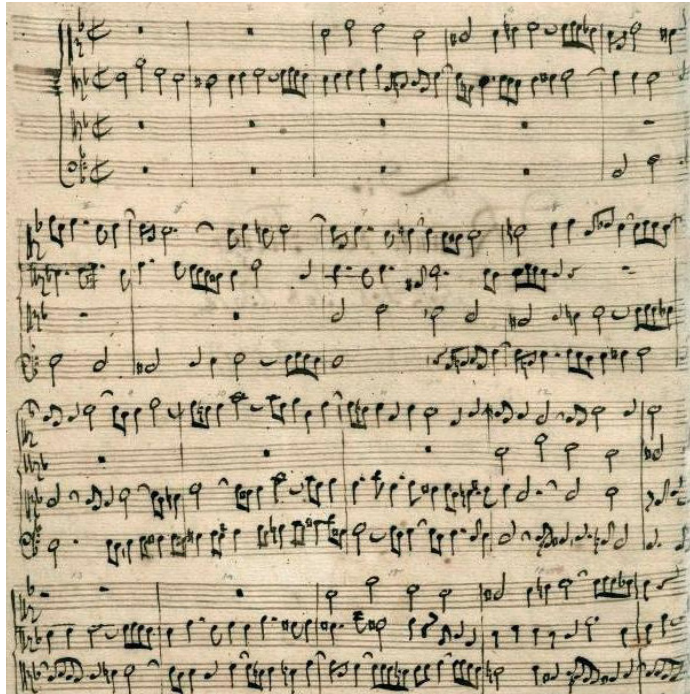


THE SAINT MARK'S
MUSIC

SERIES
2026-2027



All Bach on the Flentrop Organ

Paul Jacobs, organ

Friday, October 2, 7:30 pm

In-person at
Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all the Coast Salish tribes.

All Bach on the Flentrop Organ

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PROGRAM

*To preserve the continuity of the program,
please kindly hold applause until the very end.*

Art of Fugue, BWV 1080

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Simple fugues in four voices

1. Contrapunctus I
2. Contrapunctus II
3. Contrapunctus III: Original subject inverted
4. Contrapunctus IV: Subject inverted

Stretto fugues with inverted statements of the subject

5. Contrapunctus V: Subject upright and inverted
6. Contrapunctus VI: In the French Style
7. Contrapunctus VII: Subject upright, inverted, in diminution & augmentation

Double and triple fugues

8. Contrapunctus VIII: Triple fugue in three voices
9. Contrapunctus IX: Double fugue in four voices
10. Contrapunctus X: Double stretto fugue
11. Contrapunctus XI: Triple fugue in four voices

Mirror fugues

12. Contrapunctus XII: In three voices
13. Literal inversion of Contrapunctus XII
14. Contrapunctus XIII: In four voices
15. Literal inversion of Contrapunctus XIII
16. Unfinished Quadruple Fugue: The third subject spells B.A.C.H.

*Audio and video recordings of this performance
in any capacity are strictly prohibited.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Written by Lindsey Rodgers for the Organ Bach Festival.

Although many lovers of Bach's music have heard of the Art of Fugue, and may have a general idea of its methods, even Bach super-fans might struggle to remember its main fugue subject or its individual movements. As Matthew Dirst writes in *Bach's Art of Fugue and Musical Offering*, the piece is known "more by reputation than firm acquaintance."

There are several reasons for this. First, Bach wrote the collection in "open score," which is to say that he didn't limit the music to any particular instrument; each line could be played by any instrument capable of replicating the pitches – in the concert tonight, one musician will replicate *all* the pitches with two hands and two feet. Because the Art of Fugue is not tied to a specific instrument or ensemble, it has no specific group of musicians to champion it. Second, as an instrumental piece, it is untexted and has no programmatic elements; it doesn't project a narrative, and for church musicians, this means there is no particularly appropriate season to present it. (If only Bach had called it "The Art of the Christmas Fugue!") Finally, the Art of Fugue is full of dense counterpoint. The set consists of seven groups of contrapuntal types: simple fugues, stretto-fugues, double fugues, triple fugues, mirror fugues, canons, and some miscellaneous fugues. Each of these uses different compositional techniques, and a full appreciation of the piece's inner workings requires a deep knowledge of words such as "invertible counterpoint," "countersubject," and "retrograde inversion" – terms most often encountered in graduate-level music theory and counterpoint courses.

For all these reasons, compared with many of Bach's other works (the Brandenburg Concertos or the Mass in B minor, for example), the Art of Fugue has remained in the shadows. Still, it has been recorded at least once a year every year since 1955. In 2023, at least seven separate recordings of the work were produced.

