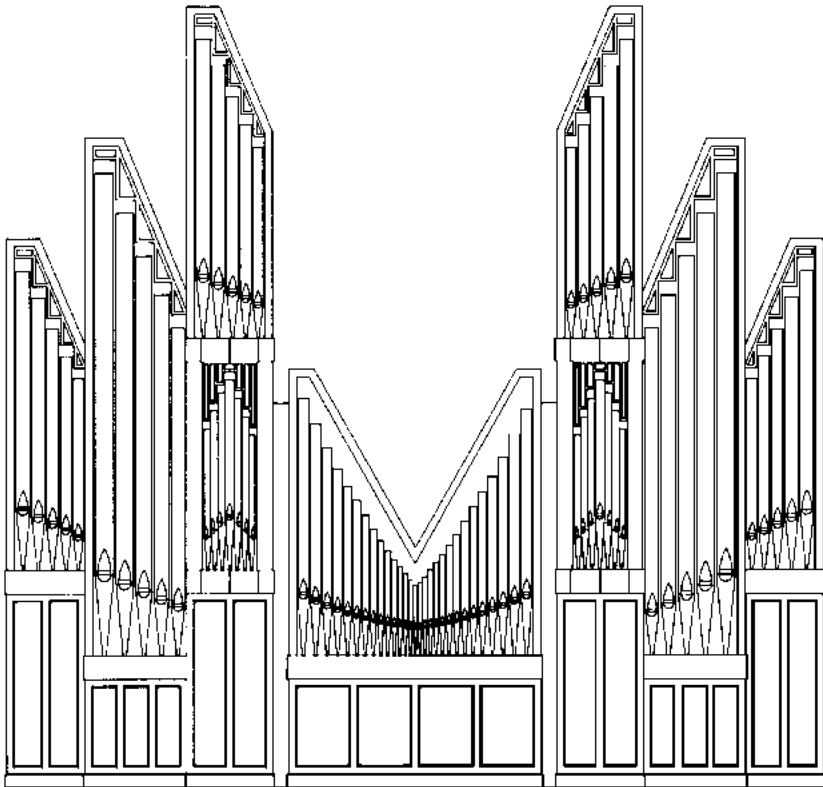


SPENCERVILLE EVENSONG CONCERT SERIES

presents

THOMAS MURRAY

in celebration of the 20th anniversary
of the
DeHaan Family Organ
at the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church



SEPTEMBER 17, 2011

PROGRAM

Concert Overture in C minor (1899)	Alfred Hollins (1865-1942)
Rhapsody on a Breton Theme, op. 7, no. 1 (1866)	Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Imperial March, opus 32	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
Toccatà in F major (BWV 540)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Three Movements from Symphonie II II. <i>Pastorale</i> III. <i>Andante</i> VI. <i>Final</i>	Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)

– INTERMISSION –

Remarks: Frank DeHaan, Mark Willey

Prelude and Fugue in g, op. 7, no. 3	Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)
Sonata for Organ in F (op. 65, no. 1) <i>Allegro moderato e vivace</i> <i>Adagio</i> <i>Andante recitativo</i> <i>Allegro assai vivace</i>	Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

ABOUT THE PERFORMER

Thomas Murray, concert organist and recording artist, is University Organist and Professor of Music at Yale University, where he has served on the faculty for 29 years and has taught many of the leading performers of a younger generation. Widely known for his interpretations of Romantic repertoire and orchestral transcriptions, his recordings are highly acclaimed. High Fidelity has credited him with "... consummate skill and artistry in treating the organ as a great orchestra" and American Record Guide said of his Elgar CD: "Murray's performance and his handling of the immense resources of the Woolsey Hall organ are beyond superlatives ... the shape of every phrase, the use of every color ... could not be more perfect."

Born in California in 1943, Murray studied with Clarence Mader at Occidental College. He has appeared in recitals and lectures at six national conventions of the A.G.O., which named him International Artist of the Year for 1986. As the recipient of this award he followed such luminaries as Marie-Claire Alain, Jean Guillou and Dame Gillian Weir. In 2003 he was named an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Organists in England, and in 2005 he was awarded the Gustave Stoeckel Award for excellence in teaching from the Yale University School of Music. In 2010 the Organ Historical Society conferred on him its Distinguished Service Award.

