

The Utah Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents

# Bach and Baroque

Friday, March 18, 2022

7:00 p.m.

Provo Central Stake Center  
450 North 1220 West, Provo, Utah

## Bach, Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582

Levi Kelley

The Passacaglia in C Minor is one of Bach's best known and most studied organ works. It is likely that he wrote it between 1706 and 1713 after visiting Buxtehude. As a passacaglia, it follows a triple-meter dance form in which continuous variations build above a repeating bass ostinato. It keeps a measured, stately tempo, with its variations mounting in complexity until they become, in the words of Robert Schumann, "intertwined so ingeniously that one can never cease to be amazed."

## Bach, Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659

Lori Serr

Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland ("Come now, Savior of the heathen") is one of the Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes written between 1740 and 1750, Bach's final decade. It is grounded by a walking bass above which the alto and tenor voices move in canon. The cantus firmus is provided in the soprano line; it is a continuously spiraling melody, heavily ornamented and melismatic, meant to evoke the mystery of incarnation.

## Bach, Prelude & Fugue in B Flat Major, BWV 560

Debbie Faires

The Prelude and Fugue in B Flat Major is the last of the Eight Little Preludes and Fugues commonly attributed to Bach but thought to have been composed by his pupils. Each is a miniature written in imitation of various Baroque styles; this one suggests a concerto grosso. The prelude proceeds majestically in free form, and the fugue follows with a stately subject and a decisive, single-minded development.

## Bach, Fantasia & Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542 "Great"

Renee Gastelum

In 1720, Bach auditioned for the post of organist at St. James' Church Hamburg and improvised a fugue on a Dutch folksong. With its playful melody, fast footwork, and virtuosic climax, the "Great" fugue endures as one of Bach's best loved organ works. The fantasia was composed separately; it opens with a free improvisation that enters into dialogue with darker chromatic passages, building to a climax with full organ and pedal.

## Bach, Toccata in D Minor, BWV 538 "Dorian"

Valerie McDougal

Composed in Weimar between 1708 and 1717, the Dorian Toccata opens with a sixteenth-note motif in perpetual motion. All subsequent gestures flow from that motif, as tense chords alternate with brighter passages for an elaborate concertato effect. The toccata is unique among Bach's organ works in that he himself indicated the manual changes that highlight the contrasts.

### Buxtehude, Ciacona in E Minor, BuxWV 160

Miranda Wilcox

Like the passacaglia, the chaconne (or ciacona) is a set of repeating, decorated variations built above a short bass theme. However, the passacaglia differs in that its melody may move to different voices, while the chaconne's theme must remain in the bass. In Buxtehude's Ciacona in E Minor, the 31 variations begin in a somber, hymn-like character, then grow in brightness until finally they arrive at a triumphal resolution, giving a sense of arrival after a dark journey.

### Buxtehude, Chorale Fantasy on Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, BuxWV 223

David Chamberlin

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern ("How brightly shines the morning star") is a Lutheran chorale marking Epiphany and celebrating the star that guided the Wise Men. Buxtehude introduces the melody in the bass; it then rises, like a star, to the soprano line. In its fullness, the theme cascades through a series of descending suspensions. Its first few notes then form the subject for an exuberant, gigue-like fugue played only on manuals until the very end, when the pedals enter for a bold and arresting climax.

### Bach, Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 731

Heidi Rodeback

Whether sung as a hymn or offered in a chorale prelude, Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier ("Dearest Jesus, we are here") is placed at the beginning of a service, intended to prepare hearts for the sermon. Bach harmonized this hymn as a four-part chorale and also set it in four different chorale preludes. BWV 731 is a gentle treatment reminiscent of a slow concerto movement. A highly embellished melody unfolds over a simple three-part accompaniment in which the interest moves back and forth between the alto and tenor lines.

### Bach, Prelude & Fugue in E Minor, BWV 555

Mark Atencio

The Prelude and Fugue in E Minor is the third of the Eight Little Preludes and Fugues attributed to Bach. The prelude is written in the *durezza* style of suspended dissonances; the fugue is harmonized with descending chromatic fourths.

### Bach, Prelude in B Minor, BWV 544

Neil Harmon

Bach's B Minor Prelude is thought to have been performed by the composer himself in 1727 at the funeral of Christiane Eberhardine, Electress of Saxony and Queen of Poland. Supporting this theory is the prelude's melancholy opening theme, a lament. The prelude's form is a ritornello featuring recurring thirty-second-note scales, octave pedal leaps, and tension-building repetitions. Despite its melancholy, the prelude is stately and grand—befitting its royal subject—and it points, through a bright and optimistic conclusion, to the resurrection.

### Bach, Prelude & Fugue in A Major, BWV 536

Jay Goodliffe

The Prelude and Fugue in A Major was probably written in Weimar between 1708 and 1717. The prelude is light and airy, based on arpeggios and belonging to Buxtehude's "stylus phantasticus" genre. The four-part fugue is written in classic fugue form. The subject is introduced in the tenor line, then sounds successively in the alto and soprano lines until finally the pedal joins and concludes the exposition. The development then proceeds in episodes where the subject repeats itself logically in various keys until finally each voice returns for a final bow. At this point, a descending arpeggio on the dominant brings the momentum to a halt and sets the stage for a final, emphatic coda.