

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, December 13, 2020

William Billings: A Virgin Unspotted
Chanticleer

John Dunstable: Ave maris stella
The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman

Alexandre Guilmant: Noel languedocien, Communion No. 2 in F minor, Op. 60
Robert Delcamp, organ
Casavant organ of All Saints' Chapel, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee

William Billings (1746-1800) was an early American composer of choral music. John Dunstable (or "Dunstable", c1390-1453) was an English composer of the late medieval and early Renaissance eras. "Languedocien" refers to a dialect spoken in southern France.

Hieronymus Praetorius: Gaudete omnis
The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood

Jean-Nicolas Geoffroy: Magnificat
Le Concert Spirituel, Herve Niquet

Claude Balbastre: Noël "Tous les bourgeois de Châtre"
Marie-Claire Alain, organ
1679 Castie/Callinet/Kern organ in the Cathedral Saint-Theodorit d'Uzès

A motet for Advent, "Gaudete Omnes" was first published in 1599. Jean-Nicolas Geoffroy (1633-1694) was an expert organ builder. French organist Claude Balbastre (1724-1799) was organist of Notre Dame Cathedral and Eglise St. Roch in Paris.

Commentary: Dr. Gerard Manecke

J.S. Bach: Opening chorus from Cantata 140, "Sleepers, Awake!"
CBC Vancouver Orchestra; Tudor Singers of Montreal, Wayne Riddell
Rosemarie Landry, soprano; Ben Heppner, tenor; Mark Pedrotti, bass

Claudio Monteverdi: Laudate pueri from Vespers of the Blessed Virgin
Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Early Music Consort of London
Philip Ledger

"Sleepers, Awake" (BWV 140) is one of Bach's best-loved works and is the familiar theme for our overnight program, "Sleepers Awake". Claudio Monteverdi's Vespers of the Blessed Virgin dates from 1610. Scholars are not certain whether the entire work was ever performed during Monteverdi's lifetime.

Traditional Appalachian, arr. John Jacob Niles: I wonder as I wander
Kathleen Battle, soprano; Christopher Parkening, guitar

J.S. Bach: Chorale Prelude: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645
Karl Richter, organ
1944 Marcussen organ in Jaegersborg Church, Copenhagen

American folklorist John Jacob Niles composed his popular Christmas song, "I wonder as I wander" in 1933. Bach's publisher, Johann Georg Schübler, issued the Six Schübler Chorale Preludes in 1748, just two years before Bach's death. Much of the material comes from previously composed works. This chorale-prelude, for instance, comes from the 4th movement of BWV 140

J.S. Bach: Cantata 186, "Argre dich, o Seele, nicht"
Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki
Miah Persson, soprano; Robin Blaze, countertenor
Makoto Sakurada, tenor; Peter Kooy, bass-baritone

Cantata 186 dates from Bach's Weimar years and was performed there on December 13, 1717. Bach was allowed to perform cantatas at Weimar, but that practice was not permitted at Leipzig. The penultimate duet for soprano and alto is an example of some of Bach's finest writing. The late Craig Smith describes it as "a sophisticated and energetic jig which builds up a enormous head of steam."

George Frideric Handel: Chandos Anthem No. 05, "I will magnify thee"
The Sixteen Choir and Orchestra, Harry Christophers
Lynne Dawson, soprano; Ian Partridge, tenor

Handel wrote his eleven Chandos Anthems whilst in the employ of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, at his country home Cannons from 1717 to 1718. Chandos Anthem No. 05 is based on texts from Psalms 144 & 145.

Jean-Francois Dandrieu: Noël Saintonge
Susan Moeser, organ
Hellmuth Wolff & Assoc. organ, Op. 40, in Bales Organ Recital Hall, University of Kansas

Dr. Susan Moeser is University Organist of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Pierre Moulu: Missa Missus est Gabriel angelus
Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice

Ed Breen writes in musicalcriticism.com: "Missa 'Missus est Gabriel angelus'...takes Josquin's motet as a model in the manner of a parody mass. In fact, the debt this work pays to Josquin is quite noticeable, especially in the gentle unfolding of the 'Kyrie' and the exquisite imitation in the 'Agnus dei' on 'peccata mundi, miserere nobis'.

Ildebrando Pizzetti: Messa di Requiem
Conspirare, Craig Hella Johnson

Italian composer Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968) was known for his operas of which he wrote nineteen. His Messa di Requiem dates from 1922-23.

Josef Haydn: Mass in Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Choir of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford; Academy of Ancient Music, Simon Preston

Judith Nelson, soprano; Carolyn Watkinson, contralto
Martyn Hill, tenor; David Thomas, bass

Austrian composer Josef Haydn's Mass No. 5 in E flat major is entitled 'Missa in honorem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae' and is also known as the 'Große Orgelmesse' It dates from 1770.

Louis Claude Daquin: Noel No. 8, "Noël étranger, sur les jeux d'anches sans tremblant et en duo"
Michel Chapuis, organ
1710 Silbermann organ in the Abbey Church of Marmoutier, France

The French Noels had their origin in the 18th-century when organists improvised on religious songs before the Midnight Mass at Christmas.