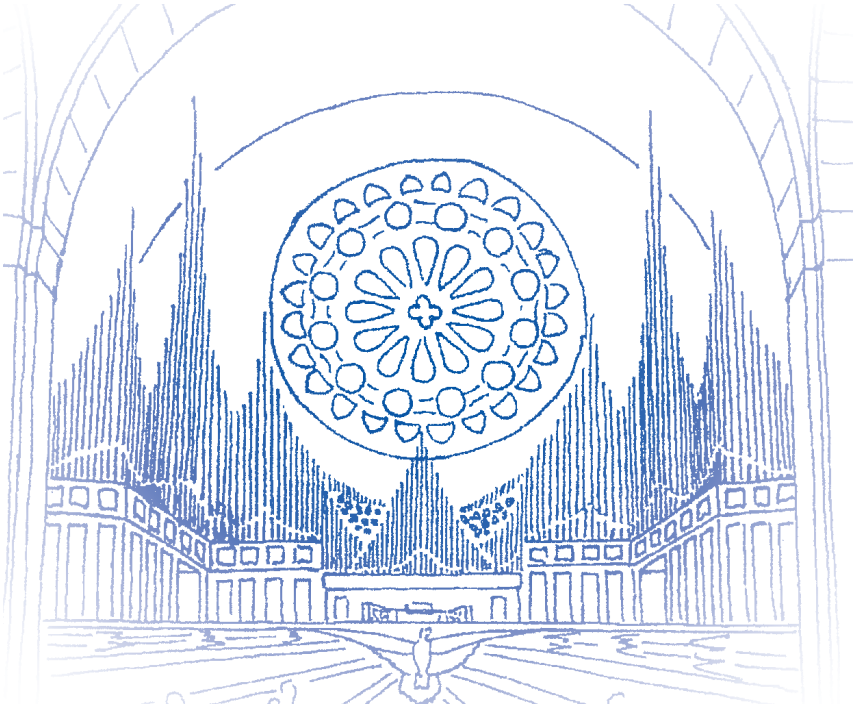
Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception



Octave of Easter Concert

Eric Plutz

Organist

Six o'clock in the evening

7 April 2024

Carillon Recital

half past five in the afternoon

Robert Grogan
carillonneur

Haec dies (This is the day)	Leonin *(c1140-c1201)*
Quasimodo geniti infantes (Introit for Easter 2)	Heinrich Isaac *(1450-1517)*
Surrexit pastor bonus (after Orlando di Lasso) from the *Keyboard Tablature Book*	Bernhard Schmid the Elder *(1520-1593)*
Christus resurgens (à3)	Orlando di Lasso *(1532-1594)*
Alleluia! Post dies octo (After eight days)	William Byrd *(c1540-1623)*
Regina caeli laetare from the *Carillon Book, Brussels, 1648*	Theodore de Sany *(1599-1658)*
Victimae paschali laudes	Marc-Antoine Charpentier *(1643-1704)*
O filii et filiae (Ye sons and daughters)	Clément Loret *(1833-1909)*
Eastertide Vespers hymn: Ad coenam Agni providi	Chant Mode VIII

Robert Grogan, Basilica Carillonneur (and Organist Emeritus), was first appointed to the National Shrine in 1964, becoming Organist in 1976. Upon retirement from his full-time position at the Basilica he was honored with knighthood in the papal order of St. Gregory the Great for his contributions to the art of sacred music. He has served as Dean of the District of Columbia chapter of the American Guild of Organists and as Chair of the DCAGO Foundation. His compositions for carillon, for organ and for choir have been published by the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, H. W. Gray (Belwin/Mills), and E. C. Schirmer, and his recordings on the Basilica's keyboard instruments have appeared on Vista, Gothic, Musical Heritage Society and other labels.

The recital is played on the **Knights' Tower Carillon of Fifty-Six Bells**, manufactured under a joint contract by the Foundries of Les Fils De Georges Paccard of Annecy-Le-Vieux, France, and Petit and Fritsen, Ltd., Aarle-Rixtel, Holland.

Organ Recital

six o'clock in the evening

Eric Plutz
organist

Please hold applause until the conclusion of the program.
All are welcome to greet the artists in the Narthex following the recital.

