

BENJAMIN EHRLICH

Waltzing Matilda

Robert Ampt (b. 1949)

ZACH KLOBNAK AND STEPHANIE SMITH

Program Notes

The four Bach selections performed this evening illustrate distinct compositional periods of Bach's *oeuvre*. Scholars have questioned Bach's authorship of the Prelude and Fugue in E Minor ("The Cathedral"). If written by Bach, it certainly would have been early in his output as the work is short and undeveloped. The chorale prelude "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein" (When in the Hour of Utmost Need) is found in Bach's pedagogical collection, *Orgelbuchlein*, which contains chorale preludes for the church year. This chorale, in north German tradition, features a highly ornamented chorale melody in the soprano register on a cornet stop from the *positiv* division. Bach's *Clavierübung III* contains both small and large settings of chorale preludes illustrating various tenets of the Lutheran faith, including the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and The Lord's Prayer. This scholarly and academic Kyrie setting presents the chant tune in stretto. Finally, The Praeludium in B Minor is one of Bach's most mature works and is set in a modified ritornello form.

Handel's opus of organ concerti were originally intended to be performed during intervals of his staged oratorios. Historically, they would have been performed with string orchestra and portative organ – usually with Handel as the organ soloist. However, 19th century French organist Marcel Dupré, transcribed the works for solo organ. Tonight's performance attempts to highlight the back-and-forth nature of the tutti and solo organ sections of the piece. The performer at the main console will provide the original string orchestra parts while the solo organ part is played from the small *positiv* organ.

Louis Vierne, organist at Notre Dame, Paris, composed six symphonies for organ, a number of smaller pieces, and a collection of twenty-four programmatic works entitled *Pièces de Fantaisie*. One of these fantasy pieces is "Clair de lune" (The Light of the Moon), which grows in texture and intensity during the middle section, where arpeggiation in the secondary manual produces a shimmering effect. Much as the moon reaches an apex over the landscape and then slips below the horizon, the piece ends quietly.

David Schack's setting of "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" begins and ends with an energetic fanfare and presents the tune in augmentation in the pedal accompanied by toccata-like figurations in the manuals.

The lush strings of the swell division offer a foundation for this Priere (prayer), which is the third movement of the Suite Gothique by French organist Leon Boëllmann. A student of Gigout, Boëllmann served as organist at St. Vincent-de-Paul in Paris.

Born in Liège, Belgium, Jongen was an exceptional student at the Liège Conservatory and won multiple awards in harmony, fugue, piano, and organ. He was appointed professor of counterpoint and fugue at the Brussels Conservatory. Although known as a virtuoso performer, Jongen spent much of his free time composing. "Menuet" first appeared on a program in April 1917 as interlude music during a vocal recital by Blanche Marchesi. Three differing melodic ideas are presented fully and repeat in a style consistent with a rondo, rather than a true minuet.

Australian composer Robert Ampt set this native Australian folk tune in variation form as an organ duet for four feet. Known as the unofficial national anthem of Australia, the folksong narrates the story of a wanderer making a cup of tea at a bush camp and stealing a sheep to eat. When the sheep's owner arrives with three police officers to arrest him, the wanderer drowns himself in a small lake and forever haunts the camp.

Performers are from the studio of Dr. Laura Ellis.