

The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Music Notes for March 19, 2023

Daniel Read and William Billings were two of the most important members of a group of self-taught composers who arose in New England during the period 1770–1820, now known as the *First New England School*. They created an indigenous sacred music readily accessible to all, which became instantly popular during that period of renewed religious fervor. Daniel Read's *Windham*—to a text by Isaac Watts—first appeared in 1785 in the collection *The American Singing-Book*.

William Billings wrote over 340 works, all for unaccompanied four-part chorus, many of which were used for teaching purposes in schools and churches throughout Boston. This morning's anthem, the poignant *When Jesus Wept*, is perhaps the most frequently republished work of the composer, first found in Billings's 1770 collection, *The New-England Psalm-Singer*.

Today's prelude is a set of variations on the popular American folk hymn *Wondrous Love* by Russell Schulz-Widmar, an important figure in American liturgical music who chaired the music committee for the Episcopal Hymnal 1982. The postlude is a setting of the popular South African hymn *Siyahamba* by Mark Miller, Professor of Church Music at Drew University, and Lecturer in the Practice of Sacred Music at Yale University.