

Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series

Christa Rakich, Organist

Battle of the Sexes

Sunday, September 20, 2026 at 3pm

Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment, and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

- Prelude in B-flat Major, op. 16, no. 2 Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
- Canonic Etude in C Major, op. 56, no. 1 Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
- Fugue in B-flat Major, op. 16, no. 2 Clara Schumann
- Prelude and Fugue on “O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid”, WoO 7 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
- Prelude and Fugue on “O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid” Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)
- Hommage à Gershwin: Chorale Prelude on “Slane” (2020) Christa Rakich
- Variations on “Christe Sanctorum” (2017) David Dahl
- I. Heralding the Tune*
 - II. Canon at the Fifth and Octave*
 - III. Curious Chords*
 - IV. Duet for Two Feet to Play*
 - V. Inversion Canon*
 - VI. Voluntary for the Sesquialter or Trumpet*
 - VII. Arietta*
 - VIII. Finale: Fuga Angelorum à 3 voci (Honoring the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael)*

INTERMISSION

- Répons pour le temps de Pâques Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968)
- Magnificat I: My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord, op. 18, no. 10 Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

Prelude in C Major, BWV 547/i	J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Adagio from <i>Sonata in F Major</i>	Anna Amalia (1723-1787) trans. Christa Rakich
Fugue in C Major, BWV 547/ii	J. S. Bach

Program Notes

This program pairs music by women with music by the men in their lives. Some were lovers and colleagues, some teachers, some good friends, and one pair had a notorious falling-out over which people still speculate today. Whether each man was a mentor or a nemesis I leave to the reader to decide.

Clara Schumann and Robert Schumann

Clara Wieck was widely acclaimed throughout Europe as a pianist and composer by the age of sixteen. At only 21 years old, she married Robert Schumann over the strenuous objections of her father. In retrospect, most people would probably agree with papa that this was a bad idea for her. Robert was a fussy man, and would not allow any disturbances while composing. Household duties and the care of their children (they had eight, seven of whom survived infancy) fell entirely to Clara. Thirteen years into their marriage, they moved to a home where Clara could practice and compose without disturbing Robert. The following year, he suffered a nervous collapse and was institutionalized. Two years later, he died. She was 37. The *Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Major* is the second of three piano works Clara wrote in 1845. The prelude is a delightful, airy, unpretentious piece. The subject of the fugue is a theme by Robert. He admired all three pieces so much that he had them published as a birthday present for his wife.

Johannes Brahms and Ethel Smyth

Each of the two settings of “O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid” consists of a short prelude followed by a longer fugue. Both are clearly influenced by the contrapuntal conventions of the high Baroque. Brahms wrote his *Prelude and Fugue* the year Smyth was born. His fugue is a massive work. The chorale appears in the pedal, and the fugue subject has no relation to it. Both the subject and countersubject appear frequently in inversion and stretto. It is a masterpiece of counterpoint: very broad, relentlessly dense, and powerful. The Smyth fugue is much more rhapsodic, really a series of fughettas. She treats each phrase of the chorale fugally. The piece builds to a climax, then ends poignantly with a soft, slow statement of the chorale.

Brahms was an icon, revered by one and all from his earliest professional days. He knew he was a genius, and so did everyone else. His music has an authority and conviction that are immutable. Smyth struggled against convention all her life. She struggled for the opportunity to study, for the right to vote (she was a suffragist), and eternally for the acceptance of her music. She was also a person who wore her heart on her sleeve and said what she thought, regardless of consequences. These are both great pieces. But they are even more interesting heard together, because one hears the difference between conviction and courage, between knowing you have something profound and having total affirmation, and believing you have something profound despite the lack of it.

Christa Rakich and David Dahl

I was subbing for a friend in August of 2020, and it was *hot*. No AC in the church. The closing hymn was “Be Thou my Vision,” not a tune I would have chosen to conclude a service. What does one play for a postlude after that? I was doodling around, cursing the heat, when Gershwin's *Summertime* floated into my head, and the two melodies wove themselves together. The tempo indication at the start of this piece is “hazy, hot, and humid.”

It took some arm-twisting to commission these variations from my friend David. At 80 years old, he had every right to be done with accepting assignments. “But what about *Christe Sanctorum*?” I pleaded. Long a favorite melody of mine, it has the honor of being Hymn No. 1 in the 1982 Episcopal hymnal. “Hmm, that *is* a good tune,” he responded. And the deal was sealed. These are exquisite variations, and I have gotten frequent use out of them. I especially admire the concluding

fugue. Not only is it in three voices, to honor the three archangels, but it also contains sequences where a phrase is repeated three times, each time a step higher. The whole set is clever and imaginative. Thank you, David!

