

RICHARD PURVIS--THE SAN FRANCISCO ORGANIST

**James Welch, DMA, AAGO
AGO National Convention, June 2014
Boston, Massachusetts
www.welchorganist.com**

Richard Purvis

Born, San Francisco, August 25, 1913

Studied at Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, 1936-1940

Served in the Army during WW2, 1941-1945

Organist and Master of the Choristers, Grace Cathedral, 1947-1971

Died, San Francisco, December 25, 1994

***Richard Purvis, Organist of Grace*, by James Welch
Available at www.welchorganist.com (\$19.95), and at Amazon.com**

Richard Purvis--organist, choirmaster, and composer at historic Grace Cathedral-- became a San Francisco legend and (along with Alexander Schreiner, E. Power Biggs, and Virgil Fox) a national celebrity who made mid-20th century American organ music popular with the masses through records, recitals, and the press. The only book of its kind, James Welch's *Richard Purvis, Organist of Grace* is a major contribution to our understanding of the music, culture, and church politics of an era marked as much by social change as by a revolution in musical taste, technology, and compositional technique.

Uniquely among his colleagues, Purvis was first and foremost a writer and performer of original music for the organ, thrilling church and concert audiences everywhere with daring harmony, colorful registration, and evocative emotion of compositions that won him instant acclaim. Hollywood noticed, but Purvis turned down offers to leave Grace to write for the movies. Ed Stout, curator of instruments at the cathedral, famously remarked that Purvis wrote "film music for the Episcopal church." Child prodigy, conservatory virtuoso, prisoner of war--Purvis's life before Grace reads like a movie. Following his epic rise and fall at Grace, he continued to concertize, compose, and teach a new generation of organists in his own image: equally adept at playing church and theatre organs, unafraid to experiment--even with electronic organs--and trained to trust their ears, not just the page.

Richard Purvis, Organist of Grace, 508 pages, is lavishly illustrated with never-before seen photos and a wealth of documents and interviews. It chronicles Purvis's early life in the Bay Area, his years at The Curtis Institute, his military service in World War II, and his tempestuous tenure at Grace Cathedral, where he made the stones sing and crowds cheer. The book includes detailed chapters about Purvis as composer, recitalist, and teacher; complete lists of his published (and unpublished) organ and choral works; the story of his secret love for the theatre organ; and colorful anecdotes and reminiscences from those who knew him as a friend, teacher, and colleague. His legend continues--clarified, corrected, and completed--in this essential resource for organists, historians, and lovers of music that speaks to the heart.

