

Jeffrey Philip Porter

Master's Recital
Organ Hall | April 25, 2018 | 7:30 p.m.

Program

On the Fritts

Praeludium in E Minor "The Great" Nicolaus Bruhns
(1665-1697)

Ciacona (from "Apparatus musico-organisticus") Georg Muffat
(1653-1704)

Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 547 Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

On the Traeri

Hymnus Girolamo Cavazzoni
Christe Redemptor Omnium (1520-1577)

Saltarello del Re Published by Antonio Gardane
(from *Intabolatura nova di varie sorte de balli*, Venice, 1551)

Ricercare IV Johann Jakob Froberger
(1616-1667)

On the Fritts

Chorale Prelude Georg Böhm
Vater unser im Himmelreich (1661-1733)

Sonata in Bb Major, Op. 65, No. 4 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
(1809-1847)
1. Allegro Con Brio
2. Andante Religioso
3. Allegretto
4. Allegro Maestoso e Vivace

PROGRAM NOTES

Nicolaus Bruhns (1665-1697) was a Dutch-German organist, violinist and composer who rose to prominence in the North German School of the early Baroque. His Father sent him to Lübeck at the age of 16 where he studied organ with Dietrich Buxtehude, the Father of North German organ music. Buxtehude considered Bruhns to be his best pupil and to say that Bruhns was a remarkable musician is an understatement. It was said that he could play three lines of music on the violin while playing a fourth part on the organ pedals. Composing in the *stylus phantasticus* style (a style of composition which highlights the genius of the composer and/or performer and which is rooted in improvisation), Bruhns produced works of extraordinary breadth and skill. The Praeludium in E Minor is one of 5 extant organ works. One of two in E Minor, this one is the larger or "Grosse", and is considered to be one of the finest examples from this period. The work is fairly typical of its time. An opening free section is followed by the first of two fugues, this one built on a chromatic line and developed to some length. A long free section, divided into several subsections, includes a rather martial like fanfare played on the Great trumpet. This followed by the final fugue, a rollicking subject which uses hemiola (2 beats superimposed over 3), bringing the piece to a dramatic and elegant ending. Like many composers, Bruhns died young, age 31; we can only imagine what his contribution to the musical world might have been if he had lived to old age.

Georg Muffat (1653-1704) is most known for his writings on French performance practices which were printed with his string collections, *Florilegium Primum* and *Florilegium Secundum* (First and Second Bouquets.) He also composed two other collections, *Armonico tributo* containing a set of five-part trio sonatas, and the *Apparatus musico-organisticus*, a collection of toccatas for the organ. In addition to the toccatas, this collection contains a Passacaglia and the charming Ciacona performed on tonight's program.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was the King of organ composition. His development of styles and forms has had great influence on composers to this day. The Prelude and Fugue in C Major BWV 547 was a late work written around 1744. The Prelude is in a lilting 9/8 and is very reminiscent of Cantata 65 in terms of harmonic and rhythmic motives. There should be a great breadth of statement when playing this prelude, for it is not a "gigue" as some would suppose, but rather has a deeper theological context. The symbolism of the Trinity is often used in Bach's works and one cannot mistake the 3 x 3 perhaps referencing the trinity. His Cantata 65, *And They Shall from Sheba Come* was written for Epiphany and itself is replete with elements of three: three kings bearing three gifts. The Prelude draws to a close with a series of dramatic chords before a short reiteration of elements of the opening theme, finishing with hands and feet outlining a triad in octaves. The fugue is remarkable as well, for the entire movement is built on a subject that is one bar long. Bach's ability to develop this short subject into a highly developed fugue is a tribute to his genius as the fugue subject appears no less than 50 times. The fugue is unusual too in that the pedal only enters at the end and plays the subject in augmentation (longer notes) with great majestic effect. Punctuated chords harken back to the ending of the Prelude followed by a long tonic pedal coda. These series of chords in both the Prelude and the Fugue are a clear indication that Bach intended them to be coupled.

The set of three pieces played on that Traeri Organ (1742) are representative of early keyboard works.

