Interlochen
ARTS ACADEMY

Interlochen, Michigan
55th Program of the 65th Year

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GUEST RECITAL

Crista Miller, organ

Tuesday, October 27, 2026
8:00pm, Dendrinos Chapel and Recital Hall

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"Stories and Variation"

Te Deum (1997) ..... Naji Hakim
(b. 1955)

Mathnavi, Op. 50 (1974) ..... Rolande Falcinelli
(1920-2006)

Deuxième Fantasie (1936)..... Jehan Alain
(1911-1940)

Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542..... Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Partita on Christus, der ist mein Leben ..... Johann Pachelbel
(1653-1706)

Prelude in G Major, H.244 ..... Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel
(1805–1847)
from a fragment completed by
Ronald Herrmann-Lubin (1997)

Trio on ST. HELENA (2016)..... Brenda Portman
(b. 1980)

Aalaiki'ssalaam (Peace be With You) (2006)..... Naji Hakim
(b. 1955)

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PROGRAM NOTES

We often ask the organ to tell **stories**. Here then are three epics told with the organ's soundscape, as envisioned by Naji Hakim, Rolande Falcinelli, and Jehan Alain. The story's texts have been included where applicable. These three works meld worldwide musical traditions in harmonically unexpected ways. French symphonic usages of Gregorian chant modes and registration idioms combine with Eastern musical traditions, especially in the use of Arabic maqamat (scales) and the Carnatic modes of Southern India. All three tell stories of humanity's desire to find, and to reunite with, the Divine. Following, at our center axis is a great Fantasy of J. S. Bach's, and its Fugue, the ultimate **variation.** We explore how stories change in time, with four variations of sung tunes from 1609 to today.

Lebanese-born Parisian organist-composer-improvisor **Naji Hakim** has long been a voice of multi-cultural **story.** Serving as successor to Olivier Messiaen at Église de la Trinité and Daniel Roth at Paris' Sacré-Cœur and pupil of Jean Langlais, he has accumulated accolades in both East and West. He writes about his **Te Deum**, composed in 1997: "….this Gregorian [chant] paraphrase responds to…[a] quotation from the Revelation to Saint John. [Rev. 7:9-12] Even though the work is in one single movement, one can distinguish the great lines of the hymn text." An English translation of the hymn text is excerpted. Typical of Hakim's Gregorian paraphrase form, Te Deum opens with direct quotations of the chant melody (shown in the long lines of text below) and progresses into six freer development sections.

1. *We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge you to be the Lord.*

The opening trumpet fanfare is declamatory and will make a return at the conclusion. The opening foreshadows the apocalyptic references throughout.

2. *All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting. To thee all angels cry aloud: the heavens, and all the powers therein. To thee cherubim and seraphim: continually do cry, Holy holy holy: Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory. The glorious company of the apostles praise thee…*

Long direct quotes of the chant tune are presented over an energetic ostinato. Each line is punctuated by glissandi and rhythmic flourishes. Then, a slightly modified acclamation of the Sanctus melody with jazz harmonies appears three times as in the hymn. In addition, Sanctus is flanked by heavy accented flourishes marked *Violent*, in illustration of "all the powers."

3. *Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's*

womb. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death; thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.

Here, Hakim comments on the chant, developing the melody and using direct quotes only to make meaningful statements. "King of Glory" is presented in irregular rhythms and is punctuated by pulsing pedals, usually in groups of seven, a Biblical number. This "Rex" episode frames more direct chant quotes over a repeating broken chord figuration.

4. *We therefore pray thee, help thy servant: whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood…*

From here forward, Hakim omits much of the text and concentrates on one meaningful phrase. This *Calme* section presents the chant sentence in canon in the pedal, over 12 "sparkling-water drops," in the words of the composer. After the last word of the text is played in the pedal, the right hand provides both an unmistakable musical illustration of "precious blood."

5. *Day by day we magnify thee…*

Several variations on the opening fanfare are presented, symbolic of "*day by day*."

6. *O Lord, in thee have I trusted….*

The final third of the work is a "toccata on a pedal-group" and is marked *joyeux* and *avec joie*, or joyfully. The above phrase appears, first in bright chords, then in a dance on the reeds with glissandi and a return of the "Sanctus," and in a harp-like virtuoso section. We also hear the return of the "praise" opening fanfare, with an allusion to the symbolism of fellow composer and predecessor at the church of La Trinité, Olivier Messiaen: the dragon of the Apocalypse appears as a low C in the 16' pedal reeds. Finally, we hear again the chordal quote and the work concludes with a toccata unmistakably spoken in the unique musical language of Naji Hakim.

