

# Great Sacred Music

## Sunday, July 3, 2022

William Billings: Emmaus  
His Majesty'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 composition with Leo Sowerby and Leslie Bassett. Composer Michael Tippett included an arrangement of "Steal Away" in his oratorio "A Child of Our Time."

Gerre Hancock: How dear to me  
Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, Jeremy Filsell  
Nicholas Quardokus, organ

Morten Lauridsen: Ubi caritas et amor  
Polyphony, Stephen Layton

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. "How dear to me" is a setting of Psalm 84 vv. 1-8. "Ubi caritas et amor" (where charity and love are) is part of the text to the Antiphon sung on Maundy Thursday during the Washing of the Feet ceremony.

Commentary: Thomas Nutt-Powell

Thomas A. Dorsey: Precious Lord, Take My Hand  
Chor Leoni Men's Choir, Diane Loomer

Lee Hoiby: Inherit the Kingdom  
Choir of St. John's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., Samuel Carabetta  
J. Dan Kiser, organ

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" was Dr. Martin Luther King's favorite hymn. Mahalia Jackson sang it at Dr. King's funeral in April 1968. American composer Lee Henry Hoiby (1926-2011) studied with Gian Carlo Menotti.

Amy Beach: Jubilate from Service in A, Op. 63  
Harvard University Choir, Murray Forbes Somerville  
Erica Johnson, organ

Leo Sowerby: Fantasy for Flute Stops

Catharine Crozier, organ

1935 Aeolian-Skinner Organ Opus 936 in Saint John's Chapel of the Groton School, Groton, Massachusetts

Dr. Murray Forbes Somerville (1947- ) was organ scholar at New College, Oxford, under Dr. David Lumsden. American organist Catherine Crozier (1914-2003) was one of the top teachers and recitalists of the latter part of the 20th-century.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 135, "Ach Herr, mich armen Sunder"

Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki

Dorothee Miels, soprano; Pascal Bertin, countertenor

Gerd Turk, tenor; Peter Kooy, bass-baritone

The German translates as "Ah Lord, I am a poor sinner." This cantata was first performed on the Third Sunday after Trinity on June 25, 1724 in Leipzig. The work has six movements. Listen for the trombone in the opening chorus.

Randall Thompson: The Place of the Blest

Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys; Orchestra of St. Luke's, Gerre Hancock

"The Place of the Blest is considered one of the cornerstones of the Treble Voice Cantata repertoire. Randall Thompson (1899-1984) is distinguished as one of America's most beloved composers. His choral music is considered timeless: music that is well crafted with harmonic freedom and beautiful melodic lines. This four-movement work uses texts that were apparently favourites of Thomson's: poetry by Robert Herrick (movements 1 and 3) and the final movement, which is an extended meditation on his favourite work, "Alleluia". The second movement is an excerpt from a 12th century bestiary based on the ancient myth of a pelican: an allegory on the victory of restorative love, which is the foundation of the Christmas message. It is unabashedly rich in drama and metrical sophistication. The unusual text of the Pelican hardly seems appropriate for the Christmas season, yet its urgency gives way to the joy and beauty of the final Alleluia. The Alleluia concludes this outstanding work with beautifully crafted polyphonic melodic lines that display Thompson's exemplary writing for treble voices." Source: [Oakvillechoir.org](http://Oakvillechoir.org)

Dan Locklair: Brief Mass

Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, Gerre Hancock

Composer Dan Locklair writes: "Like the basic bread and wine elements of Mass, the basic musical materials of BRIEF MASS are simple. Yet, like the profound and eternal meanings of Mass, the use and development of the musical materials of BRIEF MASS strive for deeper musical dimensions. The pitch material of each movement of BRIEF MASS is basic and very limited, and each movement does not stray from its basic foundation pitches. Each individual movement serves as a vital link to the whole of BRIEF MASS. Throughout its duration BRIEF MASS invokes symbolism (including numerical symbolism), and the Holy Number 3 is the inspiration for each movement's three-part structure. While the ultimate aim of this work is the successful musical illumination of one of the most significant texts in the world, technical dimensions of each movement are now briefly described."

Sir Edward Elgar: The Light of Life, Op. 29

London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Richard Hickox

Judith Howarth, soprano; Linda Finnie, contralto  
Arthur Davies, tenor; John Shirley-Quirk, baritone; John Scott, organ

“The Light of Life” was Elgar’s first oratorio. It was written for the Worcester Festival in 1896. While critics note that this oratorio lacks the polish and consistency of The Apostles and The Kingdom, Elgar’s later oratorios, I think it has all the subtle characteristics such as the use of leit motifs which make for some delicious moments. It is a shame that The Light of Life is not performed often these days.

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

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

Domenico Zipoli: Mass in F  
Cantoria of the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Jesus Gabriel Segade  
Nami Landau, soprano; Angeles Abad, contralto;  
Roberto Britos, tenor; Lee Viola, cello; Mario Videla, organ

Italian composer and priest Domenico Zipoli (1688-1726) emigrated to South American as a missionary.