

Christine Helmer, the Luther Scholar participating on our panel today, put it well when she said that we are “commemorating” the anniversary of the Reformation, which is not quite the same as “celebration.” Luther set in motion important reforms of church practice and worship -- especially in music -- and introduced ideas which helped create the modern self, but he also helped bring about the schism that caused centuries of war, and expressed virulent hatred of Jews in writings appropriated by the Nazis. We inherit that legacy and disagreements and division in the Christian church, which now has over 43,000 Christian denominations.

Often in the midst of great struggle, great art is created, and the sacred music produced during the first 250 years of the Reformation reflects the politics, theology, and social developments of its time. The elaborate Latin polyphony in the Roman Catholic tradition pre-Reformation emphasized the distance from the world and ordinary people in music originating in religious communities and in a form of worship where the people were cast more as onlookers more than participants. Reformers both in the Protestant and Catholic traditions attempted to reimagine the nature and role of sacred music, and this concert will feature a sort of sonic tour through the works they produced, starting from just before the Reformation (with a work of Josquin), through Germany, France, the Netherlands, back to Rome, and across the channel to England. Through all this, improvisateur and organist Peter Krasinski will weave sonic connections and interpretations between the works.

Church music in the Reformation reflected the convictions of its theologians, particularly Luther and Calvin. Calvin was suspicious of music's power, and only allowed unison singing in church, but this concert's works by Goudimel and Sweelinck were meant to be sung at home - in lusty, infectious 4-part harmony! Luther, however, viewed music as a great gift of God Himself, meant not only to be employed by choirs - which we'll showcase with a work of Schütz - but by the people in the pews. We'll sing a few chorales of Luther's own, and invite you to join us in singing. Across the Channel, Tallis and Byrd wrote for both Catholic and Protestant traditions (and monarchs), while back in Rome, Palestrina emphasized clear text-setting, and Lassus aimed to move listeners' emotions. The tradition peaked in the music of J. S. Bach, and we'll sing his motet *Lobet den Herrn* to showcase his particular genius.

My inspiration for our presentation of pre-, post- and counter-reformation sacred music is in part from Alexander J. Fisher's *Music, Piety and Propaganda: the Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford, 2014). For Fischer, “sound is not simply a by-product of musical performance, but a fundamental means of expressing social and religious identity—crucial issues in the fragmented and often antagonistic religious landscape of German lands during the ‘Age of Confessions’.” Fragmentation and antagonism were sometimes in real time, as in one incident where bands of Protestant worshippers disrupted a Catholic mass by singing a Protestant chorale, *Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort* (Lord, preserve us in Your Word). Linking of pieces, Peter Krasinski's improvisation will aim to capture the conflicts, continuities, and evolution of forms and melodies. A more extended improvisation, after the Palestrina motet *Tu es Petrus*, will

illustrate the historical moment when England broke from Rome. The aim is an experience of these relations, not just an aesthetic appreciation of separate pieces of music.

Another reform of Catholic church music took place in the 19th century. The Church again needed to rid itself of excessive secular influences, particularly after the French Revolution. By 1920 the work entrusted by Pius X to the monks of Solesmes to revise the chant books was done, reestablishing plainsong and polyphony as the pinnacle of church music. Maurice Duruflé was particularly well placed to bring the chant together with modern harmony in a way where each enhanced the other; the result is his *Requiem*, the concluding piece on the program today. The *Requiem* is his most substantial work and a masterpiece of 20th century choral repertoire. Duruflé was steeped in the language of Gregorian chant, and also influenced by the music of Debussy and Ravel; the *Requiem* is arguably a perfect synthesis of the two. By turns restrained and dramatic, anguished and peaceful, the work explores the range of human emotions stirred by the contemplation of the final mystery of death.

We offer this performance in honor of all those who have died as a result of religious conflict.

Josquin des Prez (c. 1440-1521, Flemish)
Ave Maria, virgo serena

Josquin was the first master of Renaissance polyphonic music, composing music for Catholic churches from Rome to Paris, and multipart pieces in every significant popular vocal form. Theorists considered his motets as perfect examples of Renaissance style, since they build complex textures from sinuous fragments of Gregorian chant. Martin Luther exclaimed, “He is the master of the notes, which must do as he wishes, while other composers must follow what the notes dictate.” *Ave Maria, virgo serena* was composed during Josquin's early service at the North Italian court at Milan, around 1485.

