



Arizona State University

School of Music

UNIVERSITY ORGAN SERIES

ROBERT CLARK

ORGAN

ORGAN HALL
Sunday, January 16, 2000 • 2:30 p.m.

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PROGRAM

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Concerto in F after Albinoni
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro | Johann Gottfried Walther
1684-1742 |
| Passamezzo (12 Variations) | Samuel Scheidt
1587-1654 |
| Sonata in A Major, Op. 65, no. 3
Con moto maestoso
Andante tranquillo | Felix Mendelssohn
1809-1847 |
| Preludes in E-flat Major
and E-flat Minor | Johann Christian Kittel
1732-1809 |
| Six Fugues on B-A-C-H, Op. 60
No. 4, M ^o ssig, doch nicht zu langsam
No. 5, Lebhaft | Robert Schumann
1810-1856 |
| Two Chorale Settings
Herzlich thut mich verlangen, BWV 727
Valet will ich der geben, BWV 736 | Johann Sebastian Bach
1685-1750 |
| Prealudium (Toccatà) in E Major, BWV 566 | J.S. Bach |

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ADMISSION PASS

- Fire and safety regulations limit admission to the official posted capacity of the "fixed" seating in the performance hall. This program is being used as the "Admission Pass" due to concerns for the possibility of over-capacity attendance.
- Keep this program in your possession. If you find you must leave the performance hall for any reason after you have been admitted please keep this program with you. You will need to show it to the House Manager to be readmitted.
- Due to the limited seating, all program admission passes are distributed on a strictly first-come-first-serve basis. Only one person will be admitted to the event with each program "Admission Pass". In fairness to all, saving seats cannot be permitted for persons who are not present at the time passes are distributed and/or who do not have an "Admission Pass" program in their possession.

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From the Thuringian Forest

When traveling in this area today, one becomes aware of a powerful culture that produced such creative giants as the Cranach family of painters, the Bach family, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Schiller, Goethe and others too numerous to mention. Some of the great monuments, like the castles at Schmalkalden, Dresden, Eisenach and Altenburg, remind us of the power and wealth that once existed in Middle Germany. Today's program explores organ music from the regions of Thuringia and Saxony, where Johann Sebastian Bach's entire career as an organist took place.

Today's program occurs at the beginning of the Bach Year of 2000 and of the Millennium. Looking back toward the 18th century we will hear, in addition to works of Bach, significant organ music that was composed a century before and a century after Bach's flourishing years. In 1624, a century before Bach's early years in Leipzig, Samuel Scheidt published a monumental collection of keyboard music, the *Tabulatura nova*. Many of the musical figures we associate with Bach's music can be traced back to keyboard music of the 17th century, especially in the works of Scheidt. At the other end of the spectrum, Mendelssohn was the first figure of the 19th century to rediscover the works of Bach. Bach's style was considered to be old-fashioned in the age immediately following his death in 1750. Mendelssohn's six organ Sonatas were published in 1844, a century following Bach's mature years as the Cantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Mendelssohn's contemporary, Robert Schumann paid homage to Bach in his Six Fugues on B-A-C-H, represented by the succession of pitches, B-flat, A, C, B. During his lifetime Bach taught many students, some of whom became credible composers and church and court musicians. One of Bach's last students, Johann Christian Kittel, was influenced by Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, when he composed his 16 Preludes in pairs of major and minor keys. The style of these pieces, however, is decidedly in a pre-Classical mode and influenced by the popular new style of the Mannheim school.

While Bach was the chief musician for the court at Weimar, his close friend and distant cousin, Johann Gottfried Walther was the musician at the city church in Weimar. At this point in Bach's career there was great interest in music of the Italian style, leading Walther to transcribe a number of Italian solo and orchestral concertos for the organ. In fact, Bach himself continued the tradition as he transcribed concertos of Vivaldi and Ernst during the Weimar years.

Variation sets on popular songs and dances were a favorite venue for keyboard composers in the 17th Century. The Passamezzo was a dance, with the term itself (passa=step, mezzo=half) suggesting the choreography. Scheidt's variations on the Passamezzo may be considered organ music as well as harpsichord music. Among the most important organ builders of Middle Germany were those from the Compenius family. As a secular instrument the organ contained many interesting colors influenced by various string and wind instruments of the period. The larger church organs represented a departure from tradition and provided the

cornerstone for an independent school of organ building in Middle Germany which was not entirely dependent upon the North German tradition.

The preludes of Kittel exude a charm and sweetness characteristic of the early Classical period. The organs of this time were noted for their wealth of unison sounding registers, leading to the concept of registration as a *melange* of colors.

Felix Mendelssohn was commissioned to compose six organ sonatas to be played at St. Paul's Church in London. Actual sonata form occurs rarely in these pieces which were first labeled by Mendelssohn as "voluntaries". The substitution of the term, sonata, for voluntary came at the publisher's urging. The first movement of the A Major sonata is a study in grandeur. In the pedal line of the fugue and its further development is the melody of the chorale, "Aus Tiefer noth". The second movement is childlike in its simplicity, reminding us of some of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words.

Schumann's fugues on B-A-C-H were composed for the pedal-piano, a popular domestic instrument in the 19th century. Some of the fugues are especially adaptable to the organ. The 4th fugue is symphonic in style, and the 5th is like a scherzo.

The chorale melody of "Valet will ich der geben" is familiar to many of us in the hymn, "All Glory, Laud and Honor". In this setting by Bach the chorale melody appears in the pedal in long notes, with exuberant figuration in the manuals. The chorale melody of "Herzlich thut mich verlangen" remains well known today, and Bach's setting is exquisite in its simplicity.

The Prelude and Fugue in E Major is an early work of Bach, probably completed before the age of 21. In 1705 Bach was given a leave from his church position in Arnstadt in order to study in Lübeck. We do not know whether Bach actually studied with the great organist of the Lübeck Marienkirche, Dieterich Buxtehude, but his influence is manifest in many details. The key of E Major was unique and daring because most organs of the time were tuned in meantone temperament which precluded music in keys containing more than two accidentals in the signature. In her research on the music of Buxtehude, Kerala Snyder has established that the organ at the Marienkirche was retuned to a modern, though unequal, temperament during Buxtehude's lifetime. This made possible the introduction of more complex keys, which was of interest to a number of younger organists, especially Vincent Lübeck. It is very likely that Bach looked upon this development as a new challenge as he composed the Praeludium in E. Later Bach provided a second version of the same work, transposed to C Major, probably for performance on the meantone organs.

Bach's E Major Praeludium is brilliant, boisterous, exuberant and superbly crafted. This Praeludium must surely be the work of the young Bach, known for his spirit and genius, not to mention his youthful peccadillos while in Arnstadt!