

JOSEPH ADAM

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

Passacaglia in D Minor, BuxWV 161

Dieterich Buxtehude
(c1637–1707)

Born around 1637, mostly likely in Helsingborg, now part of Denmark, Buxtehude became the dominant organist in North Germany at the end of the 17th-century. After an early appointment in Helsingør, he became organist and *Werkmeister* (keeper of the tower clock) at St. Mary's in Lübeck, an important Hanseatic seaport, in 1668. There he influenced and taught an entire generation of musicians, including the young Johann Sebastian Bach, who travelled more than 200 miles by foot to make the acquaintance of Buxtehude. This *Passacaglia* opens with a four-measure ostinato bass line. Four sections, each with seven variations, follow, displaying the kind of improvisational figuration that every baroque keyboardist cultivated.

Fantasia in G Major, BWV 572

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Without doubt, the young Bach's meeting with Buxtehude proved to be a profound influence upon his work as a composer; however, Bach was a genius at adopting various national trends and styles, and incorporating essential features into his own inimitable compositional manners. The *Fantasia in G Major*, also known as the *Pièce d'orgue* (Organ Piece), underscoring its debt to the organ music that Bach had learned through his study of French baroque masters such as Raison, de Grigny, and d'Anglebert. The tripartite work begins and ends with virtuoso figural writing, but at its heart lies a grand, dense, and calmly flowing section in five voices.

Symphony No. 3 in E Minor, op. 13, no. 3
Adagio

Charles-Marie Widor
(1844–1937)

Only a few years after his appointment as *Organist titulaire* to the great Cavaillé-Coll organ at the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris in 1870, Charles-Marie Widor published the first four of ten eventual *Symphonies* for organ, multi-movement compositions that were without precedent in the repertoire for their emotional range, let alone length and complexity. Though this first group often betrayed the influence of the salon and the pomp of the Second Empire, the *Symphony No. 3* stands apart with an unusual gravity and seriousness. This lovely movement is a canon in two voices between the accompaniment on the *voix célestes* and the solo line, assigned to a hauntingly *flûte harmonique*.

Sir George Thalben-Ball was born in Australia, but lived in England for most of his life, becoming well-known as something of a “showman” recitalist in the grand late Victorian/Edwardian style. He became Director of Music at The Temple Church in London, as well as City Organist at Birmingham Town Hall, and his name is still held with great respect by organists. Perhaps Thalben-Ball’s best-known work, the dedication of *Elegy* to Walford Davies demonstrates the esteem and affection in which Thalben-Ball held his predecessor at The Temple Church. Originally improvised at the conclusion of a broadcast Evensong, Thalben-Ball’s work takes the outline and characteristic intervals of Davies’ own *Solemn Melody*, making something quite fresh and affecting from them.

*Twelve Gospel Preludes*William Bolcom
(b. 1938)

What a friend we have in Jesus!

Seattle native William Bolcom began musical study in piano and composition at the age of eleven at the University of Washington School of Music. He completed his study at Stanford University and Mills College; his composition teachers included the famous French composers Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen. Bolcom was professor of composition at the University of Michigan from 1973–2008. His extensive compositions reflect a wide variety of musical interests, including ragtime, early 20th-century operetta and popular song, and include four operas, numerous works for piano, chamber music, and orchestra. His *Twelve New Etudes for Piano* won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1988. Bolcom wrote the *Gospel Preludes for Organ* in the early 1980s; they are a stylistic fusion of traditional gospel improvisation and more formal compositional techniques.

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. He continues this work at the University of Washington as Artist in Residence in Organ at the University of Washington for the 2019-2020 academic year. Resident Organist of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra since 2003, he performs regularly with the orchestra.

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. 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.