PUBLISHED ORGAN WORKS OF RICHARD PURVIS

All Glory, Laud and Honor	Leeds, 1943
An American Organ Mass	Flammer, 1953
Prélude Solennel, Introit, Offertory, Interlude, Elevation, Communion, Carillon	
Andante Cantabile	Apogee Press, 1971
Chartres	Sprague-Coleman, 1946
Dialogue Monastique, for 2 organs	Apogee Press, 1972
Eleven Pieces for the Church Organist	MCA Music, 1957
Greensleeves, Spiritual, Chartres (Noël Varié), Gwalshmai, Kyrie Eleison, Vexilla Regis, Dies Irae, Romanza, Carol Rhapsody, Divinum Mysterium, Communion	
Five Baroquisms	Gentry, 1972
Air for Flute Stops, Andante Sostenuto, Les Fifres, Musette en Rondeau, Siciliano	
Five Classical Airs for Organ	Word Music Company, 1966
Rigaudon, Aria, Trumpet Tune, Arioso, Psalm XIX	
Five Classical Airs for Organ, Vol. II	Word Music Company, 1967
Trumpet Voluntary, Larghetto, Sketch in D Flat, Psalm XVIII, Trumpet Voluntary	
Five Classical Airs for Organ, Vol. III	Word, 1972
Trumpet Tune, Largo, Noel, Sicilienne, Caprice	
Five Folk Hymn Orisons for Organ	Sacred Songs, 1966
A Prayer of Aspiration, A Prayer for Guidance, A Prayer of Confidence, A Prayer of Consecration, A Prayer of Patriotism	
Five Pieces on Gregorian Themes	Leeds, 1942-43
Vexilla Regis, Dies Irae, Divinum Mysterium, Kyrie Eleison, Communion	
Four Carol Preludes	Leeds, 1944
Greensleeves, Spiritual, Chartres, Gwalshmai	
Four Dubious Conceits	Flammer, 1952
Cantilena, Les Petites Cloches, Nocturne (Night in Monterey), Marche Grotesque	
Four Prayers in Tone	M. Witmark & Sons, 1951
Repentance, Adoration, Supplication, Thanksgiving	
Gentle Moods (originally "A Cheerful Earfull")	Gentry, 1971
Autumn Soliloquy, Lilliburlero, Plaintive Blue, An Erin Lilt, Melody in Mauve	
Greensleeves	Leeds, 1944
Idyl (for Gaylord Carter)	Oliver Ditson, 1943
In Retrospect	Sonos 1984
A Joyous Procession, Rimembranza, Roundelay	
Introspection	Sacred Music Press, 1994
Leeds' Organ Selections by Richard Purvis,	Leeds, 1957
(same as Eleven Pieces for the Church Organist, MCA, 1957)	
Lyra Davidica	Leeds, 1943
Meditation on "Rockingham"	Fred Bock Music Company, 1985
Mixture IV	Flammer, 1970
Sarabande for a Day of Solemnity, Passapied for a Joyous Festival	
Novelette	Lorenz, 2008
Novelette III	Lorenz, 2005
Organ Music from Grace Cathedral	The Sacred Music Press, 1969
Cortège, Three Novelettes, Undulato, Toccata Marina, A Retrospection	
*The Organ Music of Richard Purvis, Vol. 1	H. T. FitzSimons, 2004
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, Gwalshmai, Greensleeves, Carol Rhapsody, Lilliburlero	
*The Organ Music of Richard Purvis, Vol. 2	H. T. FitzSimons, 2004
Romanza, Wedding March, Communion, Melody in Mauve, An Erin Lilt	

Partita on the Easter Chorale "Christ ist Erstanden" Prelude, Canzone, Capriccio, Lento, Toccata	M. Witmark & Sons, 1952
Romanza (for Roland Diggle)	Sprague-Coleman, 1943
St. Francis Suite Ascription, Hymn to the Moon, Earth Carol, Canticle of the Sun	J. Fischer & Bro., 1964
Seven Chorale Preludes Fantasia (Ton-y-botel), Pastorale, Canzona, Grand Choeur, Contemplation, Poeme Mystique, Toccata Festiva	Carl Fischer, 1949
Seven Folktone Poems for the Organ Of Moor and Fen, Brigg Fayre, Of Sea and Skye, A Highland Ayre, Of Banks and Lament, From the Hebrides	Sacred Songs, 1968
Solemn Music, A	H. W. Gray, 1971
Suite for a Musical Clock (Handel, arr. Purvis)	Flammer, 1952
Sylvan Idylle, A, (for Gaylord Carter)	Gentry, 1973
Three Carol Preludes Contemplation, Poème Mystique, Caravan of the Three Kings	Gentry, 1985
*Three Christmas Preludes Contemplation, Poème Mystique, Caravan of the Three Kings	Fred Bock, 2006
Three Fanciful Concepts Fête joyeuse, A Lamentation of Jeremiah, Rondo (for pedals alone)	Flammer, 1967
Three Pieces for Organ Prayer for Peace, Elegy, Capriccio (On the Notes of the Cuckoo)	J. Fischer, 1954
A Trio of Contrasts Pax vobiscum, Eklog, Fanfare	Flammer, 1965
Two Liturgical Dances Sarabande for a Day of Solemnity, Passepiéd for a Joyous Festival	Flammer, 1970
Undulato	Lorenz

