

From the Sea to the Stars



Faythe Freese in Concert

Presented by the Denver Rocky Mountain Chapter,
American Guild of Organists

7:30 p.m. Friday, March 21, 2025

Augustana Lutheran Church

Denver, Colorado



PROGRAM

Suite from *Interstellar*
“Cornfield Chase”
“Stay”
“No Time for Caution”

Hans Zimmer
(b. 1957)
(arr. Anna Lapwood)

**Pièce d’Orgue à 5, avec la Pedalle,
BWV 572**
I. Très vite
II. Grave
III. Lent

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Revêtu de Lumière
(Clad in Light)

Alesh Jermar
(1929-2004)

Sonata No. 1 in D minor, op. 42
III. Final: Allegro assai

Félix-Alexandre Guilmant
(1837-1911)
(cadenza by Wilhelm Middelschulte)

INTERMISSION

Fanfare
(Psalm 81:1-3)

John Cook
(1918-1984)

Peaceful Valley Medley

Eurydice V. Osterman
(b. 1950)
Sherman Garner
(arr. Faythe Freese)

Pageant

Leo Sowerby
(1895-1968)

*You are invited to join the performer at the console for a “behind the curtain”
discussion following the concert.*

A reception and music swap will be available in the narthex.

Program Notes

Interstellar is an epic 2014 science-fiction film set in a dystopian future where Earth is suffering from catastrophic blight and famine. The film follows a group of astronauts who travel through a wormhole near Saturn in search of a new home for mankind.

Hans Florian Zimmer is a German film-score composer and music producer who has won two Oscars (for *The Lion King* and *Dune*) and four Grammys, and has been nominated for three Emmys and a Tony. His works are notable for integrating electronic-music sounds with traditional orchestral arrangements. Since the 1980s, Zimmer has composed music for more than 150 films, including *Gladiator*, *The Last Samurai*, the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, *The Dark Knight* trilogy, *Inception*, *Man of Steel*, *Dunkirk*, and *No Time to Die*.

Anna Lapwood (b. 1995), who arranged this suite from *Interstellar* for organ, has been associate artist at London's Royal Albert Hall since 2022 and is also a television and radio presenter. In 2016, she was appointed Director of Music at Pembroke College, Cambridge, becoming one of the youngest people ever to have directed an Oxford or Cambridge university college choir; in 2018, she established a girls' choir at the college.

"Cornfield Chase" accompanies a scene where the main character, Cooper, drives through a cornfield in pursuit of a drone, creating a sense of urgency and excitement — a metaphor for the character's relentless pursuit of a goal or discovery. The phrase is primarily used to describe this thrilling chase sequence with its intense musical score.

The music of "Stay" is emotionally packed in the film. It accompanies the moment when Cooper explains to his daughter, Murph, that he does not know when he will return home from his space mission, but that it will be years, perhaps even her whole life. Murph begs him to stay, and when he says he cannot, she is so upset with him that she refuses to say goodbye. The opening of "Stay" is slow and quiet, as if time stands still, appropriately foreshadowing Cooper's time in space. A high C is held throughout the whole piece to create tension and anxiety, almost imperceptible yet always present.

"No Time for Caution" accompanies a scene in which the crew needs to dock with a spacecraft to continue its mission to find a habitable planet. The pilot, Cooper, faces a narrow window of opportunity to dock with the craft, which is spinning rapidly because of damage. The score features intense organ motifs and pulsating rhythms that create a sense of awe, wonder, and danger.

Pièce d'Orgue à 5, avec la Pedalle, also known in some copies as *Fantasia in G Major*, means "Organ piece in 5 voices with pedal." We know that J.S. Bach, the quintessential German organ composer, was familiar with French Baroque organ music, since we have documentation that Bach hand-copied the *Livre d'Orgue* (Organ Book) of a famous French master, Nicolas de Grigny. Bach was also familiar with the table of ornaments in Jean-Henri d'Anglebert's *Pièces de Clavecin*. This evening, I will present the *Pièce d'Orgue* with a French flair of performance practice in terms of registration (my choice of organ stops), ornamentation, and *notes inégales* — meaning the eighth notes in the Gravement will usually be played in a dotted rhythm.

