



Jonathan Dimmock, organ
with
Lavinia Jackson, author and
spoken word artist

Friday, October 27, 2023 at 7:30 pm
Christ United Methodist Church

Alleluyas

Simon Preston (1938-2022)

Simon Preston was a British concert organist. He was appointed sub-organist at Westminster Abbey from 1962 - 1967, before moving to Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford, England. In 1981, he returned as Organist and Master of the Choristers at King's College, where he was a member of the choir in his younger years.



Preston's *Alleluyas* appeared in a collection of organ compositions in 1965. After the beginning introduction of the melody, the piece incorporates two different musical ideas. The first consists of fast and pointed rhythms, and the other of great jazzy chords.

[Click here](#) to hear the piece, and see an up close and personal performance of *Alleluyas* by organist James Flores.

Prayer

Jennifer Higdon (born 1963)

Jennifer Higdon is one of America's most acclaimed and most popular living composers. She is a Pulitzer Prize winner, as well as the recipient of three Grammy awards, and a number of other Grammy nominations. She is a composer of a number of different genres of music, including symphonies, wind ensembles, solo concerts, choral music, and operas. Among her works is [blue cathedral](#) (click to hear a fantastic performance) with over 600 performances world wide to date!



Prayer is the fourth movement from a larger work by Higdon called *Ceremonies*. The work as a whole is for organ and brass, but *Prayer* is one of three movements that features organ only. About *Celebration*, Higdon states, “The title refers to the various ways in which we celebrate the many aspects of life through religious and secular ceremonies...from solemn and contemplative to joyous and dancing.”

Partita on 'Detroit'

David Hurd (born 1950)

Organist, composer, choir director, and educator, David Hurd currently serves as the music director and organist at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York City. Before this, he worked at the General Theology Seminary of the Episcopal Church in New York City from 1976 to 2016. His works for both organ and sacred choral music are used widely across the United States, with over 100 compositions currently in print! Dr. Hurd is no stranger to the MGS family, having been a featured soloist in 2016!



The *Partita on 'Detroit'* is a Theme and Variations which begins with the initial melody of the piece, stated within the first minute. The rest of the piece takes that melody and builds and twists the music to fit a wide variety of changes. In all, there are nine variations before the piece returns back to its original theme at the very end.

[Click here](#) to hear a performance of *Partita on 'Detroit'* by organist Eric Plutz.

Pièce Héroïque

César Franck (1822-1890)

Born in Belgium in 1822, César Franck was a renowned organist, pianist, music teacher, and composer. He became the organist at the Basilica of Saint Clotilde in Paris, France in 1858. He also became professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatory in 1872. In order to receive this job, Franck was required to give up his Belgian citizenship and become a French citizen!

Franck's music is often referred to as 'cyclic', where concerns of balance between movements of the music were of great concern. In order to achieve this, Franck would often bring back earlier melodies into later movements of his music. Additionally, Franck's music was harmonically complex, largely due to the fact that he had enormous hands - he was able to reach over *twelve* white keys on the keyboard!

Pièce Héroïque was composed for the opening of the Paris Trocadéro (a Moorish palace). It was first performed by the composer on October 1, 1878. The piece begins with punctuated chords under the melody. This piece is a great example of the cyclic music discussed, with the main melody circling back around often before moving onto different sections. The middle of the piece takes on a much softer and gentler feeling, with the absence of the punctuated chords and a more harmonically simple structure. However, the melody comes back again before getting to a grandiose ending.



Melody for Ukraine

Myroslov Skoryk (1938-2020)

Arr. by J. Dimmock

Myroslov Skoryk was a Ukrainian born composer. His works, very contemporary in their use of harmony and texture, often stem from Ukrainian folk tunes. He was also an active film score composer, as well as jazz and popular music.

In 1945, Skoryk enrolled as a student at the Lviv Music School, but was forced with his family to move to Siberia until 1955. After his return, he continued studies at the Lviv Conservatory before attending the Moscow Conservatory. After graduating, he returned to the Lviv Conservatory to teach, before taking a position at the Kyiv Conservatory. It was here that Skoryk remained until 1988. Skoryk spent the latter years of his career traveling as a performer and lecturer across Europe, North America, and Australia.