Each line of text exhibits a new point of imitation, beginning with the echoes common to a litany, and building to beautiful word painting (sudden unanimity of rhythm and dense syncopation to “fill heaven and earth”). As with the best sixteenth-century Catholic church music, Josquin’s flexible treatment of his text, by unifying musical sound and word, completes the act of worship. The final lines are sung in homophony (like a hymn), as if the once separate voices have aligned under the grace of God.

Calvinists

Largely due to the influence of Jean Calvin, the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands, Switzerland and France led to extreme reactions against musical instruments and the use of images in worship. Congregational psalmody (leading to group hymn singing) was introduced into Protestant churches in the 1520s, but it was not until 1716 that urban church choirs began to incorporate female singers.

Calvin insisted that congregational singing should only include words found in the Bible, and his *Genevan Psalter* (1539-87) became the principal music of non-Lutheran Protestant worship.

Calvin knew Martin Luther's versification of the psalms: he combined French court poet Clément Marot's and Théodore Bèze's singable paraphrases of biblical texts with melodies by Loys "Louis" Bourgeois, the principal musician in Geneva from the 1540s-1560s. Bourgeois' most famous hymn tune is "Or sus, seigneurs" (Psalm 134), now known as "Old Hundredth" due to the English words written by Scottish clergyman William Kethe during his 1560 exile in Geneva.

Claude Goudimel (1514-1572, French)
***Rendez à Dieu* (Psalm 118)**

This French Renaissance composer was a converted Huguenot (Calvinist protestant) who studied and published in Paris. He returned to southern France to collaborate on Huguenot causes during the Protestant Reformation, and died in the 1572 St. Valentine's Day Massacres, a turning point in the French Wars of Religion.

Goudimel was the first composer to move the melody from the tenor voice to the soprano (*superius*) in a choral arrangement, transforming hymn and chorale writing all over Europe. He was the only composer to harmonize the whole French Psalter, and his four-voice Psalm settings were commonly sung in sixteenth-century private meetings of Protestant.

The term *psautier huguenot* was coined in the nineteenth century to refer to the official Geneva hymn book. It spread widely thanks to the development of printing, with over 30,000 copies in circulation by its first year of publication. By the seventeenth century, the French Psalter (made singable) was often printed at the end of Huguenot New Testaments.

The melody for Goudimel's arrangement of *Rendez à Dieu* (Psalm 118) was also composed by Louis Bourgeois, whose popular

musical settings were superseded by Goudimel's more complex and intricate adaptations for home singing. Goudimel's Ronsard-texted chansons and his polyphonic psalms are his most complex and beautiful music.

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621, Netherlands)
Or sus, serviteurs du Seigneur (Psalm 134)

Sweelinck was an influential Dutch composer and organist nicknamed "the Orpheus of Amsterdam" who worked at the beautiful Oude Kerk for forty-four years: Calvinist Dutch Reformed services there alternated *a cappella* singing and organ embellishments of psalm tunes. Sweelinck was the first composer to develop fugues from a single subject, including a fugal pedal part. He composed thirty-three French chansons, thirty-nine (Catholic) motets, and four volumes of psalm settings.

Or sus, serviteurs is a setting of Théodore Bèze's versification of Psalm 134, first published by Sweelinck in his third psalm collection (1614). It transports us back to Amsterdam's Oude Kerk in the time of Rembrandt, listening to the greatest improviser of his time weave contrapuntal webs around the psalm tune as it moves gently from soprano, to bass, to tenor.

Lutherans

Starting in 1523, Martin Luther began to translate worship texts from German to Latin, creating a need for hymn tunes. By re-introducing participatory public worship, reformers sought to displace (virtually overnight) a thousand years of Catholic ritual. Luther composed many of these chorales himself (*Ein feste Burg/A Mighty Fortress*), and adapted melodies from popular song and Gregorian chant. *Wir glauben all (We all believe)* is an adaptation of a medieval *Credo* melody: it was included in the very first hymnal for choir (1524) and was used by both Schütz and Bach.

Erhalt' uns, Herr (Keep us, Lord) is based on the early Christian hymn *Veni redemptor gentium*.

