

Jonathan Ryan, *organ*

Christ Church, Cambridge
Wednesday, June 25 & Thursday, June 26, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Symphonie-Passion, Op. 23 (1924)
Le Monde dans l'attente du Sauveur
Nativité
Crucifixion
Résurrection

Marcel Dupré
(1886–1971)

Meditation (2005)

Ken Yukl
(b. 1943)

From **Sechs Studien in kanonischer Form**, Op. 56
No. 5 in B Minor
No. 4 in A-flat Major

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Pageant (1931)

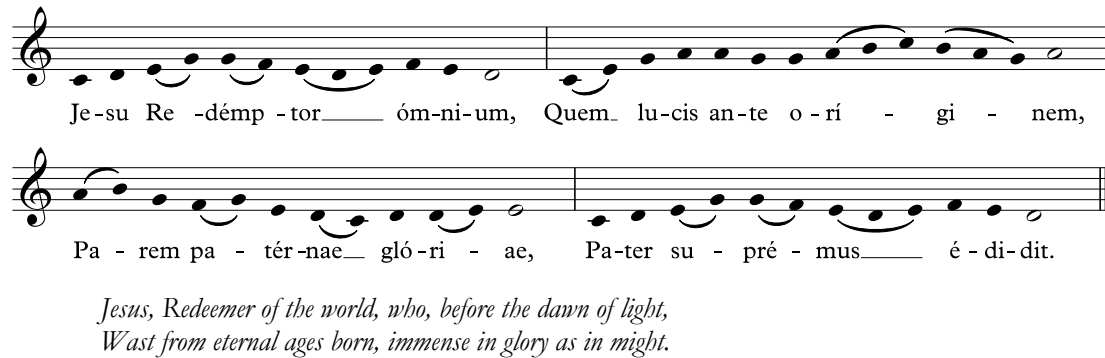
Leo Sowerby
(1895–1968)

*Jonathan Ryan is represented by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.
Organ prepared by Spencer Organ Company.*

Program Notes

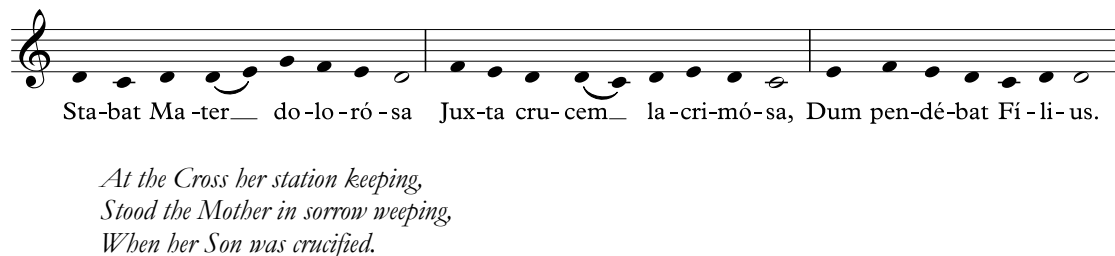
Marcel Dupré created the *Symphonie-Passion* as an improvisation during a Philadelphia concert at Wanamaker's Department Store (now Macy's) in his 1921 American tour. Key to Dupré's improvisation were the four musical themes he received at that concert. In addition to *Adeste fidelis*, usually known today as the Christmas hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful," three Gregorian chants were chosen for Dupré. These three Latin hymns, with the first verse of their text in English, follow:

The Vespéral Hymn for Christmas:



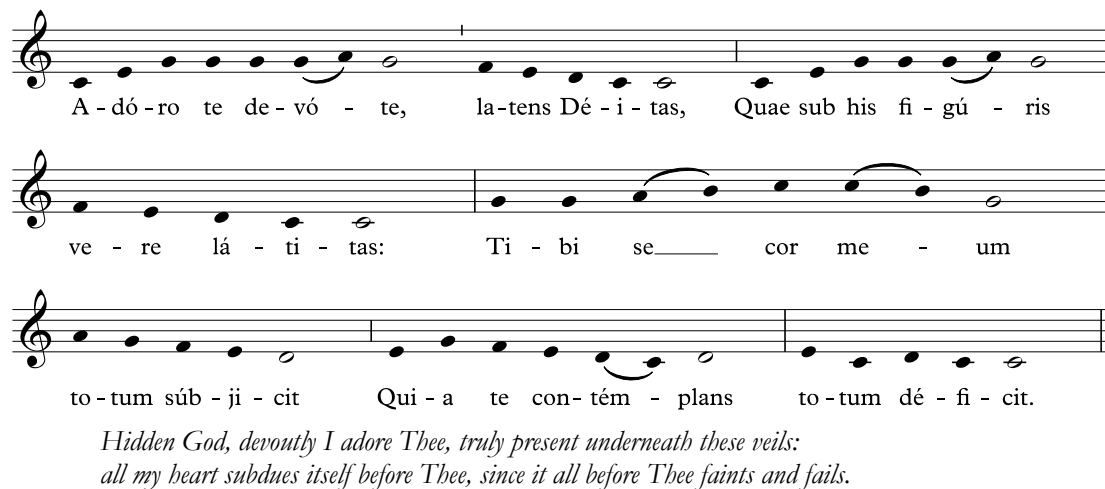
Je-su Re -demp - tor — óm-ni-um, Quem lu-cis an-te o - rí - gi - nem,
Pa - rem pa - tér-nae — gló-ri - ae, Pa-ter su - pré - mus — é - di-dit.
*Jesus, Redeemer of the world, who, before the dawn of light,
Wast from eternal ages born, immense in glory as in might.*

