

CELEBRATING 47 YEARS OF SERVICE

**Robert Parkins**

UNIVERSITY ORGANIST

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Duke University Chapel  
Sunday, April 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

*Please reserve applause until the end of each section of the program.*

# PROGRAM

Medio registro alto, 1° tono

FRANCISCO PERAZA  
(1564–1598)

Tiento [34] de medio registro de baxón (1° tono)

FRANCISCO CORREA DE ARAUXO  
(1584–1654)

Toccata prima

SEBASTIAN ANTON SCHERER  
(1631–1712)

Capriccio sopra il Cucu

JOHANN CASPAR KERLL  
(1627–1693)

Passacaglia

## MEMORIAL CHAPEL ORGAN (BROMBAUGH 1997)

*The audience is invited to move to the nave after the first section.*

Cantio Sacra: *Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz*

SAMUEL SCHEIDT  
(1587–1654)

Sonata de 1° tono

JOSÉ LIDÓN  
(1752–1827)

Toccata in F, BuxWV 157

DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE  
(c. 1637–1707)

## THE BENJAMIN N. DUKE MEMORIAL ORGAN (FLENTROP 1976)

Prélude, Op. 29, No. 1

GABRIEL PIERNÉ  
(1863–1937)

Pastorale, Op. 19

CÉSAR FRANCK  
(1822–1890)

Toccata

EUGÈNE GIGOUT  
(1844–1925)

## THE KATHLEEN UPTON BYRNS MCCLENDON ORGAN (AEOLIAN 1932, RENOVATED BY FOLEY-BAKER 2008)



# PROGRAM NOTES

Today's recital is not only the last of the 2024–2025 organ series in Duke University Chapel, but it also marks my final annual recital since arriving at Duke as Chapel Organist in 1975. The program features music that I performed at dedicatory recitals for the Chapel's three stationary pipe organs (Brombaugh, Flentrop, and Aeolian) during the last half century. The repertoire includes pieces by early Spanish and Germanic composers as well as French Romantic works.

## MEMORIAL CHAPEL ORGAN (BROMBAUGH 1997)

The Italianate organ in the Memorial Chapel was completed by the American builder John Brombaugh in the fall of 1997. Tuned in 1/4-comma meantone temperament, it is particularly suited for pre-eighteenth-century southern European organ literature. To provide greater flexibility, the builder added a small second manual division and pedals to the fundamental Italian *ripieno*. (It replaced a small Holtkamp instrument installed in 1969, which was donated to Wofford College.) The inaugural recital on October 26, 1997, featured music by early Iberian, Italian, and Germanic organist-composers.

Spanish composer **Francisco Peraza**, appointed organist at the cathedral in Seville in 1584, was ostensibly the composer of a piece labeled simply **Medio registro alto**. The title indicates a split registration (*medio registro*) on a single keyboard, with the more prominent solo in the treble (*alto*) half and a softer sound for the accompanying lower voices. This remarkable technical innovation, introduced by Spanish organ builders during the late sixteenth century, would alter the character of Iberian organs for years to come. Attributed only to “Peraza” (with no first name), this modest *tiento* is probably the earliest surviving work to specify divided stops in the title.

The *Libro de tientos* from the *Facultad Orgánica* (1626) by the Sevillian organist **Francisco Correa de Arauxo** is the only extant example of published organ music from seventeenth-century Spain. The term “tiento” was employed broadly to describe a variety of subgenres in early Spanish keyboard music, among them pieces for divided register. Correa's **Tiento de medio registro de baxón** requires a solo in the bass (*baxón*) with contrasting accompaniment in the upper voices. (In his treatise, the composer suggests a trumpet stop for bass solo registrations.) The most fascinating aspect of this *tiento* is a surprising section in septuple meter (7/8) near the end.

**Toccata prima** (in mode I) is the first of eight toccatas published in 1664 by the southern German composer **Sebastian Anton Scherer**, organist at Ulm Minster. Each of these toccatas consists of several brief but seamless sections, contrasting in texture and meter, over long pedal points. To be sure, the influence of masters like Girolamo Frescobaldi is unmistakable in these Italianate works. *Toccata prima* moves freely through a variety of keys, sometimes including highly chromatic passages, as it exploits all four enharmonic possibilities available on the Brombaugh instrument—with separate pipes provided for Eb/D# and G#/Ab.

