

# Great Sacred Music

## Sunday, May 14, 2023

**William Harold Ferguson: *O Jesus, I have promised***

St. Clement's Choir, Philadelphia, Peter Richard Conte  
Matthew Glandorf, organ

**John Tavener: *Mother Of God, Here I Stand***

Voces8

**Tomas Luis de Victoria: *Alma redemptoris mater***

The Sixteen, Harry Christophers  
Libby Crabtree, mezzo-soprano; Kaori Muraji, guitar

"O Jesus I have promised" is a cherished hymn that expresses the commitment and dedication of a believer to follow Christ faithfully, seeking His guidance and strength on life's journey. John Tavener (1944-2013) was an English composer known for his spiritual and contemplative compositions. His works, often deeply meditative and inspired by religious themes, created a profound impact on the contemporary classical music landscape. Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548-1611), a prominent Spanish Renaissance composer, crafted sacred choral music of sublime beauty and profound spirituality. His compositions exhibit meticulous craftsmanship, evoking reverence and transcendence in listeners' souls.

**Sir Arnold Bax: *Mater, ora Filium***

The Rodolfus Choir, Ralph Allwood

**Léon Boëllmann: *Prière à Notre-Dame from Suite gothique, Op. 25***

Daniel Chorzempa, organ  
Organ of the Cadets' Chapel, West Point

"Mater, ora Filium" is a sacred Latin text that dates back to the medieval period. It is a prayer to the Virgin Mary, beseeching her to intercede for humanity and pray for the salvation of her Son, Jesus Christ. Daniel Chorzempa (1944-2023) was a highly regarded American organist known for his virtuosic performances and extensive repertoire. He made significant contributions to the organ world through his recordings and interpretations.

**Commentary: Daniel Bishop**

**Henry Ley: *The strife is o'er***

Choir of Liverpool Cathedral, David Poulter  
Ian Tracey, organ

**Samuel Sebastian Wesley, arr. Daniel Bishop: *The Church's one foundation***

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

"The strife is o'er" is a triumphant Easter hymn that celebrates the victory of Christ over death. Its joyous lyrics and uplifting melody inspire believers to rejoice in the resurrection and eternal life.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876), an English composer of the Romantic era, was renowned for his choral and organ compositions. His works demonstrate rich harmonies, expressive melodies, and a masterful command of counterpoint. The text "Most glorious Lord of life" is derived from a poem by Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), an English Renaissance poet. It is found in Spenser's work "Easter," which is a part of his larger collection of poems called "Amoretti and Epithalamion."

**Gabriel Faure: *Cantique de Jean Racine, Op.11***

English Voices; London Festival Orchestra, Ross Pople

**Gerre Hancock: *Air for Organ***

Benjamin Sheen, organ

2018 Dobson Organ, Opus 93 in St. Thomas Church, New York

Gabriel Fauré's "Cantique de Jean Racine, Op.11" is a sublime choral composition that showcases his mastery of harmonies and lyrical melodies. Inspired by the text of Jean Racine, it exudes a serene and devotional atmosphere. Gerre Hancock, a distinguished American organist, left a lasting impact on the world of organ music. Through his virtuoso performances, innovative improvisations, and influential teaching, he enriched the repertoire and inspired generations of organists.

**J.S. Bach: *Cantata 86, "Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch"***

Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir, Ton Koopman

Sibylla Rubens, soprano; Bernhard Landauer, alto

Christoph Pregardien, tenor; Klaus Mertens, bass

J.S. Bach's Cantata 86, "Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch" (Truly, truly, I say unto you), is a profound musical expression of faith. With intricate counterpoint, expressive melodies, and theological depth, it exemplifies Bach's unmatched ability to convey spiritual messages through intricate musical craftsmanship. It was first performed by Johann Sebastian Bach on September 17, 1724, as part of his second annual cycle of cantatas in Leipzig, Germany.

**Antonio Maria Bononcini: *Stabat mater in C minor***

Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini

The Latin text "Stabat Mater" finds its origins in medieval hymnody. It is a sequence hymn that vividly portrays the grief of the Virgin Mary at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Traditionally attributed to Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan poet of the 13th century, it gained widespread popularity in Catholic liturgy. The text's title, "Stabat Mater," translates to "the mother stood" or "the mother was standing," referring to Mary's steadfast presence at the foot of the cross. The hymn takes listeners on an emotional journey, depicting Mary's anguish, compassion, and profound sorrow during the crucifixion. Over the centuries, "Stabat Mater" has inspired numerous composers to set it to music, resulting in a rich repertoire of musical settings. Its poignant and introspective nature has made it a beloved and enduring text, touching the hearts of countless listeners and serving as a testament to the enduring power of religious devotion.

**Felix Mendelssohn: *Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Op. 37 No. 1***

Peter Hurford, organ  
Rieger Organ in Ratzeburg Cathedral, Germany

Ratzeburg Cathedral, located in Ratzeburg, Germany, is a magnificent Gothic structure dating back to the 12th century. Its stunning architecture and rich history make it a significant cultural and religious landmark.

**Rebecca Dale: *Materna Requiem***

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Kantos Chamber Choir, Clark Rundell  
Louise Adler, soprano; Trystan Griffiths, tenor

Rebecca Dale, a talented contemporary composer, has gained recognition for her evocative and emotive compositions. With a distinctive style that blends classical and cinematic elements, she creates captivating musical landscapes that resonate with listeners.

**Franz Schubert: *Prayer, D. 815***

Monteverdi Choir, Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Sir John Eliot Gardiner is a highly esteemed British conductor known for his expertise in Baroque and Classical music. He founded the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra and is renowned for his insightful interpretations and vibrant performances.

**Camille Saint-Saens: *Mass, Op. 4***

Cantus Stuttgart, Jorg-Hannes Hahn  
Anna Maria Friman, soprano; Aleksandra Lustig, mezzo-soprano  
Patricia Wagner, alto; Andreas Wagner, tenor; Tobias Schabel, bass  
Rie Hiroe-Lang, organ

Camille Saint-Saëns composed his Mass, Opus 4, for the occasion of his own wedding. The composition, written in 1856, served as a celebratory and personal expression of his marital union.

**Jean Mouton: *Verbum bonum et suave***

Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice

Jean Mouton, a renowned Franco-Flemish composer of the Renaissance era, excelled in sacred polyphony. He served in prestigious positions in France, composed masses, motets, and chansons, and his works showcase rich harmonies, expressive melodies, and intricate counterpoint.