

Music Listening for the Easter Season

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This article continues a series begun during Holy Week, intended to highlight musical compositions which might normally be experienced live, but cannot be at this time due to our need to refrain from gathering. As with the two previous articles, I offer some background on selected compositions and their composers, the texts of the works, and links to YouTube performances so that the music can speak for itself. This is, of course, only a small sampling of the vast musical resources which exist, much as any liturgy is but a small piece of the worship which might be offered. My hope is that this small sampling of Easter music may be useful in focusing devotion and meditation on the great themes of this vibrant season the Church year.

Prelude and Procession

The late medieval hymn *O filii et filiae* is certainly one of the great songs of the Easter season. Its history is complex, but its words come to us clothed in a melody thought to be of French folk origin. *The Hymnal 1940* (#99) presented this hymn in a nine-stanza form as translated by John Mason Neale (1818–1866). The music, as arranged by Winfred Douglas, has the triple-meter feeling of a carol. *The Hymnal 1982*, however, presents *O filii et filiae* in two distinct forms. At #203 one finds five stanzas, corresponding to stanzas 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 of Neale's translation in the 1940 edition. This version is most suitable for Easter Day, especially for an evening service. The musical arrangement is different from that of the 1940 edition but, like the 1940 version, it reflects the carol tradition for this tune. The version at #206 of the 1982 edition presents another form of this hymn utilizing stanzas 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Neale's translation from the 1940 edition. This second version is most appropriate for the Second Sunday of Easter and for the Feast of Saint Thomas (21 December). Its musical presentation reveals the equal-note plainsong tradition of the melody.

Jean-François Dandrieu (c.1682–1738) was a prominent Parisian organist, harpsichordist, and composer of his time. He was the titular organist at Saint-Merri from 1705, and also one of the four organists of the Chapelle Royale from 1721. He was one of the several French Baroque organists who composed variations on French carols (Noëls). Extensive organ pieces were customarily played during the offertory in the French churches, and Dandrieu's variations on *O filii et filiae* were composed for that purpose and well represent the style of the time.

Below are YouTube links to two performances of *O filii et filiae*: first, Dandrieu's organ variations, and then sung in French at the liturgical entrance on Easter Day 2017 at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris.

Offertoire pour la fête de Pâques—Jean-François Dandrieu (c.1682–1738)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX0S6LkU_GY

O filii et Filiae—as sung in procession at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

1 - Chrétiens, chantons le Dieu vainqueur!
Fêtons la Pâque du Seigneur!
acclamons-le d'un même coeur! Alléluia!

Alléluia! alléluia! alléluia!

2 - De son tombeau, Jésus surgit
Il nous délivre de la nuit,
et dans nos coeurs, le jour a lui, alléluia!

(3 - Nouveau Moïse ouvrant les eaux,
il sort vainqueur de son tombeau:
il est Seigneur des temps nouveaux, alléluia!)

4 - L' Agneau pascal est immolé;
il est vivant, ressuscité,
splendeur du monde racheté, alléluia!

5 - Le coeur de Dieu est révélé,
le coeur de l'homme est délivré,
ce jour, le monde est rénové, alléluia!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jo4ERFQLFRw>

Three Choral Pieces

When the Lord turned again is a setting of the first four verses of Psalm 126 by Adrian Batten (1591–1637). Born in Salisbury, Batten was subsequently a chorister and organ scholar at Winchester Cathedral. He moved to London in 1614 to become a lay clerk of Westminster Abbey. He later assumed a similar position at St. Paul's Cathedral where he also played the organ. As a music copyist in London, Batten is credited with preserving much significant church music of his time, his copies being the only surviving source. Ironically much of his own music has been lost. However, Batten's surviving compositions show him to be a thoroughly skilled composer of liturgical music. Batten was one of several composers who developed the *verse anthem* genre in which full choral sections alternated with solos accompanied by organ or other instruments. The present motet is in the more standard form of a *full anthem* in which there are no solo sections nor separate accompaniment. However, the singers are divided into two equal divisions, *decani* and *cantoris*, which sit on opposite sides of the center aisle and sometimes sing in alternation. Psalm 126 is specified as one of the responses to the Zephaniah reading at the Easter Vigil (The Gathering of God's people).

Cibavit eos is the proper Introit of the Feast of The Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi. The antiphon and verse are both derived from Psalm 81, verses 16 and 1 respectively. This setting for four-voices by William Byrd (c.1540–1623) was published in his 1605 *Gradualia I*. The collect for the Third Sunday of Easter recognizes Jesus' having made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread. This foreshadows the Gospel reading for the day recounting the disciples' journey with Jesus to Emmaus, after which they knew him in the breaking of the bread. Byrd's *Cibavit eos*, therefore, with its reference to wheat and feeding, and its Corpus Christi association, becomes a suitable communion motet for the Third Sunday of Easter.

Leo Sowerby (1895–1968), composer of orchestral, choral, vocal, chamber, piano and organ music, was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was trained at the American Conservatory in Chicago and at the American Academy in Rome. He is remembered by church musicians particularly for his several fine anthems and hymn tunes and for his 40 year tenure as organist-choirmaster of Chicago's St. James' Cathedral. He is also remembered for his role as a founder of the College of Church Musicians in Washington, D.C. in 1962. In addition to his work in sacred music, Sowerby was a remarkably versatile and prolific composer and teacher of composition in the mainstream of American classical music. His anthem *And they drew nigh* was composed to mark the 125th Anniversary of the founding of Grace Episcopal Church, Sandusky, Ohio, and published in 1960. It is an expressive musical telling of Luke 24:28-31, the Emmaus story, included in the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Easter.

The texts and the YouTube links follow.

When the Lord turned again—Adrian Batten (1591–1637)

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion: then were we like unto them that dream.
The was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with joy. Then said they among the
heathen: the Lord hath done great things for them. Yea, the Lord hath done great things for
us already, whereof we rejoice. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost. As it was in the beginning and is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eV7TIVe5nE&list=RD-eV7TIVe5nE&start_radio=1&t=1

Cibavit eos—William Byrd (1543–1623)

*Cibavit eos ex aede frumenti. Alleluia. Et de petra melle saturavit eos. Alleluia. Exultate Deo adjutori
nostro: jubilate Deo Jacob. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto: Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et
semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

He fed them from the fulness of the wheat and sated them with honey from the rock.
Alleluia. Rejoice in God our helper, sing for joy to the God of Jacob. Glory be to the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6ZCIE2yf0k>

And they drew nigh—Leo Sowerby (1895–1968)

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEo7vY_zjUo