

# St. Cecilia Recital

ENDOWED BY DISTINGUISHED ORGANIST

MARIANNE WEBB

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Stephen Tharp, *organ*

The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston  
Friday, June 27, 2014, 8:00 p.m.

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**Final** from **Hommage à Igor Stravinsky** (1987)

**Naji Hakim**  
(b. 1955)

**Prélude** from **Trois Improvisations** (1912)

**Nadia Boulanger**  
(1887–1979)

**Organ Sonata**, Op. 86 (1960)

Andante—Allegro

Larghetto

Vivace

**Vincent Persichetti**  
(1915–1987)

**Fantasy for Flute Stops**, H. 222 (1934)

**Leo Sowerby**  
(1895–1968)

**Phantasie über den Choral “Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn,”** Op. 40, No. 2 (1899)

**Max Reger**  
(1873–1916)

– *Intermission* –

**Le Sacre du printemps** (1913)

*Performed from Stravinsky’s own version for piano four-hands*

**Igor Stravinsky**  
(1882–1971)

Part I

Part II

*Following the recital, the closing reception of the convention is at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel, Boston.*

*Organ prepared courtesy of Foley–Baker, Inc.*

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The ST. CECILIA RECITAL was established in 2007 through the generosity of Marianne Webb, professor of music and distinguished university organist at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, in gratitude to God for a lifelong career as a concert organist and educator. Miss Webb’s endowment, established in perpetuity, presents world-renowned concert organists in recital during the biennial National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists.

The 2014 St. Cecilia Recital is presented with the cooperation, generosity, and partnering efforts of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston.

## Program Notes

Lebanese-born Naji Hakim is one of today's most important representatives of the long tradition of French organists, composers, teachers, and improvisors. A student of Jean Langlais and Rolande Falcinelli, Hakim was first-prize winner at the prestigious international improvisation competitions at Haarlem, Beauvais, Lyon, Nuremberg, St. Alban's, Strasbourg, and Rennes. He served as organist of the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur, Paris, from 1985 until 1993, when he was appointed successor to Olivier Messiaen as organist of La Trinité Church, the post once held by Alexandre Guilmant. He also teaches at the Conservatoire Nationale de Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris. A versatile and accomplished performer and teacher, he is in demand at important festivals worldwide and remains highly sought after as a composer. Prior to studying music, he earned a diploma from the École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications, Paris.

Of this arresting and virtuosic movement—the only music by a living composer performed on tonight's concert—Hakim writes,

*Hommage à Igor Stravinsky* is a triptych which presents contrasted colors and dynamics, with short cyclical melodic and rhythmic motives inspired by Gregorian chant. The brilliant *Final* adopts a very contrasted and free symphonic-variations structure. Completed in Bayonne on August 8, 1987, the work was premiered by the author on November 25, 1987, at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Nadia Boulanger was one of the most influential musical forces of the twentieth century, as far as composition and teaching are concerned. Upon entering the Paris Conservatoire at age ten, she studied organ with Guilmant and Charles-Marie Widor and composition with Gabriel Fauré. Her own first composition student was her younger sister, Lile, a gifted musician in her own right who, in 1913, would win the prestigious Prix de Rome under Nadia's guidance. But perhaps Nadia's greatest living legacy remains a list of students who have become some of the most significant composers of our age, including Aaron Copland, Walter Piston, Roy Harris, Virgil Thompson, and, of the next generation, David Conte. Boulanger's *Prelude* in F Minor was published in the 1912 collection *Maîtres contemporains de l'orgue*. In a strict and discernable structure that is clear to the ear, the piece is scored for the foundation stops with the Hautbois. Thematic simplicity and modal harmonies dominate here.

Vincent Persichetti began piano lessons at age five, followed by studies in organ, tuba, and double bass. He became the organist at Philadelphia's Arch Street Presbyterian Church at age sixteen, and remained in the post for twenty years. After later studies at Combs College of Music and the Philadelphia Conservatory, he taught composition and theory at the Curtis Institute of Music, was appointed editorial director of the Elkan-Vogel, Inc. music publishing company, and was chair of the composition department at The Juilliard School of Music. His Organ Sonata was written in 1960 and premiered by Rudolph Kremer on December 28 of that year at Washington University in St. Louis. All thematic material used throughout the stern Andante-Allegro, haunting Larghetto, and arresting Vivace stems from the opening bars of the first movement.