What draws musicians back to this collection again and again? For one thing, the ambiguity of instrumentation leaves room for an ensemble (or individual performer) to experiment. Organists have often adapted the work to their instrument, as have brass and string ensembles. An inspired version by *Trio 335* features University of Oregon professor Steve Vacchi on bassoon, along with Amy Goeser Kolb on oboe and Heike Storm on accordion. The distinctive individual timbres of these instruments help to spotlight the counterpoint.

In addition to the potential for malleable instrumentation and timbre, the compositional virtuosity of this music is matched by its elegance and expressiveness. The *Canon [in Hypodiapason]* explodes with a flourish of triplets, as dazzling as any etude; *Contrapunctus VI a 4 in Stile francese* struts with the confidence and *majesté* of a French monarch; and the inverted subject of *Contrapunctus III* reaches upward, yearning for resolution and stasis. Far from mere compositional experiments, these fugues are filled with heart.

Bach started working on the Art of Fugue in the 1740s, but he wasn't finished tinkering with the music when he died in 1750. His son, Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach, and others edited the unfinished work and published it, first in 1751 and then in a second print run in 1752. Although Bach wasn't officially "retired" during the years that he composed this music, he had stepped back from his more time-intensive commitments in Leipzig. Think of him as the equivalent of a professor who, after transitioning to emeritus status, *finally* has time to work on that book he's been meaning to write – an intensely personal book written largely for his own pleasure. This is not music meant for throngs of adoring concertgoers or a packed nave of parishioners on a high holy day; it is a summative demonstration of a composer's deepest intellectual preoccupations. And yet, more than 200 years later, this music remains more than just

a brainteaser. It can also serve as festive church music (for an ambitious organist), and its virtuosity can bring an audience to its feet.

The whole of the Art of Fugue stands on its main fugue subject. This simple melody is stated at the start of *Contrapunctus I*. Later, it is turned upside down, condensed, stretched out, reversed, transposed, overlapped, combined with itself, combined with two versions of itself – sometimes several of these things happen at once. In *Contrapunctus XII* and *Contrapunctus XIII*, Bach offers pairs of “mirror fugues.” Rather than just manipulating the main melody, he takes the complete movement – fugue subject and all – and moves the top voice to the bottom and the bottom voice to the top. If we subjected most other music to this procedure, the resulting harmonic clashes would make the music unlistenable. But, Bach has thought out the potential sonic implications in advance, so the piece sounds delightful right-side up or upside down.

It’s a testament to the richness of this work that it can be experienced a number of ways. With the score alone, all of Bach’s tricks are revealed, and we can see the work as a staggering feat of musical puzzling and a comprehensive pedagogical statement on “how to write a fugue.” With score and music together, we can hear (and see!) how the intellectual games are balanced by the elegance of musical gesture and the moments of delight when the main subject emerges from the texture, before disappearing again into the rolling waves of counterpoint. And, as pure sound, the complex games recede into the background, and the piece becomes an aural adventure into a colorful musical landscape. Now, each movement is like a new vista, with ever-changing shapes and layers.

The collection of fugues does not end with a rousing statement. Bach passed away before he could complete everything, so the music trails off, unfinished. Thus, the Art of Fugue leaves us in the middle of the path, peering toward the next clearing. We don’t come back to where we started. Instead, the music’s conclusion seems to be down the trail in the distance, beckoning us.

Want to know more?

Even more in-depth program notes written by Dr. Colin MacKnight can be accessed via this QR Code:



ABOUT THE ARTIST



Heralded as “one of the finest organists and teachers of our day,” by *The New York Times*, “one of the major musicians of our time” by Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* and as “America’s leading organ performer” by *The Economist*, the internationally celebrated organist Paul Jacobs combines a probing intellect and extraordinary technical mastery with an unusually large repertoire, both old and new. He has performed to great critical acclaim on five continents and in each of the fifty United States. The only organist ever to have won a Grammy Award—in 2011 for Messiaen’s towering “*Livre du Saint-Sacrement*,”—Mr. Jacobs is an eloquent champion of his instrument both in the United States and abroad.

Celebrating 25 years since he first made musical history at age 23 by performing J.S. Bach’s complete organ works in an 18-hour marathon on the 250th anniversary of the composer’s death, Mr. Jacobs continues to transfix audiences, colleagues, and critics alike with his prodigious memory of a vast repertoire, both old and new. A fierce advocate of new music, Mr. Jacobs has premiered works by Samuel Adler, Mason Bates, Michael Daugherty, Bernd Richard Deutsch, John Harbison, Lowell Liebermann, Wayne Oquin, Stephen Paulus, Christopher Theofanidis, and Christopher Rouse, among others. As a teacher, he has also been a vocal proponent of the redeeming nature of traditional and contemporary classical music.

