

MUSICAL PRAYER

JOSEPH ADAM

St. James Cathedral Director of Music & Cathedral Organist
Resident Organist, Seattle Symphony
Artist in Residence in Organ, the University of Washington School of Music

Scherzo, op. 2

Maurice Duruflé
1902–1986

Once little-known except amongst organists, Maurice Duruflé has gained a new audience in recent years by increasingly frequent performances of his *Requiem*. Duruflé was exceedingly self-critical as a composer, and left behind only about thirteen completed works, most for the organ. The *Scherzo* was composed in 1924 as Duruflé was completing his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. The introduction presents both the main theme and the accompanimental figures; these are developed throughout the work in an increasingly fervent manner, capped by a calm and reflective restatement of the theme.

from *Symphony No. 5 in F Minor, op. 42*
Allegro cantabile

Charles-Marie Widor
1844–1937

Widor's *Symphony No. 5* was written in 1878, and was inspired by the new Cavallé-Coll organ for the *Palais du Trocadéro* in Paris, located directly across the Seine from the widely-disliked novelty of the Paris Exhibition, the "eyesore" known as the Eiffel Tower. Widor gave the first performance of the completed symphony on October 19, 1879. Since that performance, it has remained Widor's mostly widely known and performed composition; the closing Toccata, along with Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*, is one of the most recognized works in the entire organ repertory. The Fifth Symphony was Widor's favorite amongst his ten symphonies; he performed it often, and recorded selected movements in 1930 (still vigorous at the age of 86!). This second movement is a charming "song without words" in ternary form, with the main theme presented on the oboe, and displays Widor's mastery of writing extended melodies.

from *Le Livre du Saint-Sacrement* (1986)
Prière après la Communion – Prayer after Communion

Olivier Messiaen
1908–1992

Olivier Messiaen was perhaps the most important composer writing for the organ in the 20th-century. He wrote thirteen major works or cycles for organ between 1928 and 1986, almost all of them musical manifestations of his own deeply-held faith. His own use of the organ was less in the French symphonic tradition than his own synthesis of the influences of orchestral writing of Debussy, Ravel and Saint-Saëns. In many ways, Messiaen was alone in being regarded in France as a composer/organist, and not organist/composer.

His works are perhaps the single most significant (certainly distinctive) body of repertoire for the organ apart from the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. The *Livre du Saint Sacrement* was his final work for the organ. The sixteenth of eighteen total movements, the Prayer after Communion is a calm, and rather sweet reflection of a prayer of St. Bonaventure: “My fragrance and my sweetness, my peace and my delight...”

from *Pièces de Fantaisie*, op. 53
Carillon de Westminster

Louis Vierne
1870–1937

Louis Vierne was Organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame from 1900 until his dramatic death at the console in the midst of the 1,750th recital of his career. One of his most often-performed compositions, the Carillon de Westminster commemorated a recital Vierne gave at the new Willis organ at Westminster Cathedral in 1924. Vierne gave the first performance on November 29, 1927 as the *Sortie* (procession) at the conclusion of a Forty Hours devotion at Notre-Dame. To the great consternation and surprise of the sacristans, both clergy and the assembled faithful remained in their places until the conclusion, so taken were they with Vierne’s new work.

JOSEPH ADAM was first appointed Cathedral Organist at St. James Cathedral in 1993, and was named Director of Music in 2018. There he leads a program that includes three adult choirs and three youth choirs that provides music for nearly 600 services annually, as well as an extensive concert series that presents a wide range of choral and organ programs.

A dedicated educator, for twenty years he taught organ and harpsichord as a faculty member at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. Continuing this work, he was recently named Artist in Residence in Organ at the University of Washington for the 2019-2020 academic year. As Resident Organist of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra since 2003, he performs regularly as a member of the keyboard section of the orchestra, undertaking organ, harpsichord, piano and celesta parts, as well as annual solo recitals.

His playing received international attention when he was awarded the First Prize in the St. Albans International Organ Competition in 1991, one of the most prestigious organ competitions in the world. His subsequent performances have included recitals in notable venues throughout Europe and America. During the coming year, he will be a part of a series of recitals at St. James Cathedral that will present performances of the complete organ works of Louis Vierne in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the composer’s birth. His performances this season include recitals at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Seattle, St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, and Stanford University. He recently gave performances of the Poulenc Concerto and Respighi Suite for Organ and Strings with the North Carolina Symphony at the new Cathedral of the Holy Name of Jesus in Raleigh.

Joseph Adam was educated at The University of Iowa, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Washington, and concertizes as a member of the Windwerk Artists cooperative.