Rose Sunday Concert

Commemorating the 275th Anniversary of Saint Paul's Church Augusta, Georgia

1750-2025

Keith Shafer, Organist

The Fourth Sunday of Lent
30 March 2025
Four o'clock in the Afternoon

Program

I. The Battle of Trenton **James Hewitt**
1770-1827

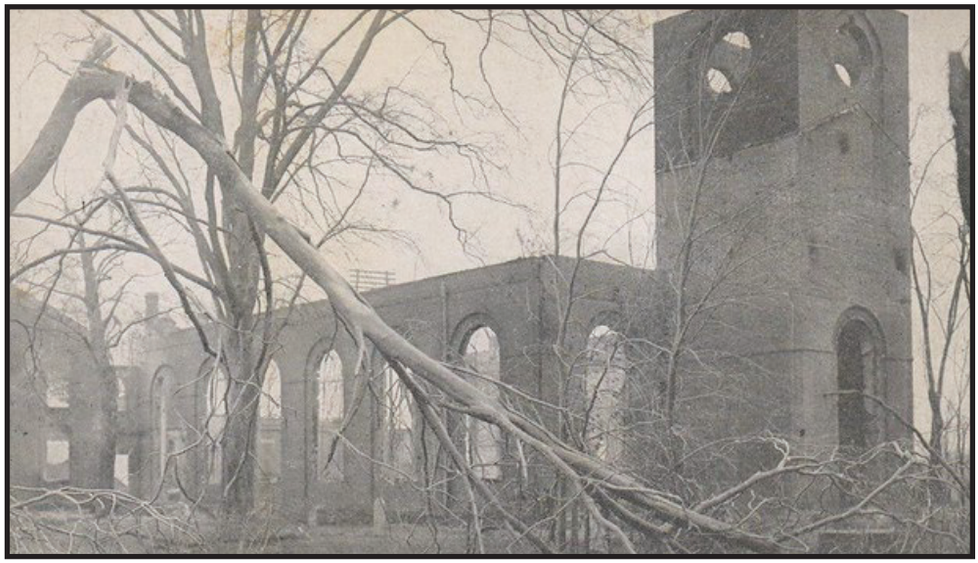
A Sonata Dedicated to General George Washington
Edited and arranged for the Organ by E. Power Biggs, 1974



James Hewitt

In the early days of this country a musician needed to be a "Jack-of-all-trades" and master of several. James Hewitt, the first Organist of Saint Paul's Church, Augusta, was a man of such talents. Born in 1770 in Dartmoor, England, he had been leader of the Court Orchestra of King George III, before emigrating to the New World in 1792. In New York, Hewitt was active as a concert violinist, director of theatre orchestras, Organist of Trinity Church, and music publisher. Later, he moved to Boston and became Organist of Trinity Church. Hewitt traveled to the Southern colonies on a regular basis with a troupe of musicians, presenting programs that included music such as the "Battle of Trenton." Several years before his death he was appointed the first Organist of Saint Paul's Church, Augusta, and was responsible for the acquisition of the church's first pipe organ.

James Hewitt was moved to set to music the clash and drama of the Battle of Trenton, which took place on Christmas Day, 1776. George Washington's surprise attack was the master stroke that boosted the morale of the ragged American army and helped turn the tide of the Revolutionary War. Hewitt's ear was attuned to the times, and his enthusiasm for his adopted country is evident in this piece of musical imagery. Hewitt dedicated his descriptive sonata to General George Washington, and the piece enjoyed considerable popularity in the concerts of the day. The composer's pictorial subtitles indicate his musical intention. Thanks are expressed to Thomas and John Robertson, dressed as members of the colonial militia, who are providing assistance with the display.



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

II. Phoenix (2016)

William H. Bates
b. 1943

Commissioned by Leslie Lambert for Saint Paul's Church
in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Augusta's Great Fire of 1916

Before the Disaster
The Disaster Begins
Shall we gather. . .?

The morning of Wednesday, 22 March 1916, was typical of any early Spring morning in Augusta: an air of tranquility, birds chirping in newly budded trees, and blustery winds of a late season cold front blowing in from the West. Citizens of this city of 46,000 were unaware of what was to befall them as the sun would set. An unattended hot iron in a tailor's shop was to begin a massive fire that would engulf 25 blocks of downtown Augusta. Among the losses: the historic building of Saint Paul's Church. As a newspaper report stated, "many considered the destruction of colonial-era Saint Paul's Church at Reynolds and Sixth streets the city's greatest loss."

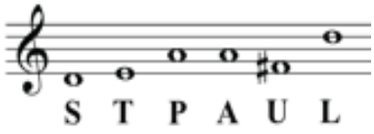
"Phoenix" attempts to "paint a picture" of that day: the peaceful morning, the gentle workday, the approaching evening, and the conflagration of that night. The opening of the work features several measures of unmetered music that presents a tranquil solo flute melody over sustained chords. As the day blossoms so also does the music, with its triplet-dominated melody and chordal accompaniment along with double pedal. As evening approaches, occasional dissonant chords (tone clusters) and low, rumbling sixteenth notes begin to penetrate the peaceful setting—the Great Fire is beginning. You will then hear the one bell that was housed in the

tower of Saint Paul's Church toll three times. The next toll is interrupted, however, for the bell falls to the ground as the roof caves in from the horrible fire that is engulfing the historic building. The sounding of the organ's chimes recalls the heroic ringing of the tower bell by the church sexton as fiery embers began to take its horrendous toll on Saint Paul's Colonial-era building.

