Pittsburg State University
2002-2003 Fisk Recital Series

presents

Larry Palmer
organ

September 22, 2002
3:00 p.m.

McCray Recital Hall
Pittsburg State University
Program

Concert Variations on The Star Spangled Banner, opus 1
[Please stand following the pedal cadenza,
for the final statement of the national anthem]

Tiento de 1° tono de mano derecha

Batalha de 6. Tom

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr, BWV 662
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist, BWV 671

The Mourning of the People

Adagio for Strings
(arranged for Organ by William Strickland)

Comes Autumn Time

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John Knowles Paine
(1839-1906)

Pablo Bruna
(1611-1679)

Anonimo
(Portuguese, 17th century)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Calvin Hampton
(1938-1984)

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Leo Sowerby
(1895-1968)

Fisk Organ, opus 106

Mr. Palmer's performance is made possible through the generosity of
The Fisk Opus 106 Organ Society
NOTES TO THE PROGRAM
22 September 2002

In a month devoted to national reflection on recent tragic events in our nation’s history, a program constructed around music by American composers seemed particularly fitting.

Paine, just returned from student years in Germany, penned his *Concert Variations on The Star Spangled Banner* in 1861, and first played the work in Boston during that turbulent year of escalating civil war. Theme and four variations, the last of which presents the tune in the minor mode, lead to a jolly and skillful four-voice fugue, ending with a cadenza for pedals and the culminating repetition of the patriotic hymn.

The composer was to become the first full professor of music in an American university (Harvard), as well as one of the founders, in 1896, of The American Guild of Organists.

In addition to Fisk organ, opus 101 at SMU, the University’s Meadows Museum collection includes a one-manual organ built in 1762 by Pascoal Caetano Oldovini for the Cathedral of Evora, Portugal. Because of this instrument I have expanded my interest in the Iberian organ repertoire.

One of the most intense composers of the period, Pablo Bruna, “the blind man of Derocha,” wrote his “piece for a right-hand solo” to utilize the *Cornetas* (two ranks of pipes speaking at 2 2/3’ and 1 3/5’ pitches). The solo voice never goes below middle C-sharp of the keyboard, for this stop’s compass began on that note, allowing an accompaniment and solo voice to be played on a single keyboard! The following anonymous battle piece is typical of this pictorial genre – an introduction leads to the trumpet calls of war, mad scrambles of the armies, and a closing hymn of thanks for victory, a section traditionally in triple meter.

One should never miss an opportunity to play Bach! Manuel and Williamson, America’s first harpsichord duo, once told a *Time Magazine* interviewer that Bach’s music made them “feel spiritually spic and span.” I have a tendency to agree with this, so I have chosen to include two of the master’s mature chorale preludes: his highly-ornamented setting of the Lutheran Gloria, *Alone to God on High be Praise* and the contrapuntal final *Kyrie, God Holy Spirit* from the composer’s *Organ Mass (Clavierübungen, Part III)*. Both works include Bach’s musical signature (B-flat, A, C, B-natural – known as H in German notation).

Calvin Hampton was my class mate at Oberlin. On our arrival at the school, in 1956, we were the youngest students in the organ department, both born in Ohio the same year. We became close friends as travel buddies during the first Oberlin-in-Salzburg junior year abroad. Cal was one of the most gifted composers of his generation; his loss to AIDS was one of the most damaging for the American organ scene. *The Mourning of the People* is the second of *Three Essays for Organ*, unpublished works from the Oberlin years. In a 1961 letter Cal wrote that
“the Essays were the first of his works he would consider keeping in a complete canon of his compositions.”

LARRY PALMER

Larry Palmer has been on the faculty of the Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, since 1970. He is currently Professor and Head of Organ and Harpsichord, Director of Graduate Studies in Music, and University Organist. Educated at Oberlin College Conservatory and the Eastman School of Music, Dr. Palmer is internationally known as performer, scholar, and teacher. His biography appears in The New American Grove Dictionary of Music and Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of 20th-Century Classical Musicians (edited by Nicholas Slonimsky). He is the author of Hugo Distler and his Church Music (1967) and Harpsichord in America – a 20th-Century Revival (1989/1993), both cited as indispensable reference works. He has written more than 100 articles, many of them for The Diapason (Chicago), for which he has been harpsichord contributing editor since 1969. Two solo recordings for The Musical Heritage Society, five compact discs for Encore Performance/Limited Editions Recordings, and a recent recording of historic Portuguese organs for SoundBoard comprise his discography. Known for stylish performances of baroque music, he is also committed to contemporary works: more than 40 new scores for harpsichord, organ, and choir have been written for him.

In recent seasons Palmer has appeared as soloist in Poulenc’s Organ Concerto with SMU’s I Palpiti Ensemble, as organist and harpsichordist with the Dallas Symphony, played solo recitals in Baton Rouge, Coppell, Beaumont, at the University of Oklahoma, in Neuf Brisach (France), and in Alvito (Portugal). He presented the Winesanker Memorial Lecture in Musicology at Texas Christian University; and has been seen nationally in the PBS television documentary Landowska: Uncommon Visionary. He has organized and taught in fourteen summer harpsichord and organ workshops for SMU, most of them at the University’s Fort Burgwin campus in the forested mountains near Taos, New Mexico.