

Music Notes for March 31, 2024

The service music during the Easter season includes the Presentation Hymn (Alleluia, give thanks to the Risen Lord) the Sanctus by William Mathias and the Fraction Anthem ("The disciples knew the Lord Jesus"). The Psalms during Easter 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's prelude consists of two works for brass quartet. The first of these is a relatively little-known work by the Baroque composer, Antonio Bertali. Bertali was an Italian composer and violinist born in Verona. Probably from 1624, he was employed as court musician in Vienna by Emperor Ferdinand II. In 1649 Bertali was named court Kapellmeister. He died in Vienna in 1669. The piece this morning was originally written for a string ensemble and has been arranged for brass by Robert Holland, a member of our St. A's choir. The second piece is a contemporary fanfare composed in 2013 by the German composer Martin Heinrichs.

The Entrance Hymn is "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." This hymn is very much in demand on Easter Day. Some years in the past I have not included it and that always results in comments like "it doesn't seem like Easter Day without that hymn!" The text is based on a translation of a Latin hymn, "*Surrexit Christus hodie.*" The English version of the hymn first appeared in a 1208 collection entitled "*Lyra Davidica, or a Collection of Divine Songs and Hymns, partly new composed, partly translated from High German and Latin Hymns; set to easy and pleasant tunes.*" The tune, "Easter Hymn," was paired with the text "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" in the 1708 publication and is the only melody that has survived from that original edition to the present day. The original melody was slightly more florid than the version we have today, though it is readily apparent that it is essentially the same tune.

The Song of Praise is "Glory to you, O God of our forebears," a modern translation of the canticle "*Benedictus es, Domine.*" The setting we are singing appears in the Hymnal 1982 at S236 and was composed by John Rutter. Rutter was born in London in 1945 and studied music at Clare College, Cambridge, and has been a much-beloved choral composer and conductor since his student days. In September 2023 he received the prestigious Ivors Academy Fellowship and joins a list of 24 Fellows that include Pierre Boulez and Sir Elton John, among others.

Today's anthem is "Easter," a dramatic composition for choir, organ, and brass by Roland Martin from 2009. Martin was born in 1955 and is a member of the music faculty of The Buffalo Seminary, Daemen College, and the University of Buffalo, as well as the Director of Music at the St. Joseph University Church, Buffalo. The anthem text is from a 1633 George Herbert poem, "Rise heart; thy Lord is risen." The poem is in two parts (the second beginning with "I got me flowers") and this anthem just sets the first section. Some of the imagery is based on concepts from Alchemy and, although a bit weird to us today, has a strange beauty that captures the incomprehensible truth of Christ's resurrection and its impact on us and on everything in our world.

During communion, the choir will sing Vernon Hoyle's setting of "This joyful Eastertide," an old Dutch carol. Hoyle was born in 1948 and over the past 50 years has been a prolific musician and composer of music for the Anglican church.