



*Presents*

## ***Celestial Fire: Organ Music for the Holy Ghost***

**A Masters Organ Recital**

**Benton Schmidt, *organist***

Given that this concert is given in a sacred space where Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, the performer would like to request that no applause be given. Instead, consider kneeling and saying a prayer.

- Cinq Versets sur le Veni Creator (2012) Jean-Baptiste Robin (1976-)  
I. *Ciel éternel* (Everlasting Sky)  
II. *Flamboisement* (Divine Fire)  
III. *Le temps qui danse* (Dancing Time)  
IV. *Au-delà* (The Beyond)
- Veni Creator (1699) Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703)  
I. Veni Creator en taille à 5 (Plein jeu)  
II. Fugue à 5  
III. Duo  
IV. Récit de Cromorne  
V. Dialogue sur les grands Jeux
- Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott Matthias Weckmann (1616-1674)  
I. Primus versus  
II. Secundus versus  
III. Tertius versus
- Prélude, adagio et choral varié*  
*sur le theme du 'Veni Creator' op. 4 (1926/30)* Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

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The Basilica of the Sacred Heart  
Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 8 PM

This is a degree recital for the Master of Sacred Music.  
*Sacred Music at Notre Dame prohibits the unauthorized recording, publication, and streaming of live performances.*  
*Please silence all electronic devices.*



## Texts and Translations

### Veni creator spiritus

Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
Mentes tuorum visita:  
Imple superna gratia come,  
Quae tu creasti pectora.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come  
from thy bright heav'nly throne;  
take possession of our souls,  
and make them all thine own.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
Altissimi donum Dei,  
Fons vivus, ignis, caritas,  
Et spiritalis unctio.

Thou who art called the Paraclete,  
best gift of God above,  
the living spring, the living fire,  
sweet unction and true love.

Tu septiformis munere,  
Digitus paternae dexteræ,  
Tu rite promissum Patris,  
Sermone ditans guttura.

Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace,  
finger of God's right hand;  
his promise, teaching little ones  
to speak and understand.

Accende lumen sensibus,  
Infunde amorem cordibus,  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.

O guide our minds with thy blest light,  
with love our hearts inflame;  
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays,  
confirm our mortal frame.

Hostem repellas longius,  
Pacemque dones protinus:  
Ductore sic te praevio,  
Vitemus omne noxium.

Far from us drive our deadly foe;  
true peace unto us bring;  
and through all perils lead us safe  
beneath thy sacred wing.

Per te sciamus da Patrem,  
Noscamus atque Filium  
Teque utriusque Spiritum  
Credamus omni tempore.

Through thee may we the Father know,  
through thee th'eternal Son,  
and thee the Spirit of them both,  
thrice-blessed three in One.

## Komm Heiliger Geist

Komm Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott:  
erfüll' mit deiner Gnaden Gut  
deiner Gläubigen Herz, Mut und Sinn,  
dein' brünstig' Lieb' entzünd' in ihn'n!  
O Herr, durch deines Lichtes Glast  
zu dem Glauben versamlet hast  
das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen,  
das sei dir, Herr, zu Lob gesungen!  
Halleluja! Halleluja!

Du heiliges Licht, edler Hort,  
laß uns leuchten des Lebens Wort  
und lehr' uns Gott recht erkennen,  
von Herzen Vater ihn nennen!  
O Herr, behüt' vor fremder Lehr',  
daß wir nicht Meister suchen mehr  
denn Jesum, mit rechten Glauben,  
und ihm aus ganzer Macht vertrauen!  
Halleluja! Halleluja!

Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost:  
nun hilf uns fröhlich und getrost  
in dein'm Dienst beständig bleiben,  
die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben!  
O Herr, durch dein' Kraft uns bereit'  
und stärk' des Fleisches Blödigkeit,  
daß wir hie ritterlich ringen,  
durch Tod und Leben zu dir bringen.  
Halleluja! Halleluja!

