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# CHRISTIAN SCHMITT



**TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023, 7 PM  
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# Welcome

Dear Friends,

Welcome to tonight's concert by German organist Christian Schmitt!

Christian is praised for his creative programming, and tonight we look forward to hearing some of the best-known works for organ, as well as compositions that will be new to us. We're pleased to be back at A&M United Methodist Church, which is much-loved by the Bryan/College Station community for its marvelous organ. We're also happy to offer tonight's concert by livestreaming, free of charge, to the patrons who can't attend this performance in person.

Both this concert and the next one on April 22 – the Season Finale of the FCM 27th Concert Series – are free of charge, as are the educational programs and opportunities that we offer to local music students.

Friends of Chamber Music series would not be possible without support from patrons and charitable trusts and foundations. Our special thanks go to Hays and Robin Glover, the 27th Season Sponsors, and to all our loyal donors for helping us bring Christian Schmitt to Brazos Valley for the first time. We greatly appreciate support from the Gilbert and Thyra Plass Arts Foundation, the Arts Council of Brazos Valley, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment of the Arts, and the Nina Astin Winkler, the Rea, and the Eugene Edge Charitable Trusts.

We thank you for sharing in your love of great classical music tonight.

Your reviews mean a great deal to us, and your support helps Friends of Chamber Music contribute to the cultural life of our community.



Andreas Kronenberg

President of the Board, Friends of Chamber Music

## Friends of Chamber Music Mission

Friends of Chamber Music brings music from diverse periods and cultures, performed by world-class musicians, to the Brazos Valley. Through concerts and outreach programs at area schools, we strive to enhance the cultural life of the community.

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Friends of Chamber Music thanks student volunteers from Texas A&M University assisting at the concerts during the 2022-2023 season.

## Educational Outreach: Pre-Concert Performance

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John Williams  
Quidditch from Harry Potter

Wind Ensemble: Brass

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Trumpet Quartet

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# Program

Please refer to this program to refrain from clapping between movements and hold your applause until the end of each piece.

This concert proceeds with no intermission.

J. S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor,  
BWV 582

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Annum per annum

Cesar Franck  
(1822-1890)

Chorale No. 3 in A minor

Theo Brandmüller  
(1948-2012)

Sieben Stücke zur Passionszeit (1983)  
VI. Die Kruezigung  
VII. Pieta

Charles-Marie Widor  
(1844-1937)

Symphony No. 10, "Romane," Op. 73  
I. Moderato

Franz Liszt  
(1811-1888)

Prelude on J. S. Bach's Cantata for  
Organ, "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen"

## ARTIST FORUM

will immediately follow the concert.

Please move closer to the stage to ask  
Christian Schmitt your questions.

# Program Notes

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**

## **Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582**

A passacaglia is an ostinato (“obstinate”) melodic idea in slow triple meter, appearing first in the bass line and repeated constantly while increasingly complex variations are played over it. It is similar to a ground bass or a chaconne, except that it is not limited to the bass voice; in fact, in Bach’s famous Passacaglia in C minor, the theme moves to the upper voices in the middle of the passacaglia before moving back to the (now fortified) bass. In the Fugue, in which themes are imitated in the various voices, Bach takes the passacaglia theme as the main fugal subject and combines it with a countersubject of repeated eighth notes, thus creating double fugue. Altogether there are 21 variations in the Passacaglia and 12 statements of the passacaglia subject in the Fugue.

**Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)**

## **Annum per annum**

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is one of the most important composers of “classical” music today. He created his organ Mass, *Annum per annum* (“Year by year”), in 1980 for the 950th anniversary of the Cathedral of Speyer in Germany, and he dedicated it to the Cathedral’s patron saint, Saint Mary, and its founder, Emperor Conrad II; to St. Cecilia, the patroness of musicians; and to Leo Krämer, the cathedral organist who premiered the piece. The work consists of five movements, which are variations on a *cantus firmus*, plus an optional introduction and coda. The movements correspond to the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei), which have been held in the Speyer Cathedral year by year, or in Latin, *annum per annum*, for over nine centuries.

**Cesar Franck (1822–1890)**

## **Chorale No. 3 in A minor**

Franck brought a spiritual and serious quality to French instrumental music in the 19th century, which previously had been dominated by the theatre. He composed this towering work in 1890, only a few months before his death. In it he synthesizes a lifetime of playing, teaching, and improvising. It begins like a toccata with rapid passages alternating with ascending arpeggiated chords, but soon a quiet lyrical section emerges. This slowly builds up to a triumphant Ending.

