

## Trinity Cathedral's BrownBag Concert Series turns 40

by Mike Telin



Since the [BrownBag Concert Series](#) at Trinity Cathedral presented its first concert in January of 1978, it has firmly established itself as an integral part of Cleveland's vibrant music scene. Today the series hosts over 5,000 guests annually, from newborns to centenarians.

On Wednesday, October 4 at 12:00 noon, Music and Art at Trinity will kick off the 40th anniversary of the free series

with a concert featuring the Trinity Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Todd Wilson and a return visit by the dynamic saxophone duo [Jake & Sarah](#). The program includes music by Handel, Quantz, Glazunov, and Koch, as well as the world premiere of Nathan Hall's *Forces of Change*, a concerto for solo saxophone and string orchestra.

"It's a remarkable achievement for any concert series to go on for 40 uninterrupted years, and with such a high degree of success," Todd Wilson, the Cathedral's organist and director of music, said during a telephone conversation. "For 30 of those years it was run by Dan Hathaway, and so often when a series has revolved around the person who founded and nurtured it for three decades, it will go downhill when that person leaves," he said. Wilson added that it's wonderful that the series has continued for another decade after the leadership torch was passed from Hathaway to Horst Buchholz in 2008, and then to himself in 2011.

One of Wilson's early artistic discoveries was Jake Swanson and Sarah Marchitelli, who have appeared on the series a number of times. "They introduced themselves via email," Wilson said. "I was so taken with everything they sent me. It conveyed their wonderful

playing and youthful enthusiasm and I thought they would be a perfect fit. They're the most wonderful people and a pleasure to work with, and they always bring an abundance of creativity and new things every time."

The season will continue on October 11, when [Gabriel's Horns](#), directed by James Day, will make their debut on the series. The program will feature a lively mix of jazz-praise, blues, and big band music. "We've been trying to schedule something for a couple of years, and this time it worked out."

The October 18 concert will feature the Fuller Sounds Handbell Choir, Carmen Massaro, director. "I've known Carmen all the years I've been in Cleveland," Wilson said. "He's directed this ensemble for a long time at Rocky River United Methodist Church, and they were featured at the American Guild of Organists convention in Youngstown this past summer. This will also be the first time in a while that a handbell choir has appeared on the series."

Vocal music will fill the Cathedral when the Cleveland State University Chorale under the direction of Brian Bailey takes center-stage on October 25. Then, on November 1, there will be a Dvořák-palooza! featuring BrownBag audience favorites violinist [Andrew Sords](#) and pianist Elizabeth DeMio performing some of the composer's tuneful masterpieces. "This is going to be a wonderful concert," Wilson said. "Andrew and Liz are always a treat to have on the series."

The words of The Bard of Avon will be highlighted on November 8 when soprano [Cecilia Nam](#) brings her "Shakespeare and Songs" program to the Cathedral. "Selections from his plays and sonnets will be read in between the musical selections. Cecilia is a terrific singer and she's performed this program in the past to great success. It's going to be a lot of fun."

The Trinity Chamber Orchestra returns on November 15. The program will feature harpist [Parker Ramsay](#) in concertos by Handel and Debussy. "Parker is interesting in that he's also an accomplished organist," Wilson noted. "I've known a handful of people who play organ and harp, and Parker certainly has the right DNA to play both instruments very well."

The final three concerts of the fall season will celebrate the holidays. On November 29, Jennifer Cochran and The Gateway Band will present "A Jazzy Christmas," a program of holiday favorites. Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* will feature harpist [Jody Guinn](#) along with the sopranos and altos of the Trinity Cathedral Choir on December 6. "I'm always happy to program this piece on an annual basis. I absolutely adore it," Wilson said. The BrownBag concerts' popular *Messiah* Sing will be presented on December 13. Wilson will lead the Trinity Chamber Orchestra, soloists, and a massed choir made up of audience members — no audition necessary.

This season also marks the 40th anniversary celebration of Trinity Cathedral's Flentrop pipe organ — whose completion in December of 1977 originally inspired the noontime concert series. A special free concert featuring Michel Bouvard will be presented on Tuesday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m., co-sponsored by the Cleveland chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The acclaimed French organist serves as titular of the Cavallé-Coll organ at the Basilica of St. Sernin in Toulouse and one of the four principal organists of the Chapel Royal at the Palace of Versailles. Bouvard is a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* (Knight of Arts and Letters), a national and cultural honor in France.

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