

## Music Notes for March 10, 2024

The service music during Lent includes the Presentation Hymn (“What shall I render unto you, O God”, listen [here](#)), the Sanctus by David Hurd, one of the preeminent Black composers of the Episcopal Church (listen [here](#)), and the Fraction Anthem March 10<sup>th</sup> only: “This is the true bread,” listen [here](#)). The Psalms during Lent will be sung using simple congregational antiphons, mostly composed by me, with verses sung by the choir to traditional plainsong chants. The psalms will be sung *a capella*, with a simple bell accompaniment to give the pitches.

The service today opens with the Decalogue, a recitation of the Ten Commandments. The inclusion of the Decalogue in the Prayer Book began in 1552. After praying the Lord’s Prayer and the Collect for Purity, the priest would stand and turn to the congregation, reading each commandment, and the people responding “*Lord, have mercye upon us, and encline our heartes to kepe this lawe.*” The Decalogue was a required part of the liturgy at one time, though in our current Prayer Book designates it as an optional part of the Eucharist. We are including it again this year to emphasize the penitential nature of the season of Lent. A cantor chants the commandments, and the congregation responds with the sung response, “Amen. Lord have mercy” to a setting from Healy Willan’s *Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena* (listen [here](#)).

The sequence hymn today is “Book of books, our people’s strength,” sung to the German Chorale, Liebster Jesu. The hymn text was written by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936) who was an English priest and liturgist best known as the author of “The Parson’s Handbook,” a liturgical manual for Anglican clergy, and as editor of The English Hymnal.

Today’s anthem is “O love that will not let me go,” composed by Carson Cooman. Cooman (b. 1982) is an American composer with a catalog of hundreds of works in many forms—from solo instrumental pieces to operas, and from orchestral works to hymn tunes. The text was written by George Matheson on one summer evening in 1882. Matheson was suffering from extreme mental distress at the time and the hymn was the fruit of that pain. It is a beautiful and tender hymn worth of more extensive use.

The music during communion during Lent will be Taizé-style chants. Today’s is “*Sing praises, all you peoples,*” or, in Latin, “*Laudate, omnes gentes.*” As with the chants from some previous weeks, this chant was written by Jacques Berthier, who was the organist at St. Ignace Church in Paris from 1961 until his death in 1994. Berthier is best known, of course, for his extensive output of service music for the Taizé community near Cluny, Burgundy.

The closing hymn is “The God of Abraham Praise.” This hymn is attributed to Daniel ben Judah. Born in Italy, he was a Jewish liturgical poet who lived in Rome. The text is based on a Jewish doxology of thirteen articles formulated by Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) in the latter part of the twelfth century. A fourteenth-century metrical version of that doxology, *Yigdal Elohim* (“magnify the Lord”), is traditionally used in daily morning synagogue services and during the Sabbath eve in Jewish family worship.

The prelude is a selection from “Five Preludes from the Sacred Service for Sabbath Eve.” Opus 122 by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968). We’ll hear an arrangement for piano of the organ piece, “Invocation: Sh’ma Yisroel.” Born in Florence, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was descended from a prominent banking family who had lived in Tuscany since the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. He is known as one of the most prominent guitar composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became a US citizen in 1946. While in America, he also composed operas and works based on American poetry, Jewish liturgy, and the Bible.

The postlude is a simple voluntary composed by Dutch composer Jan Bender (1909 – 1994). Bender was born in Haarlem, Netherlands, but moved to Lübeck, Germany at age 13 where he was drawn to the study of organ music at the Marienkirche, where the famous Danish organist Dietrich Buxtehude had been employed beginning in 1668.