Pittsburg State University
2001-2002
Fisk Organ Recital Series

presents

David Briggs

organist

Friday, October 19, 2001
7:30 p.m.

McCray Recital Hall
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

δδδδ

In accordance with Kansas State Fire Marshall regulations, we request that you take a moment to identify the two emergency exits closest to you. We have checked these exits and other emergency equipment in this building and verify they are available for use in case of an emergency.

δδδδ

Program

Étude Symphonique	Enrico Bossi
Prelude and Fugue in G major, BWV 541	J.S. Bach
Three Clock Pieces	Franz Joseph Haydn
Choral No. 3 in A minor	César Franck
Fileuse (from *Suite Bretonne)*	Marcel Dupré
Clair de Lune (from *Pièces de Fantaisie)*	Louis Vierne
Flight of the Bumble-bee	Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakoff arr. Nagel
Final (from the *"Organ Symphony")*	Camille Saint-Saëns arr. DJB

Intermission

Improvisation: Suite Improvisée
- Prelude
- Andante cantabile
- Scherzo
- Adagio
- Variations

Members of the audience are warmly invited to submit themes during the intermission. Five will be chosen out of a hat just before the beginning of the improvisation.

About our artist...

British concert organist **David Briggs'** playing has been described by *The Organists' Review* as having "more verve, more sheer *élan* and *joie de vivre* than you could imagine." A brilliant musician, Mr. Briggs has made a name for himself as one of England's finest organists and one of England's noted organ improvisateurs. He is also known for his organ transcriptions, and his performances in this medium have left reviewers asking "why they ever fell out of favour."

David Briggs is Director of Music and Organist at Gloucester Cathedral, a position to which he was appointed in June 1994, and it is upon this cathedral organ that he recorded his newest compact disc recordings on the Priory and Mayhew labels. In 1989, after four years as Assistant Organist of Hereford Cathedral, one of the sites of the three Choirs Festival, he was appointed Master of the Choristers and Organist at Truro Cathedral, becoming the youngest cathedral organist in England at that time. Under his direction, the renowned "Father Willis" organ was restored and the choir made several successful broadcasts and recordings. He was deeply involved in the Three Spires Festival there and, as in Hereford, conducted his own choir and orchestra.

He conducted his first Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in August 1995 and in July 1996 made his American recital debut, where his performances consistently received standing ovations. David Briggs was one of the featured performers in the 1997 Los Angeles Bach Festival. In April 1997 he toured Australia with the Gloucester Cathedral Choir and in November 1997 performed as solo recitalist in Australia and New Zealand. At the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in August 1998, Mr. Briggs conducted four major symphony and chorus concerts as well as having premiered his organ transcription of the Fifth Symphony of Gustav Mahler.

David Briggs is a prize-winner of both the Paisley and St. Alban's Improvisation competitions. As a transcriber, performer and recorder of Pierre Cochereau's improvisations, which have recently been released on the Priory label, Mr. Briggs was invited to give memorial recitals at Notre Dame, Paris and Madeleine, Paris, in 1994. He is in great demand locally, nationally and internationally as a recitalist, recording artist, adjudicator, course director and teacher, particularly in the art of improvisation.

Born in Birmingham, England, he began his musical training as a chorister in the Birmingham Cathedral choir. He became a fellow of the Royal College of Organists at 17, winning five prizes and the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. As Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, he toured many times and made several broadcasts and recordings with the famous

choir. During his time at King's he received a Countess of Munster Scholarship to study with Jean Langlais in Paris. He has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts for his service to music, is a member and examiner for the Council of the Royal College of Organists, and is a visiting tutor in organ improvisation at the Royal Northern College of Music. When not pursuing musical activities, David Briggs continues to work towards receiving his private airplane pilot's license.

δδδδ

Mr. Briggs records for the Mayhew and Priory record labels.

Mr. Briggs is represented by
Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists
Hartford, Connecticut

δδδδ

This concert is made possible by the generous support of the

Fisk Opus 106 Organ Society

Interested persons are invited to become members of the Society. Please use the enclosed card either to establish a membership or to request further information about the organization.

Program Notes

Étude Symphonique — Bossi

Marco Enrico Bossi was born in Salo, Italy on 25 April 1861, and he died at sea on 25 February 1925. He was a brilliant piano student at the Milan Conservatoire and toured many countries as a concert artist. He later became organist at Como Cathedral and professor of organ and composition at the Naples, Venice, and Bologna Conservatories. In 1916, he was appointed director of the celebrated St. Cecelia Conservatoire in Rome. In 1924, he undertook a long and triumphal tour of the USA (concurrently with Marcel Dupré) and died suddenly during his homeward journey.

The *Étude Symphonique* is one of his most celebrated compositions and is a veritable *tour de force,* particularly for the feet!

