

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, July 30, 2023

1. **Anonymous: All creatures of our God and King:** This is a popular Christian hymn, likely of English origin, arranged here for choir and organ. It praises the splendors of creation, attributing all to the glory of God.
2. **Don Carlo Gesualdo: Ave dulcissima Maria:** A stunning example of late Renaissance polyphony, "Ave dulcissima Maria" demonstrates Gesualdo's innovative harmonies and expressive dissonances, an ode to the Virgin Mary's sweetness and grace.
3. **Gordon Slater: Jesu, the Very Thought of Thee:** This piece by Gordon Slater is a contemplative and serene choral setting of the hymn text, conveying a personal and deep spiritual longing.
4. **John Rutter: Behold, the tabernacle of God:** A contemporary British composer, Rutter's music is often characterized by its lush harmonies and strong melodies. This piece captures the sense of awe and reverence associated with the dwelling place of God.
5. **J.P. Sweelinck: Toccata in C:** Sweelinck was a Dutch composer known for his keyboard works. His Toccata is a sparkling and lively piece showcasing the potential of the organ as a solo instrument.
6. Commentary by Dr. Murray Forbes Somerville
7. **Randall Thompson: Alleluia:** This well-known choral work is striking in its simplicity and emotional depth. It's a serene, prayerful piece that transcends linguistic barriers.
8. **Ned Rorem: Three Motets on Poems by Gerald Manley Hopkins:** Rorem, a prolific American composer, sets Hopkins' complex, nature-infused poetry with sensitivity and musical sophistication.
9. **Leo Sowerby: Thy Word is a Lantern:** A richly harmonic piece by American composer Leo Sowerby, capturing the guiding light symbolism of the text.
10. **Anonymous: Pange lingua:** This medieval hymn venerates the Holy Eucharist. Its arrangement for organ retains the piece's original austerity and reverence.
11. **J. S. Bach: Cantata 136:** This cantata, characterized by Bach's typical inventiveness and spiritual depth, explores themes of introspection and divine knowledge.
12. **Jan Vaclav Vorisek: Mass in B flat:** Vorisek, a Czech composer, offers a Mass that is both solemn and joyous, with operatic touches in its solo vocal parts.
13. **Georg Muffat: Toccata No. 10 in D Major:** This work exhibits Muffat's skill in organ composition, with its intricate counterpoint and a masterful fusion of French and German baroque styles.
14. **George Frederic Handel: Anthem for the Foundling Hospital:** Written for London's Foundling Hospital, this anthemic piece is one of Handel's best-loved choral works, combining grandeur with deep compassion.
15. **W.A. Mozart: Solemn Vespers of the Confessor:** Mozart's Vespers, composed for Salzburg Cathedral, demonstrate his genius in sacred music. They are notable for their rich melodies and intricate vocal writing.

16. **Michael Haydn: St. Francis Mass:** Michael Haydn, younger brother of Joseph Haydn, composed this Mass inspired by St. Francis. The work reflects a sense of humility and joy.

17. **Thomas Tallis: Spem in alium:** This stunning 40-part motet is a masterpiece of Renaissance polyphony, demonstrating Tallis's mastery over complex choral textures.