

Music at A&P

Sing to the Lord a new song!



W e of the church's music staff take up that scriptural directive with enthusiasm, and are happy to announce several new ventures this spring. We welcome an Artist-in-Residence for the term, we'll celebrate a cantata service in early April, and we welcome a guest choir in mid-May.

We are very pleased to report that Juno-nominated violoncellist Elinor Frey will be our Artist-in-Residence for the Spring 2016. Ms Frey is a member of l'Ensemble Caprice (our usual Good Friday choral service collaborators), and plays with many other leading ensembles nationally and internationally. Here is Ms Frey's motivation for wishing to play in a liturgical context, in her own words:

"It is a great pleasure and honour to be artist-in-residence at the Church of St Andrew and St Paul during the Winter and Spring of 2016. As a cellist I have enjoyed performing at A&P in its large musical celebrations such as the Bach Passions. While I find these events inspiring and important in the greater vision for music as an integral part of the church community, I wondered what it would feel like to play cello in the context of a traditional service, not only at an extraordinary evening liturgy. I wondered how the context of worship, how the silence of religious contemplation, and how music's resonance alongside prayer would feel in that moment of making sound on my instrument."

"Singers and organists (indeed gospel bands and other varieties of ensembles) come to church each week, but somehow cellists have not stayed in the church-playing tradition. When the instrument the "violoncello" first emerged in the middle of the 17th century, its first players were employed at the great Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna. The line of performers that held the position of principal cellist at San Petronio set the stage for a long history of incredible musicians who brought the cello to prominence. Importantly, they were the first to write solos and sonatas for the instrument, often intended to be used in church. These Italian cellists also modelled the possibilities inherent to their instrument that were later exploited by J.S. Bach in his magnificent unaccompanied Suites."

"In church, these cellists likely played instruments slightly larger than the industrialized standard of today, instruments that also supported the choir and played alongside the organ during the service. The tradition of using the cello in church in N. America has an interesting history as large-sized cellos flourished in the mid- 19th century. Since it is nearly impossible to find an original, un-modified 17th c. Italian cello under \$1 million (!), I decided to find one of these North American instruments called the "American Church Bass" to pursue my idea of playing as a church musician and to also connect to the traditions of this continent. I may also play preludes and solos on a smaller size cello as players during the 17th c. likely had multiple instruments of varying sizes, selected for the piece of music and occasion at hand."

"Thank you for sharing this journey with me and giving space to this music in your hearts and in this vibrant community ."

Ms Frey will join us in services on Sunday, February 28, March 20, May 22 and June 5, playing the preludes and accompanying the choir.

On Sunday, April 3 our choristers Kristi Bryson (soprano) and Duncan Campbell (baroque trumpet) will sing and play J. S. Bach's virtuosic Cantata 51, Jauchzet Gott in alle Landen ("Praise God in all lands"), together with string players from l'Ensemble Caprice. This spectacular hymn of praise tests the trumpeter and singer to the limit, and sets of some of Scripture's most joyous words.

On Sunday, May 15 we will be joined by the Mount Sacramento Singers, an excellent California-based choir. Our choir will sing the morning service together with them, and Mount Sacramento Singers will present a concert in our church that Sunday afternoon at 2:00 p.m.

In other news, our restoration work continues on our church's great Casavant organ. This spring we installed a Violin Diapason stop that dates from around 1920 in the Choir division, and is a beautiful example of the late-Romantic pipe voicer's art. It has a silvery, string-like tone that blends magnificently with the other voices in the division. Our next major task (scheduled for early June) is replacing the leathers in the organ's main static reservoirs, the large pressure-regulating bellows that serve as the organ's lungs.

*Jonathan Oldengarm,
Director of Music*

