

Music Blurbs for 7-22-18

For News & Notes

This week as we celebrate St. James, our organ music will include works of Spanish composer Antonio Soler. Hymns will include "Servant Song" and "For all the saints." Keeping up our St. James Day tradition, we invite anyone and everyone to join us in the choir area for a pick-up choir. We'll start rehearsing at 9:45 a.m.

For Bulletin

Today we are celebrating St. James, our patron saint. Because of his association with Spain, our postlude is by Spanish composer Antonio Soler (1729-1783). He spans the late baroque and early classical periods of music and is best known for his keyboard sonatas. By age 23 he became a Hieronymite monk and his duties were music related. Eventually he entered the Escorial, the monastery/palace of the Spanish monarchy, where he served as organist and director of the royal chapel as well as composing and teaching music to members of the royal family.

Today's piece, from one of the sonatas, was first known to me colorfully as the "Emperor's Fanfare" on an E. Power Biggs organ album entitled *Historic Organs of Spain*. Reed stops on organs imitate orchestral brass and reed instruments. Much like oboe and clarinet reeds, reed organ pipes contain a reed made of flexible brass that vibrates as wind from the air chest passes over it. This vibration creates their unique raspy sound. The Spanish loved reeds and perfected the sound of organ trumpets. To increase the volume they also arrayed the trumpet pipes horizontally in fabulous fan displays so the sound would go from the open end of the pipe directly into the room. It's much the same principle as aiming speakers. If you are in a Spanish cathedral and look up at the organ you will most likely see one of the arrays they called *en chemada* after a call from battle trumpets. If you are ending your camino at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella and you look at the two baroque choir organs you will also see the arrays of *trompettas en chemada*. Later organ builders in the 19th and 20th centuries did not want to let a good thing pass, so they too developed horizontal reeds. A favorite effect was to put a set in the rear gallery and put them under high wind pressure. A baroque organ could run at about 4psi. The State Trumpet at St. John the Divine (New York City) runs at about 50psi. Of course at the National Cathedral if you look up at the rear gallery you will also see their horizontal State Trumpets. Our own Allen electronic organ's version is called the Tuba Mirabilis.