



Interlochen

ARTS CAMP

Interlochen, Michigan
13th Program of the 99th Season

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CHAPEL ORGAN

Melissa Plamann

Sunday, July 5, 2026

4:30pm, Dendrinos Chapel/Recital Hall

A Festive Voluntary: Variations on "Good King Wenceslas" Petr Eben
(1929-2007)

Chaconne in E Minor, BuxWV 160 Dietrich Buxtehude
(c. 1637-1707)

Twelve Chorale Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes, Op. 8 Jeanne Demessieux
Rorate caeli (Chorale orné) (1921-1968)
O filii et filiae (Variations)
Ubi caritas (Ricercare)
Veni Creator (Toccata)

Psalm Prelude Op. 32, No. 3: Psalm 23:4 Herbert Howells
(1892-1983)

*Even though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me. – Ps. 23:4*

Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 678 Johann Sebastian Bach
Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 679 (1685-1750)

Apollo James Whitbourn
(1963-2024)

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PROGRAM NOTES

A Festive Voluntary: Variations on "Good King Wenceslas"

Petr Eben

A highly prolific and prominent composer in the Czech Republic, Petr Eben composed "Festive Voluntary" in response to a commission for the re-opening of the Chichester Cathedral organ in 1986. Eben employs the sprightly "Good King Wenceslas" tune as a means of consociating the Czech Republic and Great Britain: "I found this in the person of our King and national saint (Wenceslas), and the English medieval tune based on the lovely carol." Wenceslas was ruler of the Czech lands from 921-935 and is famous for distributing alms to the poor on the feast of St. Stephen (December 26); the tune hails from a 13th-century English carol for springtime. Eben sets the melody in myriad creative, clever, and tongue-in-cheek ways.

Chaconne in E Minor, BuxWV 160

Dietrich Buxtehude

The three extant ostinato-based works of Dietrich Buxtehude demonstrate a shift from the traditional chaconne style to a distinct north German treatment. A chaconne is defined by *The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as "a continuous variation form of the Baroque based on [a] chord progression." Buxtehude's beautiful "Chaconne in E Minor" demonstrates the composer's mastery of the form, as he uses rhythmic and textural variation to build a grand piece on the foundation of this simple progression.

Twelve Chorale Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes, Op. 8

Jeanne Demessieux

The Parisian organist Jeanne Demessieux enjoyed a storied career as an international concert artist. Marcel Dupré's most prized student, she played over 700 concerts and was reported to have memorized over 2,500 organ works; she left an impressively large number of compositions and several recordings in her short life. Composed in 1947 at the young age of 26, Demessieux' *Chorale Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes* is a collection of 12 pieces each in a different form. "Rorate caeli" presents the Advent chant as an ornamented cantus firmus; the celebratory Easter tune "O filii" is a theme and variation set; "Ubi caritas" is a ricercar with the cantus firmus in the pedal, and the majestic "Veni, Creator" is an exuberant Pentecost toccata.

Psalm Prelude Op. 32, No. 3: Psalm 23:4

Herbert Howells

Herbert Howells was an English composer, organist, and teacher most famous for his incredibly large output of Anglican church music. Howells wrote two sets of psalm preludes for organ, featuring his characteristically lush harmonies, compelling text painting, and stunning dynamic contrasts. This prelude depicts Psalm 23:4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Published in 1921, this piece may be somewhat autobiographical. In 1915, Howells was diagnosed with Graves' disease and was given 6 months to live. After several grueling years of experimental treatment, Howells was newly married in 1921 and had seemingly survived the proverbial valley. The piece opens with plodding repeated notes, suggesting timid footsteps. A haunting melody follows, which spirals and transforms into an exuberant, brilliant climax in the major mode, and then tempers in a serene conclusion.

Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 678
Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 679

Johann Sebastian Bach

Published during the composer's mature period in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach's *Clavierübung III* (1739) was one of Bach's proudest musical achievements. The collection contains seven "Catechism hymns," including "Die sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot" (These are the Holy Ten Commandments), composed in both "large" and "small" settings—with and without pedal, respectively—suggesting Martin Luther's large and small catechisms. BWV 678 contains several allusions to the text, uncommonly set in 6/4 time (6+4=10) and featuring the *cantus firmus* in canon. The jaunty manualiter setting BWV 679 is a fugue featuring a 10-beat subject with 10 entries.

Apollo

James Whitbourn

Acclaimed British composer James Whitbourn writes:

Apollo brings together two stories of discovery spanning two thousand years. The musical themes come from the first notated musical work whose composer is known: the first two hymns to Apollo composed by the Ancient Greek singer Athénaios in around 125 BC.

Apollo begins with a statement of the first verse of Athénaios' hymn followed by a flourish that leads to the beginning of the narrative sequence. The narrative starts in the command module as its occupants await ignition, with a gentle throbbing heard within. Then comes the countdown followed by a rumbling ignition—an explosion of energy as the rocket is thrust toward the sky. Once in space, the narrative continues with the first naked-eye sight of the far side of the Moon. This section uses the mysterious second verse of Athénaios' hymn, with its unusual, harmonically-twisting melody. Then comes one of the most famous images of that mission—Earthrise: the first sighting of planet Earth rising above the horizon of the Moon. Earthrise leads to another famed moment, when, just before lunar sunrise, the astronauts, in their 1968 Christmas Eve broadcast from the lunar module, successively read passages from Genesis. The slow, loud major chords which represent that moment cascade into the final Paean.

—Program notes by Melissa Plamann

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