

The FIU School of Music and
the Miami chapter of the American Guild of Organists
present

William Dan Hardin, organist
September 12 & 15, 2019

live stream:

<https://livestream.com/accounts/7866386/events/8818112/videos/196345295>

Moto ostinato from *Sunday Music*

Petr Eben
(1929-2007)

The Estonian composer was the most loved and respected figure in Czech cultural life and his country's most internationally known composer. He wrote *Musica Dominicalis* or *Sunday Music* in 1958 during Communism when it was forbidden to hold concerts in churches for fear it would cause people to gather in churches for religious purposes. Yet he felt he must write something for his "beloved organ." Little did he know that this would become one of his most often performed compositions. The basis of this movement is a rhythmic ostinato (repeated rhythmic figure) heard in nearly all of its 155 bars inspired by a vision of ancient battles. Eben readily admits there is not much fun to be had here, as soldiers' march toward the front as they sing "le chant de bataille." To quote Eben, "Everything is like an apocalyptic mission."

Choral no. 2 in B minor

César Franck
(1822-1890)

The new symphonic-styled organs being built in the mid-nineteenth century by Aristide Cavallé-Coll gave impetus to organ composition by César Franck, organist at Saint-Clotilde in Paris and Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatoire. Here one finds a panoply of orchestral colors and modern inventions to make playing the organ an entirely new experience from those pre-Revolution instruments. Newly designed stops provided richness, color and body to the sound in much the same way as did instruments of the orchestra.

This work is the second of three compositions César Franck wrote during a two-month summer vacation the last year of his life. With only a month after their completion and his own death, it meant that Franck never had an opportunity to teach them or perform them on his own new Cavaillé -Coll organ at Saint-Clotilde—only to play them through for others on the piano, with someone else playing the pedal parts.

The B-minor choral (equivalent of the German word chorale) takes the form of another ostinato-type composition—the passacaglia—followed by a set of variations. This theme, first heard in the pedals, migrates to other parts of the texture—sometimes buried in the middle, at other times prominently recognizable in the top voice, and at the end, boldly in the pedal again. Heard twice is the organ’s little-used Vox humana, a stop which is said to imitate the human voice.

Prelude and fugue in C Minor (BWV 546)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

From Bach’s final period in Leipzig comes his more mature and serious compositions. Five organ preludes and fugues date from this period. In the words of Hermann Keller, they are “the final supreme culmination of German compositions for the organ before the profound decline which lasted for more than a hundred years.” In these works we find an amazing degree of unity and cohesion in which material in the subordinate sections is derived from the principal sections. Of these two movements, the Prelude is far the finer work. The Fugue, although technically in five voices does not maintain five consistently and neither is it as tightly constructed as the Prelude. Nevertheless taken as a whole, it remains one of the great works of this form from Bach’s final years.

Principal source: *The Organ works of Bach* by Hermann Keller. C. F. Peters Corporation, c1967.

Prelude, adagio and chorale variations on *Veni creator*, op.4

Maurice Duruflé
(1902-1986)

(Gregorian verses sung by the choir of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Dr. Scott Tripp, director)

Although his work list is not large, it includes his most remembered work, the Requiem, and six of the most finely crafted organ works of the Twentieth Century. Duruflé was a student and loyal friend and colleague of Louis Vierne, whom he replaced at Notre Dame Cathedral from 1929-1931. He also played the premier in France of Vierne’s sixth organ symphony at Notre Dame Cathedral in 1935, of which an excerpt concludes this

concert. (Carl Weinrich had played its North American premier in New York in 1932.) The work heard here, the Prelude, adagio and choral variations on *Veni creator* was also dedicated to Vierne. From 1930 until his injury and ultimate death from injuries sustained in an automobile accident, Duruflé was organist at Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, Paris where he served with his wife, virtuoso organist Marie-Madeliene Duruflé-Chevalier.

Duruflé's choral writing and this organ work illustrate his love for the beauty of Gregorian plainchant. This op. 4 won first prize in a competition sponsored by Les Amis de l'Orgue in 1930 and is a marvelous three-part work based on themes from one of the oldest Pentecost hymns of the church, dating to the 10th century. It is heard today, as it often is with choir singing the plainchant verses preceding each variation. My deepest appreciation goes to the choir of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Coconut Grove and their conductor, Dr. Scott Tripp for their contribution to this performance.

Naiades (Water nymphs), from op. 55

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

Final from Symphony no. 6, op 59

The life of this most organistic of composers is inextricably wed to Notre Dame Cathedral, where he suffered a heart attack while playing mass. It was not a happy life, but one filled with the misfortune and disappointment of blindness, depression, the loss of a son and brother in WWII, financial difficulties, and divorce. He was passed over twice for a much-deserved position as professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire. He was a pupil of César Franck and was a central figure of an “organ school” (Widor, Guilmant, Bonnet, among others) during the first several decades of the early 20th century that left an indelible mark on the history of organ playing, teaching and composition.

Nymphs are supernatural creatures from Greek mythology that take the form of young graceful maidens who animate the environments in which they live—air, seas, woods or water. Vierne depicts their playful frolic with a *perpetuum mobile* type of composition in which scale passagework runs continually from beginning to end, shifting from right hand to left and exhibiting lovely organ colors along the way.

Vierne's organ symphony no. 6, op. 59 was written in the summer of 1930 while vacationing on the French Riviera. He writes to his future biographer, Bernard Gavoty that “the intense sunlight abolishes regrets and even past unhappiness, leaving behind just the sheer animal joy of existing!” The symphony is dedicated to his Canadian-American virtuoso friend, Lynnwood Farnam, a champion of

French music in America and universally respected by French organists as the “premier organist of the North American continent” —an accolade no one disputed.

This closing movement seems to break out of the darkness of the other movements with a playful, almost humorous taunting theme accompanied by tympani-like strokes in the pedals. Soon it is combined with a more lyrical theme as well as one introduced in earlier movements in the symphony. The player’s pedal technique is challenged by a series of unrelenting and athletic pedal scales. When organist Gaston Litaize mentioned these scales to Vierne, the composer remarked that it was a good piece to work on in winter! Indeed--if only one had winter.

Principal source: *Louis Vierne, Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral* by Rollin Smith. Pendragon Press, 1999.

Encore: Musette from Triptyque, op 51 – Marcel Dupre.

William Dan Hardin recently retired from FIU, where he came in 2000 as its first music librarian to develop a music research collection of books, scores, sound recordings and electronic resources to serve the needs of a growing School of Music. In 2015, he retired from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, where he was for approximately fourteen years as Organist and Choir Director. While at St. Stephen's, he grew the choir into one of the finest in South Florida, singing a cathedral-style repertoire and incorporating semi-professional singers.

A native of North Carolina, he holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in organ performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where he served as a teaching assistant and as assistant organist to his professor, David Craighead at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Additionally, he holds master's degrees in organ and library science from Northwestern University and Clark Atlanta University, respectively. With Dr. N. Lee Orr, he co-authored *Music in Nineteenth Century America: A Guide to the Sources* published by Scarecrow Press, in 1999. Dr. Hardin is a member of the Executive Board of the Miami chapter of the American Guild of Organists and currently serves as Interim Organist at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.