A Melody for Ukraine, originally written for flute and piano, is often referred to as the spiritual anthem of Ukraine. The piece was composed in 1982 as a film score for a Soviet war film. The film portrayed Ukrainian nationalism negatively. However, Skoryk attempted to push back against this negative statement by creating a beautifully soaring melody that was inspired by the spirit of a number of Ukrainian folk songs. This particular rendition of the piece is by our organist, Jonathan Dimmock!

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott

John Karl Hirten (born 1956)

John Karl Hirten is an American organist who holds a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. Hirten has been involved as a church musician since he was fifteen, having served as a cantor (someone who leads the congregation's singing). He has served as the organist and music director at St. James Cathedral in Brooklyn, and Old St. Mary's in San Francisco. He is Director of Parish Music at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Belvedere.



Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (A *Might Fortress is our God*) is a hymn written by Martin Luther, a Protestant Reformer during the 16th century. This particular hymn was written sometime between 1527 and 1529. The turn itself has been translated into dozens of languages over the years, and has been used as the theme for many compositions throughout history.

This particular arrangement of *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* was commissioned by Jonathan Dimmock in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation!

The Southern Delegation

John Williams (born 1932)

Audiences around the world are immensely familiar with the works of John Williams! Williams was born and raised in New York City, before moving with his family to California in 1948. It was here that Williams began studying composition before joining the Air Force. After his time in the military, Williams returned to New York to attend Juilliard Conservatory, where he studied piano. Williams returned to California and began his extensive work into the music of film, TV, and the concert stage.

Over the years, Williams has composed films scores for dozens of blockbuster movies, including seven *Star Wars* films, three *Harry Potter* films, and the music of *Jaws* and *E.T.* His concert music has includes two symphonies, several concertos (works for solo instrument accompanied by an orchestra), among a plethora of other works. Williams holds honorary degrees from 21 American Universities, and is a recipient of the 2009 National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States Government.



The Southern Delegation is arranged from the soundtrack of *Lincoln*, a 2012 film about the life and struggles of Abraham Lincoln.

Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

German born Johann Sebastian Bach was celebrated in his day as an accomplished harpsichordist and organist. However, he is now considered by many to be one of the greatest composers in history. Bach's early music education primarily came from his oldest brother, Christoph, on keyboard instruments. (Interestingly, Christoph studied with none other than Johann Pachelbel, who wrote the famous *Canon in D*!) Bach also became known as a successful violinist, serving as concertmaster for several orchestras throughout his career. He is one of the most prolific composers in history, having written over 1,000 pieces of music! He wrote massive works for nearly every genre of Baroque music, including sonatas, partitas, concertos, cantatas, and suites. However, he never wrote a single opera.

The *Passacaglia in C minor* is a beast of a work! The passacaglia is a composition that incorporates a repeated bass line (the lowest parts) throughout the whole piece. A typical passacaglia for Bach's time period would have used a four measure pattern, but this piece uses eight measures for the pattern. As with Hurd's *Partita on 'Detroit'*, heard earlier in the program, this piece is also a theme and variations. However it includes a total of twenty different variations on the main melody! Feel free to listen to this performance by Reitze Smits.



Matt Wilson, Program Notes

Matt Wilson, the author of the program notes that you hopefully found illuminating and inspiring, is a violinist and violist from South Carolina. He received a Bachelor's in Music Education from Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, before teaching in the public schools for several years. He received a Master's in Music Education from UNC Greensboro and is now pursuing a PhD in Music Education from the University of Kansas (KU) in Lawrence, KS. Rock Chalk! He is an active researcher and presenter at the state and national levels, focusing on issues of gender equity in music education.

Matt has served in several leadership roles in the NC Music Educators Association - Orchestra Section in the past. He is a member of the National Association for Music Education and the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). He is currently a student representative for ASTA's National Student Advisory Committee.