Prelude and Fugue in G major — Bach

J.S. Bach is still the greatest composer to have written for the instrument, and this Prelude and Fugue, often known as the 'Great G major', is one of his most extroverted and high-spirited works. Dating from his last years at Weimar (c.1714-16) it displays a youthful energy, brilliance, and vitality. The Prelude is introduced by a grand Toccata-like recitative, lasting eleven bars, developed from tonic and dominant chords. The principal motif then enters in the pedals, punctuated by repeated notes. the Prelude develops very much along *concertante* lines, moving through diverse tonalities. The Fugue subject, possibly inspired by the first chorus of Bach's Cantata BWV 21, with its memorable repeated notes, is developed into a movement of the utmost contrapuntal ingenuity and integrity.

Three Clock Pieces — Haydn

These charming pieces, originally intended to be heard on the hour, and played mechanically, demonstrate the beauty of the 4-foot flute stops on this instrument. Haydn composed the pieces for use by his principal patron, Prince Esterhazy.

Choral No. 3 in A minor **Franck**

Born in Liège on 10 December 1822, César Franck is hailed as the founder of the modern French organ school. He was the first *titulaire* of the Basilica of St. Clotilde in Paris (appointed in 1858) and was greatly influenced by the famous organ of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. He remained in the post until his death in 1890. The *Trois Chorals,* the proofs of which were checked by Franck on his death-bed, are works of sublime maturity and are devoid of any picturesque or 'showy' influences which were sometimes present in his earlier works. The music is romantic, impulsive, and full of passion!

Fileuse **Dupré**

Marcel Dupré was one of the most famous French organists of the twentieth century. As well as giving recital tours all over the world, he was, from 1934 through 1971, *titulaire* of the famous Cavaillé-Coll organ in St. Sulpice, Paris. His *Suite Bretonne* dates from 1923 and was the composer's Opus 21. All three movements are subdued in terms of dynamic, but are highly colorful and relate to the composer's memories of trips to Brittany. *Fileuse* depicts the Breton 'Spinning Wheel', creating the lacework which is so famous in that part of France. For the performer, it presents a considerable challenge, due principally to the continuous (and very fast!) 16th notes which are unrelenting from beginning to end!

Clair de Lune **Vierne**

Louis Vierne was born in 1870 and was virtually blind from birth. A pupil of Franck (if only for a few months!) and Widor, Vierne soon gained a reputation as one of the finest organists of his generation, and was one of the first French organists to tour extensively in the United States. He was 'suppleant' to Widor at St. Sulpice before being appointed to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, after a competition, in 1900. He remained in that post until his untimely death at the console of Notre-Dame in June 1937, in the course of a recital.

He had a unique voice as a composer, and was prolific. As well as chamber music, songs, piano music, etc., he wrote extensively for choirs (his most famous work in this genre being the *Messe Solennelle in C-sharp Minor),* and of course for his own instrument - including

four groups of *Pièces de Fantaisie* (for his US tours) and six large-scale Symphonies, which have become pillars of the romantic organ repertoire. Much of his music has a bittersweet quality, due perhaps to his often sad personal circumstances (blindness, cardiac problems, divorce, losing a child, losing his brother in World War I...). *Clair de Lune* is a beautiful, evocative and very moving piece of French impressionism. cast in A-B-A form, it is the penultimate work of Vierne's second *Pièces de Fantaisie,* and is to be played *adagio, molto espressivo.*

Flight of the Bumble-bee **Rimsky-Korsakoff**

Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Flight of the Bumble-bee* is one of the most well-known show pieces of the orchestral repertoire. originally scored for full symphony orchestra, it has of course been transcribed for many other instruments...piano, piano duet, flute, xylophone. steel drums...and organ. In the USA, the brilliant concert organist Joyce Jones has even arranged the piece with the fast 'bumble-bee' figuration to be played by the feet - but I'm pleased to say that that arrangement is not yet available in the UK!

Final ("Organ Symphony") **Saint-Saëns**

Now for a blast on the tutti! The third symphony is, alongside the *Carnival of the Animals,* undoubtedly Saint-Saëns' most famous and best-loved composition. Originally scored for organ and full orchestra, I have made this transcription, in which the organist endeavors to play, with two hands and two feet, music that is normally played by an 80-piece symphony orchestra! Saint-Saëns himself was a distinguished organist, playing at the Parisian church of La Madeleine as a young man and taking part in the grand re-opening of the Cavaillé-Coll instrument in Notre-Dame de Paris in 1862. he composed six Preludes and Fugues (showing his admiration for Bach) and three highly romantic *Fantaisies* for the instrument. I hope he would have approved of this version of the *Final* in its new guise! Saint-Saëns, incidentally, was no stranger to Gloucester, having been present at the 1913 Three Choirs Festival for the premiere of his commission, *The Promised Land.* He was also the soloist in a Mozart Piano Concerto!