Organ of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary will be inaugurated



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The Shrine of Fatima will inaugurate the organ of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary with the world premiere of the work Hû yeshûphekâ rô'sh, writen by the Portuguese composer João Pedro de Oliveira, interpreted by Olivier Latry, the organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, on the 20th of March, at 3.30 pm.

The inauguration starts with the blessing of the organ by the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, the most reverend Antonio Marto, followed by an impromptu by the organist Olivier Latry, which shall demonstrate the full potential of the instrument.

The inaugural concert of the organ will debut the work of João Pedro de Oliveira, based on the first prophecy of Mary, in the book of Genesis, commissioned by the Shrine of Fatima to mark this occasion, as well as a final impromptu based on the Ave-Maria of

Fatima.

The organ of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, placed on the church balcony, is an instrument with a great physical presence in the space and in the memory of many pilgrims. Built in 1951, by the Italian company Fratelli Ruffatti, this is the biggest instrument of the kind in Portugal, with 90 stops and about 6.500 tubes.

The restructure was done by the Italian company Mascioni Organi, keeping a considerable part of the original tubes, but adding some stops with the intention of offering a homogeneous and modern sonority to the instrument.

The new conception was idealized keeping in mind the philosophy of a symphonic organ, characterized by the details of each stop by itself, but also by the powerful sound mass, making it apt for the interpretation of the whole organ repertoire.

The console of five manuals and a pedal was renovated and modernized. The biggest tube, out of wood, is about 12 meters high and 50 centimetres wide, and the tubes of metal from the façade are about 8 meters high.

The frontal part of the instrument was redesigned by the architect Joana Delgado, the author of the project of reformulation of the presbytery of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, and counts with an artistic intervention by the Portuguese sculptor Bruno Marques, author of the crucifix and of the works of art that mark the liturgical places of the presbytery of the Basilica. For the rest of the box a wood covering was proposed carefully drawn in total articulation with the organ makers of Mascioni Organi. The echo organs, installed in the galleries, are also the result of combined work to find the esthetical definition of the solution.

The concert of the 20th of March is the first of a cycle of six concerts for organ that will take place until October, in the context of the celebration of the Centennial of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, with a repertoire created in different epochs, geographic regions, various styles and compositional attitudes. German music, French music, sacred music, contemporary music, and Marian hymns allude to a period of hundred years that give rise to a comprehensive perspective of the capacities of expression of the new organ.

The first concert takes place on the 8th of May and will be interpreted by Antonio Esteireiro, who will cover the German music of the 19th and 20th Centuries, including some of the great organ classics of that period, and the Ave-Marias of Max Reger and Karg-Elert.

On the 5th of June, Antonio Mota will present a program of one hundred years of contemporary music, including the Suite Mariale by Maleingreau.

On the 10th of July, Felipe Veríssimo will interpret a repertoire portraying one hundred years of sacred music, including the Symphony of Passion by Marcel Dupré, an emblematic work from the beginning of the 20th Century.

On the 14th of August, Giampaolo Di Rosa will make impromptus on melodies and hymns connected to Fatima, which became part of the liturgical and popular tradition

and are known by the public and the faithful, composed and sung during the last hundred years.

And on the 9th of October, João Santos, organist of the Shrine of Fatima, will interpret one hundred years of French music, from Cesar Franck to Messiaen, including various excerpts of the 15 Versets sur les Vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge.

Both the inaugural concert and the Organ cycle were thought in the context of the celebration of Centennial of the Apparitions, which will end with another great concert on the 13th of October of 2017, in which will be interpreted 13 works by the Scottish composer James MacMillan, recently named composer of the year by the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra, and a composition by Eurico Carrapatoso, interpreted by the Gulbenkian Choir and Orchestra, under the direction of the conductor Joana Carneiro.

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