



*Presents*

**Collapsing and Rebuilding:  
A Foot in the Past and Eye to the Future**

**A Masters Organ Recital**

**David Swenson, *organist***

*The performer requests that all applause be held until the conclusion of the recital and thanks you in advance.*

Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 546

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Premier Livre d'Orgue

Jacques Boyvin (c.1649-1706)

Suite du premier ton

II. Fugue Grave

III. Recit de Cromhorne ou de petite tierce

IV. Concert pour les flutes

V. Trio

VI. Fond d'orgue

VII. Duo

Toccata, Op. 59

Max Reger (1873-1916)

Fugue, Op. 69

Suite Op.5

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)

I. Prélude

II. Sicilienne

III. Toccata

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The Basilica of the Sacred Heart  
Saturday, April 24th, 2021, 7:30 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.*

## Program Notes

The title of this program ties to my goals as a sacred music student. The day I committed to the University of Notre Dame for the Master of Sacred Music program was April 15, 2019, the day that the fire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame shocked the world. This event and those concurrent with it—the worry of onlookers juxtaposed with the faith of other Parisians singing hymns across the Seine as well as the heroic actions of first responders and priests of the cathedral—is a reminder for the world what the sacred means to humanity; the sacred is necessary. As one person interviewed on the streets said, “Paris without Notre Dame...madness”. The world without the sacred would be that very same madness. I believe that what this Sacred Music program teaches will help us graduates restore and promote the sacred from the various attacks against it that send it seemingly crashing down. I hope that this concert can in some way evoke such destruction and rebirth.

“Christendom has had a series of revolutions and in each one of them Christianity has died. Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave.”

— G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*.

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750), undoubtedly one of the greatest and most influential composers and organists in the history of music (principally in the Western world), was organist, chamber music and music director at churches and courts in several cities in Central Germany. In 1723, he was appointed Music Director of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, a post he retained until his death in 1750.

The crashing chords in the prelude of BWV 546 are what signal the beginning of the “collapse” of this program, which will face various iterations of collapse as well as restoration. It is believed that the fugue was written earlier than the prelude. Most likely, the fugue was written in Bach’s “Weimar years” (1708-1717) while the prelude was written in his “Leipzig years” (1723-1750). After the drama of the Prelude, the Fugue in c minor offers only a little reprise. Written in the old style of a Renaissance motet, Bach turns to his musical roots as he slowly builds this fugue to its climax.

**Jacques Boyvin** (c.1649-1706) was born in Paris and most likely a musician from a young age. He was very influential during his time as well as contemporaneously with regards to our knowledge of French Classical performance practice—especially during the time of Louis XIV. The most prestigious position that he held was to be the titular organist of the Notre-Dame cathedral in Rouen, France. He was organist there for 30 years. Boyvin wrote two organ books—the *Premier livre d’orgue* being published in 1690 and the *Deuxieme livre d’orgue* in 1700. They are written in the eight church modes and comprise 120 pieces grouped into 16 suites and are a great example of the breadth and depth of the French compositional style. The preface to his first book contains vital information on registration and the heading of his second book is a treatise on figured bass accompaniment for the organ and the harpsichord.

**Max Reger** (1873-1916) was a German composer, pianist, organist, conductor, and academic teacher: holding positions as the director of the Leipzig University Church and the court of Duke Georg II of Saxe-Meiningen as well as the professor at the Royal Conservatory in Leipzig. Interestingly, Karl Straube, the organist who premiered most of Reger's pieces, was organist at the Thomaskirche where Bach was previously music director. Max Reger's music was very popular in Germany during his lifetime, and he was one of the last Romantic composers. He and was very attracted to fugal writing and created music in most every genre, influenced by the classical structures of Beethoven and Brahms with the extended harmonies of Liszt and Wagner.

His Toccata is a good example of his musical style: dramatic, chromatic, necessitating many stop changes, and with alternating sections of thin textured music followed by dense chordal passages. The Op. 69 Fugue is reticent of a Bach or late baroque *Spielfuge* with Reger's musical language permeating throughout. Opus 59 was published in 1901 with Opus 69 following soon after in 1903.

**Maurice Duruflé** (1902-1986) was organist at Saint Etienne-du-Mont, professor at the Paris Conservatoire, and a notorious perfectionist. Of his published works, of which there are less than fifteen, seven of them are for the organ. "Musical creation", he said, "is for me the fruit of a persevering and laborious effort. I can only write music down with difficulty, and I am constantly revising what I have already written." Written in 1934 and dedicated to his professor of composition, Paul Dukas, Duruflé's Opus 5 is today one of the most popular of his compositions, but he was only ever fond of the *Prélude*.

The *Prélude* in E-flat minor is one of the most powerfully emotional works in the French repertoire. The solemn theme is a sinister, slowly unfolding lament, building up to climax and then subsiding into a recitative for the clarinet (Cromorne on this performance) and a hushed reprise of the opening bars.

From the *Prélude* to the *Sicilienne* is a harmonic relation of a third to G minor. The elegant melody of the *Sicilienne* is heard three times in all, above an accompaniment that becomes more intricate with each repetition. These iterations of the theme also include relations of a third; the first and third statements are in G minor while the middle statement is in Bb minor. In these episodes Duruflé conjures up a ravishing array of evocative, "Ravelian", sonorities that leave the listener in a dream-like state.

In the final movement of the *Suite*, written in B minor (a tertial relationship from the key of the *Sicilienne*), Duruflé raised the conventional French organ toccata to a new level of compositional and technical complexity. Brilliant figuration and relentless rhythm are the backbone of this piece but there is also a beautiful cantabile second subject. These two themes vie for attention, but the first theme finally emerges victorious as the music finally erupts into a savage whirlwind of sound. In later years Duruflé disowned the piece and refused to perform it, on the grounds that 'the main theme is very bad!' But no one else agreed, and it is now firmly established as one of the most rewarding works of its kind in the twentieth-century repertoire.

