

# Made in America

An Organ Recital Featuring Sacred Music from the United States

## Program

*My Country, 'Tis of Thee*.....arr. Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927)

**Six Variations on a Moravian Theme**.....Margaret Sandresky (b. 1921)

Theme

I. Andante

II. Pastorale

V. Scherzo (The Sister's Haus Maus)

Epilogue

*What Wondrous Love Is This*.....arr. Craig Phillips (b. 1961)

*Talk About a Child That Do Love Jesus*.....arr. Calvin Taylor (b. 1948)

*Bye and Bye*.....arr. William Farley Smith (b. 1941)

*Who'll Be a Witness for My Lord?*

**Bayou Home**.....William Grant Still (1895-1978)

Elegy

**Concert Variations on *The Star-Spangled Banner*, Op. 1**.....Dudley Buck (1839-1909)

Theme

II. Poco Vivace

III. Allegro non Troppo

IV. Minore

V. Fughetta

## *My Country 'Tis of Thee*

---

The arranger of this well-known, patriotic hymn is **Emma Lou Diemer**—an American organist and composer born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1927. Having been a church organist since age 13, Diemer has had a distinguished career that includes two degrees (BM & MM) in composition from Yale, a PhD in composition from the Eastman School of Music, a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Brussels, and a long career as a professor at both the University of Maryland and the University of California (Santa Barbara).

*My Country, 'Tis of Thee* was written and set to the tune AMERICA by an American Baptist minister in 1831. This tune name is really a misnomer as the tune's origins are largely obscured. What we know as AMERICA was first published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1745 with the words of an English royal anthem, "God Save the King" (or Queen). This tune was also used in two English hymnals—*Harmonia Anglicana* (1742) and *Thesaurus Musicus* (1744)—as well as in Muzio Clementi's *Symphony no. 3* ("The Great National Symphony"). Based on the direct influence English culture has had on the development of the United States since the founding of the colonies, it is little wonder that a formerly English patriotic anthem be altered for use in the U.S.

Aside from this national switch, additions and other alterations have been made to the text including a stanza added for celebrations of Washington's Centennial as well as an abolitionist version. This version was written by A.G. Duncan in 1843 and published in a tune book titled, *Anti-Slavery Melodies*. Written in the battle against slavery, stanzas one and two contained pointed language:

My country! 'tis of thee,  
Stronghold of slavery,  
Of thee I sing:  
Land where my fathers died,  
Where men man's rights deride.  
From every mountainside,  
Thy deeds shall ring.

My native country! thee,  
Where all men are born free,  
If white their skin:  
I love thy hills and dales,  
Thy mounts and pleasant vales,  
But hate thy negro sales,  
As foulest sin.

Though not likely Diemer's intention, this arrangement can be used as a metaphor for American history: the beloved tune highlighted in the upper voice with dissonance and unsteady meter lurking just beneath the surface.

## *Six Variations on a Moravian Theme*

---

**Margaret Vardell Sandresky** is a composer based just over the mountains in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Moving there with her family, she ended up attending Salem College where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree before continuing her education at the Eastman School of Music where she earned a Master of Music in composition. In addition, she was awarded a Fulbright grant to study in Germany with the well-respected organist, Helmut Walcha. Her teaching record is impressive boasting positions at Oberlin Conservatory, University of Texas at Austin, North Carolina School of the Arts, and her own alma mater Salem College. In addition, to her teaching career, Sandresky has held various church appointments including at the Moravian Church for which this piece was composed.

The Moravians, although originally from Reformation-era Germany, settled in the American colonies rather extensively. Known formally as the *Unitas Fratrum* (“Unity of Brethren”), the Moravian Church dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century making it one of the oldest Protestant denominations in the world. Escaping religious persecution, like many other religious groups who landed in the Americas, the Moravians valued missionary work, personal piety, and music—things that the Methodist church would come to value. In fact, it was on a journey to the Georgia Colony in 1736 that John Wesley was impressed by a group of Moravians. Recalling in his own journal, Wesley wrote that during a terrible squall, the Moravians used song to provide comfort and assurance. The use of music in the church was still a hotly debated subject at the time, and this encounter likely bolstered John Wesley’s own fondness of music as a spiritual tool.

To the Moravians, unlike many of the other religious colonists, music was a necessity. While others like the Calvinists sang only a cappella songs based on the Psalms, the Moravians formed large, multi-part choirs as well as instrumental ensembles—of which trombone choirs were often favored. Instrumental music was a peculiarity in many colonial churches not only because of the Puritanical predilection for a cappella music for worship, but also because organs were expensive and difficult to ship across the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, most early American organs were rather modest instruments that were mostly confined to homes for personal devotion.

As time progressed, organ builders began coming to the colonies; and, by the time the U.S. was founded, there were numerous American organ builders representing a variety of European styles. The organ for which this set of variations was composed was built by a popular Old South builder, Henry Erben and is housed in the Single Sisters’ House in the Moravian community near Salem, NC. Each Moravian community was split into categories (and subsequently, choirs) based on age, gender, and marital status. The Single Sisters’ house was a place to live, worship, and work for the young, single women of the Salem community. Henry Erben was contracted to build an organ for their worship. The resulting organ was one manual with 5 stops and 210 pipes.