Come, Holy Spirit, Lord God,  
fill with the goodness of your grace  
the heart, spirit and mind of your believers,  
kindle in them your ardent love!  
O Lord, through the splendour of your light  
you have gathered in faith  
people from all the tongues of the world;  
so that in your praise Lord, may there be sung

You holy light, precious refuge,  
let the word of life enlighten us  
and teach us to know God truly,  
to call him father from our heart!  
O Lord, protect us from strange doctrines  
so that we may never look for any teacher  
except Jesus in true belief  
and may trust him wholeheartedly!

You sacred warmth, sweet consolation,  
now help us always to remain joyful and comforted  
in your service,  
do not let sorrow drive us away!  
O Lord, through your power make us ready  
and strengthen the feebleness of our flesh  
so that we may bravely struggle  
through life and death to reach you!

## Program Notes

*Veni Creator Spiritus* is a hymn to the Holy Ghost sung during the Divine Office on the feast of Pentecost. It is also integral to Confirmation and Ordination liturgies, sung during the anointing ceremony of the Bishop. In the French alternatim tradition, the organ routinely replaces some of the sections of chant which would usually be sung by the schola. All the compositions on this program, minus Weckmann's *Komm Heiliger Geist*, are based upon this melody as it has been done in the French liturgy spanning from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present, influenced by the Baroque, Impressionist, and Modernist periods.

**Jean-Baptiste Robin** (1976-), organist at the Palace and Conservatoire of Versailles, is a versatile composer of works for organ, chamber ensembles, choir, and orchestra. Commissioned and premiered for the Cathedral of Reims in 2012, the *Five Versets on the Veni Creator* are a modern contribution to the ancient alternatim tradition. The musical language is modern and complex, but still accessible to a wide audience. Though there are five pieces in this collection, only the first four will be performed at this recital.

*Ciel éternel* "eternal sky" is a slow-moving kaleidoscope of sound played by flutes an octave higher than normal pitch in each division, evoking the sky. Robin's introduction of his work quotes Matthew 3:16 "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (KJV). As the music progresses, notes are played lower and lower, illustrating the descent of the Holy Ghost.

*Flamboient* "divine fire" is a piece of constant perpetual motion inspired by the water imagery found in the second verse of the hymn. It starts off softly on flutes, but slowly builds, gaining intensity after a statement of the chant on a solo stop. Next, the mutations of the Rückpositiv, the organ division closest to the knave of the Basilica, are played for interesting colors. The piece ends with a constant crescendo to use almost the entirety of the instrument.

*Le temps qui danse* "dancing time" is the most adventurous and dissonant of this set of pieces. It is meant to evoke the struggle in the war between the Holy Ghost and evil, which is spoken about in the fifth verse of the chant.

*Au-déla* "the beyond" features the chant text *accende lumen sensibus*, meaning "kindle your light in our senses," played by the cromorne stop. In other parts of the movement, the harmonies play a consistent descent down the keyboard on soft foundation stops, which Robin says represents the arrival of the Holy Ghost. All around, the harmonies are lush and thick, and the mood is calm.

**Nicolas de Grigny** (1672-1703) was organist at the Cathedral in Rheims, France, for much of his short life. He published only one book of organ music, of which this setting of *Veni Creator* is a part. It is an interesting connection that de Grigny played at Rheims in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the Cathedral of Rheims was the commissioner of the *Cinq Versets* by Jean-Baptiste Robin in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This collection of versets is one of the greatest pieces of the French Classical organ repertoire, in culmination of all the beauty that had come before it. It is also remarkable that each movement is based on one phrase from the *Veni Creator* in sequential order. From a liturgical perspective, it was only required that the first verset begins with the

actual chant melody, but de Grigny goes beyond that to incorporate it into every movement that follows.

