

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Waynesville, North Carolina

DEDICATORY ORGAN CONCERT

by

Simon Preston

*Friday, April 30, 1999
7:30 pm*

The new pipe organ, Opus 3774, was built by Casavant Frères in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and installed at First United Methodist Church in November/December, 1998. It replaced a smaller instrument that was destroyed by fire when our sanctuary burned on November 23, 1994.

The organ was designed as an integral part of the architectural plan of the sanctuary. The architects were Atkin, Olshin and Lawson-Bell & Associates of Philadelphia. The Liturgical Consultant was Terry Eason of Terry Byrd Eason Design of Chapel Hill. The Acoustical Consultant was L. Gerald Marshall of KMK Associates, White Plains, New York. The tonal design of the organ is by Jean-Louis Coignet, Tonal Director, and Jacquelin Rochette, Associate Tonal Director, of Casavant Frères.

The organ consists of 50 ranks, 37 stops and 2,852 pipes. The exposed pipes belong to the Great Organ. Accessories include Zimbelstern, Chimes and MIDI. The console case, organist's bench and pedalboard are made of cherry to match the surrounding woodwork of the chancel. Stops, couplers, drawknobs and thumb pistons are made of rosewood. The manual natural keys are made of ebony; the manual sharps are made of rosewood with ivory caps. The ivory was salvaged from the fire-damaged console of the previous organ. Pedal naturals are made of maple and the sharps are of rosewood.

The Organ Committee was chaired by Robin Smith. Members of the committee included Joe Sam Queen, Steve McClure, Balfour Knight, Mary Neill Rogers, Michael Lodico, Jr., Ruth Sisson, Martha Wright, Robin Tindall, Richard Mullany, Jim Warren and Betsy Farlow.

SIMON PRESTON

Biography

In March 1962, a capacity crowd at the Royal Festival Hall in London was listening to a performance of a work by Janacek rarely heard at that time: the *Glagolitic Mass*. The audience was stunned by the brilliant and ferociously intense playing of a 23 year-old Cambridge student. The player was Simon Preston and this virtuoso performance was his London debut and the beginning of a distinguished career as organist and conductor. Prior to that, devotees of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, broadcast each Christmas Eve from King's College, Cambridge, heard Simon Preston accompanying the Choir from the Chapel where he had been a chorister as a boy and where he returned later as Organ Scholar. Shortly after his London debut, Mr. Preston was appointed Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey and later that same year appeared for the first time at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. During that period he worked under many famous conductors, including Leopold Stokowski and Pierre Monteux, and in 1965 made his first tour to the United States and Canada. By the time he left Westminster Abbey in 1967, Preston was already an internationally acclaimed artist.

In 1970 he became Organist of the Cathedral and Tutor in Music at Christ Church, Oxford where his work with the choir won high praise. In 1981 he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey, where again his work with the choir received great acclaim. He directed the music at the wedding of Sarah Ferguson and Prince Andrew in 1986 and was also responsible for writing much of Salieri's music in the film *Amadeus*.

Since 1987, when he left Westminster Abbey, he has continued to pursue an active career as a highly sought-after organist and conductor. A magazine recently described him as "a musician of many parts" and certainly his activities fit the description well: a series of tours taking in the Far East, Australia, South Africa and much of Europe, recording the complete organ works of Bach, the Saint-Saëns *Symphony No. 3* with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Poulenc *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani* with the Boston Symphony and the Copland *Symphony for Organ* with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Since his first tour in 1965, Simon Preston has been a regular visitor to the US, often appearing as a guest artist at conventions of the American Guild of Organists and inaugurating new instruments, as well as tours which have included most American states. He was named International Performer of the Year (New York Chapter, AGO) for 1987 and was Artist in Residence at St. Olaf College for a term in 1989 and at Northwestern University during 1992.

The description in a Vienna newspaper last year of Simon Preston as "a living legend" serves as a reminder that his recording career began forty years ago with the performance of a Gibbons Fantasia on a King's College, Cambridge disc. There are currently nearly fifty CDs available, including two versions of the Handel *Organ Concertos* with both Sir Yehudi Menuhim and Trevor Pinnock, as well as Bach's *5th Brandenburg Concerto* as harpsichord soloist, and many recordings with the choirs of both Westminster Abbey and Christ Church, Oxford. In 1971 Mr. Preston was awarded an "Edison Classique" for his recordings of Messiaen's *Les Corps Glorieux* and Hindemith's *Organ Sonatas*. The recording of Handel's *Coronation Anthems* with the Westminster Abbey Choir, conducted by Simon Preston, was awarded a "Grand Prix de Disque" in 1983, and Copland's *Symphony for Organ* with Preston as soloist (with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin) was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1997. Simon Preston is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Calgary International Organ Competition.

Thanks to Eleanor and Jack Suddath for the hospitality of Ten Oaks.