The Sequence from the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows:



Sta-bat Ma - ter — do-lo - ró - sa Jux-ta cru - cem — la - cri - mó - sa, Dum pen - dé - bat Fí - li - us.
*At the Cross her station keeping,
Stood the Mother in sorrow weeping,
When her Son was crucified.*

A Eucharistic Hymn:



A - dó - ro te de - vó - te, la - tens Dé - i - tas, Quae sub his fi - gú - ris
ve - re lá - ti - tas: Ti - bi se — cor me - um
to - tum súb - ji - cit Qui - a te con - tém - plans to - tum dé - fi - cit.
*Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee, truly present underneath these veils:
all my heart subdues itself before Thee, since it all before Thee faints and fails.*

In his *Memoirs*, Dupré recalls his decision to create and play a depiction of the life of Christ using these themes: "I suddenly had an inspiration for a symphony in four movements that was to become my *Symphonie-Passion*. . . . When my plan was announced [to the audience] by the distinguished Dr. Alexander Russell, I received a standing ovation, and I played in a state of exaltation that I have rarely experienced."

Dupré introduces the work with a vivid depiction of distress and turmoil as the world awaits the Savior. A compound and constantly changing time signature yields a highly effective, Stravinsky-esque rhythmic intensity. The chant theme for this movement, *Jesu, Redemptor omnium*, forms a serene plea for deliverance on the Oboe stop in a contrasting B section. The agitated opening material eventually sneaks in, and thereafter *Jesu, Redemptor* struggles for a triumph it

achieves by surrounding the opening tumultuous material with a canon in the soprano and bass within the parallel major key.

Probably the most scenic of all the movements, *Nativité* is divided into three equal sections. They are generally regarded as the rocky journey to the rustic Bethlehem stable (or as Mary's lullaby), followed by the stately procession of the Magi, giving way to the Magi's adoration, where we find this movement's theme, *Adeste fidelis*.

Two distinct melodic themes form the greater part of *Crucifixion*. The first, heard at the outset on thirty-two-foot and sixteen-foot stops in the pedals, is a highly syncopated, one-measure ostinato, representing the struggle to carry the cross. The second represents the climb to Calvary, with a slowly ascending line of longer note values. From this eerie opening, Dupré builds the movement to a vivid and memorable climax. After the shattering conclusion of this main section, the closing section employs *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, its presentation so fragmented as to be almost unrecognizable.

Adoro te devote is heard first in the bass and later in the soprano in *Résurrection*. This highly contrapuntal movement steadily grows to a brilliant toccata in which *Adoro te* is treated canonically. The theme swells to a conclusion of massive, rapid chords recalling the end of the first movement, ultimately giving way to a victorious fanfare.

Ohio native Ken Yukl studied organ and sacred music with John Ferguson at Kent State University. Now living in Tucson, Yukl previously served as organist and director at Trinity Lutheran Church in Akron. His 2005 composition *Meditation* is dedicated to his wife, Pamela Decker, on the occasion of a landmark birthday. Cast in ternary form, Yukl's work surrounds a lyrical melody with a largely homophonic texture based upon functional tonality in the outer sections. Drawing melodic material from the A section, the middle section builds to a climax before a recapitulation.

Despite falling out of fashion after his death, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach benefited from an enduring renewal in the nineteenth century, initiated from Felix Mendelssohn's now-famous 1829 performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, in Berlin. The influence of Bach's music extended to many composers, including Robert Schumann, whose captivation yielded several works in contrapuntal style, among them the six canonic etudes of Op. 56, written in April and May of 1845. Composed for organ or pedal piano, the works employ two-voice canons to create miniature marvels of poignant lyricism and serenity. The slightly whimsical etude in B minor seems to hide the canon between the second-lowest voice and the soprano voice. The etude in A-flat major treats it much like an art song, with a solo/accompaniment texture.

Vatican organist Fernando Germani (1906–1998) performed Sowerby's *Medieval Poem* on his first concert in the United States, in 1926, in Chicago under the composer's baton. *Pageant* was written three years later at the request of Germani, clearly with his renowned pedal technique in mind. Upon receipt of the score, he responded, "Now write for me something difficult!" A declamatory pedal cadenza announces the theme, followed by ingeniously substantive variations. Often called the "Dean of American church music" of his time, Sowerby's musical legacy extends to some five hundred and fifty scores. He is interred in Washington National Cathedral.

© M. Jonathan Ryan