

Organ Music Notes for April 20th

Prelude: Franz Xavier Süßmayer: *Sonatina*

Offertory: Franz Joseph Haydn: *The Quail* from *The Musical Clocks*

Postlude: Franz Joseph Haydn: Sonata II from *The Seven Last Words*

The organ music this Sunday is all from the Classical period that surrounds the most famous Classical composer of them all, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose music will be heard next week. Franz Xavier Süßmayer is best known for completing the best-known version of Mozart's *Requiem* which was left unfinished at the composer's death. Though many other scholars and composers have taken their turns at reconstructions, Süßmayer's is the only contemporary effort, and thus is the closest to Mozart for many people. Interestingly, Süßmayer was not a student of Mozart's at all, but studied with Salieri, who was depicted as his arch rival in the film *Amadeus* though the two were evidently on amicable terms in real life. The prelude will be one of his few published works, an organ sonatina.

Franz Joseph Haydn is the only composer before Beethoven to truly lay challenge to Mozart for the title of greatest Classical influence. Much of his music is very playful and throws tricks at the performers and the audience, such as the explosive chord in the *Surprise* Symphony allegedly designed to wake up listeners who may have fallen asleep. He wrote a number of works for musical clock, which would have been programmed on a metal disc like in a music box, only instead of metal tines, these very complicated clocks had tiny flute pipes like an organ and would play a different tune on the hour and half hour. The offertory music is one of these pieces, a menuet titled *The Quail* due to its repeated chirping figure imitating the bird.

Haydn was more than capable of gravity in his music, and the organ sonatas that make up his *Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ* are solemn and evocative, especially for the usual mannerism and order of the Classical period. The second of these sonatas has the title *Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso* (Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise), words from Luke 23:43. It begins in the darkness of c minor and goes through considerable dissonance and several keys before coming to rest and triumph in a final section of C Major.

Thomas Dawkins, organist/choir director