and Praise*
La Capella Ducale; Musica Fiata Koln, Roland Wilson

Gerre Hancock: *Prelude on Slane*
Todd Wilson, organ
Arents Memorial Organ in St. Thomas' Church, New York

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) was a German composer and music theorist known for his prolific output of sacred music. He composed the collection of hymns known as "Hymns of Peace and Praise" (in German: "Puericinium Sionium") in 1610, during his time as the Kapellmeister at the court of Duke Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. Dr. Hancock's "Prelude on Slane" was dedicated to Gerre's teacher, Dr. Robert Baker.

Commentary - David Crabtree

George Frideric Handel: *Worthy is the Lamb ... Amen from Messiah*
Gabrieli Consort and Players, Paul McCreech
The Foundling Hospital Version (1754)

Richard Dirksen: *Hilariter*
Choir and Brass of the Cathedral Church of Saints Peter and Paul, Washington, D.C., Richard Dirksen
Douglas Major, organ

This text for "Worthy is the Lamb" is taken from the book of Revelation in the New Testament of the Bible, specifically from chapter 5, verses 12-13. Handel's setting of the text is known for its grandeur

and majesty, with a triumphant choral melody that builds to a powerful climax, reflecting the exaltation of the Lamb of God. Canon Richard Dirksen (1921-2003) was an American composer and musician known for his contributions to the music of the Episcopal Church. Born in Freeport, Illinois, Dirksen showed an early aptitude for music, and went on to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and the Juilliard School in New York City. In 1956, Dirksen was appointed the Organist and Choirmaster at Washington National Cathedral, a position he held for over 25 years.

Orlando Gibbons: *O clap your hands*

Worcester Cathedral Choir, Donald Hunt

Fernando Germani: *Toccata*

Jeremy Filsell, organ

1964 M.P. Moller organ, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.

Gibbons' setting of "O clap your hands" is notable for its skillful use of harmony and counterpoint, and its expressive use of word painting, in which the music reflects the meaning of the text. The anthem is a prime example of the English choral tradition, which reached its height during the Tudor and Stuart periods, and is still widely performed and admired today. The idea for the Basilica was first proposed in 1913 by Bishop Thomas Shahan, the rector of The Catholic University of America, which is adjacent to the church. The church was designed in a Byzantine-Romanesque style, and construction began in 1920. However, due to various setbacks, including the Great Depression and World War II, the church was not completed until 1959.

J.S. Bach: *Cantata 67, "Halt im Gedachtnis Jesum Christ"*

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

Ruth Holton, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto

Knut Schoch, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

"Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ" (Keep in memory Jesus Christ) is a cantata composed by Johann Sebastian Bach, a German Baroque composer, for the fourth Sunday after Easter. The cantata was first performed in Leipzig on May 20, 1724, and was later revised in 1748.

Domenico Scarlatti: *Mass for four voices*

Prague Chamber Choir, Pavel Baxa

Domenico Scarlatti's Mass for four voices is a sacred choral work composed in the Baroque period. Scarlatti, an Italian composer and harpsichord virtuoso, is best known for his keyboard sonatas, but he also composed a number of vocal works, including this Mass.

Cesar Franck: *Chorale No. 1 in E*

Frederick Swann, organ

Ruffati/Aeolian-Skinner the organ at the Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, California

Frederick Swann (1931-2022) was appointed as the organist and choirmaster at the Riverside Church in New York City. He went on to serve as the organist and choirmaster at a number of other prominent churches and cathedrals, including the Crystal Cathedral in California, where he served for over 20 years.

W.A. Mozart: *Mass in C, K. 66 "Domenicus"*

Leipzig Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Kegel
Edith Mathis, soprano; Rosemarie Lang, contralto
Uwe Heilmann, tenor; Jan-Hendrik Rootering, bass

Mozart composed his Mass in C major, K. 66, when he was just 11 years old.

Antonio Vivaldi: *Credo in E minor, RV 591*

Ernst Senff Choir; Berlin Philharmonic, Carlo Maria Giulini

Antonio Vivaldi composed his Credo in E minor, RV 591, as part of his work as a composer and conductor for the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, Italy. The Ospedale was an orphanage and music conservatory where Vivaldi worked for many years, composing and conducting music for the girls who lived there.

Josef Haydn: *Missa Solemnis*

Collegium Cantorum St. Gallen; Southwest German Philharmonic, Constance Mario Schwarz
Judith Graf, soprano; Ingrid Alexandre, alto
Lukas Albrecht, tenor; Michael Haag, bass

Haydn had recently experienced a significant personal loss with the death of his wife in 1800. This may have influenced his decision to compose a Mass, which would have been a deeply personal and emotional undertaking for him.

Max Reger: *Toccata in D minor, Op. 59 No. 5*

Andrew Lucas, organ
Mander organ in St. Paul's Cathedral, London

The Toccata in D minor is one of a set of seven toccatas that Reger composed for the organ, and it was likely written simply as a showcase for the instrument's capabilities. The piece is known for its virtuosic flourishes and technical de