The first verset is a *plein jeu*, which consists of the hands playing luminous chords on the principle chorus while the feet play the entire chant melody in the pedals. French fugues are played on reeds and mutations, so the second verset is played on the cornet and cromorne. It is a gorgeous feat of counterpoint where five voices weave a complex tapestry of sound. The subject of each is based on the second phrase of the chant. In the third verset, a lively *duo* is fought by the cornet and sesquialtera stops, and the beginning of each melody is from the third phrase of the chant. The fourth verset is an expressive rendering of the fourth phrase of the chant, played by the cromorne in a highly ornamented style, while the beautiful flute accompanies. In closing, the *Amen* of the Veni Creator is played on the *grands jeux*, which consists of all the reeds and mutations on the organ. Combining rhythmic drive and large chords, it is an energetic and effective finale to this masterwork.

*Komm Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott* is a German Pentecost chorale composed by Martin Luther. He based it upon the sequence from the Catholic Mass of Pentecost, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. Sequences are hymn-like chants which were traditionally sung after the alleluia in the Traditional Latin Mass, but now take place before the alleluia in the modern liturgy.

**Matthias Weckmann** (1616-1664) was a German organist who traveled all over Europe to work and study, but he spent the most significant part of his composing life at the Jakobkirche in Hamburg. His setting of *Komm Heiliger Geist* consists of three verses which provide highly contrasting interpretations of the chorale melody. The first is a four-part piece which sings the melody in the soprano, supported by a chorus of alto, tenor, and bass underneath. For this movement, the plenum of the Great division of the organ is used, along with the German pedal reeds. The second verse is a chorale fantasia, which means there is a solo stop which plays an ornamented version of the melody over a simpler accompaniment. In this case, the renaissance-style trumpet on the swell was a perfect option. The third verse is a trio texture, with independent melodies for each of the hands, while the chorale tune is played by the feet. It is particularly interesting to hear the color stops of this organ here, like the *voix humaine* and the *larigot* of the Rückpositiv.

**Maurice Duruflé** (1902-1986), one of the most famous organists of the 20th century, was organist of Saint Etienne-du-Mont and professor at the Paris Conservatoire much of his life. An extreme perfectionist, he wrote few compositions and allowed an even smaller number of them to be published. Duruflé's greatest musical influence was Gregorian chant, which he sang in the Solemn style as a choir boy in Rouen.

In 1926, Duruflé wrote the last part of this large piece, a set of variation versets to be sung interspersed with the Veni Creator hymn. A few years later, he added the Prelude and Adagio to these variations, increasing the length and scope of the entire piece considerably.

The Prelude is highly inspired by the Impressionist movement. The composer gives us small tastes of phrases from the chant, but no full themes are ever stated. The hands play running arpeggios on flute stops through much of it, while the pedal plays some of the fragments.

Throughout the movement, the lovely oboe and harmonic flute stops are used to color the impressionist work.

The Adagio is characterized by a very different registration: strings (with celeste), *voix humaine*, and the tremulant abound. Phrases of the chant are also much clearer here, though a full verse is not played. There is a slow buildup of increasing energy which also includes increasing musical dissonance. The movement ends with reeds and mixtures pulled in a dramatic crescendo, then the music dies away to almost nothing.

The Choral Variations begin with a full statement of the chant melody on the plenums of the organ. Next comes the first variation, where the third phrase of the chant is played by the cromorne in the pedal against an accompaniment on flutes, while the same melody of the chant is heard in canon from a higher register. The second variation is without pedal and consists of a gap registration accompaniment which creates an ambiguous effect of hemiolas against the theme on 8' flute. The *gambe* with celeste is featured in the third variation. The hands play on this beautiful fuzziness to accompany the chant on a pure flute in the pedal. Canon is present here as well, between the top and bottom voices. The fourth variation "Final" is a glorious French toccata. It begins on full swell with the box closed, and escalates at a scintillating pace to the end, where we hear the "Amen" cadence of the chant echoed many times on full organ.

