Pittsburg State University
2004-2005
Fisk Organ Recital Series

presents

David Hurd
organist

Friday, February 18, 2005
7:30 p.m.

McCray Recital Hall
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas
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.
Program

Suite du Second Ton
  Prélude
  Tierce en taille
  Duo
  Basse de Trompette
  Trio de Flutes
  Dialogue

Die Kunst der Fuge, BWV 1080
  Contrapunctus 1 a 4
  Contrapunctus 6 a 4, in Stile francese
  Contrapunctus 9 a 4, alla Duodecima
  Contrapunctus 11 a 4

Four Spiritual Preludes (2001)
  Oh, what a Beautiful City
  Go Down, Moses
  Were you There
  Deep River

Grande Pièce Symphonique, Opus 17

Jean Adam Guilain (c. 1700)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
David Hurd
César Franck (1822-1890)

Everyone is cordially invited to attend a reception honoring Mr. Hurd in the lobby following tonight’s concert. We extend special thanks to the Southeast Kansas Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for hosting the reception.
Notes

Guilain's dates are not known, his national origin is in question, and even his real name was probably something more like Wilhelm Freinsberg. Nonetheless, he acquired a fine reputation in Paris as an organist, harpsichordist and teacher and, in 1706, he published his Pièces d'orgue pour le Magnificat. This collection contained a suite of seven pieces for each of the first four church modes. These pieces may have been intended to be played at Vespers, their movements occurring in alternation with the singing of chant. They may also have been played as a substitute for singing. While a "Petite Plein Jeu" is printed at the conclusion of each suite, the relationship of these little movements to the others of the suites is uncertain and they are often omitted in performances. The use of "Second" as opposed to "Deuxième" in the title of the present suite suggests that it may originally have been one of only two, and that the third and four suites were added later. While the French organ culture of his time was already in decline, as was the case also in many other countries of Western Europe, Guilain's special contribution was to blend Italian elements into the highly stylized French genre. Typical of organ suites of the time, the movements are designated by the registration intended for the player to use. Thus, in the course of such a suite, one heard the characteristic timbres of the instrument in orderly segments.

The Art of Fugue is a collection of pieces called Contrapuncti, fugues and canons, originating from a single theme and ranging from relative simplicity to astonishing complexity. It was collected by the composer's eldest son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, and published in 1751, a year after the elder Bach's death. Scholars have disabused us of the romantic notion that The Art of Fugue was Bach's "death-bed" composition since it has become clear that he composed much of it early in the 1740s and made many revisions over time. As well, it is also clear that he was working on a number of other major compositions during this last decade of his life. However, since this monumental and unique opus remained unfinished at the time of Bach’s death, its mysteries continue to spike the imaginations of scholars and musicians. For what purpose did Bach compose this exhaustive demonstration of counterpoint? Was it primarily a study document? Did he consider if or how it should be performed? In what order were these pieces meant to be considered? Many different responses to these questions have been given by scholars and musicians and they all are, at best, opinions. That The Art of Fugue lends itself to instrumental rendering is probably safely beyond dispute. Strings might play these pieces quite naturally. With occasional double stops even the thickened cadences can be played by four musicians. Mixed consorts also, of course, are possible. With un-doubled winds one faces the challenge of how to play the occasionally divided parts, but a recent recording by the four-member Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet (recorders) demonstrates that, with judicious omissions of notes, four winds can be made to suffice. Keyboard realization is another natural possibility. Organ is probably preferable to harpsichord because the former instrument can sustain pitches and make the voices sing more convincingly. Also, by use of the pedals, some nearly impossible
tangles of four or more voices can be thinned mercifully by assigning at least one to the feet. Playing these pieces on the organ however, one is struck by the unforgiving nature of the writing which makes no allowance for the physical realities of organ playing. Voices tend to bump into and cross one another here more often than in Bach's intentional organ music. Also, the bass voice of Bach's Contrapunctus is a full partner in the texture and more active than the pedal parts of most Bach organ fugues. So the organist's hands and feet are both challenged in translating this counterpoint to the organ. In Contrapunctus I Bach lays out and develops his primary theme with elegant simplicity. The Contrapunctus "in the French Style" has the sassy rhythmic, melodic and harmonic snap one expects to hear in a French overture of Bach's time. The color of reeds and cornets specified by composers for the French organ fugues of that day seems also compatible with the French overture character of this piece. The initial four entrances of the theme are the theme itself stated with dotted rhythms, the inverted theme played twice as fast, the upright theme played in the same rhythmic diminution, and the inversion of the answer to the theme, again, in diminution. This most unusual exposition sets up the wonderful counterpoint which follows. Many people probably were first introduced to The Art of Fugue through a 1960s Swingle Singers' recording which included Contrapunctus alla Duodecima sung in scat style with an added pizzicato roving bass part and a touch of percussion. What a remarkable performance! The memorable subject of this fugue begins with an upward octave leap and downward scale. Soon after Bach gets all four voices going, he superimposes the original Art of Fugue theme in cantus firmus style long notes. By the end of this Contrapunctus, which is played entirely by the hands, the theme will have reappeared in this form six more times. Contrapunctus XI is easily the second most massive piece of The Art of Fugue, outweighed only by the incomplete final Contrapunctus. It is a fully developed triple fugue whose stately opening section presents a variant of the original theme of The Art of Fugue in a distinctive rhythm featuring silent downbeats. This is followed by an episodic section of highly chromatic imitative writing which leads to the dominant key. The next section takes as its subject the inversion of the theme variant used at the opening of this Contrapunctus, and leads to the relative major key. The final section is a masterful and monumental bringing together of the chromatic episodic material of the second section with both the forms of the theme developed in the first and third sections.

