

## Music Notes for January 6th

**Prelude:** Andrea Gabrieli: *Ricercar Arioso II*

**Anthem:** Luca Marenzio: *Tribus miraculis (Three are the miracles)*

**Offertory:** Antonio Vivaldi: *The Four Seasons: Winter: II. Largo*

**Communion:** Domenico Zipoli: *Toccata all' Elevazione ed al Comunio*

**Postlude:** J.S. Bach: Concerto in C Major BWV 594 after Vivaldi: III. Allegro

This week explores the music of Italy from the 16th to 18th centuries. The earliest of today's music was composed by Andrea Gabrieli, who worked at the Basilica San Marco in Venice. His five books of organ works use modes rather than keys, in the Renaissance style. His Ricercari Ariosi are likely arranged from long forgotten Italian songs and, like most of his work, were not published until after his death.

Luca Marenzio was born in Brescia but travelled to Mantua and eventually to Rome to work for the Este family. While primarily remembered as a composer of secular madrigals (many of which were included in the highly influential book *Musica Transalpina* in 1588, the first major collection of Italian music brought to England), his sacred works are of equally high quality. This work depicting three of Christ's miracles (the star in the East, the turning of water into wine, and his baptism for the forgiveness of sins) may be considered a sacred madrigal in its treatment of the text. This technique of word-painting is most apparent in the following: the three miracles are sung in three voices, the star only in the high voices, the waters of the River Jordan are represented by flowing vocal lines, and the words "wedding feast" are always sung by pairs of voices that may indicate bride and bridegroom.

The bulk of renowned composer Antonio Vivaldi's work was also done in Venice. His output is massive in nearly all genres of the time, including 46 operas, 73 instrumental sonatas, much sacred music, and over 500 concertos! The most famous of these are the four violin concertos that form *The Four Seasons* -- for the offertory I will play (appropriately) a movement from the Winter concerto in a transcription for the organ.

Domenico Zipoli wrote most of his music in Florence before joining a sect of Jesuits and going with them to do missionary work in Argentina. In Italy, he wrote primarily for the keyboard, and the communion toccatas were intended for exactly the purpose for which I am playing them today. His South American music was primarily vocal (for the lack of instruments in the New World at the time) and was only recently rediscovered.

Few composers could escape the Italian influence, and J.S. Bach transcribed a few of Vivaldi's concertos as display pieces for organ. The organ is unique among instruments in that it can play a concerto without orchestra, using different keyboards and stops to represent the soloist and accompaniment. The C Major concerto is a virtuoso piece for violin and orchestra and equally impressive as an organ work. It is a bit on the long side for a postlude, but I hope that you will indulge me and I will do my very best to make it worth your time.

Thomas Dawkins, interim organist/choir director