

# Peachtree Road United Methodist Church Atlanta, Georgia



# INAUGURAL ORGAN RECITAL January 12, 2003

# A word from...

DON HARP, SENIOR MINISTER

We are delighted to have you share in these special events at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church. Many people have worked long hours to make this dream come true. My personal word of thanks to Ginger Watkins, chair of our organ committee; John Mander and the staff of Mander Organs; Bill and Anne Lester for chairing these inaugural concerts; and to Mr. Charles Loudermilk and Mr. Mark Pope III for their generosity in giving this great instrument to the Peachtree Road congregation. Mr. Scott Atchison, our Organist and Choirmaster has been most valuable in the planning of these wonderful milestones. Mr. Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra deserve our heartfelt thanks for helping us celebrate. Mr. Stephen Paulus, composer, will long be remembered for sharing his talents with us. We are delighted that you are here and it is my hope and prayer that this music will add to your faith, enjoyment of life, and to your appreciation of the arts in our great city.

### SCOTT ATCHISON Organist and Choirmaster

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to welcome each of you to these inaugural events at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church. These events are the culmination of several years of hard work by many people. The organ committee, chaired by Ginger Watkins has done an incredible job in making the Great Organ a musical instrument to fill the varied musical tastes of the Peachtree Road congregation. Bravo to John Mander, organ builder extraordinaire, for building an organ that only an organist could love! Finally, thanks to Don Harp, for his invaluable support and to Michael Shake, the best associate there is! There is no doubt that this musical instrument will serve the PRUMC congregation and the city of Atlanta for decades to come. Soli Deo Gloria!

## INAUGURAL CONCERT

10 November 2002 Eight o'clock in the evening

I was glad when they said unto me

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

O clap your hands

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Evening Service in C

Magnificat

Nunc dimittis

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Coronation Anthems

Zadok the priest

The King shall rejoice

George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)

The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The People and Choir (text found on the following page)

#### INTERVAL

Concerto for Organ, Orchestra and Chorus
With Drive and Vigor
Delicately
Buoyant and Rollicking
Laudate Dominum

Stephen Paulus (b. 1949)

(World Premiere)

Photography or sound recording of this concert or possession of any device for such photography or sound recording is prohibited.



#### Old Hundredth Psalm Tune

#### (The People and Choir in unison)

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him, and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed, Without our aid he did us make; We are his folk, he doth us feed, And for his sheep he doth us take.

#### (In verses 3 and 4, the People are silent)

O enter then his gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless his name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good:

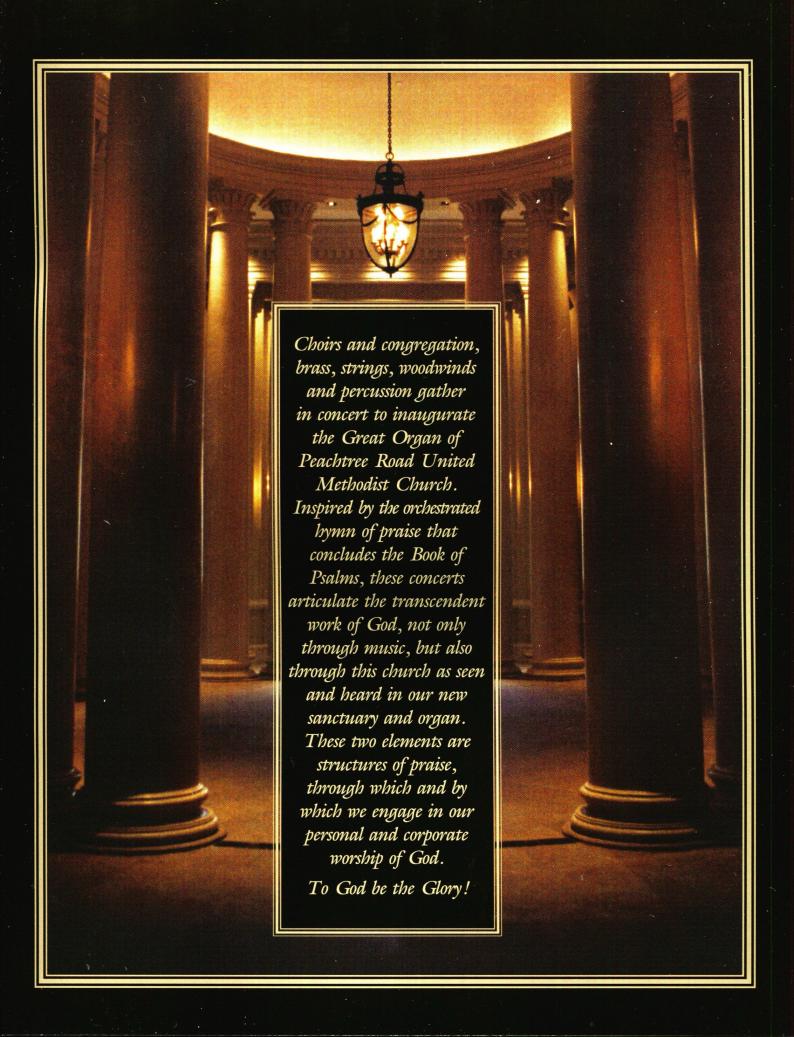
His mercy is for ever sure;

His truth at all times firmly stood,

And shall from age to age endure.

