

St. Paul's Music
Presents

The Organ Music of
César Franck (1822-1890)

September 24, 2010
Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Trois Pièces (1878)

No. 1 Fantaisie, Robert Richter

No. 2 Cantabile: Non troppo lento, Marko Petričić

No. 3 Pièce Héroïque: Allegro maestoso, Robert Richter

Trois Chorales (1890)

No. 1 in E major: Moderato, Frank Boles

No. 2 in B minor: Maestoso, Christopher Schroeder

No. 3 in A minor: Quasi Allegro, Marko Petričić

Program Notes:

César Franck, born in Liège Belgium in 1822, began his musical training to be a virtuoso pianist. He later moved to Paris to continue his education at the Conservatoire where he entered the organ class of François Benoist. Thus began Franck's association with the instrument through which he is most noted as a composer, performer and improviser. Of his twelve published works, the last two sets of pieces, *Trois Pièces* (Fantaisie in A, Cantabile and Pièce Héroïque) and the *Trois Chorals* represent a mature composer at his pinnacle.

Aristide Cavallé-Coll built a large organ for the Palais du Trocadéro, the central building of the Universal Exposition of 1878 in Paris. This was the first organ ever installed in a French concert hall. Franck performed the thirteenth inaugural concert on this instrument for which he composed the *Trois Pièces*. Although Franck was at the height of his organ career as professor at the Paris Conservatoire and Titular Organist of St. Clotilde, a review of his performance was less than favorable. The *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* found the Fantaisie in A "a beautiful, very skillfully wrought piece, but all the details were not well brought out: the soft stops lacking presence and distinctness in the hall. The Cantabile in B Major, an impressive melody of noble character, was more effective thanks to the telling récit stop employed. The Pièce Héroïque, although

containing some excellent things, seemed less interesting than the other works." Nevertheless, the Cantabile and Pièce Héroïque have become two of his most frequently performed works. Throughout the *Trois Pièces*, the development of short melodic ideas, along with efforts to create formal large scale structures represent hallmarks of Franck's compositional style. It is through Franck's compositions and the organs built by Cavallé-Coll that the foundations for the development of both improvisation and composition in the French Symphonic style were laid. This style would later flourish with notable organist-composers such as Charles-Marie Widor, Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré.

The *Trois Chorals*, Franck's last compositions, were composed during the summer of 1890 in Nemours. Upon returning to Paris, he completed the works and performed them on the piano for his organ class at the Conservatoire with a student playing the pedal part '*a la main*.' Franck's health had been in decline since an accident the prior May in which his chest had been struck. In late October, after insisting on returning to St. Clotilde to complete work on the registrations for these pieces, he contracted a cold, which in turn led to pleurisy and ultimately his death in November of 1890.

The Chorals are arguably the summit of Franck's creative genius and demonstrate his masterful command of harmony and form. In referring to the E Major Chorale, Vincent D'Indy quotes Franck as saying "You will see the real chorale; it is not the '*chorale*' but something that grows out of the work." Choral No. 2 and No. 3 interestingly pay homage to musical forms of the past. Choral No. 2 uses a passacaglia form, in which a bass ostinato is used as the unifying theme of the piece. This ostinato is later transformed into a fugue. Choral No. 3 demonstrates qualities of the toccata. The opening figuration of this work is often noted for its similarity to the Prelude in A minor (BWV 543) of J.S. Bach, a piece with which Franck was familiar.

Performers:

Christopher Schroeder received undergraduate and graduate degrees in Organ Performance and Church Music from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Chris is leaving his current position at Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis after serving as Minister of Music for fifteen years. In October, he begins a new position as Minister of Music and organist at Towson Presbyterian Church in Towson, Maryland.

Marko Petričić holds D.M.A. and M.M. degrees from Indiana University where he studied with Dr. Christopher Young. He is a member of the music faculty at the University of Indianapolis where he has initiated a program in organ and sacred music, and he also taught applied organ lessons and organ literature at Indiana University. Marko Petričić is also a Music Associate/Organist at Northminster Presbyterian Church and Seminary Organist at Christian Theological Seminary. His CD recording of French Romantic music "French Accent" was released on Pro Organo label in May of 2009.

Frank Boles has been Organist and Associate for Music at St. Paul's Church since 1979. Under his direction, the church established, *St. Paul's Music*, an outreach music series; the St. Paul's Choir School and Choral Scholar Program for boys and girls ages eight and up; and Indianapolis Pro Musica, a chamber choir of trained singers in the Indianapolis community. Frank graduated from Pfeiffer College in Misenheimer, N.C. and completed graduate studies at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, N.J.

Robert Richter is the Assistant Organist and Choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He holds degrees in Organ Performance from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Arizona State University. Prior to moving to Indianapolis, Robert held the positions of Organ Scholar at Christ Church Bronxville NY, and Organ Fellow at the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany New York.