Third Sonata — Gerald Near *(b. 1942)*

Allegro ma non troppo
Adagio e espressivo
Allegro moderato

Dedicated to Eric Plutz, the **Third Sonata** was published in 2020. The first movement is built on two ideas. The first of these, in a buoyant 6/8 with open harmonies, is found at the beginning, middle, and conclusion of the movement. An echoing fanfare motive permeates these sections. In between are more lyrical sections, in 2/4. Hints of bi-tonality are throughout, whereby it appears the music is in two keys at once. The lyrical second movement highlights two sounds: a flute and string celeste. Starting in the key of D major, Mr. Near moves to the key of E major for the central section of the movement, returning to D major for the conclusion. Throughout this movement are phrases that, while not in strict canon, are imitative. Drawing on long singing lines, Mr. Near gives the impression, in this movement, of an experienced improvisor at work. The last movement, in the Lydian mode, repeats rhythmic motives from the first movement, but this time with fully-formed triadic chords. A prominent partner is an increasingly lengthy series of running sixteenth note scales that culminates in the pedals at the conclusion. The Third Sonata was reviewed in the November 2022 edition of *The American Organist* magazine, and reviewer Jonathan B. Hall said in part, "The compositional craftmanship is excellent; the musical style modern and modal, yet grounded in tradition; the audience impact probably very positive. Overall, a piece of music that is classic without stuffiness, and modern without silliness. A beautiful blend of old and new – just what the doctor ordered."

Passacaglia, BWV 582 — Johann Sebastian Bach *(1685-1750)*

Bach's well-known **Passacaglia** is long said to be an early work of the composer, since copies of it appeared in collections with other youthful works, however, recent research suggests otherwise. Indeed, the piece is as brilliant, complex and profound as any of Bach's later works. The eight-measure theme, in 3/4 time, is played in the pedal alone, after which twenty variations follow, without break. They fall into three large groups: nos. 1-12, 13-15 (without pedals), and 16-20. The theme is present in some form during each variation: after ten variations with the theme in the pedals, it moves to the manual voices for five variations, becoming increasingly broken up. The theme returns solidly to the pedals with variation 16. The Fugue, which follows, has as its subject the first four bars of the passacaglia

theme. It is accompanied by not one, but two countersubjects which work their way through all voices. In a real sense, the piece may be seen either as a single set of twenty-one variations, beginning with an unadorned statement of the theme and ending with a climactic fugue on it; or as a set of twenty variations with its own unity and organic growth, followed by a fugue of nearly the same length, using the theme as its subject. Indeed, it may be that Bach intended the fugue, lengthy and complex as it is, to offset the unrelenting C minor of the twenty variations that precede it.

Cinqième Symphonie pour Grand Orgue, Op. 47 (1924)

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

(dedicated "à mon élève et cher ami Joseph Bonnet")

I. Grave
II. Allegro molto marcato
III. Tempo di Scherzo ma non troppo vivo
IV. Larghetto
V. Final: Allegro moderato

"I came into the world almost completely blind on account of which my parents felt a very keen chagrin: Because of this fact, I was surrounded by a warm and continual tenderness which very early predisposed me to an almost unhealthy sensitivity…This was also to follow me all my life, and was to become the cause of intense joys and inexpressible sufferings."
(Louis Vierne: 'Journal,' p. 124)

From the beginning, Louis Vierne's life seemed to be marked by misfortune. As a result of cataracts, he was almost blind from birth. He underwent eye surgery at the age of six, which partially restored his vision, allowing him to see very large shapes, and actually read large letters of the alphabet. He attended a school for the blind in Paris until he was admitted to the Paris Conservatory in 1890. He began study with a beloved uncle, who died when Vierne was just eleven years old. Then, at fifteen, his father showed signs of declining health, and within the year, he also died. Vierne had begun private study with César Franck, whom he revered, before being accepted into his studio at the Paris Conservatory in 1890. Once there, however, he enjoyed just a few classes with him before Franck died. Deeply shaken once again, Vierne persevered and studied with Charles Marie Widor, who replaced Franck as Organ Professor. Despite his near-total blindness Vierne often navigated Paris unassisted. One night in 1906, he stepped into a hole in the street that had become filled with water, severely injuring his leg, which, in turn, required him to relearn how to play the pedals of the organ. The heartbreaking discovery of his wife's adultery with a supposed friend (Charles Mutin, the dedicatee of his *Deuxième Symphonie*) led to a divorce in 1909, the same year his youngest son contracted tuberculosis (from which he died four years later at the age of ten). In 1911, both his mother and his colleague Alexandre Guilmant succumbed to kidney failure and during the early years of World War I, he lost both his brother Réné and his seventeen-year-old son Jacques in combat. Vierne had reluctantly allowed Jacques to enlist and therefore his grief was even deeper, as he felt responsible for his son's death.