Jeanne Demessieux and Marcel Dupré

Jeanne Demessieux was a petite French woman and protégé of Marcel Dupré. After winning first prizes in harmony, piano, fugue, counterpoint, and organ at the Conservatoire de Paris, she continued to study privately with Dupré, and their families became close friends. Due largely to Dupré's influence and connections, Demessieux dazzled audiences in over 700 concerts in the U.S. and Europe with her great skill at improvisation and her virtuosic pedal playing. She also was renowned for playing huge programs from memory, and maintaining an active repertoire of over 2,500 compositions.

Dupré was her champion until, suddenly, he wasn't. The rupture was sudden and permanent, and the cause(s) of it have been the subject of speculation for decades. Renowned scholar of all things organ, Barbara Owen (1933-2024), had her own opinion of the situation: "He realized she was better than he was, and he just couldn't stand it." Yet it is also the case that the organ world in 1940's Paris was not a very congenial place, and contention among Dupré, André Marchal, and Norbert Dufourcq may have contributed to the rift. In any case, Demessieux never fully recovered from having been cast out. She died of throat cancer at age 47.

J. S. Bach and Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia

1747 was the year the great J. S. Bach visited the court of Frederick the Great in Potsdam. This famous visit ultimately resulted in the creation of Bach's *Musical Offering*. "Old Bach" was 62. Frederick was 35. Carl Phillip Emanuel, old Bach's son and court musician to Frederick, was 33. Both Frederick and his sister Anna Amalia, 24, played the flute. One must wonder, where was Princess Anna Amalia during that visit? It's hard to imagine she would not have wormed her way into the proceedings. Old Bach was famous, and this visit was highly anticipated. Today Anna Amalia is best remembered as a collector of music scores, and it is thanks to her library that many Bach works have reached our hands. But she also thought of herself as an organist, and commissioned not one, but two substantial organs for her own use. And she wrote chamber music, including the *Sonata for Flute*.

What we have of this piece is a flute part and a bass line, and in this transcription, I've given the flute part to the right hand and the bass line to the feet. The left hand fills in the blanks, as a continuo player would. Does adding a middle voice make the piece into a trio, along the lines of Bach's six sonatas? Not really. First of all, we don't have three balanced voices; we have a solo voice, meant to be showy, and an accompaniment that is clearly subordinate. And secondly, the left hand just does not want to be limited strictly to one note at a time. Sometimes a chord is called for. Be that as it may, the sonata makes a lovely organ piece. Both the original sonata and my transcription are available on IMSLP.

About the Performer

Concert and recording artist Christa Rakich has performed widely throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. She is Visiting Professor at Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, where she teaches organ, clavichord, sacred music skills, and improvisation. Near her home in Connecticut, she maintains two Artist-in-Residencies: St. John's Episcopal Church in West Hartford and the Congregational Church of Somers. Past Artist-in-Residencies have included the University of Pennsylvania and First Lutheran Church in Boston.

As a Fulbright Scholar, Christa Rakich studied with renowned Bach interpreter Anton Heiller at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna, Austria. She holds Bachelor's degrees in organ and German from Oberlin College (Phi Beta Kappa). After receipt of her Master's degree with honors from New England Conservatory, she joined the faculty there, where she taught for many years, serving ultimately as department co-chair. She has also served on the faculties at Westminster Choir College, Brandeis University, and the University of Connecticut, and as Assistant University Organist at Harvard.

An eager collaborator, Christa Rakich, with her colleague Susan Ferré, is a founding performer of the Big Moose Bach Festival in Berlin, New Hampshire. With flutist Wendy Rolfe and gambist Alice Robbins, she is a founding member of the Marion Baroque Ensemble, based in Massachusetts, and was for many years keyboardist for the Fanfare Consort, a Connecticut-based ensemble that included baroque trumpet, strings, lute, organ, and harpsichord. With keyboardist Peter

Sykes, she performed a complete cycle of Bach's keyboard works in a series of 34 concerts aptly named Tuesdays with Sebastian. The concerts raised over \$20,000 for Boston area charities.

Rakich also serves as Vice-President of the Boston Clavichord Society. One of her recent concerts for that organization included a performance of Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony* on two clavichords, with clavichordist Erica Johnson. With cellists Kathleen Schiano and Rhonda Rider, Rakich has commissioned and premiered *Sonatas for Organ and Cello* by Dutch composer Margaretha Christina de Jong and Boston-based American James Woodman.

