

Music Notes 5.24.20

Prelude

Priere à Notre Dame from *Suite Gothique*

Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897)

Dr. Dave Faber, organ

Léon Boëllmann was a composer, organ teacher, and for the latter half of his brief life, organist at the Church of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, France. His modest output includes works for organ, piano, and chamber ensembles. His best-known work is, by far, his *Suite Gothique*, or Gothic Suite, inspired by the architecture of the Church of Saint-Augustin in Paris. Dr. Faber will play two of the four movements today. The prelude is Priere à Notre Dame (prayer for Our Lady), is the third movement, a gentle, reserved piece in A-flat major. The postlude is the fiery toccata, the finale of the suite, which is one of the most recognizable pieces in organ literature, often used liturgically and in organ concerts and contests. This piece is in C-minor, but ends with a major chord, colloquially called a “Picardy third.” Listen for the melody beginning in the pedal.

Hymn of Praise 265

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

DUKE STREET

Charles Hutchins writes the following on Isaac Watts:

Isaac Watts was the son of a schoolmaster, and was born in Southampton, July 17, 1674. He is said to have shown remarkable precocity in childhood, beginning the study of Latin, in his fourth year, and writing respectable verses at the age of seven. At the age of sixteen, he went to London to study in the Academy of the Rev. Thomas Rowe, an Independent minister. In 1698, he became assistant minister of the Independent Church, Berry St., London. In 1702, he became pastor. In 1712, he accepted an invitation to visit Sir Thomas Abney, at his residence of Abney Park, and at Sir Thomas' pressing request, made it his home for the remainder of his life. It was a residence most favourable for his health, and for the prosecution of his literary labours. He did not retire from ministerial duties, but preached as often as his delicate health would permit.

Called the “Godfather of English Hymnody,” Watts wrote some 750 hymns, including some of the most beloved Christian hymns, such as “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past,” “Joy to the World,” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” “Jesus Shall Reign” is considered another of his finest. One of his preferred hymn-writing approaches was to paraphrase Psalms, rendering them with New Testament eyes, a technique he called “Christianizing.” “Jesus Shall Reign” is one of these “Christianized” Psalms, and a loose paraphrase of Psalm 72.

Response of Praise 581

Glory Be to the Father

GLORIA PATRI

Hymn of Preparation 274

You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd

PICARDY

Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993) was an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada, a lover of liturgy, and a hymn-writer. According to *Glory to God*, Dunstan “called this text ‘Christus Paradox,’ because so many attributes of Christ stand in tension with each other.” With its bright biblical imagery, it calls us to confront this tension, as well. The tune, PICARDY, most often associated with “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,” is of French origin, and dates back to at least the 17th century. Coupled with Dunstan’s text, it heightens the incarnational mystery.

Offertory

To Shepherds as They Watched by Night

Paul Manz (1919-2009)

Dave Faber, organ

Paul Otto Manz was a longtime Lutheran organist, choirmaster, composer, and clinician.

Doxology 609

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Hymn of Commitment 260

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

HYFRYDOL

William Chatterton Dix was a poet, publishing several collections of religious poetry, with a predilection for “high church” ritual and liturgy. Perhaps it should come without surprise that such a liturgically-minded poet would both recognize and seek to resolve the dearth of Eucharistic hymns in the collective Protestant hymnbook with this hymn. Other well-known hymns by Dix include, “As with Gladness, Men of Old” and “What Child Is This.”

This hymn is rife with biblical imagery that is eucharistic and eschatological. The Eucharistic theme is evident in verse 3, with its reference to Christ as the food and stay, to whom we the sinful turn. At every point it is a spectacular and dramatic hymn, allusive in style. The most notable one is the idea of Jesus as High Priest (from Hebrews, chapters 3 to 9), and the vision of Revelation 5:9: ‘Thou has redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’ It is also closely linked with the feast of the Ascension, observed during the Easter season, in verse 2. Verse 3 of the hymn contains the great appeal to Jesus the intercessor and redeemer, which returns to the Eucharistic theme, though

now linked with the ascended one in heaven. In verse 4, which reminds of Dunstan's "Christus Paradox," the Incarnate Word, who was 'born of Mary' is now both priest and victim in the Eucharistic feast.

This hymn was paired with a number of tunes early on. In 1906, British composer and editor of the *English Hymnal*, Ralph Vaughan Williams, paired it with the melodic, sweeping Welsh tune HYFRYDOL, which is now by far the tune with which Dix's text is most associated. In most hymnals, after the fourth stanza, stanza 1 is repeated, so it was an obvious choice for the benediction response today.

Benediction Response 260

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (stanza 1)

HYFRYDOL

Postlude

Toccata from *Suite Gothique*

[Léon Boëllmann](#)

Dave Faber, organ