

Craig Cramer, *organ*

Old South Church, Boston

Tuesday, June 24, 2014, 10:45 a.m.

Le mystère de Noël (1940)

Poème symphonique sous forme de chorals varies sur l'hymne de Noël "Jesu Redemptor omnium"

Auguste Fauchard

(1881–1957)

Introduction, Scherzo und Fuge über B-E-A-T-E (1993)

Toni Zahnbrecher

(b. 1959)

Prelude and Fugue on "O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid"

Ethel Smyth

(1841–1924)

Zweite Sonate d-moll, Op. 60 (1901)

Improvisation: *Allegro con brio (ma non troppo vivace)*

Invocation: *Grave con duolo (doch nicht schleppend) – Molto più mosso (Sehr bewegt) – Andante sostenuto (nicht schleppend)*

Introduction und Fuge: *Allegrissimo assai – Allegro energico*

Max Reger

(1873–1916)

Craig Cramer is represented by Penny Lorenz Artist Management.

Organ prepared by Jonathan Ambrosino.

Program Notes

Auguste Fauchard studied organ with Alexandre Guilmant and Charles-Marie Widor, and composition with Vincent d'Indy and Louis Vierne. An ordained priest, Fauchard was organist of the Cathedral in Laval, France, from 1927 until his death, in 1957. The seven variations of *Le mystère de Noël* are based on the Gregorian Christmas hymn "Jesu Redemptor omnium." Each of the variations is associated with the following texts:

Variation 1. The Divine Child: "For unto us a child is born."

Variation 2. The Shepherds: "And they came with haste."

Variation 3. The Virgin Mother: "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Variation 4. The Star: "And lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them."

Variation 5. The Prayer of Suffering: "Consider, creator of the world, that You have arrived to save us."

Variation 6. The Song of the Universe: "The stars in the heaven, the earth, and the sea greet Him with a new song."

Variation 7. The Hymn of Humanity: "Jesus, glory to You, now and for evermore!"

Toni Zahnbrecher is the director of music and organist at the Church of St. Willibald in Laim, Munich. He was educated in Regensburg and at the Musikhochschule in Munich, where he was a student of Klemens Schnorr. Zahnbrecher composed the *Introduction, Scherzo und Fuge über B-E-A-T-E* in honor of his wife, Beate, for the dedication of the new organ in St. Willibald, built by the Führer firm in 1993. The name "BEATE" is spelled out in the pitches B-flat, E, A, D, and E. The tri-partite *Introduction* includes a lyrical central section, framed by toccata writing. The *Scherzo* follows the traditional form of scherzo and trio; its brilliant and lithe writing is interrupted by a solemn section on the full Swell. The *Fuge* begins in a slow, grave manner before giving way to a faster section that gains great momentum and power. The piece closes as it began, with a recall of the opening toccata material.

English composer Ethel Smyth wrote six operas, a mass for chorus and orchestra, and orchestral, choral, chamber, and solo works. She enrolled briefly at the Leipzig Conservatory before studying composition privately with Heinrich von Herzogenberg. She traveled widely in Europe and became acquainted with the musical luminaries of the day, including Brahms, Clara Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Mahler, and Grieg. The prelude on "O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid" paraphrases the melody, while the fugue is a fully worked-out chorale motet.

Reger's prodigious output represents one of the most important bodies of work in the literature of the organ. As Helmut Wirth has written, "Reger was one of those composers who grew up under the influence of Wagner's music without following him slavishly. It would be difficult to assign him a specific place in the history of music: in some respects his unruly talent was ahead of its time, but it drew strength from a tradition which he was constantly trying to renew."

The *Zweite Sonate*, composed in 1901, is laid out in three movements, which suggest symphonic form. The *Improvisation* conforms strictly to sonata form, albeit with a severely truncated development section. The *Invocation* is an expressive slow movement that gradually builds to full organ before giving way to a sumptuous harmonization of the chorale "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her." The *Introduction und Fuge* represents a symphonic scherzo and fugal finale.

– Craig Cramer