

ORGAN RECITAL

Derek Remes, organ
Thursday, June 9, 2011
7:15 P.M.

St. John's Lutheran Church
500 3rd Street West
Northfield, MN 55057

Toccata in F, BuxWV 157

Dietrich Buxtehude
(c. 1637-1707)

Dietrich Buxtehude (and Nicolas Bruhns) represents the high point of the north German organ prelude and the so-called *stylus phantasticus*, and was a significant influence on J.S. Bach. The introduction to the *Toccata in F* features passages in this free, improvisatory style, which is designed to showcase the skills of the performer. A fugal, or more strictly imitative section follows, and is registered to imitate a consort of Baroque instruments. The final section builds to a dramatic climax, and is closer to the improvisatory style of the introduction.

Four Selections from the Orgelbüchlein:

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

J.S. Bach, among the greatest organists and composers for organ, gives this preface to his *Orgelbüchlein*: "Little Organ Book, in which a beginning organist is given guidance in all sorts of ways of developing a chorale, as well as improving his pedal technique, since in these chorales the pedal is treated as completely obbligato [essential, not optional]." Thus the goal of this collection of forty-five chorale settings was both practical and pedagogical - the settings served as introductions for congregational singing, and as examples for beginning composers.

After a brief introduction, please join in singing one verse of each chorale. Bach's setting for organ alone will follow each verse.

Christe du Lamm Gottes: BWV 619 (Christ the Lamb of God)

Christ, the Lamb of God, you who bear the

5 sins of the world, grants us your peace.

Fuga a 5 con pedale pro Organo pleno, BWV 552, 2

J.S. Bach

This fugue and its accompanying prelude are the bookends to Bach's first published collection, *Clavierübung III*, which bears the description: "Third part of the Clavierübung, Consisting of Various Preludes on the Catechism and other Hymns for the Organ. Prepared for Music Lovers and Connoisseurs, in Particular, of Such Works, for the Refreshment of the Spirit, by Johann Sebastian Bach."

This five-voice fugue is cast in three large sections, each with its own fugue subject and distinct registration. The first section is in the *ars antiqua* (old style) of counterpoint, imitative of the vocal music of the Renaissance. Its subject bears a similarity to the hymn tune "O God our Help in Ages Past," which is why the piece is often nicknamed "St. Anne." The middle section, for manuals only, introduces a new subject in running 16ths. The final section combines all three subjects in a stunning example of Bach's contrapuntal technique.

short pause

Fifteen Pieces Founded on Antiphons: Ave Maris Stella, Op. 18

Marcel Dupré
(1886-1971)

I. When the salutation Gabriel had spoken (verse 2)

II. Jesus tender Mother, make thy supplication (verse 4)

III. So now as we journey, aid our weak endeavor (verse 6)

IV. Amen: Finale

Marcel Dupré was a child prodigy born to a musical family. He studied under Charles Marie-Widor, Louis Vierne, and Alexandre Guilmant at the Paris Conservatory, winning the Prix de Rome in 1914. As an improviser, Dupré excelled as perhaps no other did during the 20th century; he was able to take given themes and spontaneously weave whole symphonies around them, often with elaborate contrapuntal devices.

Each of these four movements is based on the same plainchant melody, and is intended to be played in alternation with a choir. The choir sings the odd verses and the organ "sings" the even verses and the "Amen," giving the choir a chance to rest. (The titles of the movements above vary slightly from the translation below.)

1. Hail, O Star of the sea,
Bountiful Mother of God,
And ever Virgin,
Happy gate of Heaven.

*4. Show thyself to be a Mother,
My he who was born for us
receive our prayers through
thee.*

7. Praise to God the Father,
Glory to Christ the high,
And with the Holy Spirit,
Honor to the three in one.

2. Taking that Ave,
From the mouth of Gabriel
Preserve us in peace,
Giving Eve a new name.

5. Singular Virgin,
More gentle than all,
Absolve us from sin and
Make us gentle and pure.

Amen

3. Break the sinners' chains,
Bring light to the blind,
Drive out our ills,
Invoke all things good.

*6. Grant us a pure life,
Prepare a safe way,
That in seeing Jesus,
We may rejoice forever.*

Four Selections from *24 Pieces in Free Style*:

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

Pastorale
Scherzetto
Berceuse
Carillon

Nearly blind from birth, Louis Vierne was discovered to have an unusual gift for music at a young age. He attended the Paris Conservatory and eventually became organist at Notre-Dame in Paris. His life was full of physical and emotional trials, from a separation and eventual divorce from his wife, to losing his brother and son in World War I. It is said he nevertheless remained kind and encouraging to all his students. Vierne died suddenly at the console of the Notre-Dame organ while giving his 1750th recital.

The *24 Pieces in Free Style* showcase Vierne's incredible harmonic and melodic creativity, with one piece in each of the major and minor keys arranged in ascending half-steps. The lyrical Pastorale is reminiscent of a shepherd's pipe song, while the humorous Scherzetto contrasts with its fast, articulate style. "Berceuse" is French for "lullabye," and the raucous Carillon is based on a pedal ostinato derived from the repetitive patterns of a bell tower.