Sacred Music at Notre Dame

Presents

This Moment

An Organ Recital

A.J. Lyon, *organ*

Prelude and Fugue in g minor, BWV 535 (c. 1703-1707)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Tre stycken för orgel (1992)	Lars Uno Sandén (1924-2013)
Invention	
Mild flöjt	
Rytmiskt tutti	
Tiento No. 45, de medio registro de tiple de setimo tono (1626)	Francisco Correa de Arauxo (1584-1654)
Toccata in F Major, BuxWV 156 (c. 1670–1700)	Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)
Lo stormire (2026)	A.J. Lyon (b. 2001)
Toccata ottava (1615)	Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643)
Introduction et Passacaille sur un thème de Raymond Daveluy, Op. 44 (2006)	Rachel Laurin (1961-2023)

Special thanks to my organ professor, Dr. Kola Owolabi, and to Nicholas Schefstad and Joel Stoppenhagen for being registrants and calcant.

Reyes Organ and Choral Hall, DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Friday, April 10, 2026, 4:30 p.m.

A.J. Lyon is a student of Dr. Kola Owolabi.
This is a degree recital for the Doctor of Musical Arts.

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Program Notes

All the repertoire on this program, in some way, exhibits characteristics of improvisation. Improvisation itself is an art form that is created spontaneously, and requires the performer to be completely present in the moment to produce an effective work. As such, this recital serves as a reminder to live fully in the moment. While the past and the future are certainly important, the present is the only time in which we are able to act and shape what lies ahead.

Prelude and Fugue in g minor, BWV 535

This is one of J.S. Bach's earliest prelude and fugues. The first version (given the catalog number BWV 535a) is found in the Möller Manuscript, compiled by his elder brother, Johann Christoph Bach. The prelude was originally only twenty-one measures and full of improvisatory gestures, suggesting it may have been composed on the spot as an introduction to the fugue. The fugue contained less decorative figuration and simpler voice leading. Bach would eventually return to this piece during his Leipzig years, developing both the prelude and fugue in substantial ways. He extended the prelude to nearly double its original length, and added more intricacies to the counterpoint in the fugue. Despite the changes he made to the piece years later, it is still clear that it was written by a spirited Bach in his youth.

Tre stycken för orgel

Lars Uno Sandén is a little known Swedish composer with a small output of works for organ, choir, and orchestra. He is also known for his improvisations, a few of which have been recorded. He studied organ with Nils Eriksson, Oskar Lindberg, and Otto Olsson. He spent much of his career as an organist and choir director at Linköping Cathedral in the Church of Sweden. It is clear that his improvisational style influenced this set of three pieces through their constant changes in meter and free-flowing folk-like melodies. There is a remarkable sense of clarity within them, yet they are not overly simplistic. Lush modal harmonies evoke the Scandinavian landscape—deep blue fjords, rugged mountains, and fog-shrouded forests.

Tiento No. 45, de medio registro de tiple de setimo tono

This piece comes from Correa's monumental collection of tientos, *Facultad Orgánica*. Tientos are a musical form which originated during the Renaissance that take their name from the Spanish verb *tentar*, meaning "to touch" or "to try." This reflects their improvisatory nature and exploration of musical ideas. In the preface for the collection, Correa himself writes about using rhythmic freedom in order to reveal to the listener the subtleties within the music. "Note the deliberate irregularities, freedom and dissonance, treatment and accompaniment. Note the embellished passage, the melodic line, the repetition and imitation, the passage now slow, now fast, now complex and intricate: the pleasant little morsel, the sweet treat, the little toy, and a thousand other tidbits that the eminent in art disclose each day" (Correa, *Facultad orgánica*, preface, trans. André Lash, p. 20).

Toccata in F Major, BuxWV 156

Stylus fantasticus is a prominent feature of Buxtehude's toccatas and is certainly present in this one. Typical elements include virtuosic, fast-moving gestures and sections that suddenly change character on a whim. When long strings of sixteenth or thirty-second notes appear, they are not to be played strictly in time, but rather with a sense of improvisatory freedom. From the very beginning, this piece bursts forth with fast moving scales and arpeggios that return throughout. Several fugal passages appear as well. Sections constantly switch meters from 12/8 to 4/4 keeping the listener on edge.

Lo stormire

For some time, I have followed the convention of titling my pieces with words in other languages that do not directly translate to English. As this piece was written for the Italian Positive Organ in Reyes Hall, I deemed it appropriate to choose a word from the Italian language. *Stormire* roughly translates to "leaves rustling in the wind." I considered the principles of contrapuntal writing much more consciously while writing this piece compared to my previous works, which was certainly influenced by the title I chose. It begins with one line, imitating a solitary current of wind. As the piece develops, voices are added and withdrawn, emulating the wind as it splits off into different paths and joins back together, weaving through the leaves of trees. Changes in time signature occur frequently, just as the wind flows wherever it pleases.

Toccata ottava

Frescobaldi's toccatas are known for their eclectic character, containing virtuosic flourishes as well as lyrical passages. He was primarily a church musician, serving his longest tenure at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. However, the toccatas are secular works that could be played on a variety of keyboard instruments. This toccata comes from Frescobaldi's *Toccate e partite d'intavolatura, Libro I*. Similar to how madrigals at the time would have been sung, Frescobaldi writes in his preface to the book that one should not adhere to a strict beat. Various *passi* may be taken at slower or faster tempos depending on the affect they convey.

Introduction et Passacaille sur un thème de Raymond Daveluy, Op. 44

Rachel Laurin was a prominent Canadian organist, teacher, and composer who recently passed away in 2023. She was influenced by French and German organ composers—Johannes Brahms and Max Reger being clear influences for this piece in particular. It was commissioned by David Storey for the reinstallation of the Casavant organ from the Église des Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens in Victoriaville, Quebec to St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland and premiered by Marvin Mills. The theme of the passacaglia is based on the main theme from Raymond Daveluy's Fourth Sonata for organ, who was Laurin's organ professor at the Montreal Conservatory. The introduction is taken up mostly by two giant pedal solos, which then decrescendos into the passacaglia. Laurin explores many striking and unconventional registrations throughout the variations. The coda then calls back to themes found in the introduction, bringing the piece to a rewarding conclusion.

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