



The Graduate Organ Recital of
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candidate for the Master of Arts in Liturgical Music
student of Dr. Kim R. Kasling

Saturday, November 21st, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
The Abbey and University Church of Saint John the Baptist
Collegeville, Minnesota

Program

15' *A Solis Ortus* (text on page 5) Nicolas de Grigny
[*Allegro moderato*] (1672-1703)
Fugue à 5
Trio
Point d'Orgue sur les Grands jeux
Br. David Paul Lange, O.S.B., cantor

10' Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 547 J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

INTERMISSION

40' *Symphonie Romane*, Op. 73 Charles-Marie Widor
[*Moderato*] (1844-1937)
Choral
Cantilène
Final

The binding force in this recital program is the liturgical year. Each of these compositions was based upon church music to be used at certain times and on certain feastdays celebrating the life of Jesus Christ. The first half of the program is based upon the Christmas mysteries and the second half on Christ's Resurrection.



The stained-glass window in the Abbey Church also depicts liturgical time, with the events surrounding Christmas and the early years of Jesus's ministry on the left; the right represents the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension. The image is visually held together in the center by God, sanctifying all creation and time.

Every composer featured today made his livelihood in church music. Each was devoutly religious, and these compositions give us a glimpse of how their piety pervaded their lives. They might have discovered, as I have begun to, how music can give voice to God's love for us in ways that words alone cannot. Music and other art forms attempt to describe the sublime and the transcendent, but they also ground us in our bodily experience and bind us in community. It is my hope that today's program can contribute to this spirit of community during these difficult times.



Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703) might have been the most musically advanced composer in Baroque France, as seen by comparing his work to such celebrated contemporaries as François Couperin (1668-1733) and Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749). His melodic development and intricate counterpoint—including even in the pedal parts—are unparalleled in his era.

De Grigny grew up in a family of church organists. His father, grandfather, and uncles played in churches near his hometown of Rheims. At twenty-four years old, he began work as the organist for the Notre Dame Cathedral in Rheims, a position which he held until his death seven years later.¹

The hymn *A Solis Ortus* originally spanning Jesus’s birth to Resurrection in 23 stanzas.² By de Grigny’s day, it was only seven Nativity stanzas and a doxology, as it is to today. His variations on this hymn are the conclusion of his sole published work, *Premier livre d’orgue* (“First organ book” – 1699).³ This and the other hymns he set were well-known Gregorian chants, and many retain notoriety to this day. (Many Catholics are still familiar with *Pange lingua gloriosi* for Holy Thursday, for example.) His settings show well the practice of *alternatim* which flourished in French Catholic churches even to the nineteenth century. De Grigny’s *alternatim* compositions provided highly dignified settings for festive occasions, soon to become the norm for an “Organ Mass.”⁴

Alternatim implies some back-and-forth. As seen on the facing page, the organ versets here would have alternated with the schola.

The first movement of *A Solis Ortus*, with the unequal rhythms of a French Overture, exposes the hymn melody in the pedals. Its balanced upward and downward motifs echo the paradox of the Creator taking human form. The second movement is a fugue of five voices. The subject of the fugue is based on the hymn melody, and the entry of each successive voice appears as a musical building block in the Lord’s earthly temple, the womb of his mother Mary. The third movement is a trio, two treble flutes against a weighty *cromorne* in the bass. The playfulness captures the feel of the infant Jesus at Bethlehem, content with a manger for a bed and farm animals for companions. The fourth movement is a grand procession over a pedal-point, giving appropriate weight to the doxology.

¹ Howell, Almonte, and François Sabatier. “Grigny, Nicolas de.” Grove Music Online. 2001; Accessed 21 Nov. 2020. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011778>.

² Walpole, A. S. *Early Latin Hymns* (Cambridge University Press, 1922), 150-158.

³ Grigny, Nicolas de. *Premier livre d’orgue (1699): with references to the copies of J.S. Bach and J.G. Walther*. Wayne Leupold, et al., eds. (Colfax, NC: Wayne Leupold Editions, 2015).

⁴ Apel, Willi. *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 106.