A prizewinner at international organ competitions, Rakich has received particular acclaim for her interpretations of the music of J. S. Bach. She has recorded his *Clavierübung III*, *Leipzig Chorales*, *Trio Sonatas*, and major *Preludes and Fugues*. Other organ recordings include *Deferred Voices: Organ Music by Women Composers*, *Transcriptions from St. Justin's*, *Live from St. Mark's Cathedral*, *From the Ashes: Richards-Fowkes Opus 21 in Somers*, and *A Tribute to Yuko Hayashi: Richards-Fowkes Opus 14* at Duke University.

From her website, www.christarakich.com, one can download articles on improvisation as well as compositions on well-known hymn tunes. Free downloads are also available on IMSLP. Additional compositions are published by Oxford University Press.

About the Organ Builder

Since the founding of the company in 1979, Paul Fritts & Co. Organ Builders has built fifty-five instruments. The team has devoted considerable time researching and practicing the techniques developed by the finest organ builders working in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Mexico, France, and the United States with an emphasis on the so-called Golden Age period of organ building. Organ building during these early times reached a very high level of sophistication, particularly when we study techniques of pipe construction and voicing. Elegant speech combined with a full yet sweet and colorful tone captivates the listener. The research also includes careful observations of the acoustical properties of the rooms in which the pipes speak; a key aspect to consider as one evaluates the sound of an organ. These experiences, together with the extensive expertise found within the workshop, contribute to each new project. The primary mission is to craft instruments that today's players and audiences will love and cherish.

Recent work has reflected a desire to expand further the range of the instruments while maintaining high musical standards within a meaningful and useful style. For the most part, this involves building larger, more expansive projects with additional features that broaden the musical scope of the organs. Among their recently completed projects is a seventy-stop organ in the Basilica on the campus of The University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and a sixty-three-stop instrument for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New York City will be installed in 2026.

There are currently eight craftsmen working with Paul in the workshop. All design work along with the construction of the thousands of components (except for the electric blowers, electronic pre-set systems, and small hardware items) is done in-house. The establishment of the pipe shop in 1983 completed this vision for the company, enabling personalized attention to the most important parts of the organs. The workshop itself, located just ten blocks from PLU, features a beautiful timber-framed structure with sufficient height and space for even the largest organs to be assembled prior to dismantling and shipment.

Disposition of the Gottfried and Mary Fuchs Organ
 Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Building
 Pacific Lutheran University
 Tacoma, WA

Built by Paul Fritts & Co. 1998

Great		Positive		Swell	
Praestant (Gis)	16'	Praestant (F)	8'	Quintadena	16'
Octave	8'	Gedackt	8'	Principal	8'
Rohrflöte	8'	Octave	4'	Bourdon	8'
Spielflöte	8'	Rohrflöte	4'	Viole de Gambe	8'
Salicional	8'	Octave	2'	Voix Celeste (c")	8'
Octave	4'	Waldflöte	2'	Octave	4'
Spitzflöte	4'	Nasat	1 1/3'	Koppelflöte	4'
Quinte	2 2/3'	Sesquialter	II	Nasard	2 2/3'
Octave	2'	Scharff	IV-VII	Gemshorn	2'
Cornet	V	Fagott	16'	Tierce	1 3/5'
Mixture	V-VII	Trompete	8'	Mixture	V-VII
Trompete	16'	Dulcian	8'	Trompete	8'
Trompete	8'			Hautbois	8'
Baarpfeife	8'			Voix Humaine	8'
				Schalmey	4'
Pedal					
Subbaß	32'	Praestant	16'	Posaune	32'
Subbaß	16'	Octave	8'	Posaune	16'
Gedackt	8'	Octave	4'	Trompete	8'
Nachthorn	2'	Mixture	V-VII	Trompete	4'
				Cornett	2'
Couplers:	Positive/Great Swell/Great Swell/Positive Great/Pedal Positive/Pedal Swell/Pedal	Key Action: Direct Mechanical, suspended			
		Manual compass: 58 notes (C-a''')			
		Pedal compass: 30 notes (C-f')			
		Temperament: Kellner			
Other:	Tremulants Wind Stabilizer				

For pictures of the organ, please visit the organ builder's website at www.frittsorgan.com. For more information about the organ, the organ program at PLU, and the Richard D. Moe Organ Series, please visit www.plu.edu/organ.

2026-2027 Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series
 Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Building
 Pacific Lutheran University
 Christa Rakich, Sunday, September 20, 2026, 3pm
 Justin J. Murphy-Mancini and Friends, Sunday, November 8, 2026, 3pm
 Jaebon Hwang, Sunday, February 28, 2027, 3pm
 Christopher Anderson, Sunday, April 18, 2027, 3pm

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