

**WILLIAM BOLCOM**  
**b. 1938**

**Gospel Prelude: Free Fantasia on “O Zion, haste” and “How firm a foundation”**

William Bolcom has composed twelve settings for organ of well-known Gospel songs such as “What a friend we have in Jesus,” “Shall we gather at the river” and “Amazing Grace.” These pieces explore the treatment of familiar church songs with contemporary concert writing. They are extremely difficult for the organist and are not intended to soothe the listener nor encourage singing along! The final piece in the set is the *Free Fantasia on “O Zion, haste” and “How firm a foundation.”* “O Zion” appears only in fleeting, fragmentary references among atonal chord clusters and improvisatory questioning. After one can take no more, “How firm” begins quietly in strict rhythm and an exciting Gospel style.