A Solis Ortus

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|--------|---|---|
| Cantor | 1. A solis ortus cardine Ad usque terrae limitem, Christum canamus Principem, Natum Maria Virgine. | 1. <i>From lands that see the sun arise, To earth's remotest boundaries, The Virgin-born today we sing, The Son of Mary, Christ the King.</i> |
| Organ | 2. Beatus Auctor saeculi Servile corpus induit: Ut carne carnem liberans Ne perderet quod condidit. | 2. <i>Blest Author of this earthly frame, To take a servant's form He came, That liberating flesh by flesh, Whom He had made might live afresh.</i> |
| Cantor | 3. Castae Parentis viscera Caelestis intrat gratia: Venter Puellae baiulat Secreta, quae non noverat. | 3. <i>In that chaste parent's holy womb, Celestial grace hath found its home: And she, as earthly bride unknown, Yet call that Offspring blest her own.</i> |
| Organ | 4. Domus pudici pectoris Templum repente fit Dei: Intacta nesciens virum Verbo concepit Filium. | 4. <i>The mansion of her modest breast Becomes a shrine where God shall rest: The pure and undefiled one Conceivèd in her womb the Son.</i> |
| Cantor | 5. Enixa est Puerpera Quem Gabriel praedixerat, Quem matris alvo gestiens Clausus Joannes senserat. | 5. <i>That Son, that royal Son she bore, Whom Gabriel's voice had told afore: Whom, in his Mother yet concealed, The infant Baptist had revealed.</i> |
| Organ | 6. Foeno iacere pertulit: Praesepe non abhorruit: Parvoque lacte pastus est Per quem nec ales esurit. | 6. <i>The manger and the straw He bore, The cradle did He not abhor: A little milk His infant fare Who feedeth e'en each fowl of air.</i> |
| Cantor | 7. Gaudet chorus caelestium, Et Angeli canunt Deo: Palamque fit pastoribus Pastor, Creator omnium. | 7. <i>The heavenly chorus filled the sky, The angels sang to God on high, What time to shepherds watching lone They made creation's Shepherd known.</i> |
| Organ | 8. Gloria tibi Domine, Qui natus es de Virgine, Cum Patre et Sancto Spiritu, In sempiterna saecula. Amen. | 8. <i>All honor, laud, and glory be, O Jesu, virgin born, to Thee; All glory, as is ever meet, To the Father and to Paraclete. Amen.</i> |

-Coelis Sedulius, ca. 5th c.; poetic translation by John Mason Neale (1818-1866) in *Hymnal Noted*, 1862

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) certainly knew the work of de Grigny, for the former made a copy of the latter's *Livre* to bring back to Germany.⁵ What de Grigny's compositions contributed to the Catholic Church, Bach's far surpassed for the Lutheran. His compositions based upon chorales easily number over one hundred.⁶

The chorale began as a 16th-cent. Lutheran equivalent of Gregorian chant. Like chant, it was a single line of sung text (later to be harmonized by Bach and others). Unlike chant, the music had a steady meter or pulse.

During his tenure at Leipzig, which spanned three decades until his death there, Bach worked for the *Thomaskirche* (Church of St. Thomas) and some smaller nearby churches. It is during this time that he composed this **Prelude and Fugue in C**. The exact date of composition is uncertain. However, he seems to have drawn much of the material for this prelude from a cantata written in 1724: "Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen" (They shall all come forth from Sheba) for Epiphany Sunday. The text alludes to the three kings coming from afar to honor the newborn Christ. The prelude retains the pastoral feel of the cantata. Its motifs of rising eighth and descending sixteenth notes paint a picture of nighttime travel: the guiding star and the excited caravan.

The gentle lilt of a camel's gait in the prelude gives way to awe, wonder, and majesty in the five-voice fugue. Unlike Bach's other fugues, the subject here is only one measure long, and Bach aptly maneuvers it in every measure of the composition. The

The subject is the main melody of a fugue. It is presented solo to open the piece, and each successive voice enters with the same melody in a different key. Bach is a master at manipulating his fugue subjects, using these and other methods:

- *Inversion – the subject is played upside-down (i.e. an inversion descends where the subject would ascend)*
- *Augmentation – the subject is presented at a slower tempo*
- *Stretto – multiple subjects and inversions sound at once, overlapping their melodies*

⁵ Grigny. *Primier livre*, Introduction.

