

Organ Concert Program **August 30, 2020** **2:30 pm**
Holy Cross Lutheran church, Creve Coeur, MO

Prelude and Fugue in G Major (BWV 541)	J.S. Bach (1585-1750)
<i>Rhosymedre</i> from <i>Three Preludes for Organ</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Benedictus	Max Reger (1873 – 1916)
Andantino	César Franck (1822-1890)
Theme from Finlandia	Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
The Angel's Serenade	Gaetano Braga (1844-1937)
Heavenly Sunlight	Diane Bish (1941-)
Belgian Mother's Song	Peter Benoit (1834-1901)
Will O' the Wisp	Gordon Balch Nevin (1892-1943)
Suite Gothique	Leon Boëllmann (1862-1897)
I. Chorale	
II. Minuet	
III. Prière a Notre Dame	
IV. Toccata	

JOHN J. HAMILL III

John J. Hamill III is a native St. Louisan. He has bachelor degrees in Music Performance and Music Education from the St. Louis Conservatory of Music and UMSL, respectively. He also holds a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from Webster University. He has been playing the organ since 8th grade and has held director positions in several Catholic Churches. He has also held music positions at Jennings Presbyterian Church, Jennings Mo., Christ Presbyterian Church, Moline Acres, Mo., Hamilton Christian Church in Creve Coeur and currently organist at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Creve Coeur. Mr. Hamill is the 1985 Young artist's competition winner of the American Guild of Organists, St. Louis Chapter.

Program Notes

Autograph copies of the **Prelude and Fugue in G Major** can be traced to Bach's years in Cothen (1724-25), Bach's happiest years. This piece opens with a brilliant toccata-like running scale passage for eleven measures which is then followed by a chordal texture alternating with quick running scale passages punctuated by pedal tones. The fugue has four voices, three in the manuals and one in the pedal. In this fugue the pedal voices is the third to enter the texture. At the end of the fugue a cadenza appears which is very reminiscent of the youthful spirit of the prelude

Ralph Vaughan Williams was the pre-eminent 19-20th century English composer of his day. He was known for incorporating English folk songs into his music and using the English compositional style, "Style Anglais", which employs heavy use of consonant intervals of thirds and sixths. **Rhosymedre** is typical of Vaughan Williams style. The Hymn tune is played on the Diapasons of the Great Organ with soft, very pleasing, accompaniment on the Swell organ, strings and flutes in the opening. In the middle section the texture and sound thickens with the melody now played in the soprano voice and accompaniment played on the same manual as the tune. The piece builds to a climax and then afterward the opening section returns to end the piece.

Max Reger belongs to the Neo-Classical German Romantic School. Composers in this style looked back to the works of J.S Bach and employed many of his techniques such as imitative counterpoint and fugue. The **Benedictus** begins softly with the opening motif appearing in each voice as it enters the texture. After all the voices enter there is a rising section that leads to a climax and then a softening of the sound to quietly end the first section. The second section is a fugue. The subject enters as each voice is played and

builds to a grand climax on the full organ and then decrescendos into a softer section where the opening motif again reappears. The piece ends as it opened-very softly.

Cesar Franck was organist at the Parish church of St. Clotilde in Paris. In 1858 the church installed a new Cavaille-Col organ of symphonic proportions which was the inspiration that led Franck to compose many of his organ works. The **Andantino** was composed around this time. It is one of Franck's simpler works. The piece begins with a haunting melody played on the Oboe stop with a soft "boom-chuck" accompaniment. A short interlude played on the flutes of the organ leads to a middle section. This same interlude appears again and leads back to the opening section. A coda presents the melody in a different harmonic texture.

Finlandia is a tone poem for orchestra by Jean Sibelius premiered in 1899 in the composer's native Finland. It reached word wide audiences in the following year. Its origins are in a political protest celebration of the Finnish Pension celebration of 1899, a thinly veiled rally in support of the freedom for the Finnish press, largely controlled by tsarist Russia. In this organ transcription from Orchestra the opening dark motifs suggest a communist Russia ready to pounce on the Finnish people. The theme, however is a triumphal assertion of Finnish freedom and appears after this ominous opening. The tune of Finlandia is often sung to the words, not originally by Sibelius, "Be Still My Soul."

The Angel's Serenade was composed by Italian cellist Gaetano Braga. It is a dialogue between a worried mother and a young girl who hears angelic voices calling her. This scene appears in Anton Chekov's short story, "The Black Monk" as well as other Russian literary works. The girl eventually follows the angelic voice. In its original version the narrator sings the part of the mother and girl, while the string player plays the melody from an adjoin room from the pianist and singer, to give the effect of distant angelic voices. This version is a transcription for organ.

Diane Bish, organist and executive director of the "Joy of Music", has set the hymn, **Heavenly Sunlight**, to the organ. In this piece the 8' and 2' flutes are highlighted on each manual and present the tune in a delightful, whimsical manner.

Charles Courboin has set this Flemish tune, **The Belgian Mother's Song** by Peter Benoit to the organ. The tune is played on a solo reed stop accompanied by soft, arpeggiated, harplike chords on a different manual. After a middle section the opening tune reappears now accompanied by a chime obligato.

A "wisp" refers to a bundle of sticks used as a torch and "will" refers to "intention of the torch." In folklore **Will O' the Wisp** is an atmospheric ghost light seen by travelers at night, especially in bogs and marshes. It is said to mislead travelers by resembling a flickering lamp. Gordon Balch Nevin sets his version as an ABA form toccatina containing perpetual running 16th notes played in a whimsical and capricious manner in the A section and a new theme introduced in the B. Suite Gothique is a four movement work. The **Chorale** is made up of harmonized choral phrases of block chords played on the Great Organ and echoed on the Swell. The **Minuet** is a dance in 3/4. Priere a Notre dame is a prayer played on the soft strings. The most well-known of the sections is the **Toccata** played on the full organ. The theme is first introduced in the pedals over typical French toccata texture.

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