

ORGAN RECITAL HALL / UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE CSU SINFONIA PRESENTS

an evening of
**ORGAN
CONCERTOS**
featuring Joel Bacon

CONDUCTED BY

Wes Kenney

NOVEMBER 17, 7:30 P.M.

Colorado State University

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE

CSU SINFONIA WES KENNEY, CONDUCTOR JOEL BACON ORGAN

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Organ Concerto op. 7, no. 1 (1761)

- I. Andante
- II. Andante
- III. Largo e piano
- IV. Bourrée

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Concerto for Organ FP 93 (1938)

Andante—Allegro giocoso—Andante—Allegro (molto agitato)—Très Calme. Lent—Allegro giocoso—Largo

INTERMISSION

JOSEPH GABRIEL RHEINBERGER (1839-1901)

***Organ Concerto no. 1 op. 137
(1884)***

- I. Maestoso
- II. Andante
- III. Con moto

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PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel *Organ Concerto, op. 7, no. 1*

George Frideric Handel was an English composer of German birth. He is regarded as one of the greatest composers of his era. His interest in music started at an extremely young age, but was frowned upon by his father, who wanted Handel to become a lawyer. Young Handel would go to the attic to practice the clavichord in secret. By the time his father died, Handel had already begun to attract admirers for his apparent skill. He was appointed organist at the Cathedral Church in Halle at only twelve years old. He left this post to travel through Germany, Italy, and to London, where he learned to compose through observing the different styles of these nations. Handel ultimately built his popularity by writing Italian operas in London, but in 1741 he composed his most famous work, *Messiah*, an oratorio that was very profitable for him. Oratorios, with their lack of costumes, scenery, and theatrical instruction, gave Handel complete control of the production. This freedom allowed him to incorporate use of the organ, for which he wrote concertos intended for performance during intermissions.

Handel's concertos require a great degree of improvisational skill. The music is written in such a way that sections are left completely open to the performer's discretion. Of the material that is notated, Handel borrows heavily from his previous works. The composer's early organ concertos reflect his reliance upon a relatively small one-manual instrument, as seen in a lack of dynamic changes and pedal passagework. Handel's *Organ Concerto, op. 7, no. 1*, however, shows vast improvement in these areas, which likely indicates that he had access to a new instrument with greater capabilities. This four-movement work begins with an elegant, slow introduction that transitions directly into the second movement. The second movement is in *ritornello* form: the orchestra responds to the organ by reiterating an established theme repeatedly. The third movement is the most lyrical of the whole piece and, like the other movements, allows the performer a great degree of flexibility in improvisation. Handel very much enjoyed concluding with dances, and he writes a *Bourree* for the fourth movement to end the work. This very rapid and hearty French dance leaves the audience feeling radiant.

—Program note by Anthony Federico

Francis Poulenc *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G Minor*

A “horrible tornado” was Francis Poulenc's analogy for the approaching barbarity of World War II. Having lost his parents as a teenager in the Great War, Poulenc knew all too well the horrors that awaited his beloved France. The *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G Minor* may be Poulenc's metaphorical aesthetic tornado en route towards approaching doom. The sheer weight of the introductory chord affirms this imagery by triggering an innate sense of dread and simultaneous wonder. After what seems like an eternity, the chord is released and the journey begins. The organ is soon joined by timpani and orchestra. An instrumental opera, the use of the organ as solo instrument delivers a colossal embodiment of the human voice, with immense wind, dynamics, and range. Rather than the expected concerto form of three movements, Poulenc used the structure of the *Aubade*, a series of interwoven movements in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fashion, with masquerading themes seamlessly entangled throughout the work.

The Organ Concerto was commissioned in the first half of the 1930s by Princesse Edmond de Polignac—also known as Winnaretta Singer of the American Singer Sewing Machine estate. Polignac was a staple of the salon scene and patron of the arts in early twentieth-century France

—supporting the artistic muses of influential composer and teacher Nadia Boulanger, *Les Six*, and Salvador Dalí, among others. Initially, the concerto was intended for the Polignac to play herself under the guidance of her organ teacher and artistic advisor Boulanger. However, the composition was plagued with complications. One came from the princess herself, claiming—after Poulenc began composing—she could only provide half the proposed monetary amount. This led Poulenc to seek higher-paying side commissions, which resulted in Winnaretta's waning patience, and an increased tension between composer and patron.

