

## Trinity Chamber Orchestra: Brownbag Season Finale (May 18)

by Daniel Hathaway



For the finale of the 2015-2016 Wednesday Noon Brownbag Concert season, music director Todd Wilson invited his predecessor, Horst Buchholz, back to conduct the Trinity Chamber Orchestra in works by George Frideric Handel and

Howard Hanson featuring organist Nicholas Haigh, soprano Margaret Carpenter Haigh, and Wilson himself.

Trinity Cathedral's nave was packed with an intergenerational audience including seniors in wheelchairs bussed in from retirement communities and day facilities, and downtown workers and students, many of whom had packed lunches or were standing in a long line to purchase a catered meal — a typically bustling crowd for this noonday series, now in its 38th season.

The 50-minute concert began with Handel's B-flat Organ Concerto — one of many that the composer wrote to entertain the audience between acts of his oratorios. Haigh, who is Trinity's associate music director, played the solo part with stylish elegance. Buchholz and the orchestra maintained a tight ensemble with the soloist, who was located one flight above the floor in the organ loft. A closed-circuit video projection allowed the audience to pay attention to the man behind the curtain.

Margaret Carpenter Haigh followed with three arias from Handel's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* that invoked, in turn, Jubal's lyre, "The soft complaining flute," and Cecilia herself, who did Orpheus one better by making an angel appear when the saint played the organ.

Haigh's clear, bright tone sailed out over the orchestra. A robust, expressive cello solo by Linda Atherton and a bright (non-complaining) obbligato by flutist Linda White

gilded the first two arias, and Haigh's florid melismas nicely matched the bright orchestration of the final aria.

Todd Wilson moved the proceedings from the 18th into the 20th century with Howard Hanson's *Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Harp*, Op. 22, No. 2. Drawing Romantic sounds out of the Flentrop organ at the beginning, he took us on an eventful journey that included toccata-like episodes, a flashy pedal cadenza, and a bluesy moment where organ and harp traded undulating chords. Wilson turned in a typically commanding performance, adroitly supported by Buchholz and the strings.

Trinity's Brownbag Concerts resume in October on Wednesdays at 12:10 p.m.

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