Rolande Falcinelli's Mathnavi, Op. 50 contains rhythmic episodes common in Eastern music, and ascending Carnatic polyphonic textures. In the birdsong section especially, this is manifested in a scale that is repeatedly transposed up to produce rich vertical sonorities from fundamentally horizontal motion. The fantastical title references *masnavi,* 13th C. Sufi poetry that evoked extreme love imagery evolving into ecstasy; this was understood to be symbolic of the soul's intense longing to be reunited with the divine, achingly unfulfilled in this life. Falcinelli's score lists chosen scalar materials and sectional delineations "from the mystical poem by Fakhruddin Ibrahim Arâqi:"

It is He who poured upon the earth the intoxication with which your cups are filled.

He animated man and woman and delivered the heart of Madjnoun into the hands of Leilah.

He hung on Azra's lips the hope and life of Vâmeg.

To trouble the hearts of the ardent, He sowed moles on the sweetest faces.

He placed colors and perfumes in flowers to nourish the song of the nightingale.

He threw our name and our titles of glory to the winds and called us mad and miserable.

When He found the humble Arâqi on the path, He breathed the fire of passion into his heart.

A pupil of Marcel Dupré, Rolande Falcinelli was the first female titular organist at Paris' Basilica of the Sacré-Cœur (1946-73) and the first woman to hold the title Professor of Organ at the Conservatory. There she taught students such as Naji Hakim, Marie-Bernadette Dufourcet, André Isoir, and Daniel Roth. Her Op. 50 was used as the 1974 contest (final exam) piece.

Parisian composer Jehan Alain regularly worked with both Gregorian chant in Catholic churches and Jewish melodies in the synagogue, at a time when music from North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia enlivened Paris. Blended modality, monody, and rhythmic freedom embody innovation in Alain's **Deuxième Fantasie**. Alain's registrations, with little 16' in the bass, break away from the 19th C. French symphonic sound; however, one could deem the middle development section—long notes of chant melody on the pedal trumpet—inspired by the traditional French *grand plein jeu.*

At the center axis of tonight's program, **J. S. Bach's** monumental **Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542** serves as the organist's creed. Its imagination solidifies and stretches the tonal language of the early 18th century. The bold chromaticism, augmented seconds, and striking harmonic turns of the Fantasia mirror idioms heard elsewhere on today's program. And who can name greater logic and order in Western polyphony than that in this masterful fugue?

Commonly, 17th century German composers such as **Johann Pachelbel** showed prowess by composing variations on popular hymn tunes. **Christus der ist Mein Leben**, a hymn tune from 1609 is presented, and then treated in 12 variations

of increasing complexity. Partitas are always an excellent opportunity to hear various colorful stops and small ensemble sounds!

The elder sister of German composer Felix Mendelssohn, **Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel** wrote over 400 pieces of music and was recognized as a talented pianist. Brother and sister both played the organ. Although her family tolerated her music-making, it was not an acceptable feminine career in her lifetime. It was acceptable to compose music for a wedding, however, and the most well-known of Fanny's compositions served as her own wedding music. Two well-developed and musically interesting fragments written after the success of the wedding pieces form this 1829 **Prelude in G**: a beautiful scalar melodic episode, and well-crafted fugal counterpoint. These have been glued together by two researchers—in a 1998 version by Claire Bushong, and in tonight's 1997 version by German editor Ronald Herrmann-Lubin.

Cincinnati composer **Brenda Portman** composed the **Trio on St. Helena** for *Bayoubüchlein*, a collection of preludes for contemporary hymnody premiered at Houston's 2016 National AGO Convention. ST HELENA is a tune of New York organist Calvin Hampton (1938-1984); his 1977 hymn is often paired with the text "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy."