PROGRAM

Alleluyas (1965)	Simon Preston (b. 1938)
Prelude and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 539	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541	
Adagio in F	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Allegro, Chorale and Fugue	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Intermission

Symphonie No. 5 in F. Minor, Op. 42, No. 1 I. Allegro vivace	Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)
Toccata (1998)	Simon Preston
Chant de Mai (Song of May)	Joseph Jongen (1873-1953)
Organ Sonata Allegretto	Percy Whitlock (1903-1946)
The Brothers Gershwin	arr. Howard Cable

Recordings: Deutsche Grammophone; Argo

Exclusive Management: Karen McFarlane Artists, Cleveland, Ohio

PROGRAM NOTES

By Simon Preston

The program I have chosen to play for this recital is made up of a number of links and connections, some across the centuries, others more immediate. There is a certain Englishness perhaps, but an Englishness derived from association with other countries and the composers of other countries: wheels within wheels, if you like.

Although I begin with a piece of my own, it is really Bach that is the beginning, the point of departure of this program. When you think of preludes and fugues, you think of Johann Sebastian Bach as the greatest composer of them (particularly fugues) that the world has ever seen, and the organ as the most satisfying instrument on which to hear them played. And so, as we approach the year 2000, and with it the 250th anniversary of Bach's death, I have chosen two quite sharply contrasted preludes and fugues for the organ by Bach, partly to demonstrate how different Bach's preludes and fugues can be, but also to remind ourselves that Bach probably spent a least as much of his time playing the violin as he did the organ.

The *Prelude and Fugue in D Minor* (BWV 539) is itself a contrast. The prelude, beginning simply, even plainly, with no pedals, hardly prepares us for the strongly rhythmical, angular writing of the fugue. The fugue is in fact a transcription (presumably by Bach) of one of his own violin sonata movements and exists also in a lute version, which has become popular with guitar players. The *Prelude and Fugue in G* (BWV 541) could hardly be more different. Bach in G major is usually at his most exhilarating (e.g. the 3rd Brandenburg Concerto) and this is no exception. From the opening violin-like measures of the Prelude, the music drives forward with scarcely any let-up to the end of the fugue. The Prelude is somewhat reminiscent of the kind of concerto-like Sinfonias that Bach often prefaced his Cantatas with (e.g. Cantata 29--itself a solo violin arrangement), and the Fugue bears more than a passing similarity to the opening chorus of Cantata 21.

Both Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) and Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) played a significant role in rescuing Bach's music from semi-oblivion. Mendelssohn in particular was tireless in his championing of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in performances all over Europe. But in England it was his performances of Bach's organ works that proved revelatory, especially his performance of the *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor* in St. Paul's Cathedral. It was not only the music itself, which was largely unknown in England at that time, but Mendelssohn's style of organ-playing that influenced English organists and organ music throughout the nineteenth-century. The *Allegro, Chorale and Fugue* is part of Op. 65, written in 1844, but Mendelssohn died before he could revise it. While it is thoroughly Mendelssohnian in style, the composer's admiration for Bach's music is present in every measure.

Charles-Marie Widor, on the other hand, was a composer whose own music finds no echo whatsoever in that of Bach, but by being co-editor with Albert Schweitzer of the French edition of Bach's Organ Works, Widor played a considerable part in the prominence attached to Bach's music by French organists to this day. Widor composed a wide range of music--several stage works, including a successful opera, *Les Pêcheurs de Saint-Jean*, symphonies, a piano concerto and a violin concerto, but he is now primarily remembered for his organ symphonies. The *Toccata* at the end of the *5th Symphony* is known the world over, but the first movement is possibly the finest of Widor's symphonic movements, with a great variety of texture and contrasting moods contained in one structure. It consists of a set of variations, beginning gently at first, but, as with many French organ works, gradually gaining momentum to a final powerful coda on the full organ.

Not altogether surprisingly, the starting point for my *Toccata*, written last year, was the *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* ascribed to J.S. Bach, which, while being a familiar work, nevertheless repays a certain amount of scrutiny. Its dramatic gestures, bravura displays and motoric rhythms remain startling even today, while the harmonic idiom is simple, even plain. I have tried to retain the dramatic and virtuosic elements in my own work, while at the same time seeking to free it from the harmonic restraints of d minor. To do this, I have started with all the notes of the first two bars of Bach's *Toccata*, removed the note D and created my own chordal, melodic and rhythmic patterns with what is left. After the exposition (the work is in a loose sonata form), the tonality seems to be heading towards either C sharp major or B flat minor. The reintroduction of the note D, as soon as it is safe to do so, decides the matter in favor of the latter.

The other work of mine, which begins the program, is *Alleluyas*, commissioned by Oxford University Press and first performed in 1964. It begins as a fanfare based on words from the Liturgy of St. James:

At his feet the six-winged Seraph; Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Lord most High.