In an attempt to stay true to this, I will play only on the Positiv manual—the keyboard on the FUMCOR organ most like a Baroque or Colonial organ. Additionally, I will use only the stops which match those present on the Erben organ.

## What Wondrous Love Is This

While the Moravians sang lustily, many other churches—particularly in the Puritanical North—fell behind in musical skill. As ministers often decried their churches diminished participation in singing, institutions known as Singing Schools emerged. Singing School instruction used oblong tune books with rudimentary prefaces to aid in teaching music. The instruction itself relied on a modified version of *solfege* and applied certain shapes to specific notes in a scale—these could be imposed on any major or minor scales. It was often said that there was a “shape for every note.” However, as the movement spread, the seven-note instruction gave way to four-note instruction known as “fa-so-la” singing. This used only the syllables fa, so, la, and mi.

Often the only interaction for young men and women in religious colonies, Singing Schools became not only instructional institutions, but social. This trend continued as it found its way South. Over time, the tradition became less about instructing young people to sing the hymns of the church and more about a special gathering for the church to sing. The Sacred Harp tradition—named after the *Sacred Harp* tune book by B. F. White and E. J. King—evolved into the predecessor of revivals that would sweep across the southern U.S. during the Second Great Awakening.

The Shape Note/Sacred Harp school of hymnody is responsible for the production of or the popularization of a number of beloved hymns in the U.S. including Amazing Grace (NEW BRITAIN), How Firm a Foundation (FOUNDATION), Brethren We Have Met to Worship (HOLY MANNA), and Come Thou Fount (NETTLETON).

WONDROUS LOVE is another of these Shape Note hymns and was first published in *Southern Harmony* by William Walker in 1840. The arrangement I chose is by **Craig Phillips**—a very popular organ composer of today. Based in Beverly Hills, California, Phillips often incorporates musical language derived from orchestral film music.

### WONDROUS LOVE, 12,9,6,6,12,9. "A man that hath friends..." - Pro. 18:24.

159

F Minor Mead's *General Selection*, 1811. James Christopher, 1840.

1. What won-drous love is this! oh, my soul! oh, my soul! What won-drous love is this! oh, my soul! What won-drous love is this

2. When I was sink-ing down, sink-ing down, sink-ing down, When I was sink-ing down, sink-ing down, When I was sink-ing down

3. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, To God and to the Lamb I will sing; To God and to the Lamb,

4. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, And when from death I'm free,

That caused the Lord of bliss To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul.

Be-neath God's right-eous frown Christ laid a-side His crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid a-side His crown for my soul.

Who is the great I Am, While mil-lions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, While mil-lions join the theme, I will sing.

I'll sing and joy-ful be Through-out e-ter-ni-ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, Through-out e-ter-ni-ty I'll sing on.

## *Talk About a Child That Do Love Jesus*

---

Spirituals (known also as Negro Spirituals, African American Spirituals, or Slave Songs) are one of the most uniquely American genres of music. Most other music in the earlier parts of our history was either imported directly from European countries or, if it was composed in the U.S., was a direct extension of those styles. The Spiritual was distinctive. It was the result of two different musical heritages. On one hand were the colonizing Europeans and their American descendants; and, on the other hand, were the enslaved people of Africa and their descendants.

As African people were enslaved and imported to the colonies and, later, the U.S., they were usually stripped of their own heritage and traditions and forced to assimilate to Euro-American culture. The introduction to Christianity was inevitable. As demonstrated by the Moravians who impacted John Wesley, song is a natural response to stressors in life. It is no wonder that many slaves sought song to pass the time as they toiled endlessly to build a new nation. In *My Bondage, My Freedom*—a short autobiographical work—Frederick Douglass recounted the following:

Slaves are generally expected to sing as well as to work. A silent slave is not liked by masters or overseers. “Make a noise,” and “bear a hand,” are the words usually addressed to the slaves when there is silence amongst them. This may account for the almost constant singing heard in the southern states.

Though most of the earliest mentions of songs among the enslaved were work songs known often as “field hollers,” many came to be teaching tools for their newly imposed religion. “Talk About a Child That Do Love Jesus” is one such spiritual that the enslaved sang to demonstrate their newfound faith.

The arrangement heard in this recital is **Dr. Calvin Taylor**, a composer and church musician. Studying at Oberlin Conservatory, University of Michigan, and University of California (Los Angeles), he has worked with top musicians including Marilyn Mason, Dick Grove, and Henry Mancini. Dr. Taylor has received numerous awards including the honor of having one of his symphonic works (*Inner-city Sunrise*) recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the *Unisys African American Composer’s Residency and National Symposium*. Other notable works are two collections of spirituals (*Five Spirituals for Organ* and *Spiritual Suite for Organ*), both commissioned by and dedicated to his former instructor, Marilyn Mason.