

About Today's Music

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2020

This month marks the 270th anniversary of J. S. Bach's death. Bach is arguably the most significant composer in the history of music; his work had a monumental impact on the development of music, and it continues to do so. To honor this Lutheran composer, we will share some of his music each Sunday during the month of July.

This morning you will hear two fugues - one played by our guitarist, Ben Kiekel, and one played on the organ. A "*fugue*" is a compositional device in music characterized by systematic imitation of a musical theme (a subject) in simultaneously sounding lines (counterpoint). The Encyclopedia Britannica notes, "In its mathematical intricacy, formality, symmetry, and variety, the fugue holds the interest of composers, performers, and listeners of Western art music in much the same way as the sonnet engages English-language poets and their readers."



Our Meditation at the beginning of the service comes from Healey Willan's "*The Twelve Sayings of Jesus*". Nina Vanucci will sing "*Come Unto Me*", the text from today's Gospel reading from Matthew.



The postlude for Sunday is Aaron Copland's "*Fanfare for the Common Man*". Written in 1942 for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Copland was

inspired by the country's entry into World War II, and also by a speech made earlier that year by then American Vice President Henry A. Wallace, in which Wallace proclaimed the dawning of the "Century of the Common Man".

Eugene Goossens, the conductor of the orchestra, had commissioned this piece from Copeland as part of a series of fanfares the orchestra would play at the beginning of each of their concerts during World War II.

In letters regarding the title of the fanfare, Goossens wrote, "Its title is as original as its music, and I think it is so telling that it deserves a special occasion for its performance. If it is agreeable to you, we will premiere it 12 March 1943 at income tax time". Copland's reply was "I am all for honoring the common man at income tax time".

The fanfare has been used widely in television and movies over the decades. The Navy has used it for recruitment videos, the NHL has utilized it for pre-game music, and has been used as wake-up music for various space shuttle crews in flight. It was played in Philadelphia in 2015 as Pope Francis delivered a speech on religious freedom, delivered from the same desk Abraham Lincoln used for the Gettysburg Address. Movingly, the piece was performed in NYC's Times Square on December 31, 2001 as a memorial to the victims of 9/11; their names of those who lost their lives were scrolled as the piece was played.