

## Music Notes for February 10th

**Prelude:** *Simple Gifts* (Traditional Shaker, arr. Aaron Copland)

**Introit:** *Soon Ah Will be Done* (Spiritual)

**Anthem:** Billie Holiday & Arthur Herzog: *God Bless' the Child*

**Offertory:** *My Lord, What a Mornin'* (Spiritual)

**Response:** Thomas A. Dorsey: *God Be With You*

**Postlude:** Antonín Dvorák: Largo from *Symphony from The New World*

This Sunday we examine the American Spiritual and some music inspired by it. The prelude is Aaron Copland's arrangement of the "Shaker Melody" *Simple Gifts* which he also used in his ballet *Appalachian Spring*.

The introit and offertory are traditional southern spirituals. *Soon Ah Will be Done* was arranged by William Dawson, one of the most important figures in the introduction of African-American music to the general population. The offertory, *My Lord, What a Mornin'* was most likely brought before the public or the first time by Harry T. Burleigh in his over 100 arrangements that still form the backbone of the spiritual choral repertoire.

Burleigh met Antonín Dvorák when he came to America and did a lot of the part copying for his *New World* symphony. It has been debated whether or not the famous English horn solo in the Largo was taken from an actual spiritual or if he Dvorák wrote his own melody in the style of those he had heard in America. Either way, the tune has been taken and used for a spiritual-style hymn called *Goin' Home* in the early part of the 20th century, which remains a favorite. As the postlude, I will play an organ transcription of the Largo.

Billie Holiday, one of the greatest forces in jazz singing, wrote the song *God Bless' the Child* with Arthur Herzog, jr., a composer little known but for his collaboration with her. This selection will be today's anthem. Holiday claims that the title comes from an argument with her mother over money, and the opening line "them that's got shall get, them that's not shall lose" is probably a paraphrase of Luke 19:26, from the Parable of the Ten Pounds: "I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away." It is a gospel piece, but also very much in her own signature blues style.

Thomas A. Dorsey bears no relationship to the great swing bandleader Tommy Dorsey, though there are many false urban legends that the latter wrote the hymn *Precious Lord* instead of the former. Dorsey was known as "Georgia Tom" in his blues career but became a church music director after his wife died in childbirth in 1932. His hymn *God Be With You* is a popular benediction response.