Returning to the East-West conglomerate of our program's beginning, **Naji Hakim's Aalaiki'ssalaam**, a blessing in the feminine voice, is a series of seven variations on a Marian Maronite tune, with harmonized hymn settings, scherzo textures, a French overture, and *aksak* rhythms. The finale is a

> *habanera*... a tonal, rhythmic and dynamic gradation to burst out in the brilliant and cheerful coda. This work is inspired by the tragic events that occurred in the Middle East, and particularly in Lebanon in summer 2006, and wants to be a testimony of Peace and Joy. *Let God's melody resound in you and guide your feet into the way of peace.*

Indeed, at the conclusion, after one last exultation, Hakim offers a secret last word to organists—listen for the abrupt motivic paraphrase of the opening of Messiaen's Transports de Joie—just before the final chord. Being carried away by joy is a worthy end to our **stories and their variations.**

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Crista Miller, hailed by *Gramophone* for "superlative artistry" and "effortless virtuosity and musical intelligence," is Director of Music at Houston's Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. She leads the professional Schola Cantorum, Coro Sagrado Corazón, Cor Jesu, and a distinguished concert series. She chaired the committee for Martin Pasi's landmark Opus 19 organ and has overseen significant staff development over two decades. As founder and Artistic Director of Amicis Cor Musica, she connects choral and organ traditions to contemporary civic audiences, including collaborations with the Buffalo Bayou Cistern and her own *Projections*, a multimedia series pairing the organ and visual art. She has received performance grants from Houston Arts Alliance and Scanlan Foundation.

An active performer and member of East-West Organists, Dr. Miller has appeared in 11 countries and throughout the U.S. Her double CD *Bonjour and Willkommen* (Acis) showcases five centuries of organ repertoire and has been praised by *Choir & Organ* and *Organists' Review* as "ambitious," "admirable," and "a very good advocate for the performer." Her research on Middle Eastern elements in Naji Hakim's music is published in *Mystic Modern: The Music, Thought, and Legacy of Charles Tournemire* and *ORGAN: Journal für die Orgel*. In demand as presenter, clinician, consultant, and adjudicator, she is committed to contemporary composition and leadership development in musicians. Her mentees have won competition and scholarship prizes and serve in prominent academic and ecclesial roles nationwide.

Miller earned the D.M.A. and Sacred Music Diploma from the Eastman School of Music (Hans Davidsson), the M.M. from University of Houston (Robert Bates), and a B.S.ChE from Oklahoma State University (Gerald Frank).

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UPCOMING SIGNATURE SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

***The Prom* | Book & Lyrics by Chad Beguelin, Book by Bob Martin, Music by Matthew Sklar | Friday-Sunday, Nov. 13-15 | Corson Auditorium**
Interlochen's Musical Theatre Company brings Broadway's Tony Award-nominated hit musical *The Prom* to the stage in a joyful celebration of acceptance, authenticity, and the power of community. When four self-absorbed Broadway stars descend on a small Indiana town to champion a high school student who wants to bring her girlfriend to prom, their well-intentioned publicity stunt becomes something far more meaningful.

***The Nutcracker* | Thursday-Sunday, Dec. 10-13 | Corson Auditorium**
Experience the beauty, wonder, and joy of the holiday season as the Interlochen Arts Academy Dance Division presents Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's cherished ballet, *The Nutcracker*. Follow Clara and her enchanted Nutcracker Prince on a magical journey from a glittering holiday celebration to the dazzling Land of Sweets, where beloved characters and breathtaking dances await around every corner. Featuring original

choreography by Director of Dance Joseph Morrissey, exquisite hand-crafted costumes, stunning scenic design, spectacular theatrical effects, and Tchaikovsky's iconic score performed live, this enchanting production showcases the extraordinary artistry of Interlochen's talented student dancers and musicians.

Sounds of the Season | Thursday, Dec. 17 | Corson Auditorium
Jingle all the way to Corson Auditorium for a magical evening of seasonal songs and stories brought to life by Interlochen Arts Academy's music, theatre, and interdisciplinary arts students. Cap the night with a visit from Santa Claus himself! A family-friendly holiday spectacular guaranteed to make your spirits bright.

The Accidentals with Kaboom Collective Studio Orchestra
Friday, Dec. 18 | Corson Auditorium
The Sonus Borealis Holiday Concert pairs indie-rock trio The Accidentals with a massive 32-piece youth orchestra for a sparkling, snow-globe-like winter wonderland experience featuring rich three-part harmonies and soaring symphonic arrangements.

***Cinderella* | Friday-Sunday, Feb. 12-14 | Corson Auditorium**
Experience the magic of one of the world's most beloved fairy tales as the Interlochen Arts Academy Dance Division brings Cinderella to life in a captivating full-length ballet. Filled with romance, humor, and breathtaking choreography, this enchanting production features exquisite costumes, stunning scenic design, and the remarkable artistry of Interlochen's talented young dancers. Set to Sergei Prokofiev's sweeping, unforgettable score, *Cinderella* is a celebration of hope, kindness, and the belief that anything is possible.

For information and tickets, visit interlochen.org/concerts-and-events

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