Music for Meditation

on

Good Friday
March 29, 2013 – 12:15 PM
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First Lutheran Church † 1114 Traverse Road † St. Peter, MN

Christe, du Lamm Gottes
A brief canonic setting of the Agnus Dei (see ELW #196)

O Lamm Gottes unschuldig
In this second chorale version of the Agnus Dei (ELW #357), Bach again uses canonic construction—as one voice follows the other, so the Son obeyed the will of His Father.

O Mensch, bewein (O Man, Bewail Your Great Sins)
Bach here presents a highly ornamented and introspective setting of a long (23-stanza) chorale paraphrase of the entire Passion narrative.

O wir armen Sünder (Oh, What Wretched Sinners)
This is an expansive setting by the 20th century German composer, Ernst Pepping, of a chorale by Hermann Bonn (a student of Martin Luther) which, over six stanzas recounts our sinfulness ("Oh, what wretched sinners Are we on this earth") and how Christ's coming to earth, suffering "Death and agony," “Earned us the salvation Freely giv'n to us.” The setting ends with a quiet statement of the refrain: "Kyrie, eleison, Christe, eleison, Kyrie, eleison." (Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.)

Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund (partita)
(As Jesus Hung on the Cross)
“Da Jesus” is a partita (set of 5 variations) on a chorale version of the “Seven Last Words” of Jesus.

Aus tiefer Not (passacaglia)
Max Drischner created this interesting chorale setting as a passacaglia (series of connected variations over a repeated base line—the opening phrase of the chorale tune). His setting grows from very quiet (the depths) to a very full, exuberant conclusion ("Praise God for grace and mercy!"). For the full chorale, see ELW #600.

O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig
This is an extensive setting by Bach of the Agnus Dei chorale (ELW #357) played earlier. The three sections present the chorale melody first in the soprano, then in the middle voice, and finally in the bass (a clear Trinitarian implication). In the final section, at the words “otherwise we would have had to despair” (literal translation), Bach introduces writhing chromatic progressions depicting despair, then breaks free with jubilation, corresponding to “Your peace be with us, O Jesus.”

Passion Chorale (O Sacred Head, Now Wounded)
Dutch composer Piet Kee presents us a dissonant, tortured meditation on “O Sacred Head, now Wounded” (ELW #351). The Bach harmonization will precede the chorale prelude.

Final Chorus (from St. Mathew Passion) May the sinner, worn with weeping,
Johann Sebastian Bach (arr. Thomas Gieschen) Comfort find in Thy dear keeping,
(arr. Thomas Gieschen) And the Weary soul find rest.
In tears of grief, dear Lord, we leave Thee. Sleep in peace,
Hearts cry to Thee, O Savior dear. Sleep Thou in the Father's breast.
Lie Thou softly, softly here.