

MUSIC AT

Duke Chapel

ORGAN RECITAL SERIES
FALL 2021–SPRING 2022

NOVEMBER 7 5:00 PM

JANUARY 29 8:00 PM

JANUARY 30 5:00 PM

FEBRUARY 20 5:00 PM

MARCH 20 5:00 PM

Organ Recital Series

ROBERT PARKINS, director

CHRISTOPHER JACOBSON

FEBRUARY 20, 2022 • 5:00 PM

Annum per annum

Introduction

K

G

C

S

A

Coda

ARVO PÄRT

(b. 1935)

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548 **JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH**
(1685–1750)

THE BENJAMIN N. DUKE MEMORIAL ORGAN (FLENTROP 1976)

The Hands of Time **JEAN-BAPTISTE ROBIN**
(b. 1976)

Carillon de Westminster, Op. 54, No. 6 **LOUIS VIERNE**
(1870–1937)

Jesus Loves Me **WILLIAM BOLCOM**
(b. 1938)

Maestoso, from Symphony No. 3, Op. 78 **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS**
(1835–1921)
trans. Christopher Jacobson

THE KATHLEEN UPTON BYRNS MCCLENDON ORGAN (AEOLIAN 1932)

Please reserve applause until the end of each section.



Duke
UNIVERSITY
CHAPEL

chapel.duke.edu/events

PROGRAM NOTES

This afternoon's program explores music through different manifestations of time and how we as a society perceive it. For thousands of years humanity has sought ways to measure and master time. Since antiquity, observable natural phenomena such as the changing length and direction of shadows or the regular cycle of the moon have been used to measure the passage of time. Today time can be measured with the greatest of accuracy through a myriad of electronic devices that make it more tangible and immediate in society's consciousness.

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt established himself as one of the great composers of the late twentieth century by forging a new compositional style that features minimum means to achieve the highest degree of musical intensity. Pärt dubbed this style "tintinnabular," like the ringing of bells. *Annum per annum* was commissioned in 1980 for the 900th anniversary of the Cathedral in Speyer, Germany, and features this tintinnabular writing. Striking not only for its stark sonorities and simple harmony, this work uniquely portrays the organ from the outset: a massive chord is struck and held, then the organ's air is shut off, leaving the notes of the chord to disappear slowly into the ether. This dwindling sound and falling pitch leave a ghostly impression. The music starts again softly out of the nothingness, then builds slowly to an intense crescendo with a clear, vivid ending. Bookended by an introduction and a coda, the piece contains five variations indicated by the letters K—G—C—S—A, which represent the initials of the five sections of the Mass Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei). They symbolize the Mass, which "annum per annum" and day after day has been celebrated throughout time without interruption for nine centuries in the Cathedral of Speyer.

The music of Johann Sebastian Bach transcends time and space in its extraordinary ability to simultaneously stimulate the mind and nourish

the heart. Bach's **Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV 548** represents one of the grandest and most complex of all Bach's organ works. This superior work has garnered the nickname "The Wedge" from the fugue subject that is unpredictably unique. It begins on a single E and both ascends and descends outward to octave Bs, forming a visible wedge shape in the music. It encompasses nearly all notes of the twelve-tone chromatic scale and boasts some of the most dramatic harmonic and virtuosic textures across all of Bach's organ works.

In music, the basic unit of time—the beat—conveys an almost palpable, physical energy, like the oscillations of the pendulum of a clock whose relentless ticking never stops. In Jean-Baptiste Robin's *The Hands of Time*, composed in 2018, the organist's hands recreate the delicate, perpetual movement of the hands of a clock and the subtle, hypnotic movement of the earth around the sun. The piece consists of two main compositional themes: a somber swaying motif quietly heard after a boisterous introduction, and a strong, drawn-out melody heard in the right hand on full organ. These two themes develop into twelve massive chords relentlessly repeated, like the incessant, relentless pounding of time. A slow, serene phrase tinged with both hope and resignation follows just before a final thrilling recapitulation of the opening introduction to close this marvelous work.

By the time the French musician Louis Vierne arrived in England for a short recital tour in January 1924, he was already a towering musical figure of international significance. Titular organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris since 1900, Vierne was also a celebrated composer at that time, with four organ symphonies and many other pieces to his credit. One of the recitals Vierne played in England was at Westminster Cathedral in London, where a new organ was being installed. Its builder, Henry Willis, was at the concert and

hummed a tune to the nearly-blind Vierne upon which he was to improvise. The tune Willis provided was that of the Westminster Quarters, a four-note sequence that marked the quarter hours on “Big Ben,” the clock at the Houses of Parliament that has tolled the passage of time for all of London for centuries. We have no record of how Vierne expanded on the Quarters theme at his Westminster Cathedral concert, but its potential clearly interested him. Eight years earlier he had asked the owner of a clock shop in Switzerland where he once again heard the chime to write it down for him, and three years after his 1924 recital, Vierne returned to the Quarters again, writing the swirlingly flamboyant work heard this afternoon known as *Carillon de Westminster*.

