

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, June 13, 2021

Stephen Elvey: Psalm 11

Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Sir John Goss, and Sir Edward Elgar
John Scott
Andrew Lucas, organ

John Goss: Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven

Choir of Liverpool Cathedral, David Poulter
Ian Tracey, organ

John Rutter: Most glorious Lord of life

Cambridge Singers; brass and percussion of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, John Rutter
John Birch, organ

Stephen Elvey (1805-1860) was organist of St. John's College, Cambridge. English organist and composer Sir John Goss (1800-1880) was organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where his mission was to raise the standards of music. The text of "Praise my soul, the King of Heaven" was written by Henry Francis Lyte. John Rutter's Easter anthem uses texts by Edmund Spenser and St John Damascene.

Gregorian Chant: Beata viscera

Le Concert Spirituel, Herve Niquet

Healey Willan: Gloria Deo per Imensa Saecula

Choir of St. John's, Elora, Noel Edison

Sir Hubert Parry: Chorale Prelude on Melcombe

Robert Benjamin Dobey, organ

The Ernst M. Skinner Organ, Opus 872, at Girard College Chapel, Philadelphia

"Beata viscera" translates as "Blessed Flesh of the Virgin Mary". Dr. Healey Willan wrote most of his sacred choral compositions for his choir at the Church of St. Mary Magdelene, Toronto. Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918) was Director of the Royal College of Music where he taught Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Frank Bridge, and John Ireland.

Commentary: Dr. Nathan Leaf

Francis Poulenc: Litanies a la Vierge Noire

Cambridge Singers; City of London Sinfonia, John Rutter

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Osculetur me

Stile Antico

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) composed his Litanies à la Vierge Noire 'Notre Dame de Rocamadour' in 1936 after visiting the Chapel of Our Lady in Rocamadour, in south-central France. Palestrina's collected works comprise some 32 volumes of music.

Jake Runestad: Alleluia
Kantorei, Joel Rinsema

Andre Raison: Sanctus~Messe deDeuxieme Ton
H. Joseph Butler, organ
The C.B. Fisk Organ, Op. 83, at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY

Jake Runestad's setting of the "Alleluia" text was commissioned by Brady Allred and the Salt Lake Vocal Artists and given its first performance in 2014. French Baroque organist and composer André Raison (c. 1640 – 1719) published two collections of organ music during his lifetime.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 2, "Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein"
Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki
Dorothee Miels, soprano; Pascal Bertin, countertenor
Gerd Turk, tenor; Peter Kooy, bass-baritone

The German translates as "Oh God, look down from Heaven". In the first movement Bach sets this rather severe text from Psalm 12 with the altos singing the cantus firmus around which he crafts some fugal writing. The first performance was on June 18, 1724.

George Frideric Handel: Chandos Anthem No. 11, "Let God arise"
The Sixteen, Harry Christophers

Handel lived at Cannons, the country estate of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, from 1717-1718. While in the good nobleman's employ, Handel wrote the eleven anthems based on psalms which we know as The Chandos Anthems.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert: Fugue, Canzona and Epilogue for organ, violin, and women's chorus from Three Symphonic Canzonas
Harry Wilkinson, organ
1933 Ernest Skinner organ Opus 872 in Girard College Chapel, Philadelphia

German composer Sigfrid Karg-Elert is one of those composers who wrote a lot of music, most of which gathers dust and is little-known. Organists play his Marche Triomphale and little else.

Sir Edward Elgar: The Kingdom
London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, Leonard Slatkin
Yvonne Kenny, soprano, the Blessed Virgin; Alfreda Hodgson, contralto, Mary Magdalene;
Christopher Gillett, tenor, St. John; Benjamin Luxon, bass, St. Peter

The Kingdom is the last of Sir Edward Elgar's oratorios. Elgar used his own texts. The theme is the disciples' work building the Church in Jerusalem.

J.S. Bach: Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D, BWV 1068
Noel Rawsthorne, organ
Harrison & Harrison Organ at Coventry Cathedral

English organist Noel Rawsthorne (1929-2019) was organist of Liverpool Cathedral from 1955-1980.