

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, February 20, 2022

John Bacchus Dykes: Holy! Holy! Holy!
Choir of Wells Cathedral, Malcolm Archer
Rupert Gough, organ

Gioachino Rossini: Sanctus and Benedictus from Petite Messe solennelle
Northwest German Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, Werner Andreas Albert

Charles Gounod: Sanctus from St. Cecilia Mass
Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral; English Chamber Orchestra, Barry Rose
Dame Kiri te Kanawa, soprano

John Bacchus Dykes wrote over fifty-seven hymn tunes, most of which are still in use today. His tune "Nicaea" for Reginald Heber's text "Holy! Holy! Holy!" is published in approximately 1,400 hymnals. About James MacMillan's Mass from Boosey & Hawkes: "The Sanctus is a real tour de force, being a very extended crescendo which starts very low (F sharps) with basses pianissimo and builds up to a simply massive climax. The Hosanna needs an agile organist and includes more of MacMillan's vocal ornamentation referred to above. The Benedictus follows segue and is slow moving, eventually building to another huge Hosanna which subsides again into the dark abyss from which the Sanctus began." Some critics might style Charles Gounod's St. Cecilia Mass as syrupy. On the other hand few composers could write melodies as beautiful as Monsieur Gounod's.

Giovanni Gabrieli: Sanctus a 12
The King's Consort & Choir, Robert King

J.S. Bach: Sanctus from Mass in B minor, BWV 232
Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque Soloists, Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Henry Purcell, arr. C.H. Trevor: Trumpet Tune
Simon Preston, organ
1937/1982/1987 Harrison & Harrison organ in Westminster Abbey

Italian composer and organist Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1554/1557–1612) was organist of the Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco, Venice. Bach's B minor Mass had its beginnings in 1733 as a Lutheran mass setting which consisted of just the Kyrie and Gloria. It wasn't until 1747 that Bach conflated the work into a full scale mass setting with the addition of Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei. Simon Preston plays the familiar Trumpet Tune by Henry Purcell on an organ he knows very well, namely, the Harrison & Harrison organ in Westminster Abbey, London.

Commentary: Rabbi Darren Levine

Wilhelm Wurfel: Adon Olam
Siegen Philharmonic Choir, Herbert Ermert
Estrongo Nachama, cantor; Harry Foss, organ

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Sanctus from Mass Hodie Christus natus est

Gabrieli Consort and Players, Paul McCreesh

Composer Wilhelm Würfel (1791–1832?) was a friend of the Chopin family. Palestrina's Mass for Christmas is scored for double choir: SSAB.ATTB.

Josef Haydn: Sanctus from Mass for Wind Band, Hob. XXII:14
Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque Soloists, Sir John Eliot Gardiner
Joanne Lunn, soprano; Sara Mingardo, alto; Topi Lehtipuu, tenor; Brindley Sherratt, bass

Alexandre Guilmant: March on Handel's "Lift up your heads", Op. 15
Jane Watts, organ
1937/1982/1987 Harrison & Harrison organ in Westminster Abbey

Haydn's Harmonie-Messe was the last mass setting which he wrote. From the Naxos site: "The internationally-acclaimed Welsh organist Jane Watts enjoys a solo career that has taken her all over the world: she has given recitals in Europe, the United States, Hong Kong, Barbados, Australia and New Zealand."

J.S. Bach: Cantata 181, "Leichtgesinnte Flattergeister"
Holland Boys' Choir; Netherlands Bach Collegium, Pieter Jan Leusink
Marjon Strijk, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto
Nico van der Meel, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

The delightful German title of this cantata translates as "Scatterbrained and shallow people" according to Simon Crouch. The cantata was first performed on February 13, 1724.

Edvard Grieg: Four Psalms, Op. 74
Oslo Cathedral Choir, Terje Kvam
Hakan Hagegard, baritone

Grieg's psalm settings feature old Norwegian church melodies.

Tomaso Albinoni: Concerto in D minor for Organ & Trumpet, Op. 9 No. 2
Maurice André, trumpet; Marie-Claire Alain, organ

This adaptation of Albinoni's Oboe Concerto was published in 1722 and dedicated to Maximilian Emanuel, Duke of Bavaria.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Missa 'Benedicta es'
Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips

According to the liner notes, this mass "shows a side of Palestrina's writing which is not fully recognized: his indebtedness to Josquin."

Johannes Brahms: Nanie, Op. 82 (Song of Lamentation)
Warsaw Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, Antoni Wit

This funeral dirge by Brahms uses a text by Friedrich Schiller.

Antoine Busnois: Missa O Crux lignum
Orlando Consort

Opera Today notes that "Busnois' Missa O Crux lignum, [is] one of only two masses that can be securely attributed to the composer."

J.C. Bach: Si nocte tenebrosa
L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg
Markus Schafer, tenor

Johann Christian Bach, often referred to as the "London Bach", was the youngest of Johann Sebastian Bach's sons. He was a Roman Catholic.