

ABOUT TODAY'S MUSIC

Seventh Sunday of Easter
24 May 2020

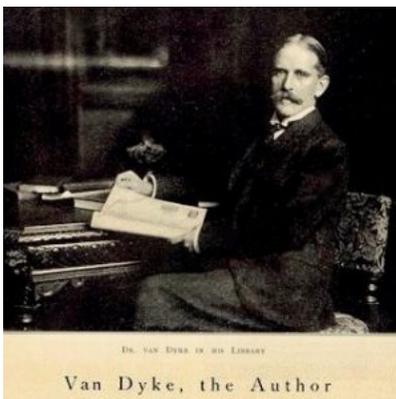
Our Choral Scholars will sing a lovely motet by Heinrich Schütz, “Sing to the Lord a new song” (“*Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*”), based on Psalm 96. Born 100 years before Johann Sebastian Bach, Schütz is considered by many to be the greatest German composer of the 17th century. His style was influenced by his two main teachers - Giovanni Gabrielli and Claudio Monteverdi. Most of his sacred vocal music that still exists was composed for the Lutheran church. He was of great importance in bringing new musical ideas to Germany from Italy and, as such, had a large influence on the German music which was to follow. A century later this music was to culminate in the work of J.S. Bach.



For further reading, please read this recent article about Schütz's music in the New York Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/arts/music/heinrich-schutz.html>

The music of our final hymn, “Joyful, joyful, we adore thee”, is universally recognized as a theme from Beethoven's final choral symphony. Though a number of texts have been set to this melody, the most well-known was written by Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933). He was inspired in 1907 by the beauty of the Berkshire mountains where he was serving as a guest preacher at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.



The metaphor of light, the antithesis of darkness—a common theme in Romantic poetry—provides the overarching vehicle for expressing joy in stanza one. “Flowers . . . [open] to the sun above.” “Clouds of sin and sadness” disperse. “Dark and doubt” are driven away. The final line of stanza one petitions the “Giver of immortal

gladness” to “fill us with the light of day.”

The second stanza paints a vivid picture of God manifest in the beauty of nature, also a common theme of the Romantic era. The third stanza extends to the human creation and the brotherhood of humanity. Since God is the Father of humanity, Christ is our brother.

The belief that ultimately humanity is progressing culminates in the final stanza, “Ever singing, march we onward,/ Victors in the midst of strife.”