

**Kola Owolabi**

**Hill Auditorium**

**Monday October 3, 2016, 8pm**

Paeon, from Six Pieces for Organ (1940)

Herbert Howells  
(1892-1983)

Sonata in F Major, Opus 149 (1917)

Charles Villiers Stanford  
(1852-1924)

- I. Allegro, molto moderato
- II. Tempo di menuetto (Allegretto)
- III. Allegro maestoso

Passacaglia, Opus 17 (2009)

John Scott Whiteley  
(b. 1950)

**INTERMISSION**

Épilogue (2008)

Rachel Laurin  
(b. 1961)

Introduction and Variations on "Lasst uns erfreuen" (2000)

John Weaver  
(b. 1937)

Little David, Play on Your Harp (1997)  
Balm in Gilead (1993)

Joe Utterback  
(b. 1944)

Prelude and Fugue in B Major, Opus 7, No. 1 (1912)

Marcel Dupré  
(1886-1971)

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Herbert Howells** (1892-1983) is chiefly known for his organ music, and the large corpus of repertoire he wrote for the Anglican church, which includes 20 settings of canticles (*Magnificat & Nunc dimittis*) for the service of Evensong. Yet, he was also a prolific composer of chamber music and orchestral music, with some noteworthy pieces such as the *Piano Quartet in A minor* and the *Concerto for Strings*. Howells' career was centered at the Royal College of Music in London where he was a professor for 59 years. He also directed the school choir and orchestra at St. Paul's Girls School in London. He travelled across England as an adjudicator for the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, and in this capacity he even made trips to Canada and South Africa. His musical style draws on English influences, particularly folksong and music from the Tudor and Elizabethan periods (16<sup>th</sup> century), but also shows strong influence of French impressionistic composers such as Debussy and Ravel. His *Six Pieces for Organ* were composed between 1939 and 1945. *Paeon*, the last of the set, is a somewhat surprising work for those who normally associate Howells' music with an introspective and melancholy style. This piece is a stormy toccata with a quiet and lyrical middle section that features lush harmonies.

One of Herbert Howells' most influential mentors was **Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924), who was Howells' composition teacher at the Royal College of Music and later referred to him as his "son in music." While Howells was still a student at the college, Stanford conducted the premiere performance of Howells' First Piano Concerto at Queen's Hall in London. Like Howells, Stanford's compositional output consists of songs, chamber music, orchestral music and operas, in addition to the Anglican choral repertoire for which he is most known. Before taking the position in London, Stanford had a long association with Cambridge University. As a student there, he served as organist at Trinity College and conductor of the Cambridge University Musical Society. He was responsible for the English premieres of several works by Brahms, including the *First Symphony* and the *Alto Rhapsody*. He was appointed Professor of Music at Cambridge at age 35.

Stanford's five organ sonatas were written between 1917-18. Although the *Organ Sonata No. 1 in F* makes use of a harmonic language that is anachronistic for its time, the piece shows Stanford's mastery of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century symphonic style. The first movement consists of a majestic opening theme in F major, an energetic transitional theme which moves through several keys, and a lyrical secondary theme in C major. A very brief development of the themes from the exposition leads directly to the second movement, a charming, elegant minuet. The third movement begins with a return to the opening theme of the first movement, now in F minor. This theme is then recast as a fugue which builds to a triumphant conclusion.

**John Scott Whiteley** (b. 1950) served as organist at York Minster in England from 1975 until 2010, when he retired to pursue a career as a freelance organist, composer, musicologist and author. He studied at the Royal College of Music in London, and undertook further studies with Flor Peeters in Malines, Belgium and Fernando Germani in Siena, Italy. He has performed works of J. S. Bach at international festivals in Poland, Italy and Russia. He has made 26 solos recordings, including the complete organ works of Joseph Jongen. He also appears as accompanist on 22 recordings. He has composed 23 organ works and 17 sacred choral compositions. The *Passacaglia*, Opus 17 (2008) was composed in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales. The first two notes, D – A, spell the first and last letters of her name. Whiteley marks very specific registrations in the score which can be realized faithfully on a large early 20<sup>th</sup> century American organ such as the instrument in Hill Auditorium, University of Michigan.

Born in the village of St. Benoit, Quebec, **Rachel Laurin** (b. 1961) has had a distinguished career as a concert organist, improviser and composer. A graduate of the Conservatory of Music in Montreal, she was assistant organist at St. Joseph's oratory in Montreal from 1986 to 2002, and then served as organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Ottawa from 2002 to 2006. She has composed over fifty pieces for various types of vocal and instrumental ensembles. Recently, she has developed an interest in composing works for organ and other instruments, including her *Fantasia for Organ and Harp* (2010) and *Sonata for Organ and Horn* (2011). *Epilogue* (2008) was awarded First Prize in the Marilyn Mason New Music Organ Composition Competition in 2009. The work is dedicated to Marilyn Mason, and is written in a loosely-organized rondo form.

**John Weaver** (b. 1937) has had a distinguished career as a concert organist, church musician and teacher. He served as Director of Music at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City for 35 years and also held appointments as organ professor at the Juilliard School of Music in New York and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In his retirement, he continues to perform frequent recitals with his wife, flutist Marianne Weaver. His *Introduction and Variations on "Lasst uns Erfreuen"* was composed in 2000, in memory of his former teacher, Alexander McCurdy.

**Joe Utterback** (b. 1944) has had a distinguished career as a jazz pianist and composer. He has been actively involved in the jazz music scenes in Kansas City, St. Louis and San Francisco and New York City, while performing concert tours across North America and Europe. Utterback's musical formation as a jazz artist stems from sessions with Ruth Searce, a legendary jazz pianist from Wichita, KS, and from gigs with Native-American blues singer Ginny Lou. He also learned the Gospel style through his involvement with Pentecostal churches. He holds a degree in classical piano performance from Wichita State University and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Kansas. He has published over 400 works including pieces for piano, organ, voice, choir and instrumental chamber music. Many of his organ compositions are featured on a CD recording, *Utterbackanalia*, performed by Andrew Shenton on the Mander organ at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in New York City.

**Marcel Dupré's** (1886-1971) autobiography contains many anecdotes that depict him as a child prodigy comparable to Mozart or Mendelssohn. He would later take Paris by storm in 1920 when he performed the complete organ works of Bach from memory in ten recitals on consecutive Friday afternoons. He made several concert tours of North America, performing 92 recitals in six months during 1922-23 and 110 recitals in six months during 1923-24. In his tenure as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire from 1926 to 1954, he became arguably the most significant organ pedagogue of the 20th century. Yet his *Three Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 7, which rank among his finest and most popular organ works, date back to his student days at the Paris Conservatoire. Composed in 1912, these pieces were written in protest against his composition teacher Widor's suggestion that he compete for the Prix de Rome, which focused on the composition of opera. The *Prelude in B major*, Op. 7, No. 1 requires an exacting technique from the performer, with its brilliant toccata patterns. The fugue is noteworthy for its economy of motivic material: all of the musical ideas in the piece are derived from transformations of the opening subject and countersubject. At the climax of the fugue, the subject is combined with itself in augmentation, and the coda brings back a motive that was heard in the prelude.