



Faculty Recital Series

2012-2013 Season

Helen M. Hosmer Hall

Monday, April 1, 7:30 PM

Michelle Rae Martin-Atwood, Organ

Pièce d'Orgue (Fantasia) in G Major, BWV 572
(Weimar period 1708-17)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

God is Our Righteousness for Organ and Guitar (1992)

Chris DeBlasio
(1959-1993)

Douglas Rubio, Guitar

Mad Rush (1979)

Philip Glass
(b. 1937)

Variations on a Theme by Paganini
for Organ Pedals (1962)

Sir George Thalben-Ball
(1896-1987)

Theme

Variations 1 - 5

Variations 8, 9

Variation 7

Variation 6

Brief Pause

Three Pieces for Organ

Aaron Travers
(b. 1975)

Con fuoco

Lento assai – Adagio teneramente

Based on poems by Stephen Crane,

Allegro marcato

1999

Irish Air from *County Derry* [Londonderry Air]

Arr. by Edwin Lemare
(1866-1934)

Greensleeves

Arr. by Anonymous

Jason Schirripa, Percussion

Symphony No. 1 Op. 14 (1898-99)

Louis Vierne

VI. Finale: Allegro

(1870-1937)

Program Notes

Bach's **Pièce d'Orgue** has always been something of a curiosity among Bach's organ works for several reasons. It is one of his very few works containing tempo indications, these given in French; the pedal line contains the note BB (a semitone outside the standard pedal compass); and there is no agreement as to whether it is written in the "typical North German style", the polyphonic style of the Italian motet, or perhaps, is the French influence with its typical 5-part writing in the central section, the main influence?

Music theory students: What is the ominous chord that sounds at the end of the large central section? Can you tell what type of "deceitful" cadence is heard predominantly throughout the work?

Mad Rush was written for the occasion of the Dalai Lama's first public address in New York City. Originally an open-structured or open-ended piece, it was first performed by Glass on organ during the Dalai Lama's entrance into the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. It was later performed on Radio Bremen and finally used by choreographer Lucinda Childs as accompaniment to a dance Mad Rush.

Minimalism (Glass loathes the term) - a style of music made in America - simultaneously incites scorn and acclaim. Glass uses repetition to create what he has called 'intentionless music'. This music demands a different kind of listening - one lacking in 'traditional concepts of recollection and anticipation', as Glass has put it. Unlike much classical music, there is no drive toward a climax, no pattern of tension and release, no emotional catharses. The principle of complexity within simplicity is at play here - when played at great speeds with a sound that saturates the room, alien acoustical phenomena emerge (beats and combination tones) that lend the music an unexpected textural richness.

Three Pieces for Organ (Based on Poems by Stephen Crane)

Each piece is an attempt at an impression of a poem by the 19th Century author, Stephen Crane. Though not widely known neither during his time or even today, Crane's very short poems are exceedingly poignant, at once dark, melancholy, and at times sarcastic, and the three represented here are certainly no exception. The first piece, which depicts "the Ride of Sin" is a brief drama that is as explosive as it is unsettling. The second piece is based on one of Crane's few love poems. The final piece is a kind of growling, squeaking depiction of many devils jumping and dancing about, all the while coaxing the observer on high, who, though he tries to distance himself from them, realizes he is no better than they. (Notes by Aaron Travers)

I. Con fuoco [Black Riders]

Black riders came from the sea.
There was clang and clang of spear and shield,
And clash and clash of hoof and heel,
Wild shouts and the wave of hair
In the rush upon the wind:
Thus, the ride of Sin.

II. Lento assai--Adagio teneramente [Here and There]

I looked here;
I looked there;
Nowhere could I see my love.
And--this time--
She was in my heart
Truly, then, I have no complaint,
For though she be fair and fairer,
She is none so fair as she
In my heart.

III. Allegro marcato [Upon a High Place]

I stood upon a high place,
And saw, below, many devils
Running, leaping,
And carousing in sin.
One looked up, grinning,
And said: "Comrade! Brother!

Louis Vierne's music has all the qualities he learned from Widor and Franck - lyrical themes and a strong sense of architecture with the added dimension of powerful chromatic harmony, not unrelated to the very dark moments of his life. He was born almost completely blind, denied first prize at the Conservatory multiple times, suffered a severe leg injury, nearly died from typhoid fever, divorced, developed glaucoma and finally, on June 1 of 1937, Vierne suffered a fatal heart attack at the very end of a recital at Notre Dame. (As the story goes, he had just finished playing a recital and as an encore was going to improvise a tune on two submitted themes. Before he could finish preparing, he had a stroke and fell off the bench, hitting a low "E" on the way down.)

However, Vierne was a champion as he brought the genre of the Organ Symphony (a multi-movement composition of symphonic proportions written for the solo organ) into the 20th century, well beyond the roots that had been established by Franck and Widor.

The famous *Final* was written when Vierne was only 29 years of age working as assistant organist at St. Sulpice and still under Widor's tutelage. It shows the influence of the *Final* of Widor's Second Symphony published over a decade prior. Vierne noted, "it is my *Marseillaise*...it pleases the public. ...so I always play it!"