

***Te Deum* - Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704)**

Second only to Lully, Marc-Antoine Charpentier is reckoned one of the foremost composers of the seventeenth century. His output of both sacred and secular music was prolific. At age 16, he left Paris intent on studying painting in Italy, but once there he threw aside his art to study under Giacomo Carissimi, the master of oratorio. Upon Charpentier's return to Paris, he composed mostly for theatre, collaborating with Moliere (among others) and he became orchestral director for an aristocratic household. This period was not an easy one for a rising musician to make his mark; Lully was the favorite of King Louis XIV, who in 1661 had made Lully Superintendent of Music. Charpentier and all other young musicians were supposed to pay homage to Lully, who was a jealous and powerful man. As a result of Lully's monopoly over royal compositions, most of the other music of the period was not given the same recognition as that of the Superintendent. Charpentier was one of the leaders of a revolt against Lully, who had proclaimed himself to be the sole musical purveyor of the 'Versailles' School.

At age 50 Charpentier became master of music at a Jesuit College; in 1698 he was called to be master of music at the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. His 28 manuscript volumes, including more than 200 sacred works, remained hidden for nearly 250 years. The recent revival of his works has now established Charpentier as perhaps the greatest French musician of the 17th century.

The *Te Deum* aptly reflects the grandeur of the Baroque. The brilliant trumpet flourishes and the concerto style with the alternation of large and small ensembles are both characteristic of the high Baroque.