



Esther Drake & John Vincent

**Malmgren
Concert Series**

Presents

Thomas Gaynor, organ
“Rising Star Recital”

Sunday, April 6, 2014
4:00 p.m.

Hendricks Chapel

Program

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685-1750)

Prelude and Fugue in G major, BWV 541

from the "Great Eighteen" chorale preludes

An Wasserflüssen Babylon, BWV 653

Trio Super Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 655

Robert Schumann

(1810-1856)

from Six Studies in Canonic Form, Op. 56

iv. in A-flat: *innig*

v. in B minor

Sergei Prokofiev

(1891-1953)

Toccatà, op. 11

Transcribed by Jean Guillou (b. 1930)

Jeanne Demessieux

(1921-1968)

from Six Études, Op. 5

ii. Tierces

Marcel Dupré

(1886-1971)

Deuxième Symphonie

i. Preludio

ii. Intermezzo

iii. Toccata

*There will be a reception in the Noble Room
immediately following the concert*

The **Prelude and Fugue in G**, BWV 541 hails from Bach's period as *Konzertmeister* in Weimar. In its driving rhythm and pointed themes, this extrovert piece displays the influence of Antonio Vivaldi. Repeated notes are a strong motivic feature of both movements of this work: the prelude superimposes repeated chords over pedal runs; and the fugue subject is characterized by sets of repeating eighth notes. Johann Sebastian's son, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach took this work with him to St. Sophia's church, Dresden, on his successful audition for the post of organist in 1733.

The chorale *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* (By the waters of Babylon) takes its subject from Psalm 137, expressing the yearning of the Jewish people in exile following the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem. Bach chooses the slow dance form, the sarabande, to evoke the mournful tone of the hymn. The chorale appears in the tenor below two highly decorated accompanying parts, hinting strongly at the style and rhetoric of the French *Tierce en Taille*.

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend is a joyous prelude in trio texture, each hand taking one melodic line underpinned by the bass line in the pedal. Like the prelude and fugue heard earlier, the harmonic language of this piece is strongly reminiscent of the concerti of Vivaldi. Most of the motivic material of this prelude is derived from the melodic contour of the chorale it is based on; at the conclusion of the piece, the chorale is heard in its entirety in the pedals.

In 1845 Robert and Clara Schumann embarked on a rigid study of counterpoint. The set of **Six Studies in Canonic Form** is just one of the fruits of this undertaking. These were written for the pedal piano—quite simply, a piano with organ pedals that play the bass notes, either pulling down the same keys or acting on a second, dedicated set of strings. Number four, in A-flat, is almost operatic in its intensity; its outer sections could be seen as a duet between two lovers, the inner section turbulent and disturbed. Number five, in B minor, is a quirky but delightful scherzo which makes extensive use of short staccato notes.

Prokofiev was renowned both as a pianist and a composer. His **Tocatta, op. 11**, for piano was written in 1912, a period during which he wrote pieces principally to demonstrate his own piano technique. A series of brooding repeated notes begins the work, setting up a *perpetuum mobile* and establishing the dark, yet extrovert, affect that pervades this work. The two main themes—a descending chromatic scale and a minor broken chord—are heard at almost all times in this piece, combining at times to create great metric tension. It ends *fortississimo* and *stringendo* with a manual flourish and a pedal glissando. Following the tradition of transcribing works to be played on the organ, the brilliant French organist and composer Jean Guillou published this edition in 1972.

The French organist, pianist, and composer Jeanne Demessieux was very well known during her short life as an astonishing performer. She is still remembered today as a composer of poetic and powerful music for organ. A long-time student of Marcel Dupré, she assimilated his revolutionary technique and, with her **Six Études**, stretched it even further. *Tierces* is an exercise in double pedaling in thirds. Using her characteristic modal harmonic language, Demessieux alternates flourishes in the right hand and pedal, accompanied by strings in the left hand.

Marcel Dupré is one of the most important figures in French organ music of the twentieth century. He was famous as a virtuoso recitalist and gave numerous tours of the USA. As a professor at the Paris Conservatoire he trained a whole generation of organist-composers, including Jeanne Demessieux, Jean Guillou, Jean Langlais and Olivier Messiaen. He revolutionized organ technique, refining it and demanding much more than ever before. The **Deuxième Symphonie** uses Dupré's idiosyncratic harmonic language throughout. The first movement is in a modified sonata form. In the exposition, introductory material based on jagged off-beat rhythms alternates with a pointillistic texture with the function of a primary theme; the second theme is a suave melody presented on the strings in a lush, jazzy harmonization. The introductory material is expanded in the development into a new theme that will conclude the movement. The second movement presents a minuet-like theme in sectional ternary form; the pervasive and clear presentation of the theme throughout gives the effect of a quirky set of variations. The final movement, again in sonata form, is a toccata in the best French tradition, beginning with powerful repeated chords somewhat reminiscent of the screeching strings of the shower scene in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. The primary theme, in 6/8 time, is presented in a number of transpositions before abruptly transitioning to a second theme in 3/4 time. The development is based entirely on the primary theme, the retransition playing with the rhythmic variation between 6/8 and 3/4 time. In the recapitulation this theme appears in canon between the right hand and the pedal, before reappearing as the concluding theme of the movement in a coda which; after more aggressive toccata figuration, the mode rather unexpectedly changes to major, finally accomplishing the Beethovenian paradigm of darkness to light.

Biography

Thomas Gaynor, 22, began his musical studies at the age of ten with piano lessons, moving on to the organ at thirteen. In 2004 he took up an organ scholarship at St. Paul's Cathedral in his hometown of Wellington, New Zealand, a position he held for seven years; more recently he was awarded the title of Honorary Sub-Organist. He completed his undergraduate studies in organ performance at the New Zealand School of Music under the tutelage of Douglas Mews. He also studied liturgical organ playing with Michael Fulcher. Currently he resides in Rochester, NY where he is in the final semester of the Master's degree in Organ Performance and Literature at the Eastman School of Music, studying with David Higgs. Thomas has recently been awarded second place in the Arthur Poister Organ Competition, second place in the Miami International Organ Competition and was a finalist in the Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition. He is the recipient of an Arts Excellence Award from the Dame Malvina Major Foundation, the Kiwi music scholarship, a Freemasons University Scholarship and the Maxwell Fernie Trust Scholarship. Thomas has participated in masterclasses and workshops with a number of organists, including Michel Bouvard, Cameron Carpenter, James David Christie, Ken Cowan, Olivier Latry, Jaques Van Oortmerssen, Stephen Tharp and Harald Vogel. In his spare time Thomas enjoys cooking for friends and gardening.

Upcoming Concerts at Hendricks Chapel

Hendricks Chapel Choir Spring Concert
Sunday, April 27, 2014
2:00 p.m.

Works by George Frederick Handel, Gerald Finzi, Benjamin Britten, M. Roger Holland

Peppie Calvar, Choir Director
Kola Owolabi, University Organist