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1612, German)

So fahr ich hin, SWV 379

Schutz was the most respected German composer of the early Baroque, studying choral technique in Venice and serving as court composer to the Elector of Saxony in Imperial Dresden. He wrote the first German operas and was one of the last composers to work in the modal style, incorporating some Lutheran chorales into his music, in spite of working for a Catholic patron.

So fahr ich hin was published one month after the devastating Thirty Years War ended in 1648. It is so subtle and exquisitely colored, that the tune itself is mostly disguised. Schütz employs tone painting by expanding the rhythm at *ausstrecken* (stretching) and poignantly allowing the harmony to drop at *schlaf ein* (fall asleep).

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750, German)

Lobet den Herrn, BWV 230

Bach had a long career, combining sixty years of regular work as a church organist and cantor with teaching, accompanying, and composing. Born in Eisenach, in the shadow of the Wartburg Castle (where Luther sheltered while translating the New Testament into German), Bach was a lifelong Lutheran. Ten of his twenty children survived infancy, and some of the work he accepted ensured his sons' education in the best Lutheran schools of his day. He always worked with choirs of men (alto, tenor, bass) and boy sopranos, but *Lobet den Herrn* would have been a challenge, even for the best choir he directed. Founded in 1212, the excellent, professional choir at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig was

directed by Bach from 1723-1750: his music remains a mainstay of the choir's repertoire, with fifty boys in the present ensemble.

Since the Northern German cities Bach called home were largely Lutheran, he composed music in both German (cantatas and chorales) and Latin (mass movements for holidays and the Electoral court in Dresden). *Lobet den Herrn* combines elements of the most complex Protestant and Catholic music of the time, developing a series of points of contrapuntal imitation in one vigorous, compact movement, capped by a fugal triple-time *Alleluia*. The motet also includes an unusual, often independent, instrumental line in the score: this could mean that *Lobet den Herrn* is a part of a missing larger work, such as a cantata.

In spite of being published in the New Bach Edition (vol. 3, BWV 230), this motet's authorship is in doubt, since no original autograph manuscript survives; it was first published by Breitkopf in 1821 (even before Mendelssohn's revival of his other works). Some scholars think the parts are too grueling to be originally intended for voices, and that *Lobet* may be an adaptation of an instrumental work. If the music is not merely one of Bach's coveted copies of other fine church music, it is his only four-voice motet, and one of his most virtuosic vocal works.

Counter-Reformation

Beginning with the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648), the Counter-Reformation was a period of Catholic resurgence in response to the Protestant Reformation. Seminaries, colonial missions, and new devotional practices were founded, encouraging a more personal relationship with Christ. The Latin liturgy was reformed, and composers were encouraged to simplify their sacred music through use of Gregorian melody, unaccompanied singing, and clear text setting.

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c1525-1594, Roman)

Tu es Petrus

Palestrina was an active singer, organist, and *magister cantorum* in Rome for fifty years. In spite of being married, he was allowed to become a member of the Sistine Chapel choir in 1555 by Pope Julius II, to whom he had dedicated several settings of the mass. Many of his shorter motets and melodies were based on Gregorian chant, and some, like *Tu es Petrus*, evolved into mass movements.

The six-voice Latin motet *Tu es Petrus* was written for the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul and published in his second book of motets (1572). Palestrina begins in a bright major tonality, employing a clear antiphonal structure allowing the voices to joyfully pass the text and melody back and forth. His uplifting approach to the text, which links Peter's name (*petros, a small stone*) with the Latin word for rock (*petra*), emphasizes the symbolic founding of the Catholic church on the living stones of faith (through many points of imitation and two separate bass lines).

Orlande de Lassus (c1530-1594, Dutch)

Timor et Tremor

Lassus was one of the most widely traveled composers of the sixteenth century. He composed over 2,000 diverse examples of vocal music, in a dozen European languages, and sang in Italian courts from Naples to Mantua. The Gabriellis traveled to Munich to study composition with him, and he was knighted by Pope Gregory XIII for services to church music.

The beautiful, dramatic Latin motet *Timor et tremor*, first printed in 1564, contrast slow, expressive music with quick phrases in order to mesh the popular motet and madrigal styles of the time. The opening text ("fear and trembling") is brought to life through abrupt harmonic shifts and the *miserere* (have mercy) evokes an

intimate litany. It is an outstanding example of what made Lassus famous: sensitive word-setting, unusual harmonies, and sharp, unexpected changes in texture.

