



Christ Lutheran Church
presents

Brian Bartusch, Organist

Sunday, October 22, 2023
4:00 p.m.



Celebrating the 5th anniversary of the
Sanctuary Organ

Program

Praeludium in C (BuxWV 137)

Dietrich Buxtehude
(1637 – 1707)

*Sonata de 5° Tono
(Sonata in the 5th Mode)*

Padre José de Larrañaga
(1728 – 1806)

Prelude & Fugue in G Major (BWV 541)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Organ Sonata in D (Wq 70/5)
Allegro di molto
Adagio e mesto
Allegro

