

JOHN LINKER

ORGANIST

6 JUNE 2014

7:30PM RECITAL

ST MATTHIAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
MINOCQUA, WISCONSIN

Fantasia e Fuga 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

Adagio (from *Symphony No. 3*, Op. 28)

Louis VIERNE
(1870-1937)

The Peace may be exchanged (from *Rubrics*, 1988)

Dan LOCKLAIR
(b. 1949)

Toccata

Jan NIELAND
(1903-1963)

PROGRAM NOTES

J.S. Bach (1685-1750) 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 (1822-1890) 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 analysed 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 Cavallé-Coll in Paris was a serendipitous time in the history of organ literature. Franck was greatly inspired by the instruments of Cavallé-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.

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) was immensely prolific in spite of the many hardships he encountered throughout his life. He was born nearly blind. A good number of his students as well as his son Jacques and his brother René were casualties of the First World War. He was poised to take up the position of organ professor at the Paris Conservatory, but was twice passed over by the administration for this job. He dedicated a piece to his daughter Colette (his famous *Berceuse*), but was told by his wife that Colette was not actually his child, and was a result of an affair Mme Vierne had with the organ builder Charles Mutin. And the list of calamity goes on. He did, however, achieve on lifelong dream in that he died on the bench of the organ at Notre Dame Cathedral while performing his 1750th organ recital.

Vierne wrote six symphonies for the organ between 1899 and 1930. Their respective keys climb one by one up the steps of the scale: D minor, E minor, F sharp minor, G minor, A minor, B minor. A seventh and last symphony, in C, would have completed the series were he not forced to abandon the work due to ill health. The luscious *Adagio* is like a "song without words" and is inspired by the long winding melodies of Wagner and Franck. The piece is based completely on material heard in the first few measures. The melody is prayerful and seems to desire resolution, which is realized beautifully when they reappear in major played by Harmonic Flute and later string celestes.

Dan Locklair's liturgical suite *Rubrics* is a collection of five pieces inspired by various rubrics (directives originally printed in red, hence "rubric") from the *Book of Common Prayer*. "The Peace may be exchanged" beautifully interprets the idea of being at peace with oneself, with each other, and with God. Locklair lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and is among the most celebrated of contemporary American composers.

Jan Nieland (1903-1968) was a celebrated composer in the Netherlands, however is little known here in the United States. Throughout the 20th century Dutch composers were highly influenced by French music; at times Nieland's music sounds strikingly similar to Franck. The *Toccata in A Minor* is in ABA form, with the B section being a brief visit to the key of g minor. After a dominant pedal point, the A section returns with fire and fury.



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.

www.johnlinker.com