



“The human desire to combine singing and instrumentation seems to be cross-cultural and global.”

by Pastor Bruce Benson, host

Have you heard of the musical instrument called a psalmodikon? It’s a dulcimer-sized rectangular wooden box with a sawtooth fretboard and one coarse string. It is played by plucking or bowing, and can be placed either across the knees or on a table top. When I was a child, one of these odd, curiously primitive instruments was displayed in a glass museum cabinet in my Midwestern small-town home church. It had accompanied congregational singing among the Scandinavian immigrant farmers who started the congregation in 1854. I recently saw another psalmodikon at a folk museum on the grounds of an immigrant era farm.

The museum guide reminded our little group that 19th century Scandinavian piety forbade using a “dance instrument” like the fiddle in worship; and a pipe organ was far, far beyond the budget of immigrants. The one-string psalmodikon, therefore, was practical both for technical reasons — almost anyone could learn to play it, and for budgetary reasons — it could be, and often was, homemade. But it is the existence of the thing itself that intrigues me. If more popular and common instruments of the day were considered too “worldly” for worship, what would have been wrong with plain old *a cappella* congregational singing? I guess the short answer is: nothing. And yet worshippers clearly welcomed this simple instrument in their gatherings.

It appears that the psalmodikon was developed, at least in part, as a way to simplify church music. Or, to put the matter more bluntly, to counteract the complex and elaborate music that could be heard in many churches of Europe during this time. A homemade one-string box creates a sound considerably more modest than J.S. Bach’s baroque trumpets dancing their exquisite choreography all through a cantata. And no one would ever leave worship marveling over the virtuosity of the lowly psalmodikon player. But the question still stands: if

instrumental art in music is worrisome to piety, why any instrument at all?

I have done no thorough study of this, but I suspect there were at least two reasons this instrument came along with Scandinavian immigrants to North America. One had to do with “fit,” the other with “fit” also, but in a very different sense. First, the psalmodikon fit luggage, budgets and needs. Pianos don’t fit in immigrant trunks, psalmodikons do. The cost of transporting an organ doesn’t fit in an immigrant’s budget, a psalmodikon does. It also fits the need for some simple way to help a singing congregation hear a melody, agree on a pitch, and share a rhythm.

Then there is that second kind of “fit.” The human desire to combine singing and instrumentation seems to be cross-cultural and global. Something about it strikes a chord (no pun intended) in the human psyche. Christians might describe it as the right fit between “heart and hands and voices,” to borrow a line from the well-known hymn, *Now Thank We All Our God*. Those who sing their thanks want the work of their hands also to praise God. Adding an instrument, even a one-string instrument, to congregational singing makes that “heart and hands and voices” collaboration more real than either voice or instrument alone. I do love *a cappella* singing, but I also understand the motivation to pack a musical instrument in an immigrant trunk.

Peace be with you,



SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTONARY 23 (YEAR B)

- (1R) Isaiah 35:4-7a
(PS) Psalm 146
(2R) James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17
(G) Mark 7:24-37

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing (LYNGHAM) – Thomas Jarman / Charles Wesley, lyricist / Andrew Watts, arranger (G)
The Carnival Band, ensemble / Maddy Prior, soloist
(CD) *Sing Lustily & With Good Courage* / SAYDISC RECORDS / CD-SDL 383
© 1990 Saydisc Records

Humble Service (BEACH SPRING and WONDROUS LOVE) – William Walker / The Sacred Harp / American Folk Hymn, lyricist / Albert F. Bayly, lyricist / Larry L. Fleming, arranger (2R)
The National Lutheran Choir: Minneapolis, MN / Larry L. Fleming
(CD) *The People's Song* / NATIONAL LUTHERAN CHOIR RECORDINGS / NLCA-12
© National Lutheran Choir Recordings nlca.com

All Poor Men and Humble (OLWEN) – Welsh Traditional / Welsh Traditional, lyricist / Caradog Roberts, arranger / K.E. Roberts, translator (2R)
Choir of the Cathedral Church of the Advent: Birmingham, AL / Stephen G. Schaeffer
(CD) *Of the Father's Love Begotten* / CATHEDRAL OF THE ADVENT, BIRMINGHAM / ECACD 1095
© 1995 Cathedral of the Advent adventbirmingham.org

Live A-Humble – African American Spiritual / Marvin Mills, arranger (2R)
The Clark Atlanta University Choir: Atlanta, GA / Denyce Graves, mezzo-soprano / Marvin Mills, accompanist / Glynn Halsey
(CD) *Angels Watching Over Me* / NPR CLASSICS / NPR CD 0006
© 1997 NPR Classics npr.org

Exsultate Jubilate: Alleluia (Allegro), K. 165 (158a) – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (G)
English Baroque Soloists, ensemble / Sylvia McNair, soprano / John Eliot Gardiner
(CD) *Exsultate Jubilate: Works by Handel and Mozart* / PHILIPS / 434 920-2
© 1993 Philips, PolyGram Records, Inc. deccaclassics.com