No other organist is repeatedly invited as soloist to perform with prestigious orchestras, thus making him the leading pioneer in the movement for the revival of symphonic music featuring the organ. Mr. Jacobs regularly appears with the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Edmonton

Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, Nashville Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toledo Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, and Utah Symphony, among others.

Jacobs has collaborated with many of the world’s leading conductors, including Gustavo Dudamel, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Franz Welser-Moest, Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Elim Chan, James Conlon, David Danzmayr, William Eddins, Thierry Fischer, James Gaffigan, Edward Gardner, Gustavo Gimeno, Jane Glover, Giancarlo Guerrero, Manfred Honeck, Carolyn Kuan, Jun Märkl, Ken-David Masur, Tito Muñoz, Gemma New, David Robertson, Donald Runnicles, Daniele Rustioni, Alexander Shelley, Carl St. Clair, Michael Stern, Alain Trudel, Osmo Vänskä, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, among others.

Mr. Jacobs studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with organist John Weaver and harpsichordist Lionel Party, and at Yale University with Thomas Murray. He joined the faculty of The Juilliard School in 2003, and was named chair of the organ department in 2004, one of the youngest faculty appointees in the school’s history. He received Juilliard’s prestigious William Schuman Scholar’s Chair in 2007. In 2017, he received an honorary doctorate from Washington and Jefferson College. In 2021, The American Guild of Organists named him recipient of the International Performer of the Year Award. Mr. Jacobs has written several well-received articles for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Mr. Jacobs is represented by Colbert Artists Management.

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All-Night Vigil

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John Michael Boyer, conductor

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AND FOR THE MONTHLY *Organ by Night* SERIES

Organ by Night is presented at Saint Mark's Cathedral on the third Sunday of each month following the Compline service, about 10:00 pm. Informal mini-concerts will introduce you to the power and beauty of a real pipe organ. All are welcome in-person in the nave or join the organist in the loft to get a feel for what playing an instrument of this size is like. Ask questions and learn more about the Flentrop organ after the concert.

NEXT UP on SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

Geoffrey Liu performing:

Sarabande from *Suite for Organ*, by Gerald Near

Partita on *Jesu, meine Freude*, by Johann Gottfried Walther

Schön Rosmarin, by Fritz Dreisler, tr. Ethel Smith

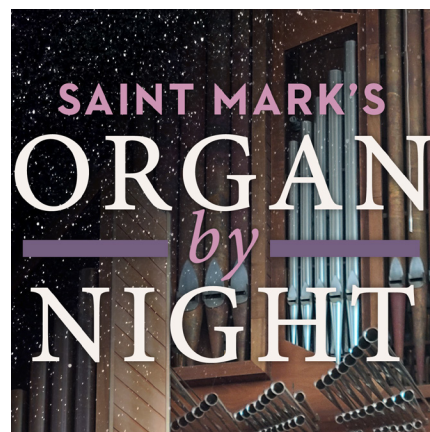
Improvisation on *We Shall Overcome* by Carl Haywood

Geoffrey Liu serves as organist at Kent United Methodist Church while maintaining a parallel career as a mobile applications developer. He holds three professional certifications from the American Guild of Organists and is the 2026–2027 Composer in Residence for Key To Change Studio in Renton, where he teaches, accompanies, and conducts students. At the University of Washington, Liu earned a degree in computer science while studying music and playing in the Symphony Orchestra. His training includes the Oregon Bach Festival and Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and masterclasses with Paul Jacobs, Kimberly Marshall, and Martin Jean. He has performed on keyboards, violin, and viola with community ensembles in California and Washington, including several world, national, and regional premieres.

MORE UPCOMING *Organ by Night* CONCERTS:

NOVEMBER 15 - Tyleen Stults

DECEMBER 20 - Michael Kleinschmidt



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With gratitude we acknowledge these Friends of the Music Series who give annually in support of making Saint Mark’s musical riches accessible to all. The donor listing below reflects gifts received since May 1, 2026, for this current season.

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Saint Mark’s Music Series is grateful to the Seattle Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for their support of radio publicity for this concert.

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SPECTACULAR 3RD SEASON!

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2026-27

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SAT, OCT 24 2026 | 7:30 pm | First Baptist, Seattle

SUN, OCT 25 2026 | 3:00 pm | Trinity Lutheran, Lynnwood

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