

The Memorial Church of Harvard University

Music Notes for April 23, 2023

The Scottish composer and conductor Sir James MacMillan is one of the pre-eminent figures of contemporary Classical music. He studied at Edinburgh and Durham universities, and has written prolifically in all genres; he is, however, most well-known for his vocal music. “Who Shall Separate Us?” was commissioned for the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, and first performed in Westminster Abbey on September 19, 2022. It is a richly-scored, eight-part *a cappella* setting of words from the Saint Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans*, chapter 8.

British composer Cecilia McDowall studied at the University of Edinburgh and London’s Trinity College of Music. She has written for many of the UK’s leading ensembles, including a new carol in 2021 for the famous Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s College, Cambridge. “I know that my redeemer liveth” was commissioned by the Epsom Choral Society and first performed alongside the Brahms *Requiem*.

Our prelude presents works by Jane Marshall and John Rutter. A longtime faculty member at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Jane Marshall was a sought-after clinician and conference speaker and composed numerous hymns and anthems that remain in wide use. One of the most prolific composers of choral music today, John Rutter was educated at Clare College, Cambridge, where he later became Director of Music. Most widely known for his Christmas carols and arrangements, Rutter edited the hugely successful *Carols for Choirs* anthologies with Sir David Willcocks, and has been called “the world’s greatest living composer and conductor of choral music.”

The postlude is by the French composer Olivier Messiaen: a musical prodigy, he was admitted to the Paris Conservatory at age eleven, where he studied with Dupré and Dukas. In 1930 he was appointed principal organist of Saint Trinité church in Paris, a position he held until the early 1970s. “Joy and Splendor of the Glorious Bodies” comes from the collection *Glorious Bodies*, and is a dazzling, colorful musical representation of the following scriptural passage, “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43).