

The Memorial Church of Harvard University

Music Notes for Sunday, January 29, 2023

Dan Locklair is Professor of Music and Composer in Residence at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He writes the following about *St. Peter's Rock*:

St. Peter's Rock was commissioned by the St. Peter's Choir of St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Charlotte, North Carolina. The commission was a gift from the choir to the congregation of St. Peter's Church in honor of the autumn 1999 dedication of St. Peter's new Parish House. In order to involve the St. Peter's Choir more deeply in the commissioning process, I invited members to submit anthem text suggestions to me. Many excellent ones were submitted, but I was especially attracted to a series of brief texts from both the Old and New Testaments suggested by Mr. Sam Gardner. Matthew 16:18, which I have set in Latin (*Tu es Petrus ...*), serves as an antiphon throughout the piece. After an instrumental introduction, the Antiphon is set in an expansive manner with the simple chant-like vocal lines being supported by an organ chaconne. [N.B. A "chaconne" is a ground bass technique consisting of a recurring harmonic progression.] The chaconne seeks to represent the solidarity of The Church (i.e. "Rock") on which St. Peter set Christ's church. A slow *a cappe*la section (with trumpet solo), using the Genesis 28:17 text (in English) appears at the piece's mid-section. Flanking this a cappella section are two fast and rhythmical sections based on New Testament (Matthew 7:24-25) and Old Testament (Psalm 122:1) texts (both also set in English) that exuberantly celebrate "the house of the Lord!" The basis for all the musical material of *St. Peter's Rock* is a 19th century hymn tune entitled *St. Peter* by English-born composer, Alexander R. Reinagle (1799-1877) and named for the London church in which Mr. Reinagle served as organist: *St. Peter in the East*. Associated with two different hymn texts in most 20th century hymns (i.e. John Oxenham's "In Christ There is No East or West" and John Newton's "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds:), the tune *St. Peter* is heard most clearly during the final section of *St. Peter's Rock* in the trumpet part.

Jane Marshall was one of her generation's best-known American composers of sacred choral music. A longtime faculty member at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Marshall was a sought-after clinician and conference speaker and composed numerous hymns and anthems that remain in wide use. She wrote about *Earthen Treasures*:

Though *Earthen Treasures* is an anthem celebrating the lives of those already gone, it is also meant to suggest characteristics of the earthly Christian life that those still here are called to reflect: triumphant faith that leads the soul to serenity; grace, honoring the sacraments; hope, working for justice; and praise to a God who gives the ‘greatest of these’—love—as a gift.

Today’s prelude also consists of music by Dan Locklair and Jane Marshall. Marshall did not write any purely instrumental music, but in 2021 Douglas E. Wagner arranged some of her lesser-known choral works as organ solos. “The Peace May Be Exchanged” is Locklair’s most famous work: a movement from his organ suite *Rubrics* (each movement drawing its title from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer).

Dorothy Papadakos was Organist and Director of Music at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, and is famed as an improviser in a number of styles. Our postlude is based on the plainsong hymn, “Lucis Creator optime” (“O blest creator of the light”), which is traditionally sung on the Sundays after the Epiphany; the chant is heard in the right hand, while the accompaniment is full of jazzy rhythms and colorful harmonies.