

Rosalind Mohnsen, organ

St. Joseph Parish, Boston

Wednesday, June 25 & Thursday, June 26, 2014, 4:00 p.m.

Prelude in F Major

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel
(1805–1847)

S. Joseph Sponsi B.V.M.: Prélude à l'Introït
from *L'Orgue mystique, Cycle de Pâques*, Op. 56
Toccata on "Salve Regina" (1952)

Charles Tournemire
(1870–1939)
Everett Titcomb
(1884–1968)

Benedictus from *Zwölf Stücke für die Orgel*, Op. 59 (1901)
Scherzo from *Zwölf Stücke für die Orgel*, Op. 65 (1902)

Max Reger
(1873–1916)

Melody (Homage to Grieg)
from *Twenty-Four Progressive Studies for the Pipe-Organ*
Postlude from *Ten Progressive Pedal Studies*, L9.11–20

George Elbridge Whiting
(1840–1923)
George Whitefield Chadwick
(1854–1931)

Gavotte Pastorale

Frederick N. Shackley
(1868–1937)

Fugue in C Minor from *Four Compositions*, Op. 36

Horatio Parker
(1863–1919)

Herzlich thut mich verlangen

Johann Kimberger
(1721–1783)

Abstraction (alla Schönberg) from *Dreiunddreissig Portraits*, Op. 101

Sigfrid Karg-Elert
(1877–1933)

Trio in F

Johann Krebs
(1713–1780)

Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 4

W. Eugene Thayer
(1838–1889)

Maestoso

Andante con tenerezza

Theme and Variations on "Gott erhalt' gut Franz den Kaiser"

Organ prepared by Pelland Organ Company.

Program Notes

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel was the granddaughter of philosopher Moses Mendelssohn and older sister and mentor of the composer Felix. Her father, Abraham, managed an office of the family bank, founded in 1795, and existing under the name Mendelssohn & Co. in Berlin until 1938. In 1820, her father wrote to her, “Music will perhaps become Felix’s profession, while for you it can and must be only an ornament, never the basis of your being and doing.” As Jews who converted to Protestantism, they were eager to live according to convention, and public concerts and publication of music were not considered womanly activities. She composed more than four hundred pieces for many different media, served as a conductor, and developed the “character piece” before Felix. In 1829, she married the painter Wilhelm Hensel. The Prelude in F Major may have been written for her own wedding, as Felix was prevented from composing one. Manual changes will differentiate the chordal and imitative aspects of the piece.

Other than *noëls*, very few pieces in the organ repertoire relate to St. Joseph. *L’Orgue mystique* of Charles Tournemire, fifty-one offices of five pieces each for the church year, composed from 1927 to 1932, includes a suite for St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of the Universal Church, a Solemnity observed from 1870 to 1955, originally on the third Sunday after Easter. Inspired by chant and the monks of Solesmes, Tournemire was also influenced by a French mystic, Joséphin Sâr Péladan, and thus influenced Messiaen, Alain, Duruflé, and Langlais; Messiaen called him “the master of arabesque.”

Everett Titcomb, born in Amesbury, Massachusetts, served, from 1910 to 1960, at the Anglo-Catholic Church of St. John the Evangelist, a mission of the Society of the same name, devoted to social justice and serving the residents of the West End. Having studied at the Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes, in France, he was one of the pioneers of the rebirth of interest in chant and polyphony, and taught at New England Conservatory and Boston University. The Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*, actually a hymn, previously used at Vespers in the Pentecost season, is now a part of Compline. Titcomb’s Toccata develops both the first incise and the first two phrases of the chant in a metrical and majestic setting. Composed in 1952, the piece is dedicated to George Faxon (1913–1992), longtime organ professor at Boston University and organist of Trinity Church.

Max Reger, born in Brand, Bavaria, decided on a musical career after attending the 1888 Bayreuth Festival. Op. 59 was his last work composed in his native town of Weiden, in 1901, with all twelve pieces being composed in two weeks. They are his first character pieces for the organ. Op. 65 was composed in 1902, in Munich. Many composers were influenced by Reger, Hindemith attributing his compositional style to him, and Schoenberg considering him a genius.

Gilbert Chase referred to the music of the following four New England composers as “noble, pure, refined, dignified, earnest and agreeable.” Many of their smaller works fall into the category of character pieces.

George Elbridge Whiting, born in Holliston, Massachusetts, studied with William Best in Liverpool and Robert Radecke in Berlin. He served as head of the organ department at New England Conservatory and as organist of both the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in Boston’s South End, and Boston Music Hall. He dedicated the Twenty-Four Progressive Studies “to my friend, Francis H. Hastings of Hook & Hastings.”

George Whitefield Chadwick, born in Lowell, Massachusetts, studied with Whiting, and with Carl Reinecke and Salomon Jadassohn in Leipzig and Josef Rheinberger in Munich. He was a founding member of the Music Teachers National Association, taught at New England Conservatory, and served as the latter’s director from 1897 to 1930, inviting members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra to teach. He wrote *Harmony: A Course of Study*, which went through seventy-four subsequent editions.

Frederick N. Shackley, born in Laconia, New Hampshire, studied with Chadwick, and served at St. John’s Chapel of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge; Church of the Messiah, Auburndale; and, for many years, Church of the Ascension, Boston. He composed one hundred and twenty works and arranged works of Edward MacDowell for organ. *Gavotte Pastorale* is in ABACA form, with A as the gavotte, and the contrasting sections as pastorale.

Horatio Parker, born in Auburndale, Massachusetts, studied with Rheinberger in Munich and served for a short time as organist of Trinity Church, Boston. He joined the Yale faculty in 1893, and served as dean of music from 1904 to 1919. During his lifetime, he was considered the finest composer in the country.

Johann Kirnberger was a pupil of Johann Sebastian Bach for two years, admiring his music when it was no longer in fashion, and served as music director to Princess Anna Amalia. The chorale *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* is presented as a trio.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert, encouraged by Grieg to compose, was a performer on the *Kunstharmonium*, for which his early works were written. *Dreiunddreissig Portraits* was likewise written for the harmonium, from 1913 to 1933, and shows a keen understanding of style from Palestrina to Schoenberg.

Johann Ludwig Krebs also studied with Bach, and was considered next to him in proficiency. His works are of excellent quality, but seemed old-fashioned and complex in the era of *style galant*, and were not published until the twentieth century.

W. Eugene Thayer, born in Mendon, Massachusetts, studied with John Knowles Paine at Harvard and with Carl August Haupt and Johann Wieprecht in Berlin. In 1863, he participated in the inaugural concert for the Boston Music Hall organ. He had the first private teaching studio in Boston, from 1875 to 1878, and was editor of *Organists' Journal and Review*, America's first organ periodical, from 1874 to 1877. His five organ sonatas show Germanic influence in their classic structure, contrapuntal writing, and pedal virtuosity. First published in Germany during his student days, Sonata No. 3, actually a suite, comprises a fugue, a character piece, and variations on a patriotic tune, *The Emperor's Hymn*, composed in 1797 by Josef Haydn.

– Rosalind Mohnsen