**Johann Kaspar Kerll**, eventually the imperial court organist in Vienna, had studied in Italy before taking appointments in Brussels and Munich, and his compositions reflect a synthesis of Italian and Germanic styles. The programmatic **Capriccio sopra il Cucu** belongs to a curious species of keyboard music, especially popular among southern European keyboard composers, based on the call of the cuckoo (a descending minor third).

One of the gems of south German keyboard music is Kerll's noble **Passacaglia** in D minor. Consisting of continuous variations on a repeated bass line

(or harmonic progression), it builds in intensity to the final statement. The simple but powerful *basso ostinato* amounts initially to nothing more than a descending tetrachord (four-note scale), modified at times during the course of forty brief variations.

## THE BENJAMIN N. DUKE MEMORIAL ORGAN (FLENTROP 1976)

Duke Chapel's four-manual Flentrop organ, the last large instrument overseen by the Dutch builder Dirk Flentrop, rests on a gallery at the entrance to the nave (replacing a remote division of the Chapel's Aeolian organ). The design of this instrument reflects primarily an eighteenth-century Dutch and French aesthetic. After the inaugural recital performed by then University Organist Fenner Douglass on December 12, 1976, five more dedicatory recitals were scheduled for the following spring. On February 27, 1977, I presented one of these programs, which included two works from the German Baroque and one from eighteenth-century Spain.

**Samuel Scheidt**, a student of the Dutch organist Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, was the most important German organist-composer of the early seventeenth century. His twelve variations on the Lutheran chorale *Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz* (Why Are You Troubled, My Heart?) appears in the first part of his *Tabulatura nova* (1624), the most significant collection of German keyboard music published in the 1600s.

The melancholic chorale melody is rendered plain and unadorned in each variation except the final one, and the composer indicates the location of the *cantus firmus* for each verse (soprano, tenor, or bass).

Two of the variations are *bicinia* (for two voices only), the first of which employs “double counterpoint.” In this case, each phrase of the *coral* is repeated as the cantus firmus and counterpoint exchange places.

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Coral in Cantu  | 7) Bicinium                 |
| 2) Coral in Cantu  | 8) Coral in Tenore          |
| 3) Coral in Tenore | 9) Coral in Basso           |
| 4) Coral in Cantu  | 10) Coral in Basso          |
| 5) Coral in Cantu  | 11) Coral in Cantu          |
| 6) Bicinium contra | 12) Coral in Cantu colorato |
| puncto duplici     |                             |

The binary sonata form developed by Domenico Scarlatti, who was born in Italy but spent most of his adult life in Portugal and Spain, established a niche all its own among many Iberian composers. A **Sonata** in mode I (D minor) of **José Lidón**, organist at the Royal Chapel in Madrid, recalls myriad pieces of similar character by Scarlatti and Antonio Soler. The extended title specifies that this sonata is playable on more than one keyboard instrument: “Sonata in the first mode for harpsichord or for organ with [a] *trompeta real*” (referring to a vertical—rather than horizontal—trumpet stop inside the organ case).

**Dieterich Buxtehude**, the most prominent figure to emerge from the later seventeenth-century north German organ tradition, left a sizable legacy of *praeludia* and toccatas. Any distinction between these two terms is unclear, since both involve an alternation of free (preludial) and strict imitative (fugal) textures. His **Toccata in F**, one of four similar pieces in this key, is shorter and less complicated than the others in that it contains only one fugal section, framed by a substantial “prelude” and a final free coda. The active, independent pedal part helps to distinguish the northern Germanic organ toccatas from their southern counterparts.



## THE KATHLEEN UPTON BYRNS MCCLENDON ORGAN (AEOLIAN 1932)

The original organ for Duke Chapel, built in 1932 by the Aeolian Company of New York, is located in chambers on both sides of the chancel. (A remote Echo-Antiphonal division was once at the other end of the nave where the Flentrop now resides.) The four-manual Aeolian, designed in the late Romantic Anglo-American tradition, represents the last of the firm's major pipe organs and is the only significant one to be installed in a church. A full-scale renovation of the large electro-pneumatic action instrument was completed by the Connecticut firm Foley-Baker in 2008, which included a new console by Richard Houghten. On February 8, 2009, former Chapel Organist David Arcus and I performed a dedication recital on the newly restored Aeolian organ. The first half of the program included three pieces from the French Romantic tradition.

