

# John Weissrock Organ Concert Series

## Church of the Gesu

*Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 7:30pm*

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**Dr. Sheri Masiakowski**

presents

Sr. Theophane Hytrek OSF (1915-1992)



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Gesu's Schantz Organ has 4 Manuals, 6 Divisions, 115 Ranks, and 6,804 Pipes.  
It contains pipes from various well-known organ builders,  
primarily Kimball, Kilgen, and Schantz.

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# Program Notes

Organ Suite in Honor of Mary Immaculate (published 1957)

I. Prelude - *Gaudens Gaudebo*

Intr.  
3.  
**G** Audens gaudé- bo

II. Offertory - *Ave Maria*

Offert.  
8.  
**A** - ve \* Ma- rí- a, grá-  
ti- a plé- na :

III. Communion - *Gloriosa*

Comm.  
8.  
**G** Lo- ri-ó- sa \* dí- cta sunt de te, Ma- rí- a :  
qui- a fé- cit tí- bi má- gna qui pót- ens est.

IV. Postlude - *De Beata*

IX. — For feasts of the Blessed Virgin. 1.

(Cum júbilo)

1.  
**I** - te, míssa est.  
Dé- o grá- ti- as.

## Offertory for Organ on “Rejoice, O Mary, Heavenly Queen” (circa 1950’s)

Gesgb. von Leisentritt, 1584

Tr. from German



1. Re - joice, O Ma - ry, heav'n - ly Queen, Re - joice, O Ma - ry! Now let thine eyes in  
glad - ness beam. Al - le - lu - ia! Lae - tà - re. O Ma - ri - a.

"Alverno Hymnal" series, Volume II, edited by Sr. Cherubim Schaefer OSF.  
TUNE: REGINA CAELI, JUBILA

## Christmas Communion Number for Organ (pre 1981)

The refrain of “O Come, All Ye Faithful” opens and closes the piece though it is somewhat disguised. “Silent Night”, “Puer natus est” (Christmas Day Introit), “O Sing a Joyous Carol” (ZU BETLEHEM GEBOREN Mainz Gesangbuch 1661), and “Lo, How a Rose” are freely treated within the composition. The less familiar melodies appear below.

### Christmas Day Introit



Intr.  
7.  
**p** U - er \* ná - tus est nó - bis,

### O Sing a Joyous Carol



Mainzer Gesangbuch (1661)

The assessment of this pre-1981 composition is based on the suggested registration in the manuscript. The specified stops were available on the Schaefer organ in St. Joseph Chapel. The Casavant organ **was** replaced the Schaefer instrument in 1981. The style of the piece suggests an even earlier composition date as it uses a harmonic language similar to the first two compositions on this program.

## Postlude-Partita on Old Hundredth (1966)

- Maestoso
- Variation I - *Moderato*
- Variation II - *Vivace*
- Variation III - *Allegro*
- Variation IV - *Andante*
- Variation V - *Presto*
- Finale - *Piu Presto*

The “Postlude-Partita on Old Hundredth” was written on commission for the Fifth International Congress of Church Musicians which took place in both Chicago, Illinois and Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 21-28, 1966. It was premiered by Hytrek on the Noehren organ at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist on August 26, 1966.

## Cantabile (1971)

“Cantabile for Organ” is the shortest of Sr. Theophane’s organ compositions (26 measures). It was written at the request of Sr. Mary Jane Wagner’s organ student, seminarian Robert Verwoert. Verwoert wrote and submitted the theme for this chorale prelude. Sister dedicated the piece to him and presented it on the day of his ordination to the priesthood, May 16, 1971.

The accompanimental motives are derived from Verwoert’s melody using intervals of seconds, fourths and fifths, a tightly constructed little gem.

## Now the Light Has Gone Away - Theme and Variations for Organ (1970’s)

Based on a German tune –MÜDE BIN ICH, its text is a children’s bedtime prayer. Sr. Theophane’s choice of this tune is a surprise. It appears in many Lutheran hymnals though it is likely that she came across a print copy in “The Lutheran Hymnal” (Concordia Publishing House, 1941).

F. R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt. MÜDE BIN ICH  
Lieder für Kleinkinder-Schulen, Kaiserwerth, 1842)

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Now the Light Has Gone Away'. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: 'Now the light has gone a - way; Fa - ther, lis - ten while I pray, Ask - ing Thee to watch and keep And to send me qui - et sleep.' The score ends with a double bar line.

