

A Junior Recital
Xavier W. Richardson, organ
November 12, 2010
University Auditorium
7:30 pm

Program

- Praeludium et Fuga in E Dur, BWV 566 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
- Deux Chorals pour Orgue Jehan Alain (1911-1940)
I. Choral Dorien
- Rhapsodie No. 3 in A minor Op. 7 Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Sur le theme Breton
- Trois Pièces, Op. 29, No. 2 Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937)
II. *Cantilène*
- Toccatà in D Minor, Op. 59, No. 5 Max Reger (1873-1916)

Program Notes

Written by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1708, the Prelude and Fugue in E Major is one of Bach's youthful works composed in the style of the *praeludia* of the earlier composer Dietrich Buxtehude. Comprising four sections, the first section includes alternating manual and pedal cadenzas with dense chordal structures. It is followed by a fughetta in the second section with tonic and dominant entries of the subject. The third section is introduced by a brief rhapsodic and flourishing motion in the manuals with pedal cadenzas punctuated by dense 9-voice chords. Finally, the concluding section reintroduces a theme reminiscent of the earlier fughetta, this time written in triple meter. The Prelude and Fugue, originally written in E Major, was transposed by Bach to C Major to facilitate performance on instruments with varied temperaments.

By the standards of the organ chorale genre, Jehan Alain's *Chorale Dorien* is intense; its four-minute duration and rich polyphony extend beyond the realm of a simple miniature. Alain built this piece on the Dorian mode—its ancient Greek usage is thought to have had similarities with the medieval Phrygian mode. Whatever one chooses to call it, this modal structure is only a foundation for the chorale; it moves quickly into a more chromatic and harmonic language, making only vague references to specific scales and tonal centers. At a slow, processional tempo, this piece evolves from a cautiously rising four-note motif. Melodically, the piece wanders up and down the scale, but it always returns to some form of the original motif. Dominated by long, ominous pedal notes, the chorale increases gradually in volume, though it never reaches a loud climax. Instead, it falls away gently into silence. Born to French family, Alain studied organ with Marcel Dupré and composition with Paul and Jean-Roger Ducasse at the Paris Conservatoire. His sister is the distinguished organist Marie-Claire Alain. Alain was killed in action early in World War II.

Born of a family with artistic proclivities, musicians, and painters, Camille Saint-Saëns conveyed an impressionable maturity throughout his youth. Entering the Paris Conservatoire in 1848, Saint-Saëns in 1851 earned the *Premier Prix* for organ and began composition and organ playing. Saint-Saëns was organist of both the Church of St. Merri (1853-1858) and then of the Madeleine (until 1877), both in Paris, France. Though an extraordinary improviser, Saint-Saëns' performance at the organ remained more pianistic while using colorful and savory stops in conformity with the traditions of the old French organ masters. A rhapsodie (or rhapsody) is an instrumental piece in one movement, often based on popular, national, or folk melodies. *Rhapsodie sur le theme Breton* is an orchestral transcription for organ based on a Breton folk melody of Brittany, Western France; it is passionate and reflective.

Gabriel Pierné studied at the Paris Conservatoire with the French composers and organists César Franck and Jules Massenet. At the age of nineteen, Pierné was awarded the *Prix de Rome*—a prize conferred by the French Académie des Beaux-Arts for mastery in the arts—in music. A conformist, Pierné was not concerned with experimentation but only with the projection of poetic beauty and sensitive moods in an elegant style. In *Cantilène*, Pierné employs a distant and lyrical trumpet passage to smoothly demonstrate this 18th century style of interpretation.

A pivotal figure in late German Romantic music, Max Reger was active as an organist, pianist, teacher, theoretician, conductor, and prodigious composer for every conceivable medium. Next to Bach, Reger was one of the most prolific German composers of organ music, writing 211 pieces for organ under twenty-seven opus numbers. The *Twelve Short Pieces*, Op. 59, were composed in fourteen days and published in June 1901. The *Toccata* serves as a fine introduction to Reger's larger compositional style. The *Toccata* pays homage to Bach through Reger's insertion of a miniature chorale which allows for subtlety of sound. In the form ABA, the *Toccata* employs full organ, soft flues and reeds, and returns to full organ.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music/Outside Field. Xavier is from the studio of Dr. Laura Ellis.