

Augusta County Garden Club House tour, Saturday, April 29, 2006

2:00 pm., Hebron Presbyterian Church

Organ selections on Taylor & Boody Opus 46

Played by Bob Moody

Obscure Gems by little-known 20th Century composers.

Program selected from:

Blessed Are Ye, Faithful Souls (1912)Sigfried Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

Born Sigfrid Theodore Karg into abject poverty, he learned music as an oboist and pianist, and later as an organist. Edvard Grieg was an important mentor and suggested he change his name to Sigfried Karg-Elert to make himself more marketable. As a composer he acquired considerable fame in England and America in the early years of the 20th century. During WWI he was a military musician as an oboist, and wrote many of his important works during that period.

This chorale prelude is based on a Lutheran hymn from the 17th century.

Give Thanks Unto God (1909) Emma Louise Ashford (1850-1930)

Emma Louise Hindle was musically precocious and by the age of twelve was organist at the Episcopal Church in Kewanee, Illinois. Her family moved frequently and at one of their musical evenings in Connecticut, when she was seventeen, she met John Ashford, a young engineer and amateur singer from Bath, England. They married soon after and moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she became the solo alto at St. John's Episcopal Church as well as a church organist and teacher of harmony. In 1884, the couple moved to Nashville, where Mr. Ashford became the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at Vanderbilt University. Mrs. Ashford began to compose and to immerse herself in the musical life of the university and the community. Mrs. Ashford was a prolific composer, as well as a frequent conductor of her work. She composed over 600 pieces of music, including organ voluntaries, sacred cantatas, hymns, song cycles, anthems, and graded works for piano and organ instruction. She traveled throughout this country and abroad, performing or conducting her work. In addition to this recognition, she won numerous prizes in international song and anthem contests. She published her work under the name E. L. Ashford.

Vesper Voluntary Op 11 #3 (1889) Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Elgar is best known for his Pomp and Circumstance marches and his Enigma Variations for Orchestra.

The Vesper Voluntaries were youthful works from his days as a parish organist in rural England.

Song (1919)..... Caleb Simper (1856-1942)

Caleb Simper, an English organist and choirmaster, had over 3 million copies of his music in print by 1889, and 5 million by 1920.

Song is one of "Seventeen Voluntaries" but there are 9 volumes of them, and they are still in print and available. Our choir sings his "Hallelujah Christ is Risen" and "Break Forth Into Joy".

On the Lake Of Galilee (1917) Isaac Barton (1864-1928?)

Dr. Barton was an organist from Lyons NY. Research reveals only that he was a featured performer in the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo on June 24, 1901, in the same building where President McKinley was assassinated on September 6 of 1901. Research has revealed little other information. The music speaks for itself.

The Last Supper (1939) Jaromir Weinberger (1896-1967)

From the "Bible Poems" suite, this movement, like the others, is very theatrical in style. Weinberger was Czech and emigrated to New York in 1939. His most popular works are the polka and fugue from the opera Schwanda the Bagpiper (1927) and his orchestral variations Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree (1939). Other works are the operas Outcasts of Poker Flat (1932; based on the story by Bret Harte) and Wallenstein (1937), and the ballet Saratoga (1941)..

Elegy (1955)..... Flor Peeters (1903-1986)

From his "Sixty Short Pieces" the Elegy is a short mystical work that uses the quiet sounds of the organ.

Peeters, a Belgian, wrote in a modal impressionistic style, but used musical forms from the Baroque era.

Litanies (1937)..... Jehan Alain (1911-1940)

Jehan Alain was killed in action during the early days of World War II. Of the more than one hundred works he wrote, at least one, Litanies, is a masterpiece; he composed it in 1937 while organist at St. Nicholas in Paris. It is built on a medieval plainsong theme that is developed to a clashingly dissonant peroration. Remembering the storm clouds of war that were gathering over France in those dark days, it is not untoward to infer a specific programmatic significance from the inscription on the published score of Alain's Litanies: "When the Christian soul in its distress cannot find words to implore God's mercy, it repeats ceaselessly and with a vehement faith the same invocation. Reason has reached its limit; faith alone can go further." Litanies can make an organ "breathe fire."

The final chord has 13 notes—11 in the hands and 2 in the feet. The organ has 13 stops.