

Blurbs for 11-18-18-8

News and Notes

Today we are pleased to welcome to the 10:30 service members of Chris Sanchez's Suzuki class that meets here twice a month. We also welcome our own Stevie Reckford-Linehan who will be joining the ensemble as cellist. As well, communion music will include Lori Minasian and Cheryl Stafford singing the Karl Jenkins version of "Ave verum corpus." Hymns will include "Lift up your heads" and "Soon and very soon."

8:00

Today's prelude and postlude are transcriptions. They were originally written for another instrumental medium and then adapted to be played on the organ. While transcriptions tend to be looked down on in an age when we can listen to recordings of the original versions, before recordings a transcription may have been the only way you got to hear a cantata or orchestral piece. Bach, in no way, considered it beneath him to do transcriptions.

Today's prelude "Wachet auf" (Sleepers wake!) is from a small collection of chorale settings for organ called the Schübler Chorales. Five of the six chorales are Bach's transcriptions of movements from his own extant cantatas. The sixth we can assume logically comes from a cantata that is lost. All of these settings call for two manuals (keyboards) and pedal. This particular setting is a transcription of the fourth movement from the cantata by the same name (BWV 140) and is scored for strings, continuo, and tenor (either as a solo or a group). This is one example of where the accompaniment is more famous than the actual melody of the hymn.

The postlude is the last movement of a string concerto by Prince Johan Ernst of Saxe-Weimar. The Prince was a musical prodigy who wrote as many as 19 works before he died at the age of 18. His father was the Duke of Weimar, Bach's employer. The Prince studied with Bach's cousin Johan Walther as well as attending the University of Utrecht while he was 15 and 16 years old. His music shows the strong influence of Italian composers like Vivaldi, who were all the rage in the early 18th century. Bach transcribed several of the Prince's works for organ and harpsichord such as the movement we hear today.

10:30

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For today's offertory and postlude we are fortunate enough to have the real thing. A full complement of violins, cello, and organ will play two Mozart Church (or Epistle) Sonatas. These were written by Mozart while in his teens and living in Salzburg. They were played during Mass between the Epistle and the Gospel and were generally scored for what we have today. The key of the sonata would match the key of the Mass setting. Three of them require larger orchestral forces so one can conjecture that the Mass settings for those days also required larger orchestral forces and since they were available, they were used. After Mozart moved away in 1780, the Prince-Archbishop wanted choral music at that point in the Mass and the epistle sonatas were dropped. We, however, are left with these delightful little known works.