

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, October 2, 2022

Jean Lheritier: Surrexit Pastor Bonus
Stile Antico

Cesar Franck: Panis angelicus
Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, Richard Marlow
Nicholas Yates, tenor; Philip Rushforth, organ

William Croft: O worship the king
Choir of Westminster Abbey, Martin Neary
Martin Baker, organ

David Trendell writes: "Jean Lhéritier (c. 1480—c. 1552) was one of the most notable of a group of composers in the generation immediately after Josquin. He was born in Northern France, in the region now referred to as the Pas de Calais, and in the early years of the sixteenth century was associated with the royal French court. It is likely that he was a pupil of Jean Mouton. In 1521 he was appointed Chaplain and Chapelmaster at the church of St Louis des Français in Rome. Although this was not a particularly prestigious musical post, Lhéritier's music was evidently popular in Rome as his works appear in several manuscripts of Roman origin. Around 1530, Lhéritier moved back to France as Chapelmaster to the papal legate at Avignon, the Cardinal of Clermont, who granted him several lucrative prebends." César Franck's Panis Angelicus is a movement Franck added to his Mass for Three Voices in 1872. A great hymn, a great choir and a superb organist is a combination hard to beat. William Croft (1678-1727) was elected Organist of Westminster Abbey in 1709.

Philippe de Monte: O suavitas et dulcedo
Hilliard Ensemble

George Frideric Handel: "Praise the Lord" from Solomon
Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque Soloists, Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Max Reger: Romanze in A minor
Martin Welzel, organ
Johannes Klais Organ, Trier Cathedral

Flemish composer Philippe de Monte (1521–4 July 1603) was one of those peripatetic Renaissance musicians who traveled around Europe back in the days when there were no autobahns or airports. de Monte knew Orlando de Lassus as a result of his travels and was well-known in Italy. It's a pity that modern audiences are familiar with only one of the movements from Handel's grand oratorio "Solomon." The short instrumental pastiche, "The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba," appears on classical music radio playlists from time to time. The pairing of composer, organ, and organist is superb in this recording of Max Reger's "Romanze in A minor". The magnificent Johannes Klais organ sits high in a schwalbennestorgel (swallow's nest) configuration in the north transept of Trier Dom.

Commentary: Nathan Leaf

Francis Poulenc: Litanies a la Vierge Noire

Corydon Singers, Matthew Best

Richard Pearce, organ

Sir William Harris: O what their joy and their glory must be

Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Sir Stephen Cleobury

Benjamin Bayl, organ

Alexandre Guilmant: Grand Chorus in D, Op. 18 (after Handel)

Simon Lindley, organ

Harrison & Harrison organ at Leeds Parish Church

From Samir Savant: "Francis Poulenc completed his Litanies in 1936, within a week of his pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Rocamadour." Sir William Harris (1883-1973) was organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor from 1933-1961. Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) were both organists of Eglise de la Sante-Trinite in Paris. Guilmant began his tenure in 1871. Olivier Messiaen was organist from 1931 until 1992.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 27, "Wer weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende?"

Tolzer Knabenchor and Baroque Orchestra, Gustav Leonhardt

Markus Schafer, tenor; Harry van der Kamp, bass,

The German translates as "Who knoweth how near my end?" Bach composed this cantata in for the 16th Sunday after Trinity with the first performance on October 6th, 1726 in Leipzig. The concluding chorale is the only chorale surviving that was not harmonized by Bach. Bach uses the harmonization featuring two soprano parts from 1682 by Johannes Rosenmüller.

Daniel de Lange: Requiem

Netherlands Chamber Choir, Uve Gronostay

Dutch composer Daniël de Lange (1841-1918) wrote his Requiem in 1868. de Lange made his living as a composer, teacher and conductor. He introduced the orchestral music of Anton Bruckner to Dutch audiences.

J.S. Bach: Chorale: "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott"

Kevin Bowyer, organ

1962 Marcussen organ in Sct. Hans Kirke, Odense, Denmark.

While Reformation Sunday is a month off, Bach's treatment of Luther's sturdy chorale is worth a listen anytime, especially when played by a virtuoso such as British organist Keven Bowyer.

Sergei Rachmaninoff: Vespers, Op. 37

St. Petersburg Choir, Vladislav Tchernouchenko

Ivna Moody writes: "The Vigil is dedicated to the memory of the respected theorist and scholar Stepan Vasilevich Smolensky (1849-1909), who had been responsible for introducing Rachmaninov to the sacred repertoire at the Moscow Conservatory. The first performance was given on 10 March 1915 by the Moscow Synodal Choir under the direction of Nikolai Danilin, and it was extremely well received

by both public and critics. It had to be repeated four times during that concert season, such was the demand to hear it again."

Antoine Busnois: Missa O Crux lignum
Orlando Consort

From notes on Amazon: "The music of Antoine Busnois has inspired intense interest in recent times. With this survey of the different genres - sacred and secular - in which Busnois excelled, the Orlando Consort demonstrates the composer's supreme technical mastery, his melodic flair, and his rhythmic vitality." Busnois was a French composer who lived from 1430-1492.

Salomone Rossi: Settings from Hashirim Asher Lish'Lomo
The Bach Sinfonia, Daniel Abraham

Italian composer Salomone Rossi (c.1570-1630) was active as a violinist in Mantua in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. His composition entitled The Songs of Solomon was published in 1623. It actually consists of Jewish liturgical texts written in the baroque style, and contains nothing from the biblical Songs of Solomon. Scholars seem to think the title is a pun on the composer's first name. We wish all of our Jewish listeners a very happy New Year. Shana tova!