

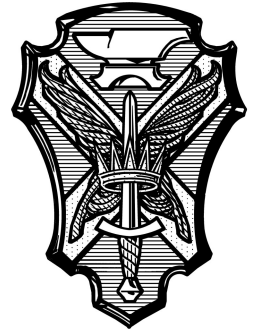
# THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

ADVENT ORGAN RECITAL

ISAAC JOHNSON, ORGAN

DECEMBER 22, 2019, 4:15 PM



## LA NATIVITÉ DU SEIGNEUR (THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD)

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

### I. LA VIERGE ET L'ENFANT (THE VIRGIN AND CHILD)

“Conceived by a virgin, a child is born unto us, a son is given to us. Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Zion! Behold, your king comes to you, just and humble.” (*Books of the Prophets Isaiah and Zechariah*)

### II. LES BERGERS (THE SHEPHERDS)

“Having seen the child lying in the manger, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God.” (*Gospel according to St. Luke*)

### III. DESSEINS ÉTERNELS (ETERNAL DESIGNS)

“God, in his love, predestined us to be his adopted children, through Jesus Christ, in praise of the glory of his grace.” (*Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians*)

### V. LES ENFANTS DE DIEU (THE CHILDREN OF GOD)

“To all who received him, the Word gave them the power to become children of God. And God sent into their hearts the Spirit of his Son, who cries out: Father! Father!” (*Gospel according to St. John and Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*)

### VI. LES ANGES (THE ANGELS)

“The heavenly host praised God and said: Glory to God in the highest heaven!” (*Gospel according to St. Luke*)

### VIII. LES MAGES (THE MAGI)

“The Magi left, and the star went before them.” (*Gospel according to St. Matthew*)

### IX. DIEU PARI MI NOUS (GOD AMONG US)

“Words of communion, of the Virgin, of the whole church: The one who created me has rested in my tent, the Word was made flesh and he dwelt in me. My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit trembles with joy in God my savior.” (*Book of Sirach, and Gospel according to St. Luke*)

## ABOUT THE RECITALIST

Isaac Johnson is Director of Liturgical Music and Principal Organist at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, one of the largest churches in the Diocese of Nashville. His most recent previous appointment was as Director of Music and Organist at St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Parish in New Britain, Connecticut. He worked as an organist and substitute organist at numerous churches in Connecticut and sang tenor in several professional ensembles, including the St. Cecilia Consort, Yale Repertory Chorus, (*cont.*)

and the schola cantorum of the St. Gregory Society in New Haven, a society for the preservation of the Latin Mass. Isaac has degrees from Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Samford University. His previous instructors include Ezequiel Menéndez, Walden Moore, David Simon, and Daniel Lawhon (organ), Jeffrey Douma (choral conducting), Ronald Shinn (piano), and Jared Ballance (violoncello). He has performed at cathedrals and churches in several states and in Canada. Isaac lives in Murfreesboro with his wife Christen and their son Linus.



### **ABOUT OUR ORGAN PROJECT**

*In the early 1990s, problems surfaced with the present Cathedral pipe organ. The largest pipes in the facade were replaced in the late 1990s by Fr. Patrick Cullen and the late Calvert Shenk. A short time later, during the tenure of Fr. Richard Donohoe as Rector, and under the leadership of Stephan Calvert (the Cathedral's director of music) an Organ Fund was begun in anticipation of rebuilding the Moller instrument. A capital campaign was planned for 2013, only to be delayed by the Cathedral's exterior renovation, a project discovered to be of greater urgency and obviously greater scope. Fr. Kevin Bazzel, Rector at the time, asked that the Cathedral organ be the next item addressed, due to its ever-greater disrepair (even failing during a Christmas Eve Mass!). Proposals for a rebuild were solicited from some of the country's best organ builders working in the "American Classic" style of the present instrument, and a study trip of their representative work was made. While all builders and proposals were thorough and excellent, each questioned whether a rebuild would fully address the deficiencies of the Moller (outlined on its page here). Around this time, we observed the passing of long-time parishioner Anna Catharine Grace, long known for her generosity toward liturgical and musical endeavors in the Diocese of Birmingham. Mrs. Grace was no less generous with our Cathedral parish, leaving her estate to secure the future of the Cathedral sacred music program, especially through the funding of the organ. In consultation with Fr. Bryan Jerabek, Rector, and the Cathedral finance council, proposals were solicited for a new instrument of eclectic design and mechanical (or "tracker") action. After years of consultation with architects, organbuilders, organists around the world, and with the blessing of Bishop Robert J. Baker, in 2019 the Cathedral signed a contract for Opus 164 of the Noack Organ Company, a three-manual instrument of 75 ranks of pipes, to be named the **Anna Catharine Grace Memorial Pipe Organ**. This organ will reuse a number of pipes from the previous Moller instrument, integrating them into an eclectic instrument of French Classical and Symphonic influences well-suited to the Cathedral's fine acoustic and the strengths of our music apostolate. It will be an instrument equally at home in the liturgy as it is in concert; one that preserves (and enriches) many of the heroic aspects of the Moller instrument while substantially increasing quieter options for accompaniment of singers and choir. The Noack organ will be installed by Summer of 2021. While Mrs. Grace's gift has secured just over 60% of the total cost of the project (removing the present organ, making the necessary structural and HVAC preparations for the new instrument, and building the Noack organ), donations are still urgently needed to cover the remaining portion of the contract price and related contracting needs. For more information, please contact the the Director of Music, Mr. Bruce Ludwick, Jr., at [Ludwick@stpaulsbhm.org](mailto:Ludwick@stpaulsbhm.org) or (205) 251-1279 x107. A donation to a project such as this is a perfect way to give glory to God and pay tribute to a loved one, helping their memory "sing on" for years to come.*