Commissioned by the American Guild of Organists in the 1980s, William Bolcom’s setting of the gospel hymn *Jesus Loves Me* sets this tune with great simplicity and beauty. Child-like innocence permeates this work. Time stands still. Bolcom approaches this in an atmospheric way at first, surrounding the first statement with ascending chord progressions. But his quirky harmonic sense is quickly given freer rein. Numerous registrations are tapped to provide a full sense of color for this, the simplest of religious

tunes. And even though both beginning and ending are muted and calm, interior passages build to powerful, grand projections of the theme.

Camille Saint-Saëns began his career as a child prodigy who could famously and effortlessly perform any of Beethoven’s 32 piano sonatas from memory. His career as a composer, however, was slower to develop. In the 1880s, he had written a number of smaller successful pieces which had a foothold in the repertoire, but his early efforts at the large symphonic forms had failed. However, since its London premiere in 1886, Saint-Saëns’ **Symphony No. 3** (nicknamed “the Organ Symphony” for the prominent role the organ plays in its final movement) remains one of the most popular symphonies across the orchestral repertoire today. Saint-Saëns said of his third symphony, “I gave everything to it I was able to give. What I have here accomplished, I will never achieve again.” It is one of those rare works that instantly entered the canon of symphonic masterpieces, and it has remained infectiously popular after 250 years. Its stardom transcends time and catapults this work into a “timelessness” that no doubt will thrill audiences for hundreds of years yet to come.



magnificat
DIRECTED *by* PHILIP CAVE

MARCH 13–20
Duke Chapel
Ensemble-in-Residence

MARCH 16 & 18
Concerts

*Visit chapel.duke.edu/music and
magnificat-consort.uk for more information*

CHRISTOPHER JACOBSON

Duke University Chapel Organist and Organist at Duke Divinity School, Christopher Jacobson, FRCO, is active as a versatile concert organist, conductor, accompanist, guest clinician, and teacher. At Duke he founded and directs the Duke Evensong Singers in services and concerts, oversees the training of the Chapel's organ scholars, and plays the organ for over 150 services each year.

As a soloist, Jacobson has presented organ recitals across North America, Europe, and Australia. His recordings appear on the Dutch record label Pentatone Classics as both an organ soloist and accompanist. He has won top prizes in numerous organ competitions, including the National Young Artist Competition of the American Guild of Organists, the Miami International Organ Competition, and the John R. Rodland Competition in sacred music. In addition to maintaining an active recital schedule, he has presented performances of the complete organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach across the United States to critical acclaim.

An active ensemble performer, Jacobson is in demand as an accompanist and continuo player. He is a 2017 Grammy-nominated organist for his work with conductor Brian A. Schmidt and the South Dakota Chorale in the world premiere recording of Marcel Tyberg's two Masses. His work as an accompanist has taken him all over the world working regularly with choirs and orchestras in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Recent engagements have included performing and recording at Victoria Hall with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande

in Geneva, Switzerland, and with early music ensembles including Three Notch'd Road in Charlottesville, Virginia.

One of the few Americans to hold the Fellowship Diploma from the Royal College of Organists (FRCO), Jacobson is in demand as conductor, organist, and adjudicator, and has led choirs on cathedral residencies in North America and England. Most recently he conducted the Duke Evensong Singers in choral residencies at Gloucester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in July 2018.

Before moving to Duke, Jacobson was previously Associate Organist and Choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Columbia, South Carolina, and Assistant Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Washington National Cathedral, where he assisted in the daily training of the choirs of Men and Boys and Men and Girls, as well as playing the organ for numerous services, including the State Funeral of President Gerald Ford.

Jacobson is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where he earned the Master of Music degree in organ performance and the Sacred Music Diploma. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree with highest distinction in organ performance from St. Olaf College. His teachers and mentors have included David Higgs and William Porter at Eastman, and John Ferguson at St. Olaf. Jacobson is a graduate of Woodberry Forest and the American Boychoir School, where he was a treble chorister under James Litton.

OTHER UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT DUKE CHAPEL

Sunday, February 27, at 4:00 p.m.
Poetry in Music: Evensong Singers

Sunday, March 20, at 5:00 p.m.
Organ Recital Series: Robert Parkins