

Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011, 4:00pm, FPC Sanctuary

The Seven Last Words of Christ A Sacred Cantata
By Théodore Dubois

Directed by Kevin Calloway with the First Chancel Choir and the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra

Featured Soloist: Judith Premin, Soprano; Paul Wiltsie, Tenor; Tobey Miller, Baritone

Théodore Dubois was born in Rosnay in Marne. He studied first under Louis Fanart (the choirmaster at Reims cathedral) and later at the Paris Conservatoire under Ambroise Thomas. He won the Prix de Rome in 1861. In 1868, he became choirmaster at the Church of the Madeleine, and in 1871 took over from César Franck as choirmaster at the Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde. In 1877, Dubois returned to the Church of the Madeleine, succeeding Camille Saint-Saëns as organist there. From 1871 he taught at the Paris Conservatoire, where his pupils included Pierre de Bréville, Guillaume Couture, Gabrielle Ferrari, Gustave Doret, Paul Dukas, Achille Fortier, Xavier Leroux, Albéric Magnard, Édouard Risler, Guy Ropartz, Spyridon Samaras, and Florent Schmitt.

Dubois was director of the Conservatoire from 1896 (succeeding Thomas upon the latter's death) to 1905. He resigned two months before the refusal to award the Prix de Rome to Maurice Ravel; this created, nonetheless, a substantial public outcry against him, which was increased by an open letter from the novelist and musicologist Romain Rolland. Gabriel Fauré took over from Dubois as director.

The music of Dubois includes ballets, oratorios and three symphonies. His best known work is the oratorio *Les sept paroles du Christ* ("The Seven Last Words of Christ"-1867), which continues to get an occasional airing; his *Toccata* (1889) for the organ is also heard now and then. The rest of his large output has almost entirely disappeared from view. He has had a more lasting influence in teaching, with his theoretical works *Traité de contrepoint et de fugue* (on counterpoint and fugue) and *Traité d'harmonie théorique et pratique* (on harmony) still being sometimes used today.