His professional life was one of triumphs, mostly, rather than tragedies: Widor chose Vierne as his assistant at both Saint-Sulpice (1892-1900) and at the Conservatory. In 1900 Widor recommended him to fill in for the ailing organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral. Soon after Vierne's first Sunday there,

Eugène Michel Sergent (1829-1900) died after serving the Cathedral for fifty-three years. Ninety-eight applicants applied for the position, and it was awarded to Vierne.

The last great late Romantic French organ composer, Vierne died while giving a recital at Notre-Dame Cathedral, on Wednesday, June 2, 1937. He performed his *Triptyque*, Op. 58, and an improvisation was to follow. Vierne pressed a pedal key, suffered a heart attack, lost consciousness, and died a short time later in spite of efforts to revive him. At his funeral (held three days later at Notre-Dame) the grand organ that he had played for thirty-seven years remained silent.

Vierne wrote a total of six organ symphonies, following the lead of his teacher, Widor. The key of each follows from the previous (all are in minor keys): No. 1 is in D, No. 2 is in E, No. 3 is in F-sharp, No. 4 in G, No. 5 in A and No. 6 is in B. Symphonies 2, 4, 5, and 6 are cyclical – each symphony contains two themes upon which its movements are based. The themes can be modified, but the thematic material of each movement can be traced to themes that are indigenous to each symphony – pillars that support the entire work. As a student of both Widor and Franck, Vierne seemed destined to bring the organ symphony to its pinnacle with his six symphonies. In Vierne's music, one can see the influence of Widor's clear command of counterpoint and classical forms, as well as Franck's attention to melodic development.

In 1916, Vierne left Paris for Lausanne, Switzerland, to go under the care of an oculist there, hoping to save what eyesight he had left. The procedures were long and painful, and due to complications (including a six-month stint in a dark room) he did not return until 1920. Upon returning to his beloved Notre-Dame organ, Vierne found it in poor condition, and began raising funds for its repair by performing concerts, and ultimately a tour of the USA. As the music he performed on tour was drawn mostly from recent compositions, it is important to note that Vierne completed his **Fifth Symphony** just three years before he sailed for the United States. Many of these works were inaccessible to, and consequently a failure with, the US audiences. Therefore, the Fifth Symphony stands as his most advanced composition prior to the period when he may have modified his style in response to the US audience.

Canadian organist Lynnwood Farnam premiered the Fifth Symphony on December 21, 1925 at the Church of the Holy Communion in New York, New York. The Fifth Symphony is Vierne's longest symphony and represents his style's zenith, and the peak of the cyclic form. Due to its complexity and heavy chromaticism, Mr. Farnam performed the work twice at the premiere, to help the audience grasp the work.

Jean Huré, the French reviewer, wrote in part, "I promise Vierne to curse him bitterly if, with such talent, he should again write so perfect a work, to express such pain and anguish in the course of forty-seven pages of very beautiful music." He aptly sums up the essence of the work: "the victory of joy over pain".

Biography



Eric Plutz is University Organist at Princeton University, where his responsibilities include playing for weekly services at the Chapel, Academic Ceremonies, and solo concerts, as well as accompanying the Chapel Choir in services and concerts. He manages the weekly After Noon Concert Series at the University Chapel, is Lecturer in Music and Instructor of Organ at Princeton University, and maintains a private studio. Also in Princeton, Mr. Plutz is Collaborative Keyboardist for Princeton Pro Musica. In 2016 Mr. Plutz received the Alumni Merit Award from Westminster Choir College. More information is available at **www.ericplutz.com**.

In celebration of Louis Vierne's 150th birthday in 2020, Eric initiated The Vierne Project – performances of the complete organ symphonies. One of a handful of organists to embark on such a venture, he performed in Beverly Hills (California), Durham (North Carolina), Minneapolis (Minnesota), Lancaster and Reading (Pennsylvania), Ithaca (New York), Houston (Texas), Evanston (Illinois), Portland (Oregon), Olympia (Washington), and San Antonio (Texas). A CD recording of the symphonies on six different instruments was released on the Affetto label in 2022.