At last, in 1938, Francis Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani in G minor* debuted, with Maurice Duruflé as soloist and Nadia Boulanger as conductor, in the private Parisian estate of Polignac. As a passionate organist from a lineage of virtuosic French organists, Boulanger had a personal interest in the project and mentored Poulenc considerably in organ technique and the ability of the massive instrument. The public première followed in June of 1939 with the Paris Symphony Orchestra, Duruflé returning as soloist, and Roger Désormière conducting. However, in letters to Boulanger after the production, Poulenc voiced his disappointment of Désormière's conducting. Although it was technically accurate, it lacked the profound affect present in the private premiere.

Poulenc's concerto is considered by many organists to be the most revered organ concerto of the twentieth century, as it eloquently explores the full range of the instrument. Dr. Bacon "enjoys playing this piece on our 'Baroque-leaning' organ, as the clean, classical sound of our instrument makes the Organ Concerto especially fun to play."

—Program note by Katrina Hedrick

Josef Rheinberger *Organ Concerto No. 1 in F Major*, op. 137

The pipe organ claims two impressive distinctions among western musical instruments: the longest history and the largest repertoire. Since 300 BCE, in Ancient Greece, the pipe organ has grown in complexity and importance, reaching its peak during the High Baroque period sometime between 1685 and 1750. It is fitting that the demigod of organ music, J.S. Bach, is German; it was the Germans after all, starting in 1500, who "pulled out all the stops" in developing an increasingly innovative pipe organ. After the Baroque period, organ music fell out of favor and was replaced by larger symphonies and opera. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the demand for orchestral entertainment outweighed the supply, creating a market for organ arrangements of orchestral pieces. Organs grew rapidly and evolved to more closely imitate an orchestra.

It is during this time that Josef Gabriel Rheinberger was born, on March 17, 1839 in Vaduz (the capital of Liechtenstein). Rheinberger was prodigious and earned the position of parish organist at the age of seven. In 1851 he entered the Munich Conservatory, and in 1852 was hired as vice-organist at the churches of St. Michael and St. Ludwig in Munich. At nineteen, he received a teaching position at the Hochschule für Musik, a job he held for the rest of his life. At the Conservatory, Rheinberger was a famously strict teacher. One of his students, the great American composer George W. Chadwick said, "They kept me at harmonizing chorales [in Bach style] for four years, but I've always been grateful for that incomparable discipline." This style of pedagogy indirectly influenced avant-garde composer Charles Ives, whose teacher at Yale, Horatio Parker, studied with both Chadwick and Rheinberger. Ives's experimental tendencies would have certainly irritated Rheinberger, so perhaps happily for all, Rheinberger died before ever experiencing Ives's music. Besides, according to letters, Rheinberger was already quite preoccupied complaining about fellow Bavarian Richard Wagner's massive ego.

By 1884, when he composed the first *Organ Concerto in F Major*, op. 137, Rheinberger had earned a venerated international reputation. Popular reception of the work was glowing, with one reviewer writing, “[it] is unquestionably one of the best works of the composer, who is here in his own field.” The concerto has three movements: *Moderato*, *Andante*, and *Finale con moto*. The first movement begins with a stately introduction in F major before both tumultuous and relaxing material ensue. A triumphant end wraps things up excitingly, if perhaps a bit too soon. The *Andante* is tender and sublimely peaceful, and the *Finale* marches briskly to a grand conclusion, though not before a virtuosic and imaginative cadenza. Orchestration may seem sparse with just strings and three horns, until the soloist reminds us of the immense capabilities of a romantic-era organ. This piece truly would have given any small German town with a decent organ a symphonic experience to remember.

—Program note by Ryan Foley



WES KENNEY is now in his fifteenth year as Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University. He conducts the CSU Symphony and CSU Sinfonia, as well as CSU Opera productions, and teaches graduate conducting. Mr. Kenney has led the orchestra to many new milestones, including first ever at CSU performances of Mahler Symphonies No. 1 and No. 5, two Strauss tone poems, the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra, and the Bruckner Symphony No. 5. This coming Spring the CSU Symphony will perform for the first time in its history, Stravinsky's score to the *Rite of Spring*. In 2014 he was named music director of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra—the premier youth orchestra in the state of Colorado—and has taken that orchestra on tour through Italy, France, and Spain. In June of 2016 Mr. Kenney took

DYAO to New York City for that orchestra's Carnegie Hall debut.

Mr. Kenney is also currently in his fifteenth season as music director of the fully professional Fort Collins Symphony. In the summer of 2004 he was named to an additional post of music director of Opera Fort Collins. Mr. Kenney was awarded the 2009 Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado American String Teachers Association. He was also awarded the Grand Prize in the summer 2007 Varna (Bulgaria) International Conducting Competition. He travelled back to Bulgaria in 2008 for concerts in Vidin and to conduct *La Traviata* in Stara Zagora. In January 2018 he will travel to Hanoi to conduct the Vietnam National Symphony, and then later in the spring to Korea to conduct the Changwon Philharmonic.

