

LENTEN CONCERT SERIES

March 8, 2018 • 12 Noon

Douglas Murray, organ

Improvised Symphony on Lenten and Easter Themes

- I. Sonata-allegro
- II. Slow
- III. Scherzo
- IV. Maestoso-Fugue



About the art of Improvisation

Until printed music became readily available in the nineteenth century, organists such as Tallis, Purcell, and Bach improvised extensively at every liturgy, and pianists such as Mozart, Chopin and Liszt spontaneously made new music at every concert. Though some were better than others, all complete harpsichordists, organists, and pianists could improvise, that is, could instantly compose. Composers such as Buxtehude and Couperin and even J. S. Bach wrote down their keyboard music primarily as models to help students develop their *own* pieces: these men never imagined that one day musicians would just play the notes before them on the page. No one considered improvisation--even of fugues--a special gift, known to only a few adepts. The French and--to a lesser extent--the Germans have maintained this art, but in the last two decades, American exponents of improvisation have risen to prominence.

Before the concert, the music staff of West End provided five familiar Lenten and Eastertide themes. From these themes, Dr. Murray will spontaneously create a four movement symphony.

Douglas Murray, a native of North Carolina, is Professor of English at Belmont University, where he has taught since 1987. He considers Stanley Scheer, Peter Fyfe and Wilma Jensen to be his special musical mentors. He has worked with many of the best American improvisateurs: Bill Porter (Eastman, Yale and McGill), the late Gerre Hancock (St. Thomas, Fifth Avenue, NYC), Jeff Brillhart (Yale and Bryn Mawr Presbyterian), Rick Ericson (Holy Trinity, NYC and Christ the King, Houston), and Pamela Ruiters-Feenstra. Prof. Murray participated and placed in the National Competition in Organ Improvisation in 2012 (3rd place) and 2014 (2nd place) and is a finalist in the Kansas City NCOI in July, 2018. Since, 2014, he has been organist at the Second Presbyterian Church in Nashville.

Still to Come in the Lenten Concert Series

March 15 **Woosug Kang**, organ

March 22 **Joshua Coble**, organ

Each half-hour concert begins at noon in the sanctuary.

Following the concert, lunch is available at 12:30 p.m. in McWhirter Hall for \$10.

Lunch requires a reservation. Register online at westendumc.org/lentenconcerts or call the church at 615.321.8500 by noon on Wednesday, one day prior to each concert.



Beethoven Mass in C Major
Sunday, March 25 • 4:30 p.m.
West End Chancel Choir & Orchestra
The Choirs of Lipscomb University
Elliston Trio, guest artists
Earl Rivers, guest conductor



West End United Methodist Church
2200 West End Avenue • Nashville, Tennessee 37203 • 615.321.8500