

Inaugural Recital
The Sewell Organ

Casavant Frères Limitée, Opus 3799

February 7, 2003
7:30 p.m.

James F. Mellichamp, Organist

CENTER FOR WORSHIP AND MUSIC

PIEDMONT COLLEGE
DEMOREST, GEORGIA

PROGRAM

Tuba Tune	C.S. Lang (1891-1971)
Noel Variations Quand le Sauveur Jesus Christ A Minuit fut fait un Reveil	Jean-Francois Dandrieu (1682-1738)
Chorale Prelude: "Jesu Leiden, Pein and Tod"	Johann C. Vogler (1696-1763)
Pièce d'Orgue, S. 572 Trés vite ment Gravement Lentement	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Chorale Prelude: "Veni creator spiritus"	Libby Larsen (born 1950)
Pièce héroïque	César Franck (1822-1890)
From <i>Pièces de Fantaisie, opus 53</i> Clair de lune	Louis Vierne (1870-1937)
Litanies (1937)	Jehan Alain (1911-1940)

PROGRAM NOTES

A native of New Zealand, Craig Lang was educated and worked in England as an organist and choral director. He was a prolific composer, and his compositions reflect typical English stylistic conventions. *Tuba Tune* features the commanding horizontal or *en chamade* reed in the outer movements and contrasts this with other reed stops in the middle section.

Noel is an old French salutation that became a designation for the many French Christmas songs of the 17th and 18th centuries. Dandrieu, organist of the French Chapel Royal, wrote variations on these Christmas songs in a light, ornamented style with typical French Baroque registrations that exhibit the various flute and reed stops of the organ.

Vogler is one of only a handful of pupils known to have studied with J. S. Bach. His setting of the Lutheran chorale, "Jesus' Suffering, Pain and Death," has a highly ornamented solo line that depicts the grief expressed in the hymn text.

Written during Bach's early Weimar period, the *Pièce d'Orgue* (or Fantasy in G Major) is a monumental, self-contained work unique in the Baroque organ repertory. The French title may refer to the extensive middle movement (Gravement) with five-part texture, deceptive cadences, and rich chromatic harmonies reminiscent of pieces in the *Grand jeu* tradition of French composers familiar to Bach. An opening toccata-like section and a closing section in free fantasia style frame the middle movement.

Libby Larsen is emerging as one of the significant figures among the younger generation of American composers. Though not an organist, she has written a number of compositions for the instrument. Here she turns to an ancient plainsong melody, "Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire," and uses a dotted rhythmic figuration as a unifying device and counterpoint to the florid melody of the chant.

Born in Belgium, César Franck was trained in Paris and spent his entire career there as a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire and organist at the Church of St. Clotilde. His compositions demonstrate an affinity for classical forms coupled with a new approach to thematic transformation in the manner of Liszt and Berlioz. The *Pièce Héroïque* resembles a

symphonic poem and exploits great contrasts in mood and style. Two themes are developed – the first is coupled with an insistent pattern of repeated chords and the second features a broader, more chorale or hymn-like quality. A gradual build-up in intensity heralds the return of the initial theme, but it is the chorale, stated in full chords, which brings this work to its dramatic close.

Louis Vierne, a blind organist and prolific composer, was from 1900 until his death in 1937 organist at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. “Clair de lune” is one of a set of twenty-four pieces with programmatic titles that Vierne composed for an American tour. The piece features a melody and lush harmonic accompaniment that seeks to depict the shimmer of moonlight.

Litanies, composed after the tragic death of Alain’s sister, leaves few listeners untouched. In a foreword to the piece Alain writes: “When the Christian soul in its distress can no longer find the words to implore God’s mercy, it repeats ceaselessly and with a vehement spirit the same invocation. Reason has reached its limit – faith alone can go further.” Alain develops the litany theme with constant and complex harmonic transformation. His magical use of rhythm creates a sense of driving energy which propels the piece to a breathtaking conclusion.

James F. Mellichamp, Organist

James F. Mellichamp is vice president for academic affairs and dean of the school of arts and sciences at Piedmont College, where he has been a member of the music faculty since 1982. In addition, he serves as organist at First Baptist Church, Toccoa. Dr. Mellichamp holds the Bachelor of Music degree from Huntingdon College, Montgomery, Alabama; the Diploma in Sacred Music from the Hochschule fuer Musik, Herford, Germany; and the Doctor of Music degree from Indiana University. His organ teachers include Harald Rohlig, Arno Schoenstedt, and Wilma Jensen.

Dr. Mellichamp has performed as an organ recitalist throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. As an organ consultant, he has been responsible for the design of a number of new organs for churches and colleges in the United States. He is also the author of articles related to organology which have been published in musical periodicals.