

Anthem Notes for January 22, 2017

God, You Made All Things for Singing

Harold Friedell (1905-1958), arr. John Ferguson (b. 1941)

God, You made all things for singing, even canyons carved from stone.

*Thunder sets the hard rock ringing with the hymn the skies intone.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Yours the praise and yours alone.*

*As the clap and roll of thunder give the rocks their note to start,
Spirit, free the songs of wonder waiting in the thankful heart.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Help each voice to sing its part.*

*Join with us in all our singing. Make our music, Lord, your own.
Be the bass note deeply ringing. Be the highest overtone.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Yours the praise and yours alone.
Alleluia! Yours the praise and yours alone.*

The text of this morning's anthem calls us both to hear the music in God's creation and to respond in praise with the music he has created within us. John Ferguson (retired professor of organ and church music, St. Olaf College), composer of the anthem, has this to say about the text and the tune: "At first hearing, this humble tune seems strange with such a strong text affirming the role of music in God's plan: the place music has in praise to the Creator. Yet further reflection suggests that this introspective tune is very appropriate when we remember that church music is a gift, a humble offering to God, not a self-serving, ego focused art."

The hymn tune (Union Seminary) was composed by Harold Friedell (1905-1958) in 1957 for the communion text "Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether" (see page 504 in the blue hymnal). While still a teenager of 16 years, Friedell—organist, choirmaster and composer—was appointed as organist at the First Methodist Church of Jamaica, New York. He later served several churches, including two large New York City churches. He also served on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, the Guilmont Organ School, and for many years following the second world war, taught composition at the Union Theological Seminary School of Sacred Music (hence, the name of the tune: Union Seminary). He spent his life in the service of the church and left an impressive legacy of liturgical music.



Harold W. Friedell

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The Reverend Thomas Troeger (b. 1945), poet and author of the text, is Professor of Christian Communication at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. As such, his primary task is to teach homiletics, or the art of preaching. He says that he wants students to be able to plumb the depths of what he refers to as the "landscape of the heart -- that deep place out of which people live and act and believe." Previously, he taught at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, where he taught homiletics, worship and congregational song.



Thomas Troeger

Ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1970 and in the Episcopal Church in 1999, he is aligned with both traditions. He has authored more than twenty books in the fields of preaching, poetry, hymnody and worship. He is also a frequent contributor to journals dedicated to these topics. His most recent books include *Wonder Reborn: Preaching on Hymns, Music and Poetry*; *God, You Made All Things for Singing: Hymn texts, anthems, and poems for a new millennium*. He is also a poet whose work appears in the hymnals of most denominations and is frequently set as choral anthems.



John Ferguson

Dr. John Ferguson, arranger, is respected as a teacher and performer, and his skill as improviser and leader of congregational song has received national acclaim. Each year he prepares and leads many festivals across the country both for local congregations and professional gatherings. A Ferguson hymn festival is much more than an inspiring organ recital, according to Emily Brink, Past President of the Hymn Society, "He involves everyone present in a glorious community of sound. Everyone gets to perform."

Dr. Ferguson is retired from teaching at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where he directed the church music-organ program, taught organ and conducted the St. Olaf *Cantorei*. Prior to that, he was on the music faculty at Kent State University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on church music and organ building.

Make our music, Lord, your own