

## PROGRAM

### *Toccatina in E Major, BWV 566*

J. S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

The *Toccatina in E Major* is an early work of Bach and a very clear indication of the composer's indebtedness to the multi-sectional preludia of his precursor Dietrich Buxtehude. While this four-movement fantasy may lack the contrapuntal sophistication of Bach's mature works, it more than makes up for it in radiant momentum.

### *Diptyque* (1930)

Olivier Messiaen  
(1908-1992)

#### *Essay on earthly life and blissful eternity*

Messiaen may have been the most original voice in the organ world of our era: it is certainly doubtful that anyone has contributed more than he to a reassessment of the role of the 20th century organ in the realms of composition, liturgy and theology. *Diptyque* is a substantial work in two parts. In it, the composer sets out to describe, in his own words, "earthly life, with its useless agitations (in part one) and Paradise (in part two)." Messiaen continues: "The two parts use the same theme transformed. Earth: theme in C minor and in perpetual motion (first development), theme in G minor in augmentation (second development), theme in F minor and in E minor (third development), theme in C minor in augmentation in canon at the octave. Heaven: it is the same theme, but in the major key, very slow, using the second 'mode of limited transposition' -- grand, ecstatic phrase which evokes the calm of the celestial city, and this 'immovable light of joy and peace' alludes to the *Imitation of Christ* (a book by Thomas à Kempis, German ecclesiastic and writer, 1380-1471)."

### *Orgelsonate, Op. 18/II* (1939)

Hugo Distler  
(1908-1942)

#### *In three movements*

Distler was arguably the finest composer of German church music in the first half of this century. He lived during a period of far-reaching developments in Lutheran worship and church music and in German organ design. In music composition, the emotional freedom of Late Romanticism was giving way to a more objective and contrapuntal approach. Similarly, the "organ reform movement" of this time gave birth to the neo-Baroque instrument, sparser in texture and more suited to the early organ repertoire than its Romantic counterpart. Together, these two forces promised all the dryness of Protestant asceticism. At the hands of Distler, however, leanness became playfulness and veneration of the past led to expressive modern utterance. These creative transformations are in exuberant abundance in the *Orgelsonate*, the composer's last major organ work.

## About the Artist

**Bruce Neswick** is the Director of Music at St. Albans School for Boys and National Cathedral School for Girls, both in Washington, DC. He is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University and of the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, and his teachers have included Charlotte Clayton, David Dahl, Margaret Irwin-Brandon, Gerre Hancock, and Robert Baker and Lionel Rogg.

A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, Mr. Neswick has performed at several regional and national conventions of the Guild and has served the Guild as a chapter dean, a regional education coordinator, a member of the national nominating board and as a member of the improvisation competition committee. He is the winner of three first prizes in organ improvisation -- from the 1989 San Anselmo Organ Festival, the 1990 American Guild of Organists' National Convention in Boston and the 1992 Rochette Concours at the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland.

Mr. Neswick has served as Organist-Choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Kentucky, Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Geneva, Switzerland, and St. Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, New York. He is very active in the field of church music and is in frequent demand as a choral clinician with the Royal School of Church Music, for whom he has conducted several courses for boy and girl choristers. He has served on the faculties of several church music conferences and this summer will teach at Master Schola, Westminster Choir College Summer Session, the Montreat Conference and a regional convention of the American Guild of Organists in Birmingham, Alabama.

Mr. Neswick has composed for several performers and churches throughout the United States, and his organ and choral music is published by Paraclete, Augsburg-Fortress, Selah, Vivace, Plymouth and St. James' presses. He served as a consultant to the Episcopal Church's *Hymnal 1982*, in which some of his hymnic material appears.

Mr. Neswick is represented by Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists.

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Copies of two recordings featuring Bruce Neswick are available at this performance. One is a CD recorded on the new Richards-Fowkes organ at St. Barnabas Church in Greenwich, CT. It includes music by Scheidemann, Bach, Distler, Sowerby, Hancock and Neswick, and is available for \$15. The other CD, also selling for \$15, is entitled *More Great Hymns of the Church* and features the choirs of St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, NY in hymn arrangements by Mr. Neswick and others.

#### *Organ built by Gabriel Kney*

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