

*Saint Mark's*

**2020-21**

**MUSIC**

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**SERIES**

*presents*

# **Flentrop Organ Concert**

Michael Kleinschmidt, organ

with the Chant Schola:

Jason Anderson, Gregory Bloch, James Wilcox  
of the Compline Choir

Livestreamed from Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle

Friday, October 23, 2020

7:30 p.m.

*Saint Mark's Music Series is grateful to Roger Sherman, Saint Mark's Associate Organist Emeritus and host of The Organ Loft radio program on Classical KING 98.1 FM, for sponsoring this program.*

## **Program**

Music of Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)

**Toccata, from Symphony No. 5**

***Symphonie Romane, Op. 73***

- I. (Moderato)
- II. Choral
- III. Cantilène
- IV. Final

## Program Notes

*Symphonie Romane* is Widor's tenth and final organ symphony, composed in 1899. He dedicated it to the memory of Saint Sernin (c. 200–257 A.D.), the first bishop of Toulouse, for whom is named an 11th-century basilica in Toulouse. It is the largest remaining Romanesque building in Europe.

Widor's first eight organ symphonies were essentially suites of character pieces. In his ninth, the *Symphonie Gothique*, he incorporated the Gregorian chant for Christmas, *Puer natus est*, into the third and fourth movements. In the *Symphonie Romane*, he developed this idea further, infusing the first, second, and fourth movements with a Gregorian chant for Easter Day, *Haec dies*. Here are the first two phrases of that chant, in the version found in the *Paroissien romain noté en plain-chant* published in Paris in 1874—the version known in Paris for more than a century when Widor composed the *Symphonie Romane*.



Gradual of the Easter Day Mass. Translation: This day is made [by the Lord; let us rejoice and be glad in it.]

The first movement is a rhapsody on *Haec dies*. That chant is first stated repeatedly in different textures, as Widor explains: “to help establish it in the mind of the listener.” The music gradually builds to a climactic statement of the chant, thundered out on the pedals under shimmering figuration in the hands. From that ecstatic outburst flow more fragments of the chant, now firmly supported by a pedal ostinato, that draw the movement to a serene conclusion in the radiant key of D major.

The second movement begins with a quiet harmonization of the *Haec dies* chant. In dialogue with it, Widor introduces a new melody that starts with four descending steps. It is first played in the tenor range of the pedals. This same melody is later developed on flute stops high above a slow statement of the chant melody in the pedals, accompanied by arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand.

In the third movement, a reed stop of the organ plays a long melody over quiet, sustained chords. Amid the melody's graceful arabesques appear portions of a different Easter chant, *Victimae paschali laudes*. Here are the opening phrases of that chant in the version found in the *Paroissien romain noté en plain-chant*, 1874.

Two lines of musical notation in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 4/4 time. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. Below the first staff, the Latin text "Vic - ti - mae pa - scha - li lau - des im - mo - lent Chris - ti - a - ni. Ag - nus re - de - mit o - ves:" is written. Below the second staff, the text "Chris - tus in - no - cens Pa - tri re - con - ci - li - a - vit pec - ca - to - res." is written.

Sequence Hymn of the Easter Day Mass. Translation: Let Christians offer praise to the Paschal Victim. A lamb redeems the sheep: the sinless Christ reconciles sinners to the Father. [Note: The whole hymn is printed in English at hymn #183 in *The Hymnal* 1982.]

The fourth and final movement is a toccata on *Haec dies* organized in what some interpreters have called “wave” form: the music rises to a climax and subsides, then to another, then another—like ocean waves, each more powerful than the last. Finally, as the energy of the final climax dissipates, the opening passage of the first movement returns, bringing the whole symphony right back to where it started. In the words of T.S. Eliot, “...and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time” (from “Little Gidding,” the last of Eliot's *Four Quartets*).

## About the Artist



**Michael Kleinschmidt** is the Canon for Cathedral Music of Saint Mark's Cathedral, Seattle. Before assuming this role in March, 2015, he served as Canon Musician of Trinity Cathedral, Portland, Oregon. Prior to moving to Oregon in 2010, he was Director of Music and Organist of Trinity Church, Boston.

As a concert organist, Michael has performed in forty-two States of America, and in Canada, Europe, and Japan. As a choral conductor, he has served as guest conductor for summer choir courses of the Royal School of Church Music/America.

Michael's primary mentor in church music was the late Gerre Hancock, with whom he worked as Assistant Organist of Saint Thomas Church, New York City, in the early 1990s. Michael holds degrees in organ performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Eastman School. His teachers were Haskell Thomson and Russell Saunders. As a recipient of a Fulbright Grant, he studied organ literature and improvisation with Peter Planyavsky in Vienna, Austria.

In addition to his professional activities, Mr. Kleinschmidt enjoys hiking among the natural wonders of the Pacific Northwest, and sharing life with his spouse, Marc Aubertin.

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