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South Church
11 November 2018

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| Concerto in A Minor, RV 522, Op. 3, No. 8 (BWV 593) (1713-4) | <i>Antonio Vivaldi</i>
(1678–1741) |
| I Allegro | |
| II Adagio senza pedale a due claviere | <i>arr. Johann Sebastian Bach</i> |
| III Allegro | (1685–1750) |
| 3 Pièces pour Grand Orgue (1878) | <i>César Franck</i> |
| II Cantabile | (1822–1890) |
| 15 Versets sur les Vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge, Op. 18 (1919) | <i>Marcel Dupré</i> |
| V Magnificat I: Magnificat anima mea Dominum | (1886–1971) |
| Hommage à Frescobaldi (1951) | <i>Jean Langlais</i> |
| VII Thème et Variations | (1902–1991) |
| Symphonie V en fa mineur, Op. 42, No. 1 (1878) | <i>Charles-Marie Widor</i> |
| I Allegro vivace | (1844–1937) |

Intermission

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| Pièces de fantaisie, Quatrième suite, Op. 55 (1926-7) | <i>Louis Vierne</i> |
| IV Naïades | (1870–1937) |
| Choral-Improvisation sur le <i>Victimae paschali laudes</i> (1930-1) | <i>Charles Tournemire</i> |
| transcribed by Maurice Duruflé | (1870–1971) |
| Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'ALAIN, Op 7 (1942) | <i>Maurice Duruflé</i> |
| | (1902–1986) |
| Cinq versets sur le <i>Victimae paschali laudes</i> (1991) | <i>Thierry Escaich</i> |
| | (1965–) |

Katelyn Emerson is represented by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.,
www.concertorganists.com

PROGRAM NOTES

Having learned that the legendary Marie-Madeleine Duruflé performed here at South Church in New Britain on 14 June 1992, I couldn't resist discovering what her program was, through the kind assistance of Michelle Horsley Parker and Richard Coffey, and basing mine on music she played.

If we let it, music can help us to experience the sounds of different times, and here we do so in three different ways: we hear music that was composed from 27 years ago to over 300 years ago, we experience a combination of repertoire that was performed on this same instrument in this same church over 26 years ago, and we hear this music today, in today's context, with today's ears. Whilst remaining firmly rooted in 2018, I invite you to join me on a musical journey, inspired by the past and full of music I love.

Concerto in A Minor, RV 522 (BWV 593)

Antonio Vivaldi, arr. Johann Sebastian Bach

Like most musicians in the 17th and early 18th centuries, Johann Sebastian Bach studied the music of Antonio Vivaldi, even going so far as to make a number of transcriptions of Vivaldi's concertos for solo organ. This may have been a way to learn from the pieces, but it was also a practical method of dissemination – and, sometimes, a way show off the virtuosity of the performer with added elaborations.

The first and final movements of this *concerto grosso* showcase dialogue between the soloists and orchestra, with each group illustrated on two manuals of the organ. In between these two *Allegro* movements is a hesitant *Adagio*, with a lovely cantabile melody over a misleadingly simple bass line.

Cantabile

César Franck

A century and a half after Johann Sebastian Bach was transcribing Vivaldi's orchestral concertos for the organ, organs in France had transferred the aural colors of the orchestra to organ stops. The new Cavaillé-Coll organ at the *Palais du Trocadéro*, inaugurated in 1878, had an abundance of these colors available, and this *Cantabile* was one of three pieces composed by César Franck to showcase the aural beauty available on the instrument. Featured in this movement, which might remind the listener of an aria duet between a soprano and a tenor, are the sounds of the oboe (the *hautbois* in French) and the core ensemble of the organ – the *foundations*, which serve the role of the orchestra's strings.

Magnificat I: Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord)

Marcel Dupré

Mme Duruflé was especially well known for her performances of organ music by her 20th century French contemporaries, among them the next three composers: her teacher Marcel Dupré, her colleague Jean Langlais, and Charles-Marie Widor, who was 77 years old when she was born.

The beautiful text of the *Magnificat* features prominently in Catholic liturgy. It appears just after Mary accepted the Angel Gabriel's request that she carry the Christ child, and has been set in choral, solo, and instrumental music throughout the centuries.

Dupré's six reflections on the *Magnificat* each depict a few different phrases of the text. This first reflection is a musical illustration of "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour. For He hath regarded the lowliness of his Handmaiden." The beautiful two-against-three motion illustrates the rejoicing, humility, and inner complexity Mary's accepted duty. The last eight measures depict "magnification," as the duplets continually rise to the final resolution.

VII Thème et variations (Hommage à Frescobaldi)

Jean Langlais

Jean Langlais was among a number of blind French organists of the 19th and 20th-century. The robust music program at the Parisian *Institute National des jeunes aveugles* [National Institute for Blind Children] produced organists who held important church and teaching positions throughout the city, including Langlais and Louis Vierne.

Inspired by the music of 16th-century Italian composer Girolamo Frescobaldi, the eight movements of *Hommage à Frescobaldi* include five parts of the mass as well this theme and variations. The theme of this variation set is an original one, and the three variations that follow explore some of Jean Langlais' more unique modal harmonies alongside creative registrations and textures.