Mr. Plutz's most recent recording, *B A C H – The Gamut from 'A' to 'G'*, was released on the Affetto label in 2023. Showcasing organ works in A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, the album was recorded on the Mander-Skinner organ in Princeton University Chapel.

As an organ concert soloist, Mr. Plutz, who "performs with gusto, flair, clarity, and strong yet pliant rhythmic control (James Hildreth for *The American Organist*)," has accepted engagements in distinguished locations across the United States and abroad. He has been a featured artist at three Regional Conventions of the American Guild of Organists (2007, 2011, and 2019), the Annual Convention of the Organ Historical Society (2016). His playing has been broadcast on "With Heart and Voice", "Pipedreams", and the "Wanamaker Organ Hour".

Eric has made four solo recordings on the Pro Organo label, **www.proorgano.com**. *French Trilogy* (on the Æolian-Skinner Organ at Byrnes Auditorium, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, South Carolina), about which James Reed (*The Diapason*) wrote, "Plutz is a master craftsman…his performances are sensitive, emotional, stunningly accurate, and spectacularly musical…truly a world-class performance by a world-class musician," and *Denver Jubilee* (restored 1938 Kimball Organ of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver, Colorado), about which David Schwartz (*American Record Guide*) wrote, "…he understands, as would a great orchestrator, how to register the more orchestral side of the instrument."

Two previous recordings are of the Princeton University Chapel Organ, *Musique Héroïque* and *Carnival*, about which Mr. Hildreth (*The American Organist*) writes, "Plutz's extraordinary musicianship and dexterous command allow him to perform the most challenging passages (of which there are many!) with apparent ease. He performs the quiet pieces with poetry and grace."

From 1995 to 2005, Eric was Music Director at Church of the Epiphany in Northwest DC, where he led the semi-professional choir and expanded the popular Tuesday Concert Series into a year-round offering. From 2005 to 2020, Mr. Plutz was rehearsal accompanist for the Westminster Symphonic Choir at Westminster Choir College. Additionally, he has worked with many organizations, including The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, National Symphony Orchestra, Choral Arts Society of Washington, and the Cathedral Choral Society (DC). As a teacher, he held the position of Adjunct Assistant Professor of Organ at Westminster Choir College three separate times.

Originally from Rock Island, Illinois, Mr. Plutz earned a Bachelor of Music degree, *magna cum laude*, from Westminster Choir College and a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. Additional study consists of two visits to Europe: in 2005, he studied the complete organ works of César Franck with Marie-Louise Langlais in Paris, and in 2019 he studied the complete organ symphonies of Louis Vierne with Ben van Oosten in The Hague, Netherlands.

The South Gallery Organ

Möller (1964)
Goulding & Wood (2000)

GREAT
32’ Contre Violone
16’ Violone
8’ Principal
8’ Chimney Flute
8’ Viola
5 1/3’ Grosse Quinte
4’ Octave
4’ Spitzflöte
2-2/3’ Quinte
2’ Super Octave
2’ Blockflöte
1 1/3’ Mixture IV
2/3’ Scharf IV
16’ Fagott
8’ Trompete
4’ Clarion
8’ Pontifical Trumpet

SWELL
16’ Contre Viole
8’ Principal
8’ Gedeckt
8’ Viole
8’ Viole Celeste
4’ Octave
4’ Traverse Flute
2 2/3’ Twelfth
2’ Flageolet
1-3/5’ Seventeenth
2’ Plein Jeu III-IV
½’ Cymbale III
16’ Contre Hautbois
8’ Trompette
8’ Hautbois
8’ Voix Humaine
4’ Clairon
Tremulant

CHOIR
16’ Quintaton
8’ Principal
8’ Orchestral Flute
8’ Gemshorn
8’ Gemshon Celeste
4’ Fugara
4’ Chimney Flute
2’ Zauberflöte
2/3’ Carillon III
16’ Bass Clarinet
8’ Petite Trompette
4’ Clairon
8’ Pontifical Trumpet
Tremulant

POSITIV RIGHT
16’ Singend Gedeckt
8’ Holzgedeckt
4’ Prinzipal
4’ Holhflöte
2’ Blockflöte
1’ Sifflöte
2/3’ Mixture IV
8’ Cromorne
Tremulant