In 1890, composer, conductor, and pianist **Gabriel Pierné** succeeded his teacher César Franck as organist at the Basilica of Sainte Clotilde in Paris (to be followed eight years later by Charles Tournemire). Pierné's compositional output for organ is modest, but his **Prélude** in G minor—the first of three pieces in Opus 29 (1892?)—has assumed its place as a staple of the late nineteenth-century French repertoire.

**César Franck**, Belgian by birth but living most of his professional life in Paris, left a dozen great works for organ. His **Pastorale** is the fourth in a set of *Six pièces* published in 1862. Its ternary form resembles that of many Romantic pastorales, a peaceful opening leading to a stormy middle section that eventually subsides with a return to the mood and thematic material of the beginning.

**Eugène Gigout**, organist at the Church of St. Augustin in Paris for 62 years, was (like Franck) also a professor of organ and improvisation at the Paris Conservatory. His famous **Toccata** in B minor (from *Dix pièces*, 1892) was recorded by the composer himself in 1912 on a Welte-Mignon player organ roll.

—Notes by Robert Parkins

Top left: the Kathleen Upton Byrns McClendon Organ (Aeolian 1932)

Top right: nameplate on the Aeolian console

Bottom right: the renovated Aeolian console

Bottom left: a division of pipes within the Aeolian organ



THE AEOLIAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK  
OPUS 1785 1932



# Robert Parkins

Robert Parkins is the University Organist and a Professor of the Practice of Music at Duke University. He first assumed the position of Chapel Organist at Duke in 1975, where he also joined the faculty of the Department of Music. In 1982, he was appointed Assistant Professor in the School of Music at Ithaca College in New York. After three years, he returned to Duke as Chapel Organist and was appointed University Organist in 1990. He will retire from Duke in the summer of 2025.

Dr. Parkins plays for Chapel services and University events during the academic year, and he directs the annual Organ Recital Series. In the Department of Music, he has taught primarily organ, harpsichord, and music theory. He has also served as Director of Undergraduate Studies and Director of Performance.



He has appeared in organ recitals throughout the United States and Western Europe (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark, and Sweden) as well as in Central America. His performances have been praised by reviewers as “stylistically informed and musically exciting . . . fresh and spontaneous, transforming the music from museum artifacts to living works of beauty” (*The Diapason*), and “elegant, with a freely flowing musicality that goes far beyond mere technical mastery” (*The American Organist*). Critics have also noted that “he demonstrates a depth of understanding that results in authoritative performances that are instructional for those seeking insight into the performance practice of these works” (*The Diapason*) and that

“his playing is expressive, musical, technically accomplished, [and he] uses the instrument superbly and has a fine ear for color—something many organists would do well to emulate” (*American Record Guide*).

