

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, July 4, 2021

William Billings: Hear my Pray'r
His Majestie's Clerkes, Paul Hillier

Gerald Near: Holy is the True Light
Choirs of St. John's Cathedral, Denver, Donald Pearson
Eric Plutz, organ

Traditional American spiritual, arr. by Timothy Brown: Steal away
Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Timothy Brown
Elin Manahan Thomas, soprano; John Harte, tenor

William Billings (1746 - 1800) is regarded as America's first choral composer. American composer Gerald Near (1942-) studied with Leo Sowerby. Timothy Brown succeeded John Rutter as Director of Clare College Choir, Cambridge.

Dan Locklair: Pater noster
Vocal Arts Ensemble of Durham, Rodney Wynkoop

Traditional, arr. Lyon: Simple Gifts
Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Jerold Ottley

Emma Lou Diemer: Many and Great, O God, are thy Things from Three American Hymn Preludes
Frances Nobert, organ

Dan Locklair is Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Maine resident Joseph Brackett (1797–1882) wrote the lyrics and tune for Simple Gifts in 1848. He was a member of the Shaker community in Gorham, Maine. This hymn-prelude is based on a Native American melody.

Commentary: Zebulon Highben

Zebulon Highben: Love Is The Key
Nordic Choir of Luther College, Allen Hightower
Text by Christina Rosetti.

Leo Sowerby: I Was Glad
Choir of Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, Larry King
Larry King, organ

Dr. Zebulon Highben is Director of Chapel Music at Duke University Chapel and Associate Professor of the Practice of Church Music at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Leo Sowerby (1895-1968) won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1946.

George Rochberg: Psalm 150
Laudibus Choir, Michael Brewer

Bruce Neswick: I Will Set His Dominion in the Sea
Choir of St. John's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., Samuel Carabetta
J. Dan Kiser, organ

Gerre Hancock: Toccata for Organ
Todd Wilson, organ
Arents Memorial Organ in St. Thomas' Church, New York

George Rochberg's setting of Psalm 150 dates from 1954 and is dedicated to his brother. Dr. Bruce Neswick is the Canon for Cathedral Music at Trinity Cathedral, Portland, Oregon. Dr. Gerre Hancock (1934-2012) was Organist and Director of Music at St. Thomas Church, New York from 1971-2004. He studied with Nadia Boulanger, Jean Langlais, and Marie-Claire Alain.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 88, "Siehe, ich will viel Fischer aussenden"
Holland Boys' Choir; Netherlands Bach Collegium, Pieter Jan Leusink
Ruth Holton, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto; Marcel Beekman, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

The German translates roughly as "Behold, I will many fishers send out". This cantata was first performed on July 21, 1726.

Howard Hanson, text by Walt Whitman: Song of Democracy
Turtle Creek Chorale; Dallas Wind Symphony, Timothy Seelig

From the publisher's notes: "Based on the Walt Whitman text, Howard Hanson's Song of Democracy was performed at the inaugural concert for incoming U.S. President Richard Nixon in 1969. Hanson proudly noted this was the first inaugural concert to feature only American music."

Randall Thompson: The Place of the Blest (Cantata for treble voices and chamber orchestra)
Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys; Orchestra of St. Luke's, Gerre Hancock

Randall Thompson (1899-1984) taught at the Curtis Institute and Harvard University. Leonard Bernstein was one of his students.

Horatio Parker: Hora Novissima
Abendmusik Chorus; Nebraska Wesleyan Choir; Nebraska Chamber Orchestra, John Levick
Anna Soranno, soprano; Julie Simson, mezzo-soprano
Kent Hall, tenor; Duane Andersen, bass-baritone

American composer Horatio Parker (1863-1919) composed his oratorio Hora Novissima to the opening words of De contemptu mundi by the twelfth-century French Benedictine monk, Bernard of Cluny. The work dates from 1893.

René Clausen: Mass for Double Choir
Kansas City Chorale, Charles Bruffy
Sarah Tannehill, soprano; Pamela Williamson, soprano

René Clausen (1953-) is Professor of Music at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Amy Beach: Help Us, O God!, Op. 50
Harvard University Choir, Murray Forbes Somerville

Dr. Murray Forbes Somerville (1947-) was organ scholar at New College, Oxford, under Dr. David Lumsden.