



The Cathedral  
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**THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE PRESENTS  
DAVID BRIGGS' TRANSCRIPTION OF ANTON BRUCKNER'S SYMPHONY NO. 7**

*World premiere of Artist in Residence David Briggs' transcription of the monumental composition  
Ticketed pre-concert lecture by the performer opens the evening*



*Photo courtesy David Briggs  
For hi-res photo, please email Madge Nimocks: madgenimocks@gmail.com*

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*(January xx, 2019 – New York, NY) – Artist in Residence David Briggs, international concert organist and composer, will perform the world premiere of his transcription of Anton Bruckner's *Symphony No. 7* on **Tuesday, February 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112<sup>th</sup> Street), Manhattan**, his second performance in the *Great Organ: A Recital Series*, part of the 2018–2019 season of *Great Music in a Great Space*. Mr. Briggs will give a ticketed pre-recital lecture with wine and canapés starting at 6:30pm.*

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is thrilled to welcome David Briggs, the first-ever organist to be named Artist in Residence, back for his second year in residency. Last season saw an impressive offering featuring the U.S. premiere of Elgar's *First Symphony*, David's transcription of Mahler's *Symphony No. 5*, as well as his own transcriptions of Maurice Ravel and his improvised



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accompaniment to the silent film *King of Kings*. Earlier in the 2018-19 season, David wowed the audience with his transcription of Mahler's *Symphony No. 6*. In addition to his upcoming performance of Bruckner's 7<sup>th</sup> symphony, concertgoers can see David in numerous appearances as both organist and composer for various cathedral events throughout the year.

For the whole of his life, Bruckner was an organist and devoted Catholic. His music suits the fabulous instrument at St. John the Divine perfectly, having every resource and flexibility in terms of color and power, perhaps even more than the orchestra. David Briggs describes Bruckner's music as "big-building-music:" monumental arches of sound which exactly mirror the colossal architecture of the cathedral, taking the listener out of themselves. Bruckner's 7<sup>th</sup> symphony benefits from the enormous resonance of the cathedral, with cataclysmic crescendos which very often terminate in mid-air and make so much more sense in a cathedral than in a concert hall.

The unique fusion of the 1911 orchestral style of organ building (E. M. Skinner) and 1953 American classic (the clarity and panache of Aeolian Skinner) fits this music like the proverbial glove. This will be the first time Bruckner's Seventh has been heard in this guise in the United States and David is hugely excited about presenting it as part of the 2018-19 Great Music in a Great Space series.

David Briggs, who devotes around a third of his career to playing transcriptions, has been at the vanguard of creating a new repertoire for the pipe organ, frequently performing orchestral music by composers like Mahler who wrote no music for solo organ. Of his approach to arranging and playing these works, he says, "The central and imperative crux of any transcription is that the music has to be reinvented and not just copied. My own feeling is that intrinsically great music can cross instrumental boundaries with compelling ease."

The 2018-2019 season of Great Music in a Great Space continues with a broad spectrum of choral and instrumental music. Coming up, Associate Director of Music Raymond Nagem performs the complete *Orgelbüchlein* in March to celebrate Bach's birthday; the continuing season will welcome back Musica Sacra for their spring concert, and will culminate with an all-French program centering on Fauré's *Requiem*.

The Cathedral's Great Organ is one of the landmark musical instruments in the United States, and is an acclaimed national treasure. Built in 1911 by Ernest M. Skinner and enlarged and rebuilt in 1954 by G. Donald Harrison of the Æolian-Skinner Organ Company, the Great Organ brings together in one instrument the very best from two of America's foremost organ-builders.

Tickets are \$25. For entry to the pre-concert lecture, be sure to select Concert+Lecture tickets for no additional charge. For more information, please visit [this page](#).

### **Program**

Anton Bruckner: *Symphony No. 7 (WAB 107)* (transcribed by David Briggs)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Adagio: Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam
- III. Scherzo: Sehr schnell – Trio: Etwas langsamer
- IV. Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht schnell



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**About Great Music in a Great Space**

Revived in 2011, *Great Music in a Great Space* reprises the legendary concert series first held at the Cathedral in the 1980s. The 2015–2016 season is comprised of three concert series: the Great Choir choral series, the Great Organ recital series, and our holiday concerts celebrating the Christmas season and New Year's Eve. The repertoire of the choral series encompasses a musical palette from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary compositions, and also features explorations of less familiar traditions such as Spanish Renaissance music and Eastern Orthodox hymnody. The Great Organ recital series features evening organ recitals, from both Cathedral organists and internationally acclaimed guest artists.

**About David Briggs**

“Mr. Briggs is one of our finest organists, and also a particularly good transcriber of orchestral works for his own instrument. “

*The New York Times*

David Briggs is an internationally renowned organist whose performances are acclaimed for their musicality, virtuosity, and ability to excite and engage audiences of all ages. Consistently ranked as one of the finest organists of his generation, David's extensive repertoire spans five centuries. He has also become one of the foremost organ transcribers of symphonic works, thereby giving listeners the opportunity to experience the organ in a new way. He has transcribed orchestral compositions by Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Bruckner, Ravel, and Bach as well as Mahler's Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth symphonies.

Described as ‘an intrepid improviser’ by Michael Barone, host of American Public Media's *Pipedreams*, David also frequently performs improvisations to silent films such as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, *Nosferatu*, *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Metropolis*, *King of Kings*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *the General*, and a variety of Charlie Chaplin films.

At the age of 17, David obtained his FRCO (Fellow of the Royal College of Organists) diploma, winning the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. From 1981-84 he was Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge University, during which time he studied with Jean Langlais in Paris. The first British winner of the Tournemire Prize at the St Albans International Improvisation Competition, he also won the first prize in the International Improvisation Competition at Paisley. Subsequently David held positions at Hereford, Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals.

Deeply committed to ensuring organ music remains relevant and vibrant, David enjoys giving pre-concert lectures and demonstrations that help make organ music more broadly accessible. He teaches performance at Cambridge University, frequently serves on international organ competition juries, and gives master classes at colleges and conservatories across the U.S. and Europe.

David performs more than 50 concerts a year at such venues as Maison Symphonique, Montreal; Royal Albert Hall, London; Notre-Dame, St. Sulpice and St. Eustache, Paris; Kimmel Center, Philadelphia; Berlin Philharmonie, Germany; St. James Cathedral, Toronto; International Performing Arts Center, Moscow; Valencia Cathedral, Spain; National Auditorium, Madrid; Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria (BC); Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway; Grace Cathedral, San Francisco (CA); and Kings College, Cambridge.



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David Briggs is also a prolific composer and his works range from full scale oratorios to works for solo instruments. He has recorded two DVDs, and 37 CDs, many of which include his own compositions and transcriptions.

David is currently Artist-in-Residence at the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City. For more information, Please visit: [www.david-briggs.org](http://www.david-briggs.org).

**About The Cathedral**

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership.

People from many faiths and communities worship together in services held more than 30 times a week; the soup kitchen serves roughly 25,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Adults and Children in Trust, the renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.

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