# Program Notes

## **Theo Brandmüller (1948–2012)**

### **Two Pieces from Sieben Stücke zur Passionszeit**

Theo Brandmüller was a German organist, composer, and music professor from Saarbrücken. He received numerous prizes for his works and was in demand as both a performer and teacher. He wrote *Sieben Stücke zur Passionszeit* (Seven Pieces for Passion-Time) in 1983. "Die Kreuzigung" (The Crucifixion) and "Pieta" are the sixth and seventh pieces, respectively.

## **Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)**

### **Moderato from Organ Symphony No. 10, "Romane," Op. 73**

Of all instruments, the pipe organ comes the closest to approximating an orchestra with its variety of sound combinations. Charles-Marie Widor stands out as the master of the organ symphony, aided by the pioneering instruments created by the French organ builder, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Widor composed his Organ Symphony No. 10 in 1900 for the installation of a new Cavaillé-Coll organ at the Romanesque-style Basilica of St. Sernin in Toulouse (hence, the nickname "Romane"). A Gregorian chant for Easter, "Haec Dies," provides the main theme. The Moderato is the first movement; it has an improvisatory, elegiac character.

## **Franz Liszt (1811–1888)**

### **Variations on "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen," Präludium nach J. S. Bach's Kantate für Orgel**

Franz Liszt is famous as one of the 19th century's greatest pianists, but he also played the organ. He originally wrote this work for piano; in 1863 he transcribed it for organ. The work is a set of 30 variations on a theme based on the chromatic, drooping bass line of the opening chorus of J. S. Bach's Cantata No. 12, "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen" (Crying, lamenting, worrying, fearing) and the similar "Crucifixus" theme from the Credo of Bach's B-minor Mass. A syncopated version of the soprano part of the cantata's chorus appears in sixth variation. After an extended free development, Liszt incorporates the melody from the final chorale in the cantata, "Was Gott tut, das ist wohl getan" (What God does, Is done well). Thus, in both Bach's cantata and in Liszt's variations derived from it, what began in bitter sorrow ends with hope.

## Christian Schmitt, organ

Since his debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle and at Salzburg Festival, Christian Schmitt has become one of the world's most sought-after organists. Last season, he was "Artist in Focus" of the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich, Switzerland, where he inaugurated the new organ at the Tonhalle with Finnish conductor Paavo Järvi.

Invited by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Schmitt debuted at Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2020. Since then, the brightest highlights of his career included Schmitt's performances with the Staatskapelle Berlin under the baton of Daniel Barenboim and his new recording of Hindemith's Chamber Music No. 7 with conductor Christoph Eschenbach. This season he debuts at Carnegie Hall with the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra and, in a solo recital, at Meyerson Symphony Center presented by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

Schmitt has performed as a recitalist at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Konzerthaus Berlin, Wiener Musikverein, Gewandhaus Leipzig, and Maison Symphonique Montréal. His collaborations with orchestras include working with conductors Philippe Herreweghe, Jakub Hruša, Marek Janowski, Daniel Barenboim, Paavo Järvi, and Manfred Honeck. A frequent recital collaborator, Schmitt has performed with world-renowned soloists Magdalena Kožená, Matthias Höfs, Thomas Hampson, and Matthias Goerne.

Schmitt's recordings for a classical music label, Deutsche Grammophon, include two CDs for the "Bach 333 - Die neue Gesamtausgabe" project and an album of works for voice and organ with soprano Magdalena Kožená. In 2013, he was presented with an ECHO Klassik award for his recording of Widor's organ symphonies.

Schmitt is on the faculty at Codarts University in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and the principal organist of the Bamberger Symphoniker. He studied organ in Paris, Boston, and Saarbrücken and served as a jury member at numerous organ competitions in Europe.



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Friends of Chamber Music Endowment Fund will provide financial stability and help meet rising programming and administrative costs. The first objective is to reach \$25,000, which will fund one Friends Music Scholarship annually.

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FCM concert series and outreach programs are made possible in part through Hotel Tax Revenue funded from the City of College Station and the City of Bryan through the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley.

Tonight's concert is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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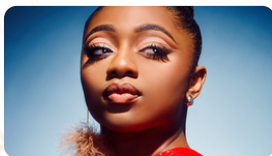


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