

The Power of Music Will Change Lives for Eternity

By Dr. Arthur George Scott

Throughout a lifetime dedicated to sacred music, certain holy moments embed themselves so deeply into the spirit that

decades cannot dim their brilliance. The first of these transformative encounters took place on Christmas Eve in 1976 at Riverdale Baptist Church in Largo, Maryland, where I grew up. Having just completed my very first semester at Liberty University, I had spent eighteen intensive weeks steeped in collegiate piano study and vocal training for my minor. For the first time, my ears were attuned to the rigorous architecture of performance: diaphragmatic breath support, pure vowel placement, crisp diction, and nuanced phrasing. That night, in that cavernous sanctuary, a gifted soprano—the wife of my friend Dave Tucker—stepped forward to sing Adolphe Adam's *"O Holy Night."* As her voice soared effortlessly into the heights of the room, every analytical instinct within me melted into absolute awe. Her rendering was magnificent, her vocal technique flawless, and her conviction so pure that I felt as though the veil between realms had thinned and I had caught a true glimpse of heaven. I sought her out immediately afterward to tell her how deeply she had touched my soul—an encounter that remains etched into my heart fifty years later.

Five years after that sacred evening, another defining moment occurred on the other side of the country. In 1981, as a twenty-five-year-old newly arrived in California, I began attending the Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton under Dr. Chuck Swindoll's pastoral leadership. Howie Stevenson, a remarkably gifted musician, served as minister of music and became a dear friend and lifelong mentor. One morning, inside that sanctuary of well over a thousand worshippers, the sun billowed through the clear glass of the distinctive dome high above the choir loft, bathing the platform in warm, celestial light. Halley sat at the

nine-foot Yamaha grand piano and began to improvise on a hymn I had cherished since boyhood: *“When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries: May Jesus Christ be praised!”* Stage front, a solo cellist joined him, carrying the melody in a rich, clairvoyant range that reached the furthest corners of the room. Not a single person sang; we sat in hushed, reverent wonder. The sheer intentionality, craftsmanship, and holiness of that prelude penetrated to the marrow of my bones, preparing every heart present to receive the preaching of God’s Word.

These two memories—separated by half a decade and three thousand miles—serve as an enduring testimony to the high and holy calling placed upon church musicians, worship directors, and leaders. Ours is never a routine exercise of flipping through hymnbooks, rehearsing choral parts, or merely checking off the musical rudiments of a weekend service. We are entrusted with cultivating sacred space and setting the stage for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether you are guiding a soaring soprano soloist, a reflective instrumental ensemble, a full choir, or a modern church life, approach your calling with uncompromising devotion and prayerful craftsmanship. Shape every subtle nuance, hone every phrase, and align your offerings with the morning message so that your music creates memories that echo in human hearts for decades to come. When offered with excellence and Faith, music has the power to change lives for eternity.