

Music Notes for May 12, 2024

The service music during the Easter season includes the Presentation Hymn (Alleluia, give thanks to the Risen Lord), the Sanctus by William Mathias (1934-1992) and the Fraction Anthem ("The disciples knew the Lord Jesus") by Mark Sedio (b. 1954). Mathias was born in Wales and was a musical prodigy who began playing the piano at age 3 and composing at age 5. He has an extraordinarily large musical output has written works for choir, organ, and orchestra, including symphonies and operas. His anthem "Let the people praise thee" was written for the wedding of Charles and Diana in 1981 and was televised to an audience of over 1 billion people. The Sanctus is from the "Communion Service Series III," published in 1976. Sedio is Director of Music at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and also serves on the music staff at Luther Seminary in Saint Paul.

The Psalms during Eastertide will be sung using settings that were composed by Peter Hallock, longtime organist and music director of St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, WA.

Today is the seventh and final Sunday of Easter. The prelude is a selection by Richard Purvis (1913-1994) entitled "Communion." Purvis was the long-time organist and choirmaster of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco from 1947 until 1971. He composed over 200 works, many in a style that was tuneful, accessible, and richly colored in an area when romantic music was out of favor and many of his contemporaries were composing in a more atonal style.

The today's opening hymn is "Sing ye faithful, sing with gladness," written by the English clergyman John Ellerton (1826-1989). Ellerton wrote or translated about 80 hymns, many of which are still sung today. The text is paired with the tune "Finnian," composed by Christopher Dearnley (1930-2000) in 1975. Dearnley was the organist at Salisbury Cathedral from 1954 – 1968 and this tune has become a favorite in the Episcopal Church since its inclusion in the Hymnal 1982

The anthem today is "Go forth and tell" by David Ogden. The text is related to the Gospel lesson, in which Jesus talks about sending his disciples out into the world. Ogden (b.1966) is from Hertfordshire, England. Our choir has sung a few of his compositions over the years, and we have frequently in the past used one of his Alleluia Gospel acclamations.

The communion hymn is "The head that once was crowned with thorns," written by Irish Roman Catholic priest Thomas Kelly (1769-1855). Amazingly, Kelly wrote 765 hymns, of which only a handful are still commonly in use today, although many of them are worth rediscovering. The tune is "St. Magnus," now attributed to Jeremiah Clarke, the composer of the well-known "Trumpet Voluntary" so often heard at weddings.

The closing hymn is "Jesus shall reign where're the sun, written by Isaac Watts for his 1719 publication, "Psalms of David, Imitated." The text proclaims Christ's dominion over the whole world. It is sung to the stately tune, "Duke Street," which readily lends itself to majestic subjects. The final stanza features an accompaniment by Eric Thiman, who was the organist at

City Temple in London, beginning in 1958. As a side note, during Thiman's tenure there, City Temple acquired a new J.W. Walker & Sons organ. The instrument fell into disuse and disrepair in recent years, but it is now being repurposed and relocated to our own St. James Cathedral right here in Chicago (expected installation date is in 2025)!

Today's postlude is "Grand Choeur," one of several pieces with the same title by Théodore Salomé (1834-1896). He was a French organist and composer who was organist at The Church of the Holy Trinity in Paris. He played there at the funeral of Georges Bizet in 1875.