I have included two charming works in this recital, one by Percy Whitlock (1903-1948), the other by Joseph Jongen (1873-1953), partly because both composers lived for a time in a town where I grew up: Bournemouth, a seaside resort in the south of England. In fact, Whitlock became Borough Organist and gave entertaining weekly recitals on the Pavilion theatre organ as well as being organist of St. Stephen's Church. He apparently wrote this *Scherzetto* after hearing the first performance in England of Rachmaninoff's *3rd Symphony* on the radio.

Jongen, who lived in England during the war and, like Widor, composed a wide variety of

music, destroyed all but 137 of his pieces. What remains include a symphony, several concertos, chamber music, songs and choral pieces and 28 organ works, of which two are deservedly popular: the spectacular *Sinfonie Concertante* for organ and orchestra and the slight but charming *Chant de Mai*.

What, you might ask, of Beethoven and Gershwin?! Although I knew that Beethoven was a more than competent organist (his practice instrument is still preserved), I did not become acquainted with the organ music until I was asked to record the Complete Works--in the end, not such a demanding task. There are only *Five Short Pieces*, two Preludes which go through all the keys, a March and a short fugue. However, the *Adagio* (the first composed of the *Five Short Pieces*) is outstandingly beautiful and I have no hesitation in including it here.

George Gershwin, as far as I know, has no organ pedigree, but this suite comprising many of his well-known melodies was arranged by Howard Cable for organ and full orchestra. It was first performed on May 9, 1998 at an Organ Spectacular in Jack Singer Hall, Calgary, Alberta by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, myself at the mighty organ and Maestro Howard Cable on the podium. The version you hear now is Howard's arrangement for organ solo.

WHAT THEY SAID:

I maintain that an organist, who is a master of his instrument, is a virtuoso of the highest order. - Ludwig van Beethoven

To play the organ properly, one should have a vision of Eternity. - Charles-Marie Widor

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WAYNESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
CASAVANT 3/50 1999
Opus 3774

STOP LIST

14	GREAT ORGAN	FEET	PIPES
	1. Bourdon (Ext. of No. 3)	16	12
	2. Principal	8	61
	3. Chimney Flute	4	61
	4. Octave	4	61
	5. Flute	4	61
	6. Super Octave	2	61
	7. Fourniture IV	1 1/3	244
	8. Trumpet	8	61
	Great Unison Off		
	Chimes		
	MIDI		
	9. Festival Trumpet	16	(Choir)
	10. Festival Trumpet	8	(Choir)
	11. Festival Trumpet	4	(Choir)
20	SWELL CHOIR		
	12. Bourdon doux (Ext. of NO. 13)	16	12
	13. Flute majeure	8	61
	14. Viole de gambe	8	61
	15. Voix celeste (GG)	8	54
	16. Principal	4	61
	17. Flute douce	4	61
	18. Nazard	2 2/3	61
	19. Quarte de nazard	2	61
	20. Tierce	1 3/5	61
	21. Plein jeu III-V	2	269
	22. Basson (Half-length ext. of No. 24)	16	12
	23. Trompette	8	61
	24. Hautbois	8	61
	25. Clairon	4	61
	Tremblant		
	Swell 16		
	Swell Unison Off		
	Swell 4		
	MIDI		
	26. Festival Trumpet	8	(Choir)

20 CHOIR ORGAN

27. Salicional	8	61
28. Bourdon	8	61
29. Harmonic Flute (1-12 common with No. 28)	8	49
30. Flute	8	61
31. Flute celeste	8	49
32. Prestant	4	61
33. Koppel Flute	4	61
34. Principal	2	61
35. Quinte	1 1/3	61
36. Sesquialtera II	2 2/3	122
37. Cymbale IV	2/3	244
38. Cromorne	8	61
39. Festival Trumpet (TC from No. 40)	16	--
40. Festival Trumpet	8	61
41. Festival Trumpet (from No. 40)	4	---

21 PEDAL ORGAN

42. Contrebasse (Resultant)	32	--
43. Sub Bass (Resultant)	32	--
44. Contrebasse (Ext. of No. 48)	16	12
45. Sub Bass	16	32
46. Bourdon	16	(Great)
47. Bourdon doux	16	(Swell)
48. Octavebasse (from C2)	8	32
49. Chimney Flute	8	(Great)
50. Bourdon doux	8	(Swell)
51. Chorale Bass	4	32
52. Flute	4	12
53. Mixture III	2/3	96
54. Contra Posaune (Half-inch ext. of No. 55)	32	12
55. Posaune	16	32
56. Basson	16	(Swell)
57. Trumpet (Ext. of No. 55)	8	12
58. Festival Trumpet	8	(Choir)
59. Clarion (Extension of No. 57)	4	12
60. Festival Trumpet	4	(Choir)
61. Hautbois	4	(Swell)

MIDI