Girolamo Cavazzoni was an Italian organist and composer, the son of Marco Antonio Cavazzoni. He published two collections in Venice: *Intavolatura libro primo*, and *Intabulatura d'organo*, and the *Hymnus Christe Redemptor Omnium* (Christ the Redeemer of All) appears in the second collection. A Hymn for Christmas, it was probably used *in alternatim*, alternating with sung verses of the hymn. Cavazzoni treated his themes more freely than his contemporaries by altering rhythm and duration of notes of the chant.

Antonio Gardano (Antoine Gardane) was French by birth but lived and worked most of his life in Venice as a publisher of 450 editions of music by prominent composers of the time. The *Saltarello del Re* is from a collection entitled *Intabulatura nova di varie sorte di balli, "dances of various kinds, to be played on the arpicordo, harpsichord, spinet or clavichord by divers and most excellent composers"*. None of these composers are attributed, but they created an entertaining collection of popular dance forms of the day. The saltarello is a lively dance for couples, similar to a galliard, in triple meter. The name comes from the Italian word *saltare* (to jump) featuring a leaping steps.

Johann Jakob Froberger (1616-1667) was a German composer, virtuoso keyboard player and organist. He was well travelled and is credited with incorporating many national styles into his compositions; he was thus a great influence on composers that came after him, including Buxtehude, Georg Muffat, Louis Couperin and Georg Böhm. He forbade the publication of his works during his lifetime, but his music was published after his death. He was significant in developing the keyboard suite, leading to its ultimate manifestation in the Partitas of Bach.

The Ricercare IV is a work in three sections. The first and third sections treat the subject in a rather stately and straightforward way, while the second section uses a more florid, chromatic treatment. The piece is highly imitative, the Ricercare being a forerunner of the fugue.

Georg Böhm (1661-1733) was another prominent German Baroque composer who composed in the *stylus phantasticus*. His compositions are mainly for harpsichord and organ, including preludes, fugues and partitas. His chorale partitas are some of the earliest examples of this genre which would be used by other composers like Pachelbel and Bach. The Chorale Prelude on *Vater unser im himmelreich* is one of his most well-known works. It employs a simple chordal accompaniment over which the chorale melody is played in a flowing florid style. Johann Walther created a highly ornamented version of the piece, but Böhm's version is evocative of the simplicity and strength of the Lord's Prayer, the text upon which the chorale is based. It is presented here in its original form.

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847) was a German composer, pianist, organist, and conductor. A child prodigy, Mendelssohn composed for almost every musical genre. His family was Jewish but later adopted the Christian faith, taking the surname Bartholdy. Mendelssohn developed an interest and affinity for the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and is credited with reviving an interest in Bach's music by conducting a performance of *The St. Matthew Passion*, the first performance of the work

since Bach's death in 1750. The influence of Bach is clear in Mendelssohn's organ works, albeit with a slightly more modern tonal palette. In 1844, Mendelssohn was commissioned to write a "set of voluntaries" by the English publishers Coventry and Hollier. These "voluntaries" would eventually become the six Organ Sonatas. Not sonatas in the traditional sense, they are more gatherings of various pieces including some previously composed movement as well as newly composed material. Three of the Sonatas, No. 1, No. 3 and No. 6 incorporate Lutheran Chorales.

The Fourth Sonata in Bb Major is in four movements. It opens with a virtuosic section of fast 16th notes over a pedal point. This immediately moves to a more martial like section using dotted rhythms which gives the impression of a slower pace than the first section. The third section of the movement combines the first two to drive towards the conclusion. The second movement began its life as a faster march-like movement. Here Mendelssohn changes its character by changing the marking to *Andante religioso*. This is possibly one of Mendelssohn's most recognized melodies. The third movement is a barcarolle-like piece, gently rocking in triple meter and in the form of a trio. The Sonata concludes with an *Allegro Maestoso e Vivace*. This is not Mendelssohn's original finale but replaced a movement which Mendelssohn found less successful. This movement was added before publication and the Fourth Sonata was the last one to be completed. The opening rises in chords above an ascending pedal scale. This eventually gives way to a fugue subject that leads to some of Mendelssohn's greatest contrapuntal writing. The opening theme re-enters to bring the movement, and the Sonata, to a stirring conclusion.