POSITIV LEFT
16’ Geigen
8’ Principal
8’ Rohrflöte
4’ Principal
4’ Koppelflöte
2 2/3’ Rohr Nasat
2’ Octave
2’ Spielflöte
1 3/5’ Terzflöte
1 1/3’ Quintflöte
1 1/3’ Mixture IV
Tremulant

BOMBARDE
8’ Diapason
8’ Open Flute
4’ Octave Major
2’ Plein Jeu IV
1’ Harmonics IV
16’ Bombarde Harmonic
8’ Trompete
Harmonique
4’ Clarion Harmonique
8’ Pontifical Trumpet
Tremulant

PEDAL
64’ Gravissima
32’ Contre Violone
32’ Contre Bourdon
16’ Principal
16’ Bourdon
16’ Violone (GT)
16’ Gemshorn
16’ Violone (SW)
16’ Contrebasse
16’ Quintaton (CH)
10 2/3’ Grosse Quinte
8’ Octave
8’ Stopped Flute
8’ Viole (GT)
4’ Choralbass
4’ Open Flute
2’ Hohlflöte
4’ Mixture IV
1 1/3’ Acuta III
32’ Contre Bombarde
16’ Bombarde
16’ Posaune
16’ Basson (SW)
16’ Fagott (GT)
8’ Trumpet
4’ Clairon

The West Chancel Organ

Möller (1964)

GREAT
16' Bourdon
8' Principal
8' Bourdon
4' Octave
4' Flute à Fuseau
2' Flute à Bec
1 1/3' Mixture IV
8' Trompete

SWELL
16' Gedeckt
8' Principal
8' Gedeckt
8' Viole
8' Viole Celeste
4' Octave
4' Harmonic Flute
2' Gemshorn
2' Plein Jeu III-IV
16' Contre Hautbois
8' Trompette
8' Hautbois
4' Clairon
Tremulant

CHOIR
16' Dolcan
8' Spitzprincipal
8' Rohrflöte
8' Dolcan
8' Dolcan Celeste
4' Oktav
4' Blockflöte
2 2/3' Nazard
2' Principal
1 3/5' Tierce
1' Fourniture III
8' Corno di Bassetto
Tremulant

PEDAL
32' Contre Bourdon
16' Soubasse
16' Bourdon (SW)
16' Gedeckt (SW)
16' Viole (GT)
16' Dolcan (CH)
8' Octave
8' Stopped Flute
4' Choralbass
4' Open Flute
2 2/3' Rauschquinte II
1 1/3' Mixture II
16' Bombarde
16' Basson (SW)
8' Bombarde
4' Chalameu

The M. P. Möller organs of the Upper Church were dedicated on April 25, 1965 at a mass celebrated by Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York. As a gift of Cardinal Spellman, the Catholic Chaplains, and military personnel of the United States, the organs are a resounding memorial to the many deceased chaplains and members of the armed forces. In the words of Cardinal Spellman, "may [the organs'] symphony remind us of the goodness, patriotism and faith of those who have gone before us."

Nearly thirty years after their installation, the Goulding and Wood organ company of Indianapolis, Indiana was contracted to build two new identical consoles, enabling both organs to be played by either and both consoles. The south gallery instrument also underwent pipework revisions and a slightly redesigned facade.

Combined, these monumental instruments house 9,393 pipes, from which 157 stops play 172 ranks. The largest pipe of the south gallery, standing at nearly 40 feet, weighs close to 900 pounds, while its smallest pipe is no bigger than a simple pencil.

Among the many acclaimed performances on the Basilica's organs, the legendary Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992) performed the world premiere of his *Méditations sur le Mystére de la Sainte Trinité* on the south gallery organ in 1972.

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
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Rector of the Basilica

Peter Latona, D.M.A.
Director of Music

Benjamin LaPrairie, M.M.
Associate Director of Music

Andrew Vu, M.M.
Assistant Director of Music

Robert Grogan, D.M.A.
Carillonneur and Organist Emeritus

Bard Wickkiser
Curator of the Basilica Organs

Sara MacKimmie, M.M.
Vincent Fung, M.M.
Administrative Assistants

For more information on upcoming concerts and events,
find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/nationalshrinemusic

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