Alleluia – Randall Thompson (G)
Polyphony / Stephen Layton
(CD) *Barber, Bernstein, Copland, Thompson* / HYPERION / CDA67929
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“Music lets people who speak different languages do something together. Sing. In that way it is both a welcoming and a unifying force.”
-Pastor Bruce Benson

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTONARY 24 (YEAR B)

- (1R) Isaiah 50:4-9a
(PS) Psalm 116:1-9
(2R) James 3:1-12
(G) Mark 8:27-38

Lift High the Cross (CRUCIFER) – Sydney H. Nicholson /

George W. Kitchin, lyricist / Todd Wilson, arranger (G)
The Memphis Boychoir: Memphis, TN / Deltorum Brass Ensemble, ensemble / David J. Kienzle, accompanist / John Ayer
(CD) *God is Gone Up: Choral Evensong for Ascension Day* / PRO ORGANO / CD 7088
© 1996 Pro Organo proorgano.com

Of the Father's Heart Begotten (DIVINUM MYSTERIUM) – Piae Cantiones / Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, lyricist / Sir David Willcocks, arranger / Robert Furley, translator (G)
Tenebrae / Nigel Short
(CD) *The Dream of Herod* / SIGNUM CLASSICS / SIGCD046
© 2003 Signum Classics signumrecords.com

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN) – Hans Leo Hassler / Bernard of Clairvaux, lyricist / Johann Sebastian Bach, arranger / Paul Gerhardt, translator (G)
The Concordia Choir: Moorhead, MN / René Clausen
(CD) *Sing a New Song* / CONCORDIA RECORDINGS / E-1830 (RC-2CD)
© Concordia Recordings concordiarecordings.com

Victimae Paschali Laudes (VICTIMAE PASCHALI) – Unknown (G)
St. John's Boychoir: Collegeville, MN
(CD) *Seasons* / ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY – COLLEGEVILLE / © 1996 St. John's University

How Precious is the Name – American Folk Tune (G)
Boston Camerata: Boston, MA / Joel Cohen
(CD) *The American Vocalist* / ERATO / 2292-45818-2
© 1992 Erato, Paris, France

I Got a Key to the Kingdom – African American Spiritual / Alice Parker, arranger / Robert Shaw, arranger (G)
Musicians of Melodious Accord / David Frye, tenor / Alice Parker
(CD) *Spiritual Songs* / MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY / MHS 512412K
© 1989 Musical Heritage Society

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (HAMBURG) – Lowell Mason / Isaac Watts, lyricist / Gilbert Martin, arranger (G)
The St. Olaf Choir: Northfield, MN / John Ferguson, accompanist / Anton Armstrong
(CD) *Great Hymns of Faith: Volume I* / ST. OLAF RECORDS / E-2294
© 1999 St. Olaf Records stolafrecords.com

“Neither the events of daily life or Bible stories always leave people in the mood to sing. But there is something about both life and the Bible that eventually calls for music making.”

-Pastor Bruce Benson

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTONARY 25 (YEAR B)

- (1R) Jeremiah 11:18-20 or
Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22
(PS) Psalm 54
(2R) James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
(G) Mark 9:30-37

Cantata 208: Schafe koennen sicher weiden (Sheep May Safely Graze), BWV 208 – Johann Sebastian Bach (G)
Winnipeg Mennonite Children's Choir / Helen Litz
(CD) *Count Your Blessings* / PRO ORGANO / CD 2230
© 1992 Pro Organo proorgano.com

Psalm 54: Save me O God for thy Name's Sake –

Fredric William Wadley (PS)
The Choir of Wells Cathedral / Christopher Brayne, accompanist /
Anthony Crossland
(CD) *O Praise the Lord of Heaven: The Psalms of David – Volume 2* /
PRIORY RECORDS, LTD. / PRCD 337
© 1990 Priory Records, Ltd. priory.org.uk

Open Thou Mine Eyes – John Rutter / Lancelot Andrewes, lyricist (2R)
The Cambridge Singers / John Rutter
(CD) *A Portrait of the Cambridge Singers* / COLLEGIUM RECORDS /
CSCD 500
© 1990 Collegium Records, Naxos of America, Inc. collegium.co.uk

Be Thou My Vision (SLANE) – Irish Traditional / Irish Traditional, lyricist /
John Ferguson, arranger (2R)
St. Olaf Cantorei: Northfield, MN / John Ferguson
(CD) *The Green Season: A Sing For Joy Hymn Festival* /
PACIFIC RIM SOUND / PRS 08005
© 2007 Pacific Rim Sound pacificrimsound.com