#### (The People and Choir in unison)

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The God whom heaven and earth adore,
From men and from the angel host
Be praise and glory evermore.
Amen.





#### PROGRAM NOTES

Parry's monumental setting of verses from Psalm 122 was composed for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902, revised and expanded in 1911. Opening with one of the most famous choral acclamations in music, I was glad displays the chorus and orchestra at their fullest potential, achieving dramatic results. Antiphonal choral exchanges, an impassioned prayer, and a dynamic climax contribute to this monumental essay in ceremonial music.

The compositional style of Ralph Vaughan Williams is widely recognized in many genres. Besides a considerable oeuvre of instrumental and secular music, Vaughan Williams contributed much to church music and hymnody during the first half of the 20th century. An anthem taken from verses of Psalm 47, O clap your hands was composed in 1920 and is generally associated with the Feast of the Ascension.

The Magnificat (Song of Mary) and Nunc dimittis (Song of Simeon) are canticles from the New Testament, generally sung as part of the service of Evensong. Many English and American composers have provided settings of these texts, but few surpass the symphonic quality found in those of Stanford. Arching choral phrases, cascading waves of orchestral sound combined with delicate use of instrumental color, and subtle harmonic contrasts create a powerful, yet reserved setting of the evening canticles.

Zadok the priest (whose name is never mentioned in the Bible without his position) is a comparatively minor character in the Biblical story of David, playing a "walk-on" role with no lines of his own. As head priest of the Israelites, he was a supporter of King David, and probably a trusted advisor. He, along with other royal officials, successfully shepherded the fledgling nation through a crisis when David grew old and weary and it appeared as though the unintended son would assume the throne. Solomon had been promised the throne, and Zadok presided over the ceremony that legitimized him as the new king: "...Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon..." (I Kings 1:39).

Zadok's name is little remembered, except by music lovers who treasure the magnificent Coronation Anthems of Handel. The composer wrote four anthems to traditional texts based on Biblical passages, for the coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey of King George II and Queen Caroline, in 1727. Composing these important pieces should have been the job of William Croft, the Organist and Composer of the Chapel Royal, but he died at about the same time the coronation was being planned. His successor was Maurice Greene (William Boyce's teacher and lifelong mentor). Greene may have expected to compose the coronation anthems, but by the time he was installed he found that Handel had been given the task at the new king's insistence.

The words of Handel's anthem are not always consistant with the authorized (King James) version of the Bible. In fact, these English texts had been used in British coronations for at least seven centuries before Handel set them, dating back to a time when all religious rites were conducted in Latin, well before the "King James" translation was made.

#### PROGRAM NOTES

These great Coronation Anthems epitomize the glories of the Handelian choral style. In compositions of monumental proportions the composer sets soaring melodies and thrilling counterpoint in service of ceremonial solemnity, with trumpets and drums adding martial splendor in all but one of them. Who, on hearing such music, could doubt the legitimacy of the monarch so honored? Handel's settings have proven so popular that one or more of his anthems have been used at every British coronation since 1727.

As plans for the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II progressed, it was suggested by Vaughan Williams that a congregational hymn should be included as part of the service. R.V.W. told Dr. William McKie, then organist of Westminster Abbey: "If you can persuade the Archbishop (of Canterbury) to have a hymn in the coronation service, I'll make a mess-up of 'Old Hundredth'." From the opening fanfares, to the simple contrasting treatments of the inner stanzas, to the concluding doxology and amen, Vaughan Williams' "mess-up" is certainly a regal treatment upon the noblest of all hymn tunes.

The Concerto for Organ, Chorus and Orchestra is cast in four movements and is approximately 25 minutes. The first three movements are for organ solo and orchestra. The final movement includes the addition of a chorus. This was done at the request of Scott Atchison, Organist and Choirmaster at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church of Atlanta, Georgia. The setting in this final movement is a Latin setting of Psalm 150. Since one of the main purposes of this commission was to celebrate the installation of the Mander organ, it seemed fitting to include a Psalm that urges the reader to "praise the Lord with organ, strings, timpani, trumpets, choir, etc."

The first movement With Drive and Vigor is characterized by shifting blocks of chords from the organ interspersed with rapid sixteenth note figures from the orchestra, especially the strings. The second movement, marked Delicately is in significant contrast to the first. It begins with organ alone and is joined by light woodwind textures and low pizzicato strings. A little theme from the oboe makes its appearance over a sustained chord in the organ. Movement three Buoyant and Rollicking opens with a rapid pattern of sixteenth notes in the opening bar of the organ which becomes the signature for the entire movement. This theme is passed on to the strings which help to propel the movement to its brisk close.

The final movement is entitled Laudate Dominum and is a setting of Psalm 150 in Latin. The chorus opens this section with only a spare organ accompaniment, a solo melody in the manuals with long sustained pedal notes. In the middle, the tempo suddenly picks up as the chorus echoes the words "Omnis spiritus." They begin their final melody with the words "Laudate eum in tympano, in cordis et organo." The chorus brings the work to its triumphant close on a Bb major chord while the organ thunders with cacophonous descending chords, finally coming to rest in concord with the chorus on a similar Bb major chord with the orchestra.

Notes compiled by Michael L. Shake, Jr. Handel notes by Nick Jones, © 2001, Woodruff Arts Center, Atlanta Concerto notes by Stephen Paulus

