

Faculty Recital
Laura Ellis, Organ

Friday, January 8, 2010
University Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

- Five Sacred Dances Margaret Sandresky
(b. 1921)
- I. Processional:
Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk,
O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. – *Psalm 89:15*
 - II. I desire that in every place men should pray, lifting holy hands
above. – *I Timothy 2:8*
 - III. I will bow down towards your holy temple – *Psalm 138:2*
 - IV. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees
of the wood are moved with the wind. – *Isaiah 7:2*
 - V. And David danced before the ark of the Lord – *II Samuel 6:14*

Aspiración José Jesús Estrada
(1898-1980)

- Praise Paul Richards
(b. 1969)
- I. ... with blasts of the shofar
 - II. ... with harp and lyre
 - III. ... with timbrel and dance
 - IV. ... with lute and pipe
 - V. ... with resounding cymbals ... with loud-clashing cymbals
**preview performance*

Trois Préludes Hambourgeois Guy Bovet
(b. 1942)

- I. Salamanca
- II. Sarasota
- III. Hamburg

PROGRAM NOTES

This program was designed for presentation at the Region IV Mid-Winter Conclave to be held in Sarasota on January 17-20. Inspired by the conclave theme "Psalms and Palms," the program invites the listener to reflect on Old Testament scripture and enjoy music of composers from southern and tropical locales.

MARGARET SANDRESKY was the recipient of the Distinguished Composer of the Year Award presented by the American Guild of Organists (AGO) at the 2004 national convention held in Los Angeles. Sandresky was a student of Howard Hanson, Bernard Rogers, and Helmut Walcha and is *professor emerita* of music at Salem College, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she was on the faculty from 1946-1986. *Five Sacred Dances* was commissioned in 1998 for the dedication of the Létourneau/Casavant organ at Augsburg Lutheran Church in Winston-Salem. The dances are based on Biblical texts describing movement, and the works are composed to suggest these motions. The movements were choreographed and danced for the first time by Music for a Great Space, November 13, 1999.

JOSÉ JESÚS ESTRADA is considered one of Mexico's finest composers of organ and choral music in this century. Estrada served as professor of organ at the National Conservatory in Mexico City from 1935 to 1980. The lyrical *Aspiración* ("Longing") was composed in approximately 1955.

"Praise" takes its titles and inspiration from Psalm 150: 3-5, where we are implored to praise God with various musical instruments. In each movement, the organ is asked to imitate the sound or gestures of these instruments. A Yemenite folk melody frequently used with this text in Hebrew is incorporated into several of the movements, as are fragments of chant melodies used in the High Holy Day services accompanying the blowing of the shofar. "Praise" was composed for organist Laura Ellis, and is dedicated to the composer's father, Cantor Stephen Richards, in honor of his 75th birthday. The work will have its official premiere at St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Sarasota, on January 18.

PAUL RICHARDS, Associate Professor of Composition at the University of Florida, is the recipient of numerous prizes and commissions. His works have been heard throughout the United States and internationally on six continents. Awards include Special Distinction in the ASCAP Rudolph Nissim Prize, the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra's Fresh Ink competition prize, the New Music for Sligo/IMRO composition prize, and many others. Commissions have come from orchestras, wind ensembles, choirs, and chamber ensembles, and his works have been recorded by Richard Stoltzman, the Slovak Radio Orchestra, the Moravian Philharmonic, and numerous chamber groups. Music by Paul Richards is recorded on the Meyer Media, MMC, ERM, Capstone, Mark, and Summit labels, and is published by Southern Music, Carl Fischer Music, TrevCo Music, the International Horn Society Press, Jeanne, Inc., and Margalit Music.

GUY BOVET, recently retired from his post as professor of organ at the Musikhochschule in Basel, Switzerland, is a multi-faceted organist, improviser, and composer. Originally improvisations, the *Trois Préludes Hambourgeois* were later notated from tapes or from the composer's memory. "Salamanca" is based on a popular theme from the countryside around Salamanca, Spain, and imitates many of the colors of the Baroque Spanish organ. The original idea for "Sarasota" came during a visit to Florida, where the composer "heard stories of alligators showing up in people's backyards and eating dogs and babies." The movement shows influences of southern jazz and captures the flavor of the southern United States. The final movement, "Hamburger Totentanz" is a large crescendo based on an ostinato rhythm.

ABOUT THE PERFORMER

LAURA ELLIS serves the University of Florida as associate professor in the School of Music and teaches undergraduate and graduate organ, harpsichord, and carillon. A native of Minnesota, Ellis is a graduate of Luther College (Decorah, Iowa) and holds the Master of Music degree in church music and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance from the University of Kansas. Her major organ teachers have been William Kuhlman and James Higdon. Prior to her Florida appointment, Ellis served as professor of music at McMurry University and held the position of parish organist at the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest in Abilene, TX. Ellis began her teaching career at the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas. Recital engagements as organist have included appearances at Piccolo Spoleto (Charleston, SC), Westminster Abbey, the University of Sydney, and various locations throughout Florida, Texas, and the South. Ellis is active in the American Guild of Organists and is past director of the New Music Competitions and Commissions Committee. Ellis was recently appointed to the national committee on Educational Resources and serves as District Convener for the state of Florida.