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (ROCKINGHAM) – Edward Miller /
Isaac Watts, lyricist / John Rutter, arranger (G)
The Choir of King's College / Benjamin Bayl, accompanist /
Stephen Cleobury
(CD) *Best Loved Hymns* / EMI (ANGEL, EMI CLASSICS, EMI RE-
CORDS, LTD) / 7243 5 57026 2 3
© 2001 EMI (Angel, EMI Classics, EMI Records, Ltd) emiclassics.com

The Lamb – John Tavener / William Blake, lyricist (G)
Dale Warland Singers: Minneapolis, MN / Dale Warland
(CD) *A Rose in Winter* / D'NOTE CLASSICS / DND 1022
© 1997 D'Note Classics dnote.com

*“Sing For Joy often plays music made by
professionals, yet it welcomes all the world in
every corner to sing along.”*
-Pastor Bruce Benson

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 26 (YEAR B)

(1R) Numbers 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29
(PS) Psalm 19:7–14
(2R) James 5:13–20
(G) Mark 9:38–50

God is Here! (ABBOTS LEIGH) – Cyril Vincent Taylor /
Fred Pratt Green, lyricist / John Ferguson, arranger (1R, 2R)
The St. Olaf Choir: Northfield, MN / John Ferguson, accompanist /
Anton Armstrong
(CD) *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord* /
ST. OLAF RECORDS / E-2396
© 2001 St. Olaf Records, stolafrecords.com

Dere's No Hidin' Place – African American Spiritual /
Alice Parker, arranger / Robert Shaw, arranger
Robert Shaw Festival Singers / Robert Shaw (G)
(CD) *Amazing Grace: American Hymns & Spirituals* /
TELARC / CD-80325
© 1993 Telarc, Concord Music Group telarc.com

I Wanna Be Ready – African American Spiritual /
James Miller, arranger (G)
The London Adventist Chorale / Ruby Philogene, soprano / Ken Burton
(CD) *Steal Away: Spirituals & Gospel Songs* / EMI (ANGEL, EMI CLAS-
SICS, EMI RECORDS, LTD) / 7243 5 69707 2 4
© 1997 EMI (Angel, EMI Classics, EMI Records, Ltd) emiclassics.com

If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee (WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT)
– Georg Newmark / Georg Newmark, lyricist / Jody Lindh, arranger /
Catherine Winkworth, translator (2R)
Grace Presbyterian Choir Chancel Choir: Houston, TX / Ann Frohbieter,
accompanist / Chadwick J. Edwards
(CD) *O Sing Unto the Lord!* / GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH /
GP 005
© Grace Presbyterian Church gpcb.org

Many Colors Paint the Rainbow – Roy Hopp /
Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., lyricist (1R, G)
Calvin College Alumni Choir: Grand Rapids, MI /
Kenneth Bos, accompanist / Pearl Shangkuan
(CD) *Many Colors Paint the Rainbow* / CALVIN COLLEGE / CD 4
© 2001 Calvin College calvin.edu

Come Down, O Love Divine (DOWN AMPNEY) – Ralph Vaughan Williams
/ Bianco da Siena, lyricist (1R)
The Choir of Winchester Cathedral / David Dunnett, accompanist /
David Hill
(CD) *Hymns and Psalms from Winchester* /
HERALD AV PRODUCTIONS / HAVPCD 185
© 1995 Herald AV Productions heraldav.co.uk

Thank you for your gifts!

In Honor Of:

My wife Kathy's 70th birthday

*Tom Lohr, director of music,
West Raleigh Presbyterian Church*

*Mrs. Jane Scheer, on retirement after 43 years as
organist & choir director at Christ Episcopal Church,
Albemarle, North Carolina*

(Memorials listed on the back)

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praise. Your contributions and kind words are a blessing.**

*“Sing For Joy is a wonderful way to support
Sunday morning worship.”*
-Twin Falls, Idaho

*“I look forward to Bruce Benson's reflections, the last one
on “Beauty invites repetition” was another gem.”*
-Rochester, Minnesota

*“I listened during the month of July in Anshan, Liaoning
Province, China. It was a great blessing to me!”*
-Nashville, North Carolina

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In Memory Of:

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*Mark Gullickson,
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Joyce (Mrs. Robert) Harter

*Alice Hudson,
who loved organ music; Behany LCMS*

*In fond memory of
Marian Winquist Kinzinger*

Frances W. McN. Lewis

Lucille Mikkelson

Pastor Rudy & Betty Ann Ramseth

*Ray Runbel,
Class of 1953*

(Honorariums listed inside)

SEPTEMBER 2015 / YEAR B

**Sing For Joy® is a
production of
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Sing For Joy staff:

W. Bruce Benson
Host

John Ferguson
Music Adviser

Jeffrey O'Donnell
Executive Producer and Music Director

Joshua Wyatt
Associate Producer

Carolyn Pierson
Communications Coordinator

Website: singforjoy.org
Email: singforjoy@stolaf.edu
Phone: 507-786-2600

Sing For Joy
St. Olaf College
1520 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057



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