

Music Notes for June 8th

Prelude: Joseph Boulnois: *Pièces Brèves*: I. Dans l'esprit d'une sarabande

Introit: *I'm Gonna Sing* (Spiritual)

Anthem: *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit* (Spiritual)

soloist: Michael Lauer

Offertory: Joseph Boulnois: *Pièces Brèves*: II. La nuit dans une cathédrale

Response: *Lord, Make Me More Holy* (Spiritual)

Postlude: Joseph Boulnois: *Pièces Brèves*: IV. Grand chœur

Joseph Boulnois was a little-known French organist whose career was cut short at the age of 34 when he contracted the Spanish influenza while serving as an army nurse during World War I. His son, Michel, published his works after his death and is known to have lived to the age of 100, serving as organist at St-Philippe-du-Roule well into his 80s. His father's suite of *Pièces Brèves* is unique in that they are all in D, but evoke different qualities and eras throughout French music. The first is *Dans l'esprit d'une sarabande* (in the spirit of a sarabande), looking back at the French Baroque music that Boulnois undoubtedly knew very well from his studies. The second, *La nuit dans une cathédrale* (Night in a cathedral) is much like Debussy or Ravel and is strictly a mood piece full of quiet stillness. The fourth (as well as the third, which I will not play today) is a *Grand chœur* (Great chorale) in the style of Franck, one of the greatest influences on French composition prior to the 20th century.

The three vocal pieces in this service come from an altogether different tradition, the American Spiritual. Both the introit and anthem are very typically southern pieces that invite the singer to rejoice in worship and prayer, a concept which may be a bit unfamiliar to the New England congregations that still owe a great deal to the Puritan ideals of sitting quietly and reverently. Nevertheless, if the introit *I'm Gonna Sing* inspires you to "sing, pray, or shout 'Hallelujah!'" please feel free! Likewise, the singer of the anthem *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit* declaims that when the spirit moves them, they will pray. The piece is of course a prayer itself, and a few scattered "amens" from members of the congregation would not be out of place. I have been informed though, that in this context it is not pronounced "Ah-men" but rather "Ay-men."

The benediction response is another spiritual, a call-and-response *Lord, Make Me More Holy*, and I invite the congregation to turn to number 75 in the New Century Hymnal and join in after the first verse.

Thomas Dawkins, organist/choir director