He has appeared in Japan, South America and Australia, as well as in most countries of continental Europe; his performances have included recitals for the International Congress of Organists in Cambridge (1987) and the Lahti Organ Festival in Finland, where he was soloist with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Constantin Orbelian. As a soloist in North America he has performed with the Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Houston and New Haven Symphony Orchestras, as well as the National Chamber Orchestra in Washington DC, the Yale Philharmonia and Yale Symphony Orchestra. In 2008, Prof. Murray performed at a festival inaugurating the new organ in Magdeburg Cathedral (Germany), returning to Europe in September of that year to play the inaugural recital on the new instrument at St. Johannes Church in Malmö, Sweden. Among his appearances during recent seasons were the debut recital on the renovated E.M. Skinner organ in Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago, a recital for the Anglican Association of Musicians at Disney Hall in Los Angeles and for the Organ Historical Society at Severance Hall in Cleveland. In December of this year Prof Murray will play an inaugural recital on a Romantic style Klais organ in the new concert hall (Musikhuset) at Aarhus, Denmark.

PROGRAM NOTES

Born in Hull, England, **Alfred Hollins** had a notable career as both organist and pianist, even though blind from birth. As a boy he played Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* at the Crystal Palace, and at sixteen played for Queen Victoria at Windsor. A student of Hans von Bülow in Berlin, Hollins was as agile at the piano as at the organ. He appeared in North America, Australia and South Africa during a long performing career and chronicled his experiences in *A Blind Musician Looks Back*, a remarkable autobiography published in 1934.

Camille Saint-Saëns was both a virtuoso pianist and organist and one who greatly enriched the repertoires of both instruments. For some twenty years he was the titulaire (the designated principal organist) of the Madeleine, one of the famous Parisian churches. His three *Rhapsodies on Breton Themes* are pieces from the composer's youth, yet nonetheless charming for that. The one heard this afternoon displays the arpeggio technique distinctive to pianists, as well as what was an innovative choice of coloristic stops for the time when it was written.

Edward Elgar, the son of a Worcester musician, learned to play the violin and organ (as his father did) early in youth. Perhaps he was attracted to the organ because it is the one instrument which offers a complex ensemble and a wide spectrum of color, resources which approach that most complex of all ensembles, the orchestra. His *Imperial March* dates from 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It was published in both an orchestral version and an organ transcription by George Clement Martin, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, where the official Jubilee Commemoration service was held. It was the organ version which spread the fame of the March most effectively, for it took Elgar's music throughout the British Empire to places where no orchestra was heard, but where there was often an organist capable of doing justice to Martin's arrangement.

Written while **Bach** was organist to Duke Wilhelm Ernst in Weimar (1708-1717), the *Toccata in F* dates from a time when his fame as an organ virtuoso was growing beyond his native Saxony. One source states that the piece was written in 1713; if true, it predates the composer's well-documented visit to Cassel, on which occasion one observer declared that Bach's feet "flew over the organ pedals as if they had wings." We can therefore imagine that the witness who wrote that comment was listening to this very piece. The opening sections consist of pure two-part canonic writing; lengthy pedal solos follow, using the same theme. The main part of the piece is Italianate in style and is a tour de force of rhythmic excitement.

Charles-Marie Widor's music for organ truly needs no introduction to those who attend organ concerts. Numerous pieces, believed to have been played by him frequently in his early career, were assembled in what Widor termed Symphonies, so-called because of their orchestrally-inspired use of the organs which were setting new standards of expression. The Symphonies are not symphonies in any formal sense, but suites with a varying number of movements. In the case of *Symphonie II*, the actual contents differ with the revised editions issued by Widor during his long life, the last edition containing one movement written long after the others. Three of his most inspired movements, chosen for their charm and contrast are played in this afternoon's recital.