Mr. Kenney is a frequent guest conductor of professional and educational ensembles. Recent appearances include the Colorado Symphony, Colorado Music Festival, Lafayette Symphony (Ind.), and the Acadiana Symphony (La.). He has conducted New Hampshire All-State, New Mexico All-State, Virginia All-State, and Alabama All-State. He also has credits that include concerts with orchestras in Europe and Asia. He has given orchestra clinics in all corners of Colorado and is sought after for sessions at the Colorado Music Educators Association Conference. Mr. Kenney is a former president of the Conductors Guild and serves currently on their advisory board.

Mr. Kenney is one of the founders of the CSU Summer Master's Degree program in conducting, designed to allow music educators the opportunity to earn a graduate degree while furthering their conducting studies and remaining in their current position.

Joel Bacon is the Stewart and Sheron Golden Chair of Organ and Liturgical Studies at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

He earned degrees in mathematics and organ performance from Baylor University, and an artist diploma in organ from the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. With a dissertation on the use of organ in orchestral works, he earned his Ph.D. in historical musicology through a joint degree program of Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts and the University of Vienna. His teachers included Joyce Jones and Michael Gailit.

Joel Bacon has been heard in recital throughout Europe and North America, and live performances have been broadcast on *Austrian Radio (Ö1)* and *Public Radio International*. A specialist in music for organ and orchestra, his recent performances include: *Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3*; *Herman Berlinski's Sinfonia No. 6*; *Aaron David Miller's Concerto for Two Organists*; *Stephen Paulus's Concerto for Organ, Strings and Percussion*; *François Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani*; as well as numerous Baroque concertos by Handel and Bach (including the complete *Brandenburg Concertos on harpsichord*). His most recent recording project, "*Denkmal an Martin Luther / Monument to Martin Luther*" was recorded in Germany at St. Thomas in Grünwald (Munich), and features solo organ music by J. S. Bach.

Joel Bacon directs and teaches an annual summer course for young organists (CSU Organ Week), and has directed several Pipe Organ Encounters of the American Guild of Organists. He has taught at the Oundle International Festival (Cambridge, UK), at organ courses of the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna, and at numerous other courses in the US and Canada. As a musicologist, he has lectured widely on topics related to the organ and liturgical music. In 2017, he gave an invited lecture at Colorado State University on the President's Community Lecture Series, which highlights the university's outstanding programs and faculty.

Joel Bacon is organist at St. John XXIII Catholic Church in Fort Collins, where he conducts a choir specializing in Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.

Violin 1

Ryan Foley, Principal
Casey Donohue, Asst. Principal
Dmitri Ascarrunz
Katie Gardner
Gage Nolan

Violin 2

Jeremy D. Cuebas, Principal
Ryan Wessel, Asst. Principal
Corban Green
Trey Yu

Viola

Rosa Cole, Principal
Sarah Chicoine, Asst. Principal
Garret Durie
Hailey Moy

Cello

Julius Hochmuth, Principal
Joshua Greiner, Asst. Principal
Sarah Souders

Bass

Daniel Probasco, Principal
Stephen Morrison, Asst. Principal

Oboe

Mylie Payne, Principal
Sonja Barber

Bassoon

Sarah Horton, Principal

Horn

Ayo Derbyshire, Principal
Miranda Deblauwe
Andrew Meyers

Timpani

Chris Nadeau

Harpichord

Dale Nickell



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Graduate String Quartet Concert / FREE	November 28, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Holiday Spectacular / dress rehearsal open to CSU students	November 29, 7 p.m.	GCH, UCA
Parade of Lights Preview / FREE	November 30, 6 p.m.	UCA
Holiday Spectacular / Public Performance	November 30, 7 p.m.	GCH, UCA
Holiday Spectacular / Public Performance	December 3, 4 p.m.	GCH, UCA
Concert Orchestra Concert / FREE	December 3, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Jazz Combos Concert	December 4, 7:30 p.m.	GCH, UCA
Graduate String Trio Recital	December 4, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Violin Studio Recital / FREE	December 5, 6, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA

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Fall Dance Capstone Concert	December 8, 9, 7:30 p.m.	UDT, UCA
Fall Dance Capstone Concert	December 9, 2 p.m.	UDT, UCA

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Freshman Theatre Project / FREE	December, TBD	ST, UCA

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