I Allegro vivace (Symphonie V en fa mineur, Op. 42, No. 1)

Charles-Marie Widor

The first movement of the symphony from whence comes Charles-Marie Widor's famous *Toccata* takes us on an aural tour of the French symphonic organ. The oboe and foundation stops that bring the *Cantabile* of César Franck (Widor's predecessor as professor at the Paris Conservatoire) to life have appeared already in the program, but in this movement, another set of variations, we hear numerous symphonic combinations; from the flutes alone to the solo

violin and the woodwind section all together – not to mention the brass section that propel the *Allegro vivace* to its energetic conclusion.

Naiades (Pièces de fantaisie, Quatrième suite, Op. 55)

Louis Vierne

As *organist titulaire* of the *Cathédrale Notre-Dame* for 37 years, Louis Vierne was charged with maintaining and repairing the organ, which, by the early 20th century, had fallen into disrepair. To finance this, Vierne performed throughout Europe and the United States. The 24 *Pièces de fantaisie*, expressly written for performances, not for liturgy, were composed before or during a 1927 tour in America. Many were dedicated to either French or American colleagues. *Naiades* (water nymphs) flits over the keyboard like its mythical namesakes do over water, alternating flowing chains of sextuplets with sections reminiscent of nymphs' songs. These water sprites dizzily whirl together and vanish into the distance.

Choral-Improvisation sur le Victimae paschali laudes

Charles Tournemire, tr. Maurice Duruflé

Nobody in early 20th-century Paris was better known for organ improvisation than Charles Tournemire. Organ students at the Paris Conservatoire regularly visited the *Basilique Ste-Clothilde* to hear the *le Maître* create music. In 1930-31, Tournemire recorded five improvisations on 78-rpm discs, a project for Radio France that also included recording several works of Franck, one of his predecessors at *Ste-Clothilde*. He refused to transcribe and publish these improvisations himself, but Maurice Duruflé, his student, did so 19 years after his death (and two years before Mme Duruflé's performance in New Britain).

The 11th-century *Victimae paschali laudes* is the sequence for Easter Day, and one of few sequences still used in liturgy today. The chant describes Jesus' sacrifice and, although the *Victimae paschali* is in a minor mode, Tournemire brings both tender introspection and awe-some triumph to his improvisation.

Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'ALAIN, Op 27

Maurice Duruflé

About a decade after Vierne's *Pièces de fantaisie* were composed and Tournemire's improvisations were recorded, the second world war tore Europe apart. No individual and no field – artistic or otherwise – was untouched, and the world lost countless lives. Composers often expressed grief and honored their colleagues by writing in homage to them. Maurice Duruflé remembered his friend and colleague Jehan Alain through his *Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'ALAIN*. Alain died in battle in 1940, at only 29 years old.

The *Prélude* includes a musical quotation of Alain's most famous work for organ, *Litanies*, a piece that feverishly "repeats endlessly the same invocation with a vehement faith...until faith alone continues the ascent." Both the prelude and the fugue are built "on the name of ALAIN," using the letters of the notes to spell out the name: A=A, L=D, A=A, I=A, N=F. On figurations created by these five pitches, Duruflé captures both the bravery of his slain friend and the helpless desperation of the bereaved. What rises above all else is a hope that continually reaches higher for a better world.

Cinq versets sur le Victimae paschali laudes

Thierry Escaich

In 1992, the same year of Mme Duruflé's performance here in New Britain, organist and composer Thierry Escaich was appointed as professor of improvisation and *écriture* at the Paris Conservatoire. Four years later, he would succeed Mme Duruflé as organist of St-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris.

Composed in 1991, one year before Mme's recital, these five *versets* on the *Victimae paschali* show some of Escaich's improvisational creativity using the same Easter sequence on which Tournemire improvised 60 years earlier. The first *verset* renders the theme nearly unrecognizable through unexpected syncopations and rhythmic development. In total contrast, the second *verset* is an *adagio* fugue that begins in the lowest notes of the organ's manuals and rises to the highest, before fragmenting and fading away into the third movement, a scherzo that jumps all over the keyboard. The fourth *verset* is a march with the left-hand's ostinato ostensibly maintaining the opening few notes of the *Victimae paschali*. Escaich's signature "flashes of light" add a shock factor to this suspenseful movement. Finally, a fleeting toccata shows off the virtuosity of the organist and the capabilities of the organ, with an irregular meter that tempts the toe to tap yet refuses true predictability – suspending expectation and leaving one to simply enjoy the brilliance of the composer and the liberated musical joy.

Marie-Madeleine Duruflé, organist
14 June 1992
South Church
New Britain, Connecticut

Concerto in G Major, BWV 592 (c. 1715)

I [Allegro]

II [Grave]

III [Presto]

Antonio Vivaldi

(1678–1741)

arr. Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

3 Pièces pour Grand Orgue (1878)

II Cantabile

III Pièce héroïque

César Franck

(1822–1890)

Variations sur un Noël, Op. 20 (1923)

Marcel Dupré

(1886–1971)

Intermission

Pièces de fantaisie, Quatrième suite, Op. 55 (1926-7)

IV Nāïades

Louis Vierne

(1870–1937)

Choral-Improvisation sur le *Victimae paschali laudes* (1930-1)

transcribed by Maurice Duruflé

Charles Tournemire

(1870–1971)

Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'ALAIN, Op 7 (1942)

Maurice Duruflé

(1902–1986)

Improvisation

Marie-Madeleine Duruflé

(1921–1999)