The appearance of **Marcel Dupré's** *Three Preludes and Fugues, opus 7*, must have heralded the genius of this musical giant in a dramatic way. Dupré represented the vanguard of modern French organ composition at the time of the First World War. His professional fortunes took a great leap forward in 1919 when a generous English patron of the arts was captivated by his improvisations. His benefactor was Claude Goodman Johnson, the Managing Director of Rolls-Royce, a keen organ enthusiast and an avid francophile who arranged sponsorship for Dupré's highly auspicious debut in England, thereby establishing a career that eventually took Dupré to every continent. This Prelude unfolds with remarkable delicacy, introducing a theme in long notes which reappears in combination with the devil-may-care theme of the Fugue.

Mendelssohn's *Six Sonatas, opus 65* and *Three Preludes and Fugues, opus 37*, are cornerstones of the early Romantic organ literature. Mendelssohn was a skilled player and improviser at the organ. The London publisher Coventry and Hollier, well aware of the keen interest surrounding the composer's organ playing in England, commissioned him to write what became the Sonatas. The first movement of this work is noteworthy for its sharp contrasts between the turbulent fortissimo passages and the reassuring statements of the opening phrase from a Lutheran chorale, Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit (What my God wills will always be done). An eloquent Adagio follows; then a transitional movement which, like the first, is remarkable for its striking rhetorical contrasts. The final movement commences in F major and carries the piece with great animation to a triumphant close.

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RECORDINGS

Several CD recordings made by Thomas Murray, are available. Please see Mark Willey following the concert for details about how you can obtain them.

20 YEARS AND COUNTING

20 years ago, on September 21, 1991, Simon Preston played the dedicatory recital for the newly installed Moller, Opus 11806 pipe organ. It was the culmination of a dream born many years before, that this sanctuary could one day house a fine pipe organ. The DeHaan family, who had been active in the early decades of the Spencerville Church, had agreed to give the organ as a gift to the congregation and community. At the time, they wished to remain anonymous and their only request was that the instrument be shared liberally with the community. John Lintner, the Minister of Music at the time, wisely knew that an organ was only so good as the room in which it sang. Along with Senior Minister Rob Vandemann, and a dedicated committee of church members, he guided the process through the selection of a builder, the design of the instrument and the acoustic renovations made to the room. There were many challenges encountered, but John's determination, the DeHaan's generosity, and the dedication of the congregation never wavered. The Moller organ company built and delivered the organ in the summer of 1991. The renovations to the sanctuary and the installation of the organ took several months, but as it began to speak its first notes, it was obvious this would be a wonderful asset to this church and community.

In the 20 years since its installation, this organ has played for countless services. Its 78 ranks, and 4600 pipes have sung for the joy of weddings, the sorrow of funerals, and the excitement of many thrilling organ recitals given by world-renowned masters of the instrument. Thousands of listeners have been moved by this organ, finding in its tones spiritual refreshment and artistic inspiration. Its full impact on the congregation and community is impossible to overestimate.

There have been challenges along the way. Within months of delivering the organ, the Moller company dissolved in bankruptcy. As the instrument settled into its home, many issues manifested, both large and small, with no warranty to cover the expense of their remedy. Several instruments of similar vintages suffered similar issues and have continued to decline, even to the point of needing to be replaced just a few short years after their installation. However, thanks to the skill and commitment of our master organ technician, Bard Wickkiser, the Spencerville organ is crossing this milestone sounding better than ever. In the weeks leading up to this concert, Mr. Wickkiser began to explore the sonic potential of the organ by working to voice the pipes that, because of the demise of the Moller organ company, never received a proper finishing. He has discovered richness of tone and clarity of speech that are just waiting to be uncovered. This voicing will continue, rank by rank, as we find the money to finance it, until the full potential of this glorious instrument is realized. As we continue into the next 20 years, and beyond, we are committed to being good stewards of this incredible gift. A fund has been established to ensure the healthy future of this wonderful instrument. If you would like to partner with us in this journey, we would welcome gifts to this fund of any denomination. Thank you for being with us today to celebrate this 20th anniversary.

Spencerville Evensong Concert Series
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