

My Lenten Playlist

As a singer, I have always gravitated towards the dark, sad, and/or melancholic pieces. Part of it is because that type of music is very much the opposite of who I am and it challenges me as an artist. A larger reason is that there is such a wealth of repertoire to explore. This is especially true in sacred and religious music from Lent. Composers took inspiration and texts from the Psalms, Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the Passion and Crucifixion. In recent years, part of my Lenten practice has been to listen to and reflect upon the texts. As I listen I try to understand how different composers grappled with bringing the scriptures to life and how they chose to highlight specific theological ideas in music. As we approach Palm Sunday and Holy Week, I thought I might share a few pieces from my playlist.

O vos omnes, Tomas Luis de Victoria

In this short work, we hear text from Lamentations 1:12 set by the Spanish Renaissance composer, Victoria. For Victoria, the phrase "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like into my sorrow" holds significance and we hear that phrase uttered in two separate iterations with increasing intensity.

Super flumina Babylonis, Palestrina

This setting of Psalm 137 is a lament of the Jewish people in exile. Palestrina illustrates the rushing waters of the river by fluid melodic lines and juxtaposes it against the despondency of the text.

A more modern setting of this Psalm can be found in Stephen Schwartz's musical, *Godspell* (On the willows)

St. Matthew Passion, JS Bach

This setting of the Passion from the Gospel of Matthew is a 3 hour undertaking. The work alternates between Scripture and reflective poetry. Connecting the work further is the repeated use of the hymn "O Sacred Head Sore Wounded."

If you don't have time for the entire work, several arias are worth a listen including "Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben" (Out of love my Savior is dying) and "Mache dich mein Herze rein" (Make yourself pure, my heart).

The Crucifixion, Samuel Barber

This is an outlier in that its text is not biblical. The text was found scribbled into a 12th century scroll that an Irish monk was transcribing. Samuel Barber used the text as part of his Hermit Songs. As the poem begins, "At the cry of the first bird, they began to crucify thee, o Swan," Barber captures the starkness of the text and incorporates a motive reminiscent of a bird call.

For Maundy Thursday, the choir will be singing this text but in a choral setting. In our version, the opening line repeats several times and acts as a refrain. The harshness of the text is illustrated by clashing harmonies.

As a final note, I don't suggest listening exclusively to sad music. Should you find your spirit failing, Handel's *Messiah* is there with plenty of uplifting music to cheer your soul. On Easter Sunday, perhaps consider blasting the Hallelujah chorus on your way home from church.

Blessings,
Alanna Keenan, Director of Music



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 Grandmothers, Sisters, Aunts,
 Nieces & Lady Friends

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SUSAN PARSONS
 *Athena Award
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LADIES LUNCHEON

Name: _____ will attend
 (please include numbers of all age categories for whom you
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Ages 13 and up: _____ @ \$10/each Total: \$ _____

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Ages 3 and under _____ FREE High Chair _____

Men & Youth, make the ladies in your life
 feel special! We need drink servers and clean-
 up helpers. Your brunch is on us. If you can
 help, please let the church office know.
 Thank you!

Tale of “Chalice”

Set for Palm Sunday.

This supporting player of the saga of the first Easter could have been called the “unsung disciple” because he was a secret follower of the crucified and risen Lord and he also gave his garden tomb for our Lord to be laid to rest until the morning of the resurrection. The man in question is Joseph of Arimethea, the “Keeper of the Easter Chalice”.

When Joseph gave our Savior the use of the tomb he also gave his heart to him, and as Easter approaches it’s time for all of us to give our hearts in glorious victory.

This is a story of Easter told by our own Miss Penelope and presented to our children on Palm Sunday. April 14. To request your copy for your child or grandchild, as always, be sure to call the church office.

Easter Greetings & Blessing,
 Roland Small, Jr.
 Coloring Book Master
 Children’s Ministry

