

Music @ St. Alban's

Sunday Concerts in Davidson

Concert Notes – November 22, 2020
Earle Cheshire-Wood

Lord Inchiquin - Turlough O'Carolan (Ireland, 1670-1738)

Carolan is named Ireland's national composer by many, and *Lord Inchiquin* was composed to honor the fourth Earl of Inchiquin, William O'Brien, during the baroque era. O'Brien was a Whig member of parliament who served as a governor of County Clare, Ireland. *Lord Inchiquin* is assumed to have been composed during Carolan's visit to a reverend who lived nearby O'Brien's castle. Carolan became blind from smallpox at 18 and lived the rest of his life as a travelling harper. His music is now adapted for acoustic guitar by altering standard tuning, allowing the guitar to more closely resemble a harp. Carolan is remembered with festivals, roads, schools, sculptures, shops, the Irish £50 note, and even a meteor crater on Mercury to his name.

Oh Susanna - Stephen Foster (U.S., 1826-1864)

Foster was the first professional American composer, and used the then-popular minstrel shows to gain support and recognition for his music. These minstrel shows often included blackface performances with actors that used burnt cork paste, grease paint, or shoe polish to color their faces. Despite writing the first American song to sell over five thousand copies - *Oh Susanna* sold 100,000 - Foster was continually swindled by publishers and received only two fifty-dollar bills for *Oh Susanna*. However, the song mirrors two others, as its melody resembles "Mary Blane" and the chorus and storyline are almost identical to that of "Rose of Alabama".

Carolan's Concerto / Bourées from Cello Suite No. 3 - Turlough O'Carolan **J.S. Bach (1685-1750)**

Carolan's Concerto - Turlough O'Carolan

Carolan's favorite piece of his own, the Concerto is assumed to have gotten its name from a challenge initiated by Italian violinist Francesco Geminiani, who sent Carolan a piece of music with subtle flaws. Carolan is said to have corrected the piece and returned it to Geminiani, who then praised his work, calling Carolan "*il genio vero della musica*", or "a true musical genius". Carolan's compositions were typically never published or even written and survived solely through other musicians. The publishing of his works only began in the late 18th century.

Bourées from Cello Suite No. 3 - J. S. Bach

The set of two bourées from Bach's third cello suite offer a beautiful juxtaposition. The first among them is energetic and pointed, while the second, played in c minor, is softer and more troubled. Rhythmically, the two are similar, but Bach is able to use this to create balance through the key and assumed articulations. The cello suites have been played at the falling of the Berlin wall and by Yo-Yo Ma on the tenth anniversary of 9/11. The bourées from Cello Suite No. 3 are recognizable and often used for instructing students, as seen in the Suzuki method books.

Sarabande and Double from Violin Partita No. 1 in B Minor - J.S. Bach

Bach's first partita is the only one to include a double for every movement. The *Sarabande and Double* is a dreamy solo violin piece, and requires the musician to be completely relaxed, allowing the notes to flow naturally while still maintaining accuracy. It is also commonly played on mandolin and acoustic guitar.

Westlin Winds - Traditional Scottish

This traditional piece, *Westlin Winds*, is a sweet and soothing tune with soft guitar and lyrics describing the Scottish landscape. The most popular version of the song is known to have been composed or adapted by Robert Burns, a renowned Scottish poet and lyricist of the 1700's, pioneer of the Romantic movement, and an inspiration to the founders of liberalism and socialism. Today, the tradition of "Burns suppers" continues every year on his birthday, January 25th, consisting of a ceremonial haggis feast, singing, and toasts.

Beautiful Dreamer - Stephen Foster

The somber and haunting serenade, *Beautiful Dreamer*, was written shortly before Foster passed away holding a purse with only a few cents and a note reading "Dear friends and gentle hearts". The piece was published following his death, and was a parlor ballad, as opposed to the minstrel songs he had previously composed the decade prior. Throughout his entire life, Foster earned barely over 15 thousand dollars from his sheet music that was used across America. Foster is still known for his elegant lyrics and beautiful melodies, and *Beautiful Dreamer* can be found today in children's TV shows like *The Berenstain Bears* and *Rugrats*, novels such as *Trumpet of the Swan*, and the 1939 movie, *Gone With the Wind*.

Program notes written by Earle Cheshire-Wood

Earle is a youth member on the board for Music at Saint Alban's. She lives in Davidson and is a junior at North Mecklenburg High School. She has played the viola for over five years, performing in several youth orchestra events across the southeast, and has recently picked up the drums. Earle's favorite things include discovering new music, fashion, ice-skating, her pit bull named Pickles, and running for her school's track and cross-country teams.