

PROGRAM
Christopher Berry, Organist
April 8, 2014

Apparition de l'Église Éternelle Le Banquet Céleste 6

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Most associate the the Messiaen *Apparition de l'Église Éternelle* with the Feast of Pentecost, the "birthday" of the Christian Church. Christian tradition also holds that the Church and her Sacraments were born from the water and blood which issued from the side of Christ when He was pierced after the Crucifixion.

The *Banquet Celeste* refers to the Holy Eucharist and so is evocative of Maundy Thursday and the Institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist - the Mass. Messiaen inscribed the score with the following from the Gospel of St. John:
He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.

Herzlich tut mich verlangen

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

The Brahms is based on the chorale by Hans Leo Hassler which is often sung in the English-speaking world during Holy Week entitled *O Sacred Head*.

*O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame bowed down,
Now scornfully surrounded, With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory, What bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.*

Prière from Six Pieces, 1868

César Franck (1822-1890)

Rollin Smith calls the *Priere* "Franck's most profound organ work". The tempo is *Andante sostenuto*. Louis Vierne wrote "The *Priere* is the most remarkable of the six pieces. It is a broad fresco with a single theme; a prayer par excellence. It is as though the phrase in itself is beyond human understanding. Truly, it expands in the soul's interior and fades away on high." Franck, Langlais and Tournemire, all of whom are heard on tonight's program, were all organists of the famous church of St. Clotilde in Paris.

**Sonata III
De Profundis**

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)
Jean Langlais (1907-1991)**

The Langlais, like the second movement of the Mendelssohn sonata, is based on the German chorale *Aus tiefer Not*, from Johann Walther's *Gesangbüchlein* of 1524. Martin Luther had endowed it with the translation of Ps 130 (129), *Out of the Depths*. This is a quintessential psalm for the Lenten season.

**Attende Domine 4'30"
Hosanna Filio David**

Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968)

Jeanne Demessieux was an extraordinarily talented pupil of Marcel Dupré. Her setting of the Lenten chant *Attende Domine* is resplendent with original harmonies which have inspired recent generations of French organ composers and improvisers.

**L'Orgue Mystique: Sabbato Sancto (mvt. 4)
L'improvisation sur le "Victimae paschali laudes"**

Charles Tournemire (1870-1939)

Charles Tournemire composed a suite of organ music for every Sunday and major feast of the church year entitled *L'Orgue Mystique*. Much of this music is chant-based and that which is not definitely grows out of the plainsong aesthetic. This is the Communion movement of the suite for Holy Saturday – the Easter Vigil. In it we hear the familiar Alleluia melody, which has become ubiquitous throughout the Catholic musical world. Its placement in this movement is a reminder that this chant properly and originally appears as part of the Easter Vigil liturgy.

The *Victimae Paschali* is one of a collection of recorded improvisations by Tournemire which were transcribed by Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986). This masterful improvisation is based upon the liturgical Sequence for Easter Day.

*Let Christians offer sacrificial praises to the passover victim.
The lamb has redeemed the sheep: The Innocent Christ has reconciled the sinners to the Father.
Death and life contended in a spectacular battle:
the Prince of life, who died, reigns alive.
Tell us, Mary, what did you see on the road "
I saw the tomb of the living Christ and the glory of his rising,
The angelic witnesses, the clothes and the shroud."
"Christ my hope is arisen; into Galilee, he will go before his own."
We know Christ is truly risen from the dead! To us, victorious King, have mercy!*