The raw emotions of the Augustans are depicted as the organist plays painful-sounding chords of ever-increasing dynamics. As the chords begin to mellow, so also do the dynamics. Eventually, *s i l e n c e* falls—as though there is disbelief in what has just befallen the city of Augusta. For the parishioners of St. Paul's, shall they rebuild and, if so, where? On the river? We know, of course, the answer to these questions. “Yes! We will rebuild our church— right here on the river and right here on the ashes of the old one.” So, from the ashes of the historic colonial-era building, rose the present structure of Saint Paul's Church, just as the mythological *Phoenix* rose from the ashes of its predecessor. The parishioners of St. Paul's have thus been gathering “at the river” to worship for the past 275 years.

After the poignant *s i l e n c e* in this piece, one will hear a few seemingly disconnected pitches—all on F-sharp (the first pitch of the hymn tune that will eventuate). One may associate the word “Shall?” with these pitches, as though more than 100 years ago individual members of Saint Paul's Church were speaking in a questioning manner concerning if or where to rebuild. Several other church members state the same question (in the music, of course). When a new pitch (E natural, the second pitch of the hymn) enters, the question has been expanded to “Shall we gather?”). The organ increases in dynamics, and eventually there is a toccata on a hymn well known to today's Saint Paul’s congregation—the answers that have been resoundingly reaffirmed more than 100 years after the Great Fire.

At the end of the Toccata the organist will improvise a pedal solo (a *cadenza*), a passage that brings us fully into the twenty-first century. There follows a triumphal entry of the organ's *State Trumpets* sounding the opening pitches of “Shall We Gather at the River?” and a presentation on the chimes of a melody. This short theme has been “carved out” for Saint Paul's Church based on a tradition that goes back to medieval times in which specific letters of the alphabet are assigned to specific music pitches. Here is the **ST PAUL** chime theme that has been configured for this composition:



The piece concludes with a striking chord that features the quick (grace-note) presentation of the first two pitches of the “Saint Paul” motive carried over into the final D-major chord, which holds the remaining pitches of the “St Paul” theme.



William H. Bates, a native of Texas, earned the Bmus in organ and church music and the BA in music theory from Howard Payne University, and both the Mmus and the Dmus in organ performance at Indiana University. During his career, Dr. Bates presented recitals and workshops for churches and AGO chapters throughout much of the United States and for a number of music conventions, including national meetings of the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society. He also played recitals in Europe, including those at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and King's College in Cambridge, England. Before his retirement he contributed articles and reviews to *The American Organist, The Diapason, The Journal of the American Liszt Society, and BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute.* Several of his choral works are available from Hinshaw Music (Chapel Hill, NC), and six organ collections have been printed by Concordia Publishing House. Dr. Bates's *Sonata Breve* is his first work to be published by MorningStar Publishers. From August 1978 through May 2011 Dr. Bates taught at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, where he held the position of Professor of Organ and Music History. He also served as associate dean and director of graduate studies for the music school. He was called back to teach music history during the 2011-12 academic year, this boosting his academic teaching career to forty-six years. In 2012 he was named a recipient of the Oswald Gleason Ragatz Distinguished Organist Alunnus Award at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. Dr. Bates is now retired and living in Texas.

Saint Paul's Church

Gather by the River

III. Five Hymn Tune Voluntaries **Michael Burkhardt**
Born 1957

The Saint Paul's Church Organ Collection
Commissioned in commemoration of the 275th Anniversary of Saint Paul's Church, Augusta

I. Omni Die, Hymn 341
II. Dunedin, Hymn 455
III. Vineyard Haven, Hymn 392
IV. Morning Star, Hymn 117
V. Llangloffan, Hymn 68



Internationally known for his innovative and inspiring hymn festivals and for his creative work with children, Michael Burkhardt is in frequent demand as a choral clinician, organ recitalist, and hymn festival leader. Dr. Burkhardt is Artist-Professor of Organ at Eastern Michigan University, and Founder-Artistic Director of hearts, hands and voices Worship and Fine Arts Program for Children in Southeast Michigan. Dr. Burkhardt is a graduate of Carthage College, Kenosha, WI. He earned his M.M. degree from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, and his D.M.A. degree from Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. He has performed and led seminars at both national and regional events for the American Guild of Organists, the Hymn Society, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, and the American Choral Directors Association, and since 2003 he has made nine performance-teaching tours to South Korea and Singapore. Dr. Burkhardt is author of *Part-Singing Global Style*, *Singing with Understanding*, *Read 'n Ring*, *Worship for the Young Child*, and *Creative Hymn Playing*. He is composed three settings of the Eucharistic liturgy, *A New Song, Missa St. Andrew,* and *Missa Mixolydian* as well as numerous organ improvisations, choral octavos and handbell compositions.

You are invited to a reception in the River Room
Following this afternoon's concert