Revêtu de Lumière was composed by Alesh Jermar, a Czech post-modernist composer, film-music composer, organist, pianist, and synthesizer player. The piece consists of recorded whale songs, seagull cries, and surf sounds in counterpoint with the organ. Alesh claimed that he was totally sober when writing this piece!

Félix-Alexandre Guilmant's **Sonata No. 1 in D minor** is subtitled, "Hommage Respectueux à Sa Majesté Leopold II" (the Belgian king). The work was originally composed in 1874 and reworked four years later as the *Symphony No. 1 for Organ and Orchestra*. The Final is a

relentless toccata consisting of two themes. At the outset, one hears an exciting and rapid sixteenth-note theme that calls upon the technical resources of the organist. The final introduction of the chorale theme, in D Major and featuring double pedal, uses the full resources of the organ for a powerful and breathtaking finish.

Concerning the cadenza: Wilhelm Middelschulte was born in Heeren-Werve, Germany, in 1863 and died in Oespel, a suburb of Dortmund, Germany, in 1943. In 1891, he moved to Chicago, where he became the Organist and Director of Music at Holy Name Cathedral. In 1893, he performed Guilmant's First Symphony for Organ and Orchestra with the Thomas Orchestra for the reopening of Holy Name Cathedral after a renovation. From 1899 to 1918, Middelschulte was the organist for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He was widely acclaimed by contemporary critics such as Ferruccio Busoni, who described him as an equal to Bach, Franck, and Reger. This cadenza may have been composed as early as 1893, when Middelschulte first performed the work, but the earliest known mention is for the inauguration of the Austin organ at Chicago's Medinah Temple in 1915. The present version is a compilation of two different copies. The cadenza makes its appearance in the third movement just before the last statement of the theme, with a double trill between the hands.

John Cook, British organist and composer, wrote his **Fanfare** in 1952. The text that inspired the work is from Psalm 81:

Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
Raise a song, sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our festal day.

Eurydice Osterman, a native of Atlanta, is an internationally known composer, organist, pianist, and writer. In **Peaceful Valley Medley**, Dr. Osterman has combined three African American spirituals: "We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace," "Jesus Walked That Lonesome Valley," and "I Am a Poor Wayfarin' Stranger." A fourth spiritual, "Give Me Jesus," is my organ version of an arrangement for piano and bass-baritone by Sherman Garner, a bass-baritone with whom I worked at Collingwood Presbyterian Church in Toledo, Ohio. This arrangement, a tribute to Garner, appears in the medley after "Jesus Walked That Lonesome Valley." As with most Black spirituals, many variations of the lyrics exist, and the songs are expressions of times of hardship and notable experiences.

Leo Sowerby was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1895 and began his musical education at an early age, studying theory and piano at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. After service in the U.S. Army during World War I, he received the American "Prix de Rome," the first of its kind awarded in composition, and subsequently studied at the American Academy of Rome for three years. Upon returning to the United States in 1924, he joined the faculty of the American Conservatory of Music, where he became head of the department of composition. In 1927, he was appointed as Organist and Choirmaster at historic St. James Episcopal Church, where he soon established a distinguished music program. St. James witnessed the blossoming and growth of Sowerby's genius; much of his greatest music was written for its choir and its Austin organ, built in the 1920s and enlarged in 1961. In 1934, Sowerby was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music by the Eastman School of Music, and in 1946, he received the Pulitzer Prize for *Canticle of the Sun*, a choral work. In 1962, after 35 years at St. James, Sowerby became the first Director of the College of Church Musicians at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He died in 1968.

Sowerby wrote in many idioms, but his most significant contribution was in the field of organ and sacred choral music. He once referred to himself as “a musical Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” because he not only composed church music, but also wrote two pieces for the orchestra of Paul Whiteman, the “Jazz King” of the 1920s and ’30s. He has been called a “national composer” because of the jazz-derived syncopation and folk-like quality of his music.