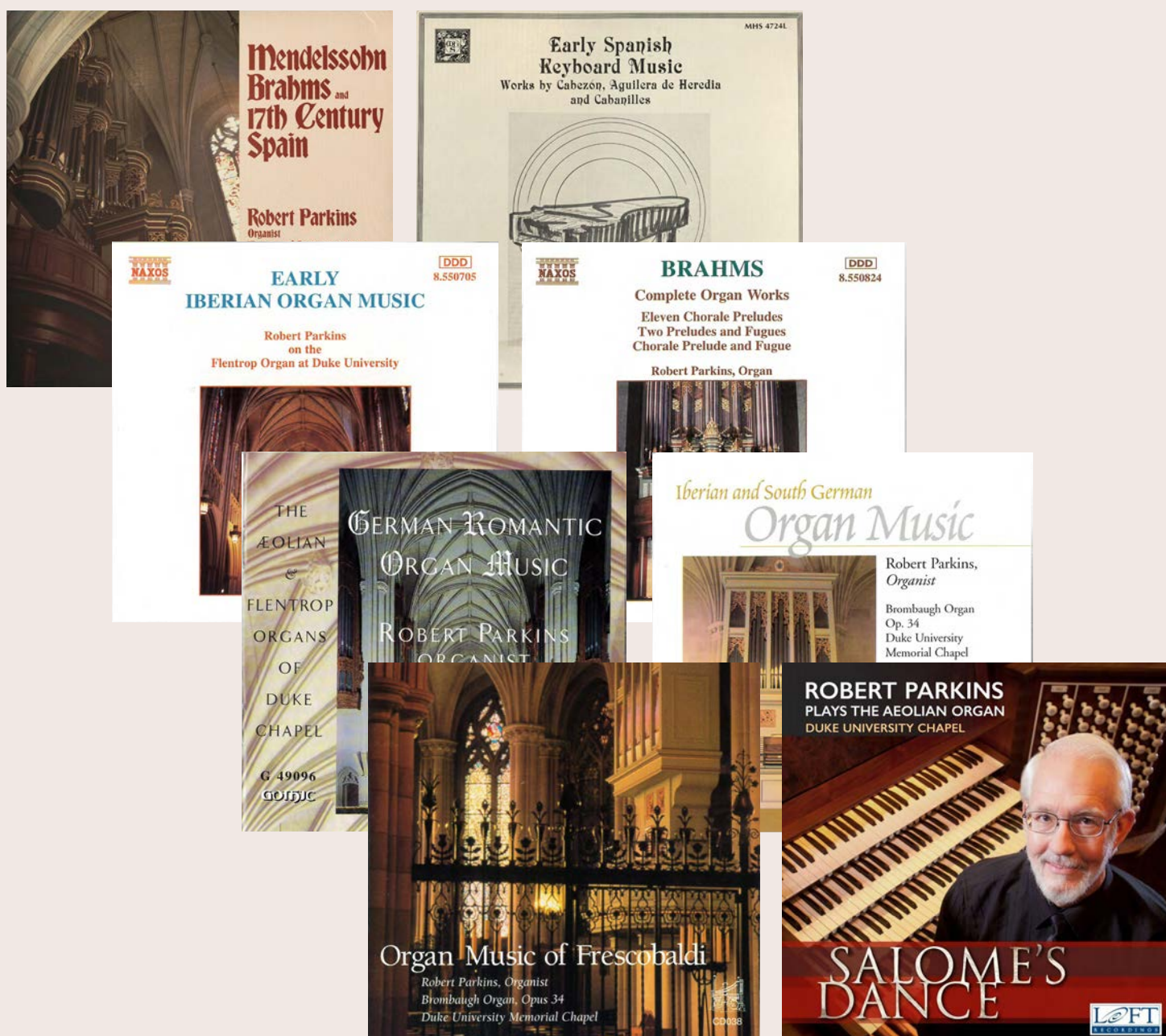


Solo recordings by Robert Parkins have appeared on the Calcante, Gothic, Loft, Musical Heritage Society, and Naxos labels. Among them are the LPs *Mendelssohn, Brahms and 17th-Century Spain* (1982) and *Early Spanish Keyboard Music* (harpsichord, 1983). Out of print for many years, these two earlier recordings are again available online at <https://sites.duke.edu/robertparkins/free-downloads/>.

All of his organ CDs were recorded on the Flentrop, Aeolian, and Brombaugh instruments in Duke Chapel, including *Early Iberian Organ Music* (1993), *Brahms: Complete Organ Works* (1994), *German Romantic Organ Music* (1998), *Iberian and South German Organ Music* (2001), and *Organ Music of Frescobaldi* (2003). *Salome's Dance* (2019), his most recent album, features music by late German Romantic and American composers, and is available in Duke's Gothic Bookshop.

Publications by Dr. Parkins include articles for *The Organ Yearbook* (“Cabezón to Cabanilles: Ornamentation in Spanish Keyboard Music” and “Mendelssohn’s Fugue in F Minor: A Discarded Movement of the First Organ Sonata” with R. Larry Todd), *Early Music* (“Keyboard Fingering in Early Spanish Sources”), *The Diapason* (“Rediscovering the German Romantic Organ”), *The American Organist* (“The Pinnacle of a Golden Age in Spain”), and *The Piano Quarterly* (“Mendelssohn and the Erard Piano”). He also contributed the chapter on “Spain and Portugal” in *Keyboard Music Before 1700* (Schirmer Books).

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Robert Parkins pursued his undergraduate degree in organ from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (BM 1970) and completed his graduate studies in organ at the Yale University School of Music (MMA 1975 and DMA 1980). His principal teachers were Gerre Hancock, Charles Krigbaum, and Michael Schneider in organ, and Ralph Kirkpatrick in harpsichord. As a Fulbright scholar, he pursued further organ study with Anton Heiller at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna (1973–1974).





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