English Reformation

King Henry VIII led the English Reformation, and he was recognized “the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England” in 1534. Parliament passed four anti-clerical acts and church property (including over eight hundred monasteries and most of the choirs of men and boys) began to be dissolved in 1536.

Although daily services continued to be said and sung in Latin, lessons at Matins and Evensong were read in English from 1537 and Henry even briefly toyed with the idea of an alliance with the Lutherans. The *First Book of Common Prayer*, introduced in 1549, created an urgent demand for sacred music in English, and professional musicians in this period tended to be native British subjects or transplants from the Low Countries. In addition to new English hymns and service music, composers and printers began to publish new texts for earlier Latin choral music.

During the five years of Queen Mary’s reign (1553-1558), polyphonic music in Latin enjoyed a brief resurgence, but after the ascension of Elizabeth I, Latin texts dropped out of public use, surviving in small private chapels. Cathedral choirs (including the Chapel Royal), theatrical troupes, and organists thrived in both this late Tudor period (until 1649) and after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. The first public concert of classical music in England would not be held until 1672.

Thomas Tallis (c1505-1585, English Catholic)
With all our hearts and mouths

Thomas Tallis was distinguished among English composers for his versatility (motets for as many as forty parts), beautiful melodies, and intensity of expression in miniature forms. He was a church musician at Waltham Abbey (Essex), the last monastic foundation to surrender to the Crown. Tallis served four different monarchs in the Chapel Royal, taught William Byrd, and was granted a monopoly to publish polyphonic music by Elizabeth I. His later motets could be transposed down for private chapels (without boy sopranos) and up for home use (including women's voices).

This dense contrapuntal work was very popular in the early seventeenth century. It is one of two existing *contrafacta* (later re-textings) of Tallis' superb Christmas motet *Salvator mundi*, which was the first selection in the joint Tallis-Byrd publication *Cantiones sacræ* (1575). It is an ideal synthesis of Catholic music (an imitative canon that becomes freely expressive) and confessional Trinity Sunday (Protestant) text.

William Byrd (1540-1623, English Catholic)
Teach Me, O Lord

Byrd was the most distinguished musician of his generation, publishing virtuosic canons, motets, and anthems in popular anthologies. Trained as a Catholic boy soprano at Westminster Abbey, he lived most of his life under Protestant monarchs, rising to a position at the Chapel Royal under Elizabeth I, although remaining a practicing Catholic.

As the English anthem developed, the verse anthem, interspersing solo and choral sections, flourished where choirs of boys and men were preserved. Even after the restoration of Charles II, verse anthems continued to thrive in the Chapel Royal. While organs provided accompaniment in liturgical settings, consorts of viols were used outside of church.

This beautiful work dates from Byrd's work at Lincoln Cathedral (1563-1572), where it was sung as a liturgical psalm. The text is two lines from Psalm 119 (the longest psalm), followed by the minor doxology. It is an usually intimate setting, with full five-voice sections and cadences recalling Anglican chant.

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Maurice Duruflé: *Requiem* Op. 9

In his *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Marcel Proust (1871-1922) wonders “whether music might not be the unique example of what might have been – if the invention of language, the formation of words, the analysis of ideas had not intervened – the means of communication between souls.” A consideration of the *Requiem* Op. 9 of Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) might tempt us to add ‘and a dialogue between past and present’ to Proust’s reflection, given the *Requiem*’s genesis – its *fons et origo* – in the time-honored tradition of Gregorian chant. There is no continuously performed musical repertory in human history that rivals Gregorian chant in either longevity, geographical distribution, or in its inexhaustible variety of styles and forms. While some critics see Duruflé’s *Requiem* as a sophisticated ‘arrangement’ of the plainsong *Missa pro defunctis*, the *New Yorker*’s Russell Platt, in 2012, went further, dubbing the work “an elegant theft.” Yet even when journalistic hyperbole is set aside, we are confronted with a work whose undeniable debt is to Gregorian chant and, in particular, the versions of the chant melodies edited by the monks of the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Pierre de Solesmes under the leadership of Dom Joseph Poirier (1835-1923).

