

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, March 14, 2021

Claudio Monteverdi: Adoramus te, Christe
Choir of Westminster Abbey, Martin Neary

Francis Pott: Ubi caritas
Commotio, Matthew Berry

George Frideric Handel, arr. by Edward Higginbottom: Crux fidelis
Choir of New College, Oxford; Capricorn, Edward Higginbottom

John Wenham writes about the Monteverdi motet: "This short but very moving motet was one of two on the same text published in 1620 in an anthology compiled by Giulio Cesare Bianchi, a cornett player who was then working in Milan, but had earlier studied composition under Monteverdi at Mantua. The text is found in devotional Books of Hours as part of the Hours of the Cross." This review describes Francis Pott's setting of "Ubi Caritas" rather well. "Ubi caritas et amor is a wedding anthem that makes an effective SATB alternative to Duruflé's classic but dispositionally inconvenient SATTBB version." Edward Higginbottom sets the tune of the Largo from Handel's opera Xerxes to the Latin text "Crux Fidelis" (Faithful Cross).

Johannes Brahms: Agnus Dei from Missa Canonica (1856)
St. Clement's Choir, Philadelphia, Peter Richard Conte
Ken Cowen, organ

Felix Mendelssohn: Psalm 43, "Richte mich Gott", Op. 78 No. 2
Chamber Choir of Europe, Nicol Matt

Don Carlo Gesualdo: Judas, mercator pessimus
Pomerium, Alexander Blachly

Although composed in 1856, Brahms' Missa Canonica was never performed until 1983. Mendelssohn published his Three Psalms in 1874-77. "Judas, mercator pessimus" a setting of a Responsory of the second nocturn of Maundy Thursday.

Commentary: The Rev. Ian MacGregor

Traditional, arr. by Waldemar Ahlen: The Earth Adorned
St. Olaf Choir, Kenneth Jennings

Yehezkel Braun: Psalm 118
Ernest Senff Choir; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz
Matthew Kirchner, tenor

Kenneth Jennings (1925-2015) was Director of the St. Olaf Choir from 1968-1990. Yehezkel Braun (1922-2014) was an Israeli composer.

Rihards Dubra: Miserere Mei

Cambridge Chorale, Michael Kibblewhite

Traditional American folk tune, arr. by Mack Wilberg: Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Mormon Tabernacle Choir; Orchestra at Temple Square, Craig Jessop, Mack Wilberg

Cesar Franck: Pastorale for Organ
Michael Murray, organ
Cavaillé-Coll organ in St Sernin Basilica, Toulouse, France

Rihards Dubra (1964-) is a Latvian composer whose sacred music is rooted in the great music of the past. His setting of the Miserere Mei dates from 1993. 18th century pastor and hymnist Robert Robinson wrote the text for Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing. The hymn is commonly sung to the tune Nettleton. The Cavaillé-Coll organ in St Sernin Basilica, Toulouse, France, dates from 1888 and is considered one of the finest of its era.

J.S. Bach: Motet No. 3: "Jesu, meine Freude", BWV 227
RIAS Chamber Choir; Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Rene Jacobs

The eleven movement motet "Jesu, meine Freude" is the most complex of the six motets which Bach wrote. It uses texts by Johann Franck and Johann Crüger as well as the Epistle to the Romans.

Loyset Compere: Officium de Cruce
New York Polyphony

Loyset Compère (c.1445–1518) was a contemporary of Josquin des Prez.

Salomone Rossi: Selections of Jewish Liturgical and Instrumental Music
Ensemble Salomone Rossi

Italian musician Salomone Rossi (1570–1630) was a Jewish violinist and composer.

Richard Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua
UCLA Chamber Singers; Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra, JoAnn Falletta
Hila Plitmann, soprano; J'NAi Bridges, mezzo-soprano; Timothy Fallon, tenor as Pilate and Kefa;
Matthew Worth, lyric baritone as the Narrator; Kenneth Overton, bass baritone as Yeshua; James K.
Bass, bass as Kayafa

American composer Richard Danielpour (1956-) has composed a remarkable setting of the Passion narrative. One striking feature of his setting is the juxtaposition of the ancient Aramaic and English texts drawn from scripture. Danielpour's soundscape creates a dramatic, very listenable portrayal of the Passion of Yeshua.