

Music Blurbs for 2-24-19

News and Notes

This week our hymns include “Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,” “Make me a channel of your peace,” and “Go forth for God.” The choir sings “O Sing Joyfully” by English Renaissance composer Adrian Batten.

Sunday bulletins

Today’s prelude and postlude are by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621). Sweelinck, like Frescobaldi (last week), also straddled the Renaissance and Baroque periods and also wrote primarily for keyboards. He could easily be called the grandfather of German organ music. He spent almost his whole life in Amsterdam. His only official duties were to play the organ. During his lifetime, Amsterdam became a Calvinist city. Organ music was typically not played during services because of the “Regulative Principle” which restricts elements of worship only to those which are commanded in the New Testament. Organists played variations on Genevan psalm tunes before and after the services to help familiarize the people with the tunes. He also composed music for Lutherans and Roman Catholics. In fact the hymn for today’s prelude, “Allein Gott,” is a Lutheran hymn. He appears to have had ties with England as well. His music appears in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* even though all the other music is by English composers.

Whereas Frescobaldi’s music is highly emotional, Sweelinck’s music is characterized by mechanical repetition. This characteristic would morph eventually in a generation or two. The mechanical repetitions became the persistent rhythms of late Baroque composers like Vivaldi. The rhythmic patterns became *figuren* in Bach, in whose music they will express some underlying significance. His German pupils, like Samuel Scheidt and Heinrich Scheidemann, would go on to become the core of the North German organ school that would flower in to Bruhns and Buxtehude and play a major influence on Bach.