

Music Blurbs for 9-2-18

News and Notes

This week's music will include "Prayer" by Ernest Bloch, performed by Stevie Linehan-Reckford on cello. We will also sing "Just as I am," "Rejoice ye pure in heart!" and "Lift up your hearts, ye mighty gates."

Bulletin

The text for "Rejoice, ye pure in heart!" was written in 1865 for a choir festival that was held annually at Peterborough Cathedral, England. Just three years later it was published in the Appendix of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the primary hymnal of the Church of England. The present tune, MARION, was composed in 1883 for use with this text by Arthur Messiter, and was named in honor of his mother. The text and tune first appeared together in print in an 1889 hymnal published in New York called *Hymnal with Music*. Much of that edition seemed prelude to the 1892 edition of the hymnal for the Episcopal Church USA. As our Hymnal Companion suggests, the buoyant spirit of jubilant song that permeates this text and this tune that conveys a similar spirit has assured its continual use to this day.

It's a bit odd to write about what we are not singing but there is another tune with a local connection. It was written by Richard Dirksen in 1974. At the time he was the Precentor, Organist, and Choirmaster of Washington National Cathedral. The occasion was the installation of the Most Rev. John Allin as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church which was held at National Cathedral. The tune, VINEYARD HAVEN, was named to honor then dean of the National Cathedral and close friend of Dirksen, The Very Rev. Francis Sayre, who had a summer home in Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard.

About our Cello Solo, "Prayer":

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) composed *From Jewish Life* around 1924. Bloch originally composed this moving triptych for cello and piano. The work is made up of three pieces or movements: Prayer, Supplication, and Jewish Song, all dedicated to cellist Hans Kindler. Bloch wrote that his intent was not to reconstruct authentic Jewish music or melodies, but to capture the complex, ardent Jewish spirit and soul.

When you listen to Prayer by Ernest Bloch, you will hear the opening movement from the work "From Jewish Life." The first movement "Prayer" is reflective, emotionally intense, and expressive.