

LENTEN CONCERT SERIES
February 27, 2020 • 12 Noon

Wilma Jensen, organ

Grande Pièce Symphonique, Op. 17

César Franck
(1822-1890)

- I. Andantino serioso – Allegro non troppo e maestoso
- II. Andante – Allegro – Andante
- III. Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Beaucoup plus largement que précédemment

The *Grande Pièce Symphonique*, Opus 17, a very early work, is unlike any other of Franck's compositions. It is the longest organ work and is motivic and fragmented, sometimes with multiple phrases, followed by rests and fermatas. It can be described as sounding like a long improvisation. Written in 1860-62, it can be thought of as a symphony for solo organ.

The symphonic school of the nineteenth century French organ composition was encouraged by the organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811-1899). His company built organs in France from about 1840 until about 1900 and exerted much influence upon the writings of such composers as Franck, Widor, Guilmant, Gigout, and Vierne. The manual divisions of these organs are dominated by brilliant reeds but include other distinctive stops such as harmonic flutes, strings, and compound stops such as mixtures. Gradual crescendos and diminuendos became more easily manipulated by the use of coupling devices.

Franck was organist in Paris at the Basilica of Sainte Clotilde for thirty-one years where he presided over one of the best known organs built by Cavaillé-Coll. The *Grande Pièce Symphonique*, Opus 17, is a major work in three large movements. It is notable for the cyclical use of thematic material, a practice favored by other composers of the time, most especially Liszt. After a lengthy introduction, a pedal solo presents the principle theme followed by a dignified, legato second theme. The movement closes softly after a bridge passage. The lyric second movement (Andante) is in three sections. The first and third parts in B major have a stately melody which, in the first section, is treated in short echo phrases. The middle section in B minor takes the style of a scherzo.

An extended interlude incorporates four different themes from the preceding two movements to introduce the final movement. Here Franck presents the principle theme from movement one in parallel major over a virtuosic pedal part. A fugue brings the work to a noble conclusion.

Wilma Jensen is a well-known as an outstanding recitalist, church musician, and teacher. As Professor of Organ at Indiana University, among other schools, she has shaped a generation of outstanding organists. Her concert career has taken her throughout the U.S. and around the world, including tours of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, France, Poland, England, and The Netherlands.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, she was a pupil of Catharine Crozier and Harold Gleason. Jensen is the Choirmaster/Organist Emerita at St. George's Episcopal Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where she served for nineteen years. She has made critically acclaimed recordings, both as an organ soloist and in the role of conductor with the St. George's Choir. Under her direction, the St. George's Choir was invited to sing for the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and an extended tour in Europe.



Still to Come in the Series

- March 5 **Matthew Phelps**, piano
- March 12 **Sally Ahner**, soprano
- March 19 **Elizabeth Smith**, organ
- March 26 **Nicholas Bergin**, organ
- April 2 **Andrew Risinger**, 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 \$11. **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.



Lenten Choral Concert

Music of Haydn, Handel, and American Composer Dan Forrest

Sunday, March 8 • 4:30 p.m.

West End UMC Chancel Choir & Orchestra

Matthew Phelps, conductor

West End United Methodist Church

2200 West End Avenue • Nashville, Tennessee 37203 • 615.321.8500