

# BRUCE E. LUDWICK, JR., ORGAN

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023, AT 4:00PM

— PROGRAM —

*Toccata in F*, BuxWV 156

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637–1707)

*Suite du Premier Ton*

Jean-Adam Guilain (1680–a. 1739)

I. Plein-jeu II. Trio III. Duo IV. Basse de Trompette V. Récit VI. Dialogue  
VII. Petit Plein-jeu

*Symphonie No. 2* (1902)

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

I. Allegro II. Choral III. Scherzo IV. Cantabile V. Final

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## THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

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CHARLES MATHEWS, ORGAN SCHOLAR



## ABOUT THE MUSIC

**Dietrich Buxtehude's** Lübeck had been a free imperial city for over 400 years and would retain those privileges for centuries more. The pipe organ was an ideal vehicle for a little “bling” for a city—a trend in Northern Europe, as Sweelinck and others had obligations that were mostly civic, despite working officially in churches. The *Marienkirche* was Buxtehude's home for much of his career. It certainly satisfied the prominence need of the city merchants, situated as it is on the highest point in the city. Constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, it is considered the first of the major “brick Gothic” churches that pepper the Baltic region. Most of all, though, it was the religious symbol of the city during a milieu in which Christianity was the major part of the cultural fabric. In Buxtehude, the city found a similarly exalted composer-musician. Born in what is now Sweden, Buxtehude was a prolific composer of music for all genres. The **Tocatta in F** is the larger of his two organ toccatas in that key; it is similar to many of the North German *praeludia* in its basic *stylus fantasticus* form (virtuosic episodes interspersed with fugal or imitative sections), but (like its counterpart BuxWV 155) is distinguished by a greater fidelity and complication in the fugal writing that foreshadows the achievements of J.S. Bach. The form is ideal for showing off an excellent pipe organ: we hear the *organ pleno* (the manual and pedal flue choruses, plus pedal reeds), colorful flutes, “consort stops” (such as color reeds, in this case the *voix humaine*...sounding very not French, and the *quintaton*, a flute with a pronounced third harmonic), the gorgeously-voiced and vocal principals, and finally larger registrations with the organ's 32' stops. It is a great vehicle to show Noack Op. 164 is a French organ that speaks other languages fluently!

Another instance of a foreigner finding a home in a new land is **Jean-Adam Guilain**. Appropriately, he is known by his French name, as his works are completely French in inspiration, and he lived in that country for a large part of his life. A student of famous teacher and *organiste du roi* Louis Marchand, he certainly had the best pedigree, and Guilain dedicated his *Livre d'Orgue* to his teacher in gratitude. It is a tragedy that only one of his two organ books survive: the other is lost: we are left with these gems built on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> church modes which fortunately supply a veritable cornucopia of the late French Baroque organ school's color and compositional form. In this style, the registrations (or sounds used on the organ) are intimately associated with the formal structure of the piece. A *Plein Jeu* is almost always a large French *overture* played on the eponymous *plein jeu* (the massed principal choruses of the organ). The *Duo* and *Trio* movements have a little more latitude in registration. You will hear them played on the contrasting *jeu de tierce* of the organ, and then on the mutations in dialogue with the *cromorne*. The *Récit* is heard on the smaller, more intimate choir *cornet* and is very lyric. It mimics a vocal aria as heard in Charpentier, Lully, and many other contemporaries. It is on the organist to make it sing! A brilliant *Dialogue* on the *grand jeu* follows. French reeds possess a bright, brassy color that functions magnificently in an acoustic like ours, though many so-called French organs in the US have a harsh, violent character. We are very fortunate here to have an instrument with all of the brilliance and none of the violence! The final movement of these suites is almost always a *petit plein jeu*, played on the *choir/positif* chorus, and this is no exception. It is a quiet *sortie* that reminds us things were a bit less loud in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century!

While the organ here at St. Paul's is admirable at playing these earlier styles, it is really designed as an ideal vehicle for slightly later music of the French school. **Louis Vierne's Second Symphony** is one of the masterpieces of this French Romantic organ school. Vierne was born with congenital cataracts that made him nearly blind; while subsequent surgery would improve his vision slightly, this was a burden he carried his entire life. A child prodigy, he was the most brilliant French organist of his generation. A student of Franck and Widor at the Paris *Conservatoire*,

