

School of Music

Genesis of Genius:

*Exploring Bach's Organ Works in the
Context of his Precursors*

Kimberly Marshall, organ

March 23, 2003

2:30 p.m.

Organ Hall, Music Building

PROGRAM

Prelude and Fugue in G minor, BWV 535Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

from the *Neumeister Collection*J. S. Bach

Machs mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güt, BWV 957

O Jesu, wie ist dein Gestalt, BMV 1094

Jesu meine Freude, BWV 1105

Toccatà in D minor, BWV 155Dieterich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

Concerto in A minor, after Vivaldiarranged for organ by J. S. Bach

[Allegro]

Adagio

Allegro

Trio in F Major, BWV 587François Couperin, arranged for organ by J. S. Bach (?)

Tierce en tailleFrançois Couperin
from *Messe des Paroisses* (1688-1733)

Fantasy in C Minor, BWV 562J. S. Bach

Toccatà, Adagio and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564J. S. Bach

PROGRAM NOTES

Today's recital explores the development of Bach's unique style of composing for the organ. We know that he was exposed to different types of organ music as a young man, and these greatly influenced the way in which he wrote for the instrument. Three major influences were the organs of north-Germany, where Bach studied as a teenager and returned as a young man, the French classical style, which Bach experienced at the court of Celle and learned from copying French music; and the Italian concerto, notably those by Vivaldi, which Bach arranged for the organ, adapting the concept of a ritornello (or returning theme and texture) to much of his mature music.

An early version of the **G-minor Prelude and Fugue** exists in Bach's autograph in the Möller manuscript, so this can be dated to before 1707. The virtuosic passagework, repeated chords and rhetorical silences of the Prelude all point to Buxtehude, whom Bach visited in the autumn of 1705. He requested four weeks' leave from his church in Arnstadt to travel to Lübeck and learn from the famous organist of the Marienkirche. He made the 280-mile journey on foot, leaving for Lübeck in November and returning the following February, at which time he was rebuked by the Arnstadt Consistory for his prolonged absence, and also for his improper playing, making "curious variations in the chorale" so that the congregation was confused by it. Although there is no precise evidence about what exactly Bach heard and experienced in Lübeck, the Arnstadt account suggests that his organ playing changed dramatically under Buxtehude's influence.

The *Neumeister Collection* is an eighteenth-century manuscript of chorales that was discovered in the Yale University Music Library in December of 1984, just before the tercentennial celebrations of Bach's birth. The manuscript contained 33 previously unknown organ chorales by J. S. Bach, which have been dated c. 1705, the year that he walked to Lübeck. **Machs mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güt** (BWV 957), with its extended sequences, is probably one of Bach's earliest preserved chorale settings for the organ. **O Jesu, wie ist dein' Gestalt** (BWV 1094) is a simple setting with the chorale in the treble, which I will play with the soaring Nachthorn in the Pedal. The dramatic use of harmony and rhetorical silence in **Jesu meine Freude** (BWV 1105) suggests that it was composed after Bach's meeting with Buxtehude.

The **D-minor Toccata** by Buxtehude (BuxWV 155) reflects the *stylus phantasticus*, a dramatic style of composition that features violent contrasts and improvisatory flourishes. The toccata opens with short, memorable motives that punctuate large pauses, featuring the pedal in sustained lower notes and solo passages. The change from this seemingly spontaneous virtuosity to the stricter pulse required by imitative writing creates the structure of the work. Sequential repeats of rapid figuration alternating with full chords erupt in the final section, providing a return to the opening free style after the last fugal statements.

Bach arranged four of Vivaldi's orchestral concerti for performance on the court organ in Weimar, attesting to the value he placed on the new Italian style that was invading Europe. The **A-minor concerto** is very demanding, with lively outer movements featuring double pedal and rapid figuration. The lyrical middle movement was originally written for two solo violins over an ostinato accompaniment. On the Fritts organ, I will render the solo lines on a Principal sound, with a soft flute playing the repetitive accompaniment underneath.

In the Obituary for his father, C. P. E. Bach writes: "While a student in Lüneburg, my father had the opportunity to listen to a band kept by the Duke of Celle, consisting for the most part of Frenchmen; thus he acquired a thorough grounding in the French taste, which in those regions was something quite new..." The next three pieces demonstrate Bach's study of French style. The **Trio in F major** is a transcription of a movement from Couperin's instrumental suites, *Les Nations*. The two manuals and pedals of the organ perform the trio texture that was originally allocated to two treble instruments over a basso continuo.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Classical French organ inspired composers to develop musical styles and tessituras that featured specific timbres. This symbiotic link between tone color and music is stressed in the nomenclature of French pieces, where sometimes the range of a solo voice determines the title of a work played on a specific stop or group of stops, such as the **Tierce en Taille**, where the rich tierce sound is featured in the tenor part, or taille.