* currently in print

PUBLISHED WORKS FOR ORGAN AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Larghetto Cantabile, for classical guitar and organ	Apogee Press, 1971
Lyra Davidica, for brass, tympani and organ	Leeds, 1943
Petit Concert Champêtre, organ/harp/harpsichord	World Library, 1972
Suite for Piano and Organ: From the Sierra Bell Prelude, Pastorale d'Été, Capriccio Espagnole, Harmonies du Soir, Scherzo	Gentry Publications, 1970

UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS FOR ORGAN (AND MULTIPLE ORGANS)

Deliusness [n.d.] Hommage à Frederic Delius, Fantasy for Organ and Harpsichord	
Kalevala Mist, 1984	
Melita Suite, 1978 Introduction and Theme, Maestoso Bravura, Scherzetto, Cantabile, Finale	
Soliloquy, 1991	
Symphonic Suite for Three Organs (1991) Fêtes Joyeux, Rushing Rivulet, Cancion Catalan, Tarantella-Valsante	

PUBLISHED RECORDINGS

1. Aeolian-Skinner Presents The King of Instruments, 1953

Volume V--The Music of Richard Purvis; Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California
Produced by the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company, Inc., Boston 25, Mass.

Partita on Christ ist Erstanden; Pastorale, Forest Green; Adoration; Divinum Mysterium;
Capriccio on the Notes of the Cuckoo; Introit; Elevation

2. A Richard Purvis Organ Recital in Grace Cathedral, Vol. I, 1956

High Fidelity Recordings, Inc., R-703

Trumpet Tune (Purcell); Arioso (J. S. Bach); Greensleeves (Purvis); Processional (Shaw);
Supplication (Purvis); Pavanne [sic] (Elmore; Cappricio [sic] on the Notes of the Cuckoo
(Purvis); Toccata (5th Symphony, Widor)

3. A Richard Purvis Organ Recital in Grace Cathedral, Vol. II, 1956

High Fidelity Recordings, Inc., R-704

Marche Grotesque (Purvis); Sheep May Safely Graze (J. S. Bach); Pièce Héroïque (Franck);
Cortège et Litanie (Dupré); Nocturne (Purvis); Les Petites Cloches (Purvis);
Adagissimo (Dupré); Toccata Festiva (Purvis)

4. Music For Christmas: Richard Purvis at the Organ in Grace Cathedral,

High Fidelity Recordings, Inc., R-705, 1959

Adeste Fideles; Lo, How a Rose; It Came Upon the Midnight Clear; In Dulci Jubilo [sic] (Dupre
(Dupré); Joy to the World; O Little Town of Bethlehem (Purvis arr.); O Little Town of
Bethlehem (Redner orig.); Cortège et Litanie (Dupré); Christmas Cradle Song (Purvis); The
First Noel; Carol Rhapsody (Purvis)

5. Richard Purvis at the Grace Cathedral Organ, 1969

Word Records, Waco, Texas, WST-9033-LP

Fanfare; Brigg Fayre; Les Petites Cloches; Greensleeves; Thanksgiving; Nocturne; Supplication;
Of Moor and Fen; The Cuckoo

6. The Organ Plays Golden Favorites

The Readers Digest Association, Inc., 1972

Aeolian-Skinner Organ, Symphony Hall, Boston

Serenade from "The Student Prince" (Romberg); March of the Toys (Herbert); Love Sends a
Little Gift of Roses (Openshaw-Cooke); Musetta's Waltz, from "La Bohème" (Puccini); My Heart
at Thy Sweet Voice, from "Samson and Delilah (Saint-Saëns); Grand March, from "Aïda" (Verdi)

Alexander Memorial Organ, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

Overture to Act III, from "Lohengrin" (Wagner); Clair de lune (Debussy); In a Monastery
Garden (Ketèlbey); Bridal Chorus, from "Lohengrin" (Wagner); Prize Song, from "Die
Meistersinger" (Wagner); Goin' Home (Dvorak-Fisher)