he would serve as assistant to the latter and his successor Guilmant in the organ class there. Sadly, he was passed over when the professorship opened. He did have the consolation of remaining the *organiste titulaire* of Notre-Dame-de-Paris for over 30 years, albeit with an organ in disrepair for most of his tenure (at no fault of his own). A prodigious recitalist, he performed all over the world to raise funds for the organ's restoration. He was uniformly adored by his students as a kind, understanding, and excellent teacher who imparted the wisdom of his own excellent mentors. His compositions, however, are his greatest legacy, and his organ symphonies are the apogee of this genre. The First Symphony is brilliant, but (by the composer's admission) derivative. Symphony 2 is where we first hear Vierne's unique compositional voice and process. The work is united by cyclical form, a technique originating in the Classical period. Liszt used it and transmitted to Franck, from whom Vierne learned. In the initial movement, the themes are presented and developed in various ways with contrasting moods and modes. There is a lot of "math" involved in making this all work, especially when the themes are combined, but it is brilliant. The first theme is angular and heard in the first notes of the *Allegro*; the second theme, more pastoral, is introduced first when things "quiet down" in the same movement. It begins the *Choral*, as well, a movement that is a clear homage to similar works by Franck and Widor but developed in Vierne's own style. The pedal presents the melody, followed by a harmonized statement on the acidic *gambe*. This progresses to a turbulent minor key variation, and so this similar struggle continues until a triumphant conclusion (an ending shared with the first movement, albeit in less virtuosic style). The *Scherzo* is a gossamer thread draped over the entire symphony: the flutter of harmonic flutes over the pedal melody (taken from the second theme) is effervescent. Toward the end of the movement, we hear the first theme in a sort of humoresque—a welcome contrast to its presentation in darker form elsewhere. The *Cantabile* begins with a smoky, exotic statement on the 16' flute, 8' string, and 4' harmonic flute of the Swell, reminding us that even Debussy commented on the amazing colors of this symphony at its premiere! The first theme is then presented by the choir *Clarinette* 16', while things progress through the cherished colors of the great builder Cavaille-Coll: strings, harmonic flutes, all in combination. The *Final* brings all themes together through intensive development sections with just a bit more virtuosity than the first movement. There are many virtuosic, unexpected turns that eventually lead to a triumphant coda in the parallel major key of E major. We hear Vierne here at his best: good overcomes evil, positive struggle is superior, and the composer's melancholy gives way to greater beauty.

—Notes by the recitalist

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**Bruce E. Ludwick, Jr.** is Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral of Saint Paul. He had the privilege to serve in a similar position at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in St. Louis, Missouri. Ludwick has served Roman Catholic, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalian, and Church of the Brethren congregations in Missouri, Texas, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, and has concertized in these states as well. Nationally, he has served as organ faculty or organist for many conventions, most recently the 2021 CMAA Colloquium. A native West Virginian, Ludwick earned the Master of Music in Organ Performance with Emphasis in Sacred Music at the University of Texas at Austin where he studied with the late Gerre Hancock, Organist and Master of the Choristers *Emeritus*, St. Thomas Church, 5th Ave. He earned the Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance and Music Education from West Virginia University as a student of William Haller. He benefited from long-term organ study with the late David Craighead and Alan Lewis; his conducting study was with Kathleen Shannon. Bruce lives in Birmingham with his wife, Erin, and sons Joseph, Peter, Thomas, and Maximilian (Max).

# THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

## The Anna Catharine Grace Memorial Pipe Organ

Noack Organ Company Opus 164

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### II - GREAT

Double Diapason	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Viola	8'
Harmonic Flute	8'
Chimney Flute	8'
Principal	4'
Open Flute	4'
Twelfth	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> '
Fifteenth	2'
Seventeenth	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub> '
Fourniture II	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> '
Mixture IV	1'
Cornet III	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> '
Trumpet	8'
Tremolo	

### I - CHOIR

Quintaton	16'
Diapason	8'
Gedackt	8'
Viola	8'
Unda Maris	8'
Principal	4'
Chimney Flute	4'
Nasard	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> '
Fifteenth	2'
Nachthorn	2'
Tierce	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub> '
Larigot	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> '
Mixture III-IV	1'
Clarinet	16'
Cornocean	8'
Cromorne	8'
Chamade (TC)	8'
Tremolo	

### III - SWELL

Bourdon	16'
Diapason	8'
Harmonic Flute	8'
Gamba	8'
Celeste	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Prestant	4'
Traverse Flute	4'
Octavin	2'
Mixture IV	2'
Bassoon	16'
Harmonic Trumpet	8'
Oboe	8'
Vox Humana	8'
Harmonic Clarion	4'
Tremolo	

### PEDAL

Subbass	32'
Contrabass	16'
Subbass (ext.)	16'
Bourdon (from SW)	16'
Open Bass	8'
Stopped Flute	8'
Octave	4'
Contre Bassoon	32'
Bombarde	16'
Trombone (ext.)	16'
Bassoon (from SW)	16'
Trumpet (ext.)	8'
Clarion	4'