

JOHN LINKER ORGANIST

9 FEBRUARY 2014

3:15PM RECITAL

CATHEDRAL OF ST PHILIP
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Fantasia G-Moll, BWV 542

J.S. BACH
(1685-1750)

Grande pièce symphonique, Op. 17

César FRANCK
(1822-1890)

- I. Andantino serio; Allegro non troppo e maestoso
- II. Andante; Allegro; Andante
- III. Allegro non troppo e maestoso; Andantino serio;
Allegro non troppo e maestoso; Allegro; Andante;
Très lent; Animez; Beaucoup plus largement que précédement

PROGRAM NOTES

J.S. Bach is unquestionably the most important and influential composer for the organ, and some would argue he was the finest composer of all time. Evidence suggests that his *Fantasia & Fugue*, BWV 542, was revised as an audition piece for a church job in Hamburg. Bach didn't get the job, but lucky for us this piece is a staple in the repertoire of many an organist. True to the north German *stylus phantasticus* in which this was composed, the *Fantasia* balances fugato sections with improvisational recitatives. Though Bach wrote no registration indications (i.e., which particular combinations of sounds to use), it is assumed a contrasting registration is desired for the contrasting contrapuntal sections, as performed today.

César Franck was a cutting edge composer for the organ in that he wrote in a “symphonic” style. In fact, *Grande pièce symphonique* is considered the first symphony written for the organ in that it is usually analyzed as being in three movements, and just as Beethoven had done in his Ninth Symphony, each of the themes used throughout the work are restated at the end. The convergence of the Belgian musician Franck and French organ builder Cavaillé-Coll in Paris was a serendipitous time in the history of organ literature. Franck was greatly inspired by the instruments of Cavaillé-Coll, as his innovations included full-bodied harmonic flutes, fiery reeds, and a primitive yet user-friendly combination action with which sounds could be changed rapidly. Franck's principal positions throughout his career included serving as organiste-titulaire for Ste Clotilde in Paris and organ professor at Paris Conservatory.



JOHN LINKER

A native of Princeton, Illinois, John received a Bachelor of Music degree from Northern Illinois University (DeKalb) in 1997 where he studied organ with Robert Reeves and Richard Hoskins, and a Master of Music degree from the Chicago Musical College (Roosevelt University) in 2003, an organ and harpsichord student of David Schrader. He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Cincinnati (College-Conservatory of Music) where he studied organ with Roberta Gary and conducting with Stephen Coker and Earl Rivers. Linker has performed numerous roles at CCM, and was first place winner in the annual Strader Organ Competition in 2004.

Since 2001 Linker has been Organist/Choirmaster of the Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal) in Lexington, Kentucky, where he leads a vibrant choir program of professional and volunteer singers of trebles and adults. In addition to the usual rigorous rehearsal and service schedule, the Choir has performed in concert numerous masterworks. National and international tours also occupy much of the Choir's time, and under Linker's leadership the choir has honored four English Cathedral residency invitations, (Gloucester Cathedral, 2003; Lichfield Cathedral, 2006; Durham Cathedral 2006; Ely Cathedral 2009). The Choir has also made many stateside tours including Atlanta, Chicago, Washington DC, New York, and all around Kentucky. This past summer the Choir had a very successful tour throughout Europe, singing in Rome, Florence, and Paris.

In addition to liturgical work and teaching, Linker keeps busy as a recitalist and chamber musician, making numerous tours in the United States and abroad. He is an active member of the Association of Anglican Musicians, the American Guild of Organists (former Dean of the Lexington Chapter), the Organ Historical Society, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity. Rekindling an early interest in trumpet music, John also plays organ and trumpet with Kentucky Baroque Trumpets. Linker is married to Lexington native Molly McCann Linker, and both are proud parents to a daughter named Lila and guardians to felines Nigel, Pierre, and Tom.

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