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Leo Sowerby was educated primarily in Chicago, studying organ performance and theory, followed by three years of further schooling in Italy that resulted from becoming the first American to win the Prix de Rome composition prize. Upon returning to the U.S., he was professor of composition at the American Conservatory in Chicago, and also organist at St. James (Episcopal) Cathedral for more than forty years. He left Chicago in 1962 to help establish the College of Church Musicians in Washington, D.C. The famous Chicago painter, teacher, and author of children's books, Rainey Bennett, created a watercolor that would inspire Sowerby's three-part *Fantasy for Flute Stops* of 1935, marked "fairly fast and whimsically" at the outset. The piece is dedicated to Bennett.

Maximilian Reger was born in Brand, Upper Palatinate, Bavaria. An early and rigorous musical training with Hugo Reimann of Thuringia, with particular attention to the music of J.S. Bach, resulted in a rich compositional style and thorough mastery of counterpoint. Considered a Classicist-Romanticist in the tradition of Johannes Brahms, Reger represents the pinnacle of German Romantic organ music. In his choral fantasia on *Punish me not in thy anger*, he writes seven variations that depict the verses of the Protestant hymn text. His expectedly dense textures, dynamic contrasts, and idiosyncratic gestural implications are all in high form.

Little need be said about Igor Stravinsky's place in musical history. Far more relevant to this concert is the work at hand, the notorious ballet *The Rite of Spring*, whose original title, *Vesna svyashchennaya*, actually translates as "Sacred Spring." Opening night took place on May 29, 1913, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, with Pierre Monteux conducting a production choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky. The boos and hisses that were soon audible were likely a

response to the jagged movements of the dancers rather than to the music itself. In any case, the volume levels rose to engulf the music and reach such a near-riotous scene that the police were summoned. While Nijinsky apparently spent the afterglow dinner in tears, it is said that Sergei Diaghilev, who commissioned the work for the Ballets Russes, was absolutely thrilled with the evening. The score, which to this day retains its shock value, remains a premier test piece for most orchestras. In playing it on the organ as a solo, I have used the duo piano score, made by Stravinsky for rehearsal purposes, as a basis for keyboard adaptability in consultation with the full orchestral score as a reference for textures and orchestration.

– Stephen Tharp

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### **Marianne Webb**

Marianne Webb (1936–2013) maintained a balanced career as an internationally recognized performer and teacher. She was distinguished university organist at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), where she has taught organ and music theory since 1965. She built a thriving organ department and established, organized, and directed the nationally acclaimed SIUC Organ Festival (1966–1980), the first of its kind in the country. She sought funding for and designed the fifty-eight-rank Reuter pipe organ in Shryock Auditorium in 1969. The instrument is named in her honor. Together with her husband, David N. Bateman, she established the endowed Marianne Webb and David N. Bateman Distinguished Organ Recital Series.

Miss Webb was a graduate of Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, and obtained the Master of Music with highest distinction from the University of Michigan in 1959. Her teachers were Jerald Hamilton, Marilyn Mason, Max Miller, and Robert Noehren. In 1961, she was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to continue her studies in Paris with André Marchal. While in Paris, she served as supply organist for the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity (Episcopal). Further graduate study was with Arthur Poister at Syracuse University and Russell Saunders at the Eastman School of Music.

Among her numerous awards and honors, Miss Webb was given the American Guild of Organists (AGO) Edward A. Hansen Leadership Award in 2008, “in recognition of her stellar career as a concert artist and distinguished teacher, and in gratitude for her lifetime of leadership, devoted service, and extraordinary generosity to the AGO.” In 2009, she received the Avis Blewitt Award from the St. Louis AGO Chapter, and was selected as the alumni fellow by the College of Arts and Sciences at Washburn University for her “significant contribution as a highly regarded professional in her chosen field.”

As a concert artist and clinician, Miss Webb toured extensively throughout the United States, performing at AGO regional and national conventions, and for the national conventions of Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity and the Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians, as well as for local AGO chapters, churches, colleges, and universities. She recorded on the Pro Organo and Pleiades labels and was featured on American Public Media’s *Pipedreams*.

An active member of the AGO, Miss Webb served as a member of the national committees on Educational Resources, Chapter Development, and Membership Development and Chapter Support. She reestablished the Southern Illinois AGO Chapter in 1983, and served as its dean for six years. She is a member of the Clarence Dickinson Society and founded the AGO St. Cecilia Recital series in 2007. Through this magnanimous gift to the Guild, she Webb will be remembered in perpetuity for her musical artistry and excellence in teaching, and as a woman of quiet strength, courage, generosity, and abiding faith.