⁶ Forkel, Johann Nikolaus. "On Johann Sebastian Bach's Life, Genius, and Works," in *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*. Hans David and Arthur Mendel, eds. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), 471.

subject resembles the opening notes of the chorale “Allein Gott in der Höhe sei Ehr” (To God in highest alone be the glory), which serves as the Lutheran liturgical *Gloria*.⁷ For three-fourths of the movement, the hands carry all of the music. Then, it opens up with a great sense of expansiveness as the pedals begin to carry the melody at half-speed. In this, Bach’s vision of the unsurpassable glory of God is readily apparent. It comes to a great climax with four abrupt chords before cascading in a series of falling scales to the final cadence. Both movements end with only an eighth note, as though Bach is telling us he has nothing more to say. At the bottom of every composition, Bach placed his signature phrase – *Soli Deo Gloria* – To God alone be the glory.⁸



Charles-Marie Widor’s (1844-1937) self-proclaimed lineage tracing back to J.S. Bach’s tutelage might be tenable at best,⁹ but his dedication as a church organist cannot be denied. He maintained a provisional contract at the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris for 68 years. When he took the job in 1870, he accepted responsibility for the largest organ in France.¹⁰

Organ compositions during his first 50 years display a grand scale capable of utilizing fully the greatest instruments being built at that time, though these works still largely followed classical form. The organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811-1899) were monumental in character, having the power to fill cathedrals to capacity and the colors to resemble a symphonic orchestra. Cavaillé-Coll and Widor sustained a lasting friendship, and each reveled in the other’s art.¹¹

⁷ Marshall, Robert L., and Robin A. Leaver. “Chorale.” Section 6, Other Wittenburg Chorales. *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 21 Nov. 2020. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005652>.

⁸ David, Hans, and Arthur Mended, eds. *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), 16.

⁹ Near, John. *Widor: A Life beyond the Toccata* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 11-14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 44-50.

In Widor's maturity, he experiments with a more ethereal approach. His style becomes improvisatory and unpredictable, more chromatic and dissonant. Three large organ works from this period (*Symphonie Gothique* in 1895, *Symphonie Romane* in 1900, and *Suite Latine* in 1927) rely on Gregorian chant for exploring this new musical expression. The two *Symphonies* are musical depictions of church architecture (with the *Romane* being dedicated to St. Sernin in Toulouse), and key to this image is the music of the Church.

Symphonie Romane is a grand setting of Easter chant. Its predominant theme is the *Haec dies* Gradual from the Mass for Easter Sunday. This theme permeates the work almost in its entirety. Widor's presentation of Gregorian chant is not strict. He explains in the preface to this work that the best way to express a non-metrical idea in a metered musical idiom is to constantly present it in different ways.¹² Many of his expositions of the chant happen above a pedal-point, where the performer is free to interpret the melody with liberty.

The Gregorian chant upon which the *Symphonie Romane* was based:
 (Paroissien Romain, 1874)

Hæc di - es, quam fecit Dominus...

Hæc dies, quam fecit Dominus: exsulemus, et lætemur in ea.
 This is the day the Lord has made: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

The first movement begins with a leaping toccata figure before introducing us to the chant for the first time in a solemn recitative. The toccata figure alternates with

phrases of the chant until the two merge and spin out in his first variation. This is his overall structure for the movement: alternating

Recitative is most often used in sung theatrical works. It is a technique where the lyrics are sung in speech rhythm, not strict musical time.

¹² Widor, Charles-Marie. *Symphonie Romane Opus 73 for Organ* (Kalmus/Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.), Preface.

with a dramatic show of homophonic chords accompanying what is to be the penultimate exposition of the chant melody. From there, he begins a gradual *decrescendo* to the end of the piece. He gives us a quiet reminder of the toccata figure from the first movement, following this with the final singing of the chant on the organ's quietest stop. Having taken us through wonder, power, and majesty, Widor leaves us in breathless mystery, aware of the very air around us. All of this, the music and the stillness, is God's creation and a gift to us.



In Gratitude

I wish to extend my thanks to all who have made today possible through their support, encouragement, and advice. First and foremost, this is a big thank-you to all of you in attendance, whether in person or online. Furthermore, a few people merit particular recognition:

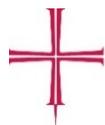
Thank you, Dr. Kim Kasling, for your invaluable help with interpretation and registration, practice technique and performance details, and music history and Bach numerology.

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