

school of music
university of florida + college of fine arts

Scott Ziegler, organ
Graduate Recital

Saturday February 20th 2016
2:00 PM
University Auditorium

Program

☞ Please hold applause until the end of each section ☞

“Großes” Praeludium in e-Moll

Nicolaus Bruhns
(1665-1697)



Orgelbüchlein

Christ lag in Todesbanden (BWV 625)
O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß (BWV 622)
Christ ist erstanden (BWV 627)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)



Trois Préludes Hambourgeois
I. Salamanca

Guy Bovet
(b. 1942)

Toccata alla Rumba

Peter Planyavsky
(b. 1947)

Flores de Desierto
I. Albarda

Pamela Decker
(b. 1955)



Pièces de fantaisie

Suite No. 2
Hymne au Soleil
Clair de Lune

Suite No. 3
Carillon de Westminster

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)



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This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Music in Organ Performance

Program Notes

Nicolaus Bruhns was in the third generation of one of the Baroque period's most well-known musical families. His teacher Dieterich Buxtehude considered Bruhns to be his most skilled pupil. Bruhns's harmonic language is unlike his contemporaries, featuring highly chromatic passages and quick modulations. Only five of Bruhns's works survive, partly due to his sudden death at age 32. The **Praeludium in e minor**, referred to as the "big e-minor" to distinguish from the shorter "little e-minor," alternates between free and structured sections and features two fugues.



Unlike that of Bruhns, the music of J. S. Bach was not appreciated until long after his death. His works were rarely studied until Felix Mendelssohn conducted the Saint Matthew Passion in 1829, over 100 years after its premiere. Bach's highly controlled counterpoint is now considered the pinnacle of Baroque composition. The *Orgelbüchlein* (little organ book) is a collection of chorale preludes for Sundays in the liturgical year. BWVs 625, 622, and 627 are based on Lent and Easter texts.

When Martin Luther was ex-communicated from the Roman church he began reforming church traditions that he felt contradicted scripture. One of Luther's core beliefs was accessibility of the service. He translated the bible and order of worship into German so his congregation could understand the service. Luther also wrote chorales, or hymns, that the congregation could sing in the vernacular. Luther repurposed many pre-existing chant melodies from the Roman church for his chorales. **Christ lag in Todesbanden** takes its melody from the Latin Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes* (Let Christians offer sacrificial praises to the Passover victim). This straightforward setting places the tune in the soprano voice and follows the rhythm of the original chorale.

Christ lay in death's fetters,
given up for our sin.
He rose again
and brought us life.
Therefore let us be glad,
praise and thank God,
and sing Alleluia! Alleluia! ¹

The ornamented **O Mensch bewein dein Sünde groß** prelude features the cornet (core-NAY), a common Baroque registration of French origin, with pipes at lengths of 8', 4', 2⅔', 2', and 1⅜'. The ranks at 2⅔' (Nasard) and 1⅜' (Tierce) are mutation stops that, instead of sounding at the octave, sound a twelfth (fifth) and a seventeenth (third) above the 8' pitch, respectively. The effect produced by this combination is of a warm, nasal-like quality.

O man, lament your great sin,
for the sake of which Christ left his Father's bosom
and came to earth.
Of a pure, gentle virgin
Jesus was born for us;
He wanted to become the Mediator.
He gave life to the dead
and put aside all sickness,
until the time arrived
that He should be sacrificed for us.
He bore the heavy burden of our sins
stretched out on the cross. ¹

Program Notes (continued)

Like “Christ lag,” **Christ ist erstanden** is based on the Latin Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*. The setting is the only multi-verse chorale in the *Orgelbüchlein*. The tune is unornamented, although the other voices grow more complex with each verse.

Christ has arisen
from all the torments.
Therefore let us all be glad!
Christ will be our consolation. *Kyrie eleison!*
Had He not risen,
the world would have passed away.
Since He has risen,
Let us praise the Father of Jesus Christ. *Kyrie eleison!*
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Therefore let us all be glad!
Christ will be our consolation, *Kyrie eleison!* ¹



In every concert during his twenty-year tenure as Professor of Organ at the University of Salamanca in Spain, Guy Bovet concluded the program with an improvisation based on an audience-submitted melody. **Salamanca** is a transcription of one such improvisation at the city’s Cathedral. After the Cathedral’s caretakers submitted the same theme multiple years in a row, Bovet decided it was time to feature this melody. The Dean of the Cathedral, however, never forgave him for the performance of the apparently sacrilegious tune, and the enraged Dean unsuccessfully appealed for Bovet’s removal from his teaching post. The musical result is this playful dance quite contrary to the text of the folk tune: “Clara goes to the church to ask forgiveness with the good book in hand.”² The opening section imitates a street performance of flute, drum, and reed before the organ takes over to develop the theme in a crescendo through the end of the piece.