At 10 years of age, with five years of piano lessons behind him, Duruflé was admitted as a chorister to the choir school of Rouen cathedral. There he followed in the footsteps of countless generations of composers and musicians whose musical education was nourished within the church on a daily diet of plainsong, classical polyphony, and the works of the great Baroque, Classical and Romantic composers of sacred music. In *Mes souvenirs*, Duruflé recalls that formative period and its influence on the development of his musical personality:

The extraordinary environment of this cathedral, the presence at all the services of some fifty seminarians singing the plainsong and alternating with the motets of the *maître*...the accompaniment of the *orgue de chœur*, this splendor that was evoked as the liturgy unfolded, profoundly impressed me. These were, I can say, the better moments of my life...I looked forward to feast days impatiently. It was there, in this display of grandeur, surrounded by these liturgical and musical riches, that I had my calling as an organist.

After private lessons with the legendary French organists Charles Tournemire (1870-1939) and Louis Vierne (1870-1937), Duruflé was admitted to the Paris conservatory in 1920. Ten years later he was inducted as titular organist at the Parisian church of Saint-Étienne du Mont, a position he held until his death in 1986.

If the dominant geopolitical events influencing Duruflé’s creative life were the two World Wars, his musical life was inevitably influenced by Debussy, Ravel and Dukas. Within the narrower *milieu* of Catholic church music, Duruflé experienced the great waves of liturgical musical reform that were initiated by Pope Pius X’s *motu proprio* (“*Tra le sollecitudini*”) of November 22, 1903, the virtual monopoly on ‘official’ versions of Gregorian chant subsequently granted to the Benedictines of

Solesmes and, of course, the upheavals occasioned by the often misguided application of the Second Vatican Council's statements concerning music in the liturgy.

Durufié's compositional output is tiny, and while it is equal in importance to his largely ignored *œuvre* of transcriptions and orchestrations, it is the *Requiem* that stands head and shoulders above all else. The *Requiem* Op. 9 actually exists in four versions: one for large orchestra, one for a reduced orchestra with organ, one for organ and cello, and an unpublished version with piano accompaniment. All versions feature a choir and two solo voices: mezzo-soprano and baritone.

The precise liturgical texts that constitute the Requiems composed from the 15th century to the present day have never been standardized. Most composers would set music for the both the mass Ordinary (*Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei*) and the mass Proper (Introit, Offertory, Communion). And while sometimes the ancient sequence recalling the Day of Judgment *Dies irae* would be set to music, at other times composers, like Durufié and Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) for example, would choose just one verse from this fire and brimstone text: the plaintive *Pie Jesu*. In addition, texts from the burial service would often be added. Once again, perhaps following Fauré, Durufié set both the responsory *Libera me* which is read after the absolution of the dead but before the burial and the antiphon *In paradisum* that accompanies the corpse's final journey to the grave. That the movements chosen by Durufié so closely mirror those set by Fauré in his *Requiem* Op. 48 (and premiered in the Parisian church of La Madeleine in 1888) has inevitably led to comparisons yet such comparisons were fiercely contested by Durufié:

I do not think I was influenced by Fauré, contrary to the opinion of certain musical critics, who, anyway have never given an explanation concerning their viewpoint. I have simply tried to surround myself with the style suitable to the Gregorian chants as well as the rhythmic interpretation of the Benedictines of Solesmes.

In the 21st century, most of the great masterpieces of liturgical music are performed and heard in non-liturgical environments: either through recordings or in concert halls. Even when performed in churches, the performances will often be for concert audiences rather than as part of the routine celebration of the liturgy. While there is no doubt that Durufié's *Requiem* is perfectly suitable for liturgical performance, it is unclear if this was the composer's intention. Indeed, the precise circumstances surrounding the genesis of the work are not at all clear. For many years it was understood that the work originated as a commission from the French music publisher Durand & Fils. It has recently come to light, however, that the work was in fact composed as a response to a commission from a program established by the Ministry of National Education's Department of Fine Arts at the end of France's Third Republic and continued by the Vichy regime (established in 1940). In 1947 Durufié completed the *Requiem* and was rewarded handsomely by the Fourth

Republic to the tune of 30,000 francs, a sum that was three times the original commission!

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