In 1974 a group of Sisters concertized in Germany as part of the centennial celebration of the School Sisters of St. Francis. They performed eleven concerts in both large and small venues. It is possible that she heard this tune at an elementary school performance sung by the children as a gesture of hospitality to the Sisters.

The piece is contemporary in sound and uses the variation form similar to that of her “Postlude-Partita on Old Hundredth”. The distinctive feature that places it in the era of the Schaefer organ (1928-1980) is the use of chimes in the opening movement. The current Chapel Casavant organ does not have chimes.

## Salve Regina – Communion Meditation for Flute and Organ (1986)

Flute - Tatiana Pearson      Gregorian Chant - Barb Ahlf

This manuscript was penned 1986 in Sr. Theophane's hand and sung by the School Sister of St. Francis Chapel Singers in its early years. Organ and flute serve as an extended free introduction. A flute obbligato ornaments the end of each sung chant phrase. If you join in singing the *Salve Regina* be ready for the frequent pause as the flautist does her commentary.

## Chaconne (1989)

Many of Sr. Theophane's organ compositions were penned in the form of hymn-partitas, theme and variation. The "Chaconne honors that preference with its theme, a sixteen measure harmonic progression, followed by five variations. The Gesu organ has 11 ranks of pipes called the Echo Division. They are located on the main floor far right in the south wall. The majority of this evening's concert comes from the divisions located in the choir gallery divisions – Solo, Swell, Great, Choir and Pedal. You will hear some conversation between the Echo and Gallery divisions in this "Chaconne".

## Rhapsody of Praise, Based on the Gregorian Chant *Te Deum* (1981)

The composition was prepared throughout 1980 on the commission invitation extended by the School Sister of St. Francis Music Ministry Committee. Sr. Theophane premiered the piece at the dedication of the Casavant organ (opus 3493, 3/35R)1981 on March 20, 1981.

The *Te Deum* chant is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. The composition incorporates versets of the simple tone Gregorian Chant *Te Deum* as well as deriving its motives



(1-3-4) from the chant incipit



and (1-2-4) from the beginning of the creedal statement:

A questionnaire completed by Sr. Theophane in 1974 includes this response: "I personally feel that my most recent work *Psalms for Organ and Instruments*, and other earlier chamber works are among my best musical expressions." Had this question been posed later "Rhapsody of Praise on the 'Te Deum'" would surely rate well in her opinion!

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The North American Academy of Liturgy has presented an annual award to persons who exhibit excellence in liturgy since 1976—Protestants, Jews and Catholics. In 1990 Sr. Theophane was both the first woman and first musician to receive this award. The award acknowledges her contributions in the field of sacred music. The text is an artful and sincere accolade of all her life and work. It is a most fitting way to close this study of her contributions to the genre of solo organ music with “*doxa* (praise) and delight”.

“Daughter of St. Francis, protégé of St. Cecilia,  
At the keyboard and in the choirloft,  
In the classroom, recital hall, and for the assembly  
Your teeming acoustical imagination  
                                  has sounded *kyrie* and thanksgiving;  
*doxa* and delight  
                                  *pathos* and power.

Through half a century and more,  
Your love insists that organ and all instruments conjoin,  
That the music of earth and heaven combine  
Whereby every living thng may praise the Lord.  
For your gifts and for your being we sing *jubilare Deo!*”\*

\* Donald Saliers, 1990 *Berakah Award*, *The North American Academy of Liturgy*. This framed award hangs in the hallway entrance to St. Joseph Chapel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



**Sheri Masiakowski**, Curator of the Heritage Music Collection for the School Sisters of St. Francis, completed her Doctor of Musical Arts degree (Organ performance) in January 2022 at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her dissertation was “The Solo Organ Works of Sr. Theophane Hytrek OSF”. She consistently plays at numerous Milwaukee sacred sites: Archdiocese of Milwaukee Permanent Diaconate Formation, Three Holy Women Cluster, St. John Vianney Parish, Greenfield Avenue Presbyterian, St. Francis of Assisi Parish and the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

Sheri is a former Dean of the Milwaukee Chapter–American Guild of Organists and past Chair of ALMA-Archdiocesan Liturgical Musician’s Association. She teaches on the Master of Music and Liturgy faculty of Alverno College.

*Organ playing is the  
manifestation of a will filled  
with the vision of eternity.*

*-Charles Marie Widor*



Tuesday, March 14 at 7:30pm – Hunter Erickson

Tuesday, April 11 at 7:30pm – Simone Gheller

Tuesday, May 9 at 7:30pm – James Grzadzinski

Church of the Gesu  
1145 W. Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee

The GESU CHURCH  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