Peter Planyavsky spent most of his career as organist and choral director at *Stephansdom*, Saint Stephen’s Cathedral, in Vienna. He has taught at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst* (Music and Performing Arts) in Vienna since 1980, and has served as the chair of the Church Music department. **Toccata alla Rumba** is the second work he published, in 1971. The piece is framed around a syncopated rhythm typically found in Cuban rumba, which is a more fluid dance than today’s ballroom rumba. The theme is taken from a German chorale tune, *Nun danket all und bringet Ehr*, “Now thank we all and bring honor, you people of God, to the one whose praise the angelic host sings forever.”³

Flores de Desierto, or “Desert Flowers,” is a set of three tango pieces written to provide organists with music emulating Argentinian composers like Astor Piazzolla. Each piece is named after a flower indigenous to the Sonoran Desert where Pamela Decker teaches organ (University of Arizona). The first, **Albarda** (also known as ocotillo or desert coral) “is a flamboyant plant with long, thorny wand-like stems bearing clusters of waxy red-orange flowers.”⁴ The piece’s spicy melodic themes emulate the hummingbirds that are attracted to these flowers, while the accompaniment provides rhythmic motives found in tango music.



Program Notes (continued)

When Louis Vierne was just twenty-two years old, he was appointed Assistant Organist to Charles-Marie Widor at Saint-Sulpice in Paris. At age thirty he became Titular Organist at Notre-Dame. In the long history of French organ prodigies this would not be so remarkable if not for the congenital cataracts that made Vierne legally blind. We know from his close friend Marcel Dupré that Vierne used oversized manuscript paper and a large pencil to write down his compositions. Mid-career he went on a concert tour through the United States to fund a restoration of the organ at Notre-Dame, which was in disrepair during much of his tenure. He lost a brother and son in World War I, severely damaged his leg in a street accident, and died of a heart attack at the console in the middle of a concert (his 1,750th solo concert at Notre-Dame). Despite these tragedies Vierne's legacy lived on through his many students, including Nadia Boulanger and Gaston Litaize. The following are from Vierne's twenty-four *Pièces de fantaisie* (fantasy pieces), published in four suites of six pieces in 1926 and 1927. The theme that binds the following selections is an ode to Florida, the Sunshine State.

Little is known about **Hymne au Soleil**, but one can find some meaning from the English translation, "Hymn to the Sun." A play titled "Chantecler," written by Edmond Rostand, premiered in Paris in 1910 in which all characters were farm animals. The rooster speaks about the sunrise in soliloquy, later published separately as "Hymne au Soleil." The first line of text reads, "I adore you, Sun! Oh you whose light blesses each rising in rays of honey, going into each flower and cottage, whose light splits and yet remains strong in god-like love!"⁵ It is possible Vierne knew Rostand and found inspiration for the piece, published in 1926, in the poetry. In winter the sun over Florida remains sharp and can heat an overnight chill back to room temperature by noon. Its slow procession through the sky gave Florida its nickname, the Sunshine State. Vierne seems to captivate this phenomenon accurately despite never having visited Florida.

Vierne dedicated **Clair de Lune**, or "Moonlight," to the organ builder Ernest M. Skinner, founder of the company that built the organ you hear this afternoon. The Skinner Company built symphonic instruments (emulating the sounds of an orchestra) throughout the 20th Century that have come to define the "American" sound in organ building. Vierne's lyricism brings to mind images of the moon floating above the clouds, a narrative familiar to Floridians in the home of the space program. One can witness a shuttle launch from Paynes Prairie, right here in Gainesville.

Vierne's most well known work was originally an improvisation played in concert in 1924 and was later published in the third suite of fantasy pieces. The theme of the improvisation, as is typical when improvising in concert, was presented to Vierne just moments before he began playing. The English organ builder Henry Willis was chosen to pick a melody and was no doubt eager to hear a French organ virtuoso improvise on a beloved English melody. Common belief inaccurately claims that either Vierne misheard the tune or Willis incorrectly whistled the tune to Vierne in the first place; the melody presented in the piece does not follow the tune accurately. However, the final iteration of the familiar tune, unlike each time previous, precisely follows the chime that rings from Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) at the Palace of Westminster in London every fifteen minutes. A more accurate description, therefore, is Vierne fully developed segments of the theme before presenting it in its full form. **Carillon de Westminster** calls to mind the great carillon looming over this auditorium in Century Tower, the University of Florida's monument to alumni lost in the World Wars. The two daily performances and quarter-hour chimes help keep UF's 54,000 students and faculty on track during the course of the school day.

¹ German translations by Robert Clark and John David Peterson, 1984 Concordia Edition of Orgelbüchlein

² Original program notes by Guy Bovet, translation by Scott Ziegler 2015

³ Translation by Scott Ziegler 2015

⁴ Original program notes by Pamela Decker

⁵ Translation by Scott Ziegler 2015