

Preview

Moore and Carterette to play organ/piano recital at Stambaugh Auditorium March 30

by Daniel Hathaway



Organist Edward Moore and pianist Nathan Carterette will perform both as soloists and as an unusual duo on the Stambaugh Auditorium Organ Series in Youngstown on Sunday afternoon, March 30 at 4:00 pm. Both musicians are recent transplants to Pittsburgh, Moore having moved there from Washington DC, and Carterette from Cleveland.

They met when Carterette attended an organ/piano concert that Moore gave at East Liberty Presbyterian Church, where he serves as director of music. "I heard them play Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Carterette said during a Skype to two cell phones conversation during a rehearsal break at Stambaugh last week. "It was so fantastic. Ed produced every instrument in the orchestra on the organ."

As the musicians got to know each other, they decided to try a collaboration. "We started talking about organ/piano repertoire and I suggested Liszt's *Totentanz*," Carterette said. On Sunday, he'll play Liszt's original piano part while Moore will adapt the second piano part of Liszt's own version for two pianos to the organ.

"I'll do the same for Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*," Moore said. "The fact that both composers made two-piano arrangements makes it authoritative — if they had to reduce the orchestra part to one keyboard, this is the way they wanted it."

Carterette will be at the front of the stage at a new Steinway D grand piano ("I feel as though I'm breaking it in") while Moore will be just below at the four-manual console of the 1926 E.M. Skinner organ which was restored to its original condition in 2010. "It fits the music so well with all its colors, solo stops and big tubas," Moore said. "It's unique for a public auditorium. We're very fortunate to have it in Youngstown."

In addition to the Liszt and the Gershwin, Moore and Carterette will play solo works that have interesting connections to Skinner organs and to other pieces on the program.

Moore will contribute Virgil Fox's famous arrangement of J.S. Bach's *Come, Sweet Death*, a piece that became a theme song for that flamboyant organ virtuoso. "I decided to play it because of a conversation I had with Stambaugh's William Conti when I came to try the organ before the restoration," Moore recalled. "He mentioned having heard Virgil play it on a recording. Just last week I discovered in a program archive that Virgil had played it as the second piece on his recital at Stambaugh in 1947. It's a dream to play on this organ — it almost plays itself!"

E.M. Skinner also provides a link to Moore's other solo, Louis Vierne's *Carillon du Château Longpont*. Vierne, who was organist of Notre-Dame in Paris, toured the US and admired Skinner's organs — especially for their modern stop-changing technology. Though he never played at Stambaugh, Vierne dedicated his *Clair de Lune* to the American organbuilder.

Carterette hears important connections between his solo piece, Maurice Ravel's *Jeu d'eau* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. "There are passages in the cadenzas of *Rhapsody* that come straight out of *Jeu*," he noted. And Moore observed that, whether by accident or design, the three composers in the second half of the program — Vierne, Ravel and Gershwin — all died in 1937.

I ask Moore and Carterette if they have an encore in their back pockets in case Sunday's audience demands one. "We're playing that at the beginning," Carterette says. "The Star-Spangled Banner guarantees us a standing ovation!"

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