8888

Four Spiritual Preludes is a suite of short organ pieces modeled on the examples of the chorale prelude literature of the baroque masters. Each piece attempts to set a well-known spiritual melody in an appropriately expressive texture and fresh harmonic context. The first piece of the set, "Oh! What a beautiful City" was completed in February 2001 and was the last of the set to be composed. It presents the spiritual melody above left hand and pedal accompaniment. The accompaniment patterns feature triplets and other groups of threes representing the four sets of three gates referred to in the text. In the measure where the text cites twelve gates, the left hand responds by playing four triplet patterns. This Prelude has a busy urban flavor with impressions perhaps of start and stop traffic and maybe a few taxi horns. The Prelude on "Go down, Moses" is structured over the gradual chromatic descending of the pedal voice for the
equivalent of more than two octaves. The spiritual melody is in the uppermost voice, and two additional accompanying voices dialogue with one another to provide a fluid if not somewhat tortured harmonization. Of the four settings, "Were you there" was the first composed. Written in 1994 at the urging of a colleague, it features the unadorned melody in the top voice accompanied by a rocking figure in fourths to suggest an atmosphere of desolation suitable to the spiritual. The pedal part is limited to two pitches until near the end when it descends chromatically from the dominant to the tonic. This piece remained an "only child" for six years until its companion settings were composed at the suggestion of Dr. Mickey Thomas Terry. The setting of "Deep River" finishes the set. The melody of its chorus is largely supported by augmented triads and thirds in triplet figures. In the verse, the melody and alto voice are heard over chords in triplet patterns. A reprise of the chorus ends the prelude.

If one scans the high points in the emergence of the French symphonic school of organ composition and playing in the early twentieth century, the names of Charles-Marie Widor, Louis Vierne, Marcel Dupré, and Maurice Duruflé will certainly appear in prominence. Yet, all of these men stand on the musical foundations laid by César Franck who took over the organ class at the Paris Conservatory in 1872. Born in Belgium, Franck entered the Paris Conservatory at age fifteen. From 1844 he held various titles at Parisian Churches and, in 1858, moved to Sainte Clotilde to preside at the Cavaillé-Coll organ in that newly built neo-gothic church. Musician and instrument were to become one over the course of the next decades, and Franck would compose twelve large organ works which would significantly redefine the language of the French organ. The Grande Pièce Symphonique, Franck's longest single work for the organ, is the second of the Six Pièces, the earliest set of his major organ works. Composed in 1862, it is inscribed to Charles Valentin Alkan, a noted keyboard virtuoso and composer of Franck's day whose music is little known in our time. While it is a continuous single movement, one can discern three distinct sections, the first two of which might even prove satisfying as separate stand-alone pieces. The opening section in centered in f-sharp minor and introduces the essential and contrasting Andantino serioso and Allegro non troppo e maestoso themes of the piece. Franck spins out the bold latter of these themes at great length in various textures and contrapuntal procedures, including his characteristic canons, before bringing this section to a quiet resolution. The second section features a lovely Andante theme in B-major. This reposeful theme, which begins and ends the section, surrounds and contrasts with the energetic and Scherzo-like Allegro theme encountered at its center. Having laid out his store of thematic material, Franck begins the final section of the Grande Pièce with a series of brief reflections or echos of earlier themes, the rugged maestoso theme recurring almost antiphon-like. These fleeting remembrances of past themes soon collect in a build-up of energy, eventually erupting into a striding triumphal march in F-sharp major. This brilliant re-casting of the earlier maestoso theme into the major mode is then extended into a fugal section and, with further well-crafted extension, Franck's Grande Pièce Symphonique is finally brought to a joyful conclusion.
DAVID HURD
Concert Organist

Concert organist David Hurd enjoys widespread recognition as a performer, composer, and lecturer both at home and abroad. He has concertized throughout North America, performing both at national and regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists. In 1981 he was invited to perform at the Internationaal Orgelfestival Haarlem, which meets in Gouda, the Netherlands, during which he received the diploma for improvisation at the Stitching Internationaal Orgelconcours. In 1977 he was awarded first prizes both in organ playing and improvisation at the International Congress of Organists.

As a composer, he has received numerous commissions for choral, organ, and instrumental works, and has composed a great amount of liturgical music. He served on the Standing Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Church from 1976 to 1985. The Hymnal 1982 (Episcopal) and Worship-Third Edition (Roman Catholic) are two of several collections that include his liturgical compositions and arrangements.

He was appointed to the faculty of Duke University in 1972 concurrent with graduate studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In 1973 he returned to New York as Organist and Music Director at the Chapel of the Intercession, a position he retained until 1978 when he was named Composer in Residence for a season. In 1976 he was appointed to the faculty of the General Theological Seminary in New York City where he is currently Professor of Church Music and Organist.

In the 1982-1983 academic year, while on sabbatical leave from General Seminary, he was appointed visiting lecturer at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. He was appointed to the organ faculty of the Manhattan School of Music in 1984. In 1987 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Music, honoris causa by the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale. The following year he received honorary doctorates from The Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, and from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston.

David Hurd was born in Brooklyn, New York. Prior to his undergraduate studies at Oberlin College, he attended both the High School of Music and Art and the Juilliard School in New York City. Upon graduation from Oberlin, he was appointed Assistant Organist of Trinity Parish in lower Manhattan. His organ teachers were Bronson Ragan, Garth Peacock, Arthur Poister, and Rudolph Kremer.

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