

## A Faculty Recital

Dr. Laura Ellis, organ

Saturday, April 7, 2007

University Auditorium

2:30 p.m.

### Program

#### *Five Dances*

- I. The Primitives
- II. At the Ballet
- III. Those Americans
- IV. An Exalted Ritual
- V. Let Everyone Dance

Calvin Hampton

(1938-1984)

#### *Trois Danses*

- I. Joies
- II. Deuils
- III. Luttes

Jehan Alain

(1911-1940)

#### Nightsong and Ostinato Dances

Pamela Decker

(b. 1955)

### Program Notes

For twenty years **CALVIN HAMPTON** served as an organist and choirmaster in New York City. An active recitalist, from 1972 to 1982 Hampton offered free midnight organ recitals every Friday evening at Calvary Episcopal Church in Manhattan. Prolific and eclectic as a composer, he utilized such elements as rock, gospel hymns, synthesizers, and quarter tones in his music. *Five Dances* was commissioned by the Holtkamp Organ Company and premiered by David Higgs in 1982. Each movement effectively presents a dancing portrait for the listener's imagination.

**JEHAN ALAIN** was born into a music family. His father, Albert, was an accomplished organist/composer who had studied with Alexandre Guilmant and Louis Vierne. Jehan was exposed to organ music at any early age and attended the Paris Conservatory, studying organ with Marcel Dupré and composition with Paul Dukas and Jean Roger-Ducasse. Inspired by this rich musical environment, Alain's catalog of works includes more than 140 works for piano, organ, chamber ensemble, and voices. His musical language is influenced by jazz, the music of the Far East, and the compositional innovations of Olivier Messiaen. He was called to military duty in 1939 and died in action on June 20, 1940. The *Trois Danses* date from 1937-1939 and were premiered in Paris in 1941. *Joies (Joys)*

presents two contrasting themes (slow and fast) that are finally combined at the end of the movement. A short transition prepares for the second dance, *Deuils (Sorrows)*. This dance is a slow passacaglia which carries the inscription: "Funeral dance in honor of the memory of a hero." After a number of statements of the main theme, a contrasting quiet theme is introduced. These two themes are combined and the movement ends with a long chant-like section based on the second theme. The third dance, *Lutttes (Struggles)*, portrays a struggle between thematic and rhythmic elements introduced in the earlier dances.

**PAMELA DECKER** is Associate Professor of Organ/Music Theory at the University of Arizona, Tucson. She also serves as organist at Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Tucson. Decker holds the Doctor of Music Arts degree in organ performance, with an emphasis also in composition, from Stanford University. She has studied organ and composition in Germany under a Fulbright Grant.

Dr. Decker provides the following program notes for *Nightsong and Ostinato Dances*:

This work is made up of a lyrical, meditative "song" followed by three multisectional dances. The entire piece is continuous; it is not a set of independent movements. The sections flow like a dream sequence in which one surrealistic dream grows out of another; the sections are nonetheless unified and developed with ostinato figures and subtly related motives that transform and evolve as they weave into new rhythmic patterns and non-tonal harmonic progressions. The harmonic language is based on non-tonal modes having nine or ten notes per octave—modes inspired by flamenco patterns. Among the dance rhythms are *habanera* (with tresillo), *charrada*, *bolero*, and *tarantela*.