Pageant opens with a splash of dazzling virtuosity. During Sowerby’s “Prix de Rome” stay in Italy, the playing of the young virtuoso Fernando Germani impressed him. When Sowerby returned to the U.S., he wrote *Pageant* as a challenge to this sure-footed virtuoso — throwing down the musical gauntlet, as it were. Germani accepted it and later replied, “Now write me something really difficult!” The structure consists of an introduction, a theme with four variations, and a coda. The variations are connected by interludes to give a sense of continuity to this fragmented form. The theme has a delightful folk-dance character.

The Artist

Dr. Faythe Freese, Professor Emeritus of Organ at the University of Alabama School of Music, is in demand as a recitalist throughout the United States, Europe, Brazil, South Korea, and Singapore. Dr. Freese was the recipient of the Indiana University Oswald Ragatz Distinguished Alumni Award. She is the only American woman to have recorded at L’Église de la Sainte-Trinité, Paris, on the landmark instrument where Guilman, Messiaen, and Hakim were titular organists.



Dr. Freese has been a featured performer and lecturer at national and regional American Guild of Organists conventions and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians’ biennial convention. Her performances have been hailed as “*powerful ... masterful ... impressive ... brilliant.*” She was a featured performer for two evening concerts at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, during the 2024 AGO National Convention, and she performed the closing concert of the November 2020 East Texas Pipe Organ Festival, where she featured works by Leo Sowerby.

Dr. Freese holds degrees in organ performance and church music from Indiana University and has held faculty positions at Indiana University, Concordia University in Austin, the University of North Dakota-Williston, and Andrew College. As a Fulbright scholar and Indiana University/Kiel Ausstausch Programme participant, she studied the works of Jean Langlais with the composer in France, as well as the works of Max Reger with Heinz Wunderlich in Germany. Most recently, she has been awarded the Honored Listee of Marquis Who’s Who in America.



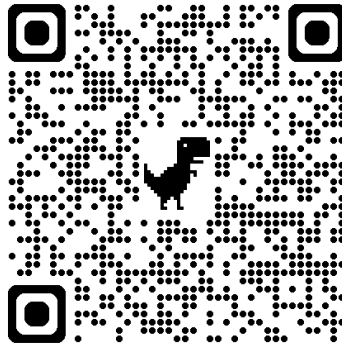
Dr. Freese is the author of publications including *Five Chorale Preludes & Free Hymn Accompaniments*; *Sunday Morning Organist: A Survivor’s Guide for the Pianist*; and *Sonus Novus: Intonations and Harmonizations* (Concordia Publishing House). She is the Director of and on the roster of Concert Artist Cooperative III.

Dr. Freese would like to thank the Denver Rocky Mountain Chapter for the opportunity to perform at this lovely venue during the current season. Special thanks to Sub-Dean Linda Mack and to David Vogels for their hard work in organizing this project and bringing it to fruition; to organist Andrew Peters and the staff at Augustana Lutheran Church for stepping forward at the last minute to host this concert; to Jeffrey Harms and Richard White for technical support; to Jerry Freese for procuring and producing the whale video; and to Ed

Mack for the Mountains and Valleys photo essay. The space video was taken by NASA astronauts on the International Space Station, courtesy of Earth Movie Theater.

The following compact discs are available by contacting **ffreese@ua.edu**:

- *The Freese Collection*, Raven OAR-948
- *Faythe Freese à l'Orgue de l'Église de la Sainte-Trinité*, JAV 173
- *Roaring Ranks with Faythe Freese*, Arkay AR6176
- *Sowerby at Trinity*, Albany Records TROY 368
- *Faythe Freese in Concert*, Arkay AR6174



Your donations to the Denver Rocky Mountain Chapter, American Guild of Organists, will help defray the costs of this program and support upcoming programs. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be gratefully accepted at the welcome desk in the narthex, or you can use the QR code above to make a donation with your smartphone. We now partner with Zeffy.com, a 100% free fundraising platform for nonprofits, to process your payment. Zeffy covers all transaction fees, so your full payment goes directly to the Denver Rocky Mountain Chapter. At checkout, Zeffy will ask for a donation to support its work. If you don't wish to contribute to Zeffy, simply click the dropdown menu, choose "Other," and change the donation to \$0. **Please check your junk/spam folder if you do not receive payment confirmation.**