

**Laura Ellis
Organ
Christ Church Episcopal
Pensacola, FL
Sunday, October 11, 2009
4:00 p.m.**

Toccatina	Ramón Noble (b. 1925)
Variations on “Mein junges Leben hat ein End”	Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)
Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 535	J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Two works for organ 1. Largo 2. Moderato	Elizabeth Stirling (1819-1895)
Te Deum, Opus 11	Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968)
from <i>Four Spirituals</i> Deep River Great Day	Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)
Chaconne and Toccata on King’s Weston	Mary Beth Bennett (b. 1954)

Program Notes

This afternoon’s program is designed to showcase the rich tonal variety found on the Gabriel Kney organ at Christ Church. Our journey begins in a somewhat unlikely place: Mexico! **RAMÓN NOBLE**, a native of Hidalgo, Mexico, studied at the University of Hidalgo and the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City. A prolific composer, Noble’s many compositions use themes, dances, and rhythms from his native country. His energetic “Toccatina” features driving rhythms and virtuosic scalar passages.

JAN PIETERSZOOM SWEELINCK is a Dutch organist/composer whose compositions feature elements of the late Renaissance and early Baroque eras. This set of variations on the simple folk song “Mein junges Leben hat ein End” (My young life has an end) offers the organist an opportunity to explore a wide variety of registrational colors. The work opens with a hymn-like setting of the folk song on 8’ flute. Ensuing variations provide a sense of crescendo as the work increases in dynamic level and rhythmic intensity (eighth-notes, triplets, sixteenth notes). The final variation returns to a soft registration and simple setting reminiscent of the opening.

Most likely composed during his days as a court organist in Weimer, **J.S. BACH’S** Prelude in G Minor is a quasi-improvisatory essay that opens with arpeggio figurations and dramatic gestures. The fugue is characterized by its simple shape and repeated notes.

ELIZABETH STERLING, one of the few women in the Romantic period that composed for organ, often performed the organ works of J.S. Bach in recital. She was born in Greenwich, England, and studied piano, organ, and harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She was

appointed organist at St. Andrew Undershaft in London in 1858 and held the position until 1880. The Largo and Moderato are intimate works written in simple ABA form and feature gentle flutes, strings, and principals.

As a student at the Paris Conservatoire, **JEANNE DEMESSIEUX** won *Premiers Prix* in harmony (1937), piano (1938), and fugue and counterpoint (1940). Demessieux studied organ, improvisation, and composition with Marcel Dupré for nearly 10 years. One of a select number of European organists to tour America in the mid-twentieth century, Demessieux fascinated American audiences with her phenomenal technique. Three transcontinental tours of North America in 1953, 1955, and 1958, established her status as a master organist, improviser, and composer. In 1962, she was appointed organist titulaire at the prestigious Church of the Madeleine, Paris. She retained this post until her death at the age of 47 on November 11, 1968.

Demessieux's majestic Te Deum, published in 1959, is reminiscent of Charles Tournemire's composition of the same name. She composed this remarkable work with the organ at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, in mind (notably the State Trumpet). The work, paraphrasing the sections of the Te Deum hymn, is written in three parts: Moderato, Andante, and Allegro. Within the first five measures, the first two phrases of the Te Deum are stated with full organ. A pedal ostinato, derived from the first three notes of the hymn, begins soon thereafter and supports the opening phrase in augmentation. The Andante section is based on the text "Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in Gloria numerari." The melody is stated in the manuals on 8' foundation stops and in augmentation in the pedal on solo reed. The closing Allegro section provides a triumphant conclusion and utilizes the horizontal trumpet on this instrument, the "Spanischetrompete."

A Professor of Music and Eminent Scholar at Old Dominion University, Dr. **ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK** is renowned for his innovative settings for organ. Hailstork received his doctorate in composition from Michigan State University, where he was a student of H. Owen Reed. He completed earlier composition studies at the Manhattan School of Music under Vittorio Giannini and David Diamond, the American Institute at Fontainebleau with Nadia Boulanger, and Howard University with Mark Fax.

MARY BETH BENNETT is the Organist/Choirmaster of Seventh Street Christian Church, Richmond, Virginia, and has recently served on the music faculty of the University of Richmond. She holds degrees from Stetson University, the Eastman School of Music, the University of Southern California, and the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik (Cologne, Germany). Based on a hymn tune composed by Ralph Vaughn Williams, the *Chaconne and Toccata on King's Weston* begins quietly and grows in intensity with each chaconne variation. The aggressive French toccata features the hymn tune in the pedal. The work comes to a thrilling conclusion on full organ.