The organs of Thuringia upon which Bach played did not, of course, possess the characteristic timbres of the French organ, and the Protestant liturgy had no use for the short pieces composed by the French for alternatim practice during the Catholic Mass. Nevertheless, Bach gained much from studying French music, and hints of this influence reside in his organ works. The elegant **Fantasy in C Minor, BWV 562**, demonstrates Bach at his most French, with beautifully ornamented melodies and graceful slurs suggesting the vocal style of Lully's operas. The five-part texture, with two voices in each hand and one in the pedal, may have been adopted by Bach following his study of the organ works of another French composer, Nicolas de Grigny, heard in Robert Clark's concert last month.

Although Bach's three-movement work in C Major is different in many respects from Buxtehude's tripartite work (Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne in C Major), certain common traits link the two. The **Toccata** contains some of Bach's most elaborate free writing for the organ in the Italian style, as well as his most demanding pedal solo, possibly a reference to the prominent use of pedal in Buxtehude's music. The **Adagio** presents a skillfully ornamented melody over a simple accompaniment in the left hand and pedals; this dissolves into an extended series of suspensions evoking the *durezza e ligature* of the Italian style. The **Fugue** is exceptionally rhythmic, with the changing accents of hemiola punctuating the subject's close. It concludes the work with a verve that is reminiscent of both Buxtehude and Vivaldi.

—Kimberly Marshall

FRITZ PIPE ORGAN

The Fritts pipe organ in a thoroughly modern instrument that is strongly influenced by historic practice. Installed in 1992 by Fritts & Co., its mechanical (tracker) key action makes possible the most intimate contact between player and instrument. Except for a few hardware items, the Fritts is virtually hand crafted, representing some 13,000 hours of individual labor. Each of its 1,900 pipes was made in the Fritts shop in Tacoma, Washington, by casting the metal, forming sheets, hammering and cutting the metal, and finally forming the pipes, just same method employed many hundred of years ago.

Judy Fritts, sister of the builder, Paul Fritts, executed the rich carvings, which so beautifully ornament the organ case. These were first carved in basswood, then enameled and finally gilded with 24K gold leaf. The result is an organ case that closely resembles antique organs of northern Europe.

The organ is housed in the Organ Hall, which is located on the first floor of the Music Building on the main ASU campus in Tempe. The room was designed specifically for the Fritts pipe organ. Such details as the wood barrel-vault ceiling, masonry walls, lack of sound-absorbent materials and the high, rectangular shape of the room are direct influences from the typical churches in which the old organs sounded.

BIOGRAPHY



Kimberly Marshall maintains an active career as an organist and scholar, performing regularly in North America, Asia and Europe. She currently holds the Patricia and Leonard Goldman Endowed Professorship of Organ at Arizona State University, and she has previously held teaching positions at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and Stanford University. In 1985, she won first prize in the international St. Albans Competition, resulting in prestigious concerts (Royal Festival Hall, London and Chartres Cathedral) and

a recording contract with the BBC. The following year, she received the D.Phil. in Music from the University of Oxford. Her compact disc recordings feature music of the Italian and Spanish Renaissance, French Classical and Romantic periods, and works by J. S. Bach.

Dr. Marshall was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to continue her research and teaching during 1991 at the Sydney Conservatorium in Australia. Northeastern University Press published her edition of articles on female traditions of music making, *Rediscovering the Muses*, in 1993, and she has contributed entries for the *Grove Dictionary of Music 2000*. Her anthology of late-medieval keyboard music was published last year.

Her concert engagements include Notre-Dame, Paris, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, King's College, Cambridge, Uppsala Cathedral and the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem. She enjoys tailoring programs to the styles of the instruments she plays, and has performed on many historical organs, such as the Couperin organ at Saint-Gervais, Paris, the Gothic organ in Sion, Switzerland, and the Cahman organ in Leufstabrik, Sweden. Dr. Marshall was a recitalist and workshop leader during the last four National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists (Dallas, 1994; New York, 1996; Denver, 1998; Seattle, 2000). She is affiliated with the Organ Research Center in Göteborg, Sweden, where she teaches and performs each year. During the summer of 2001, she appeared in Seoul for the Korean Association of Organists and in Toronto for the Convention of the Royal College of Canadian Organists. Last autumn she was invited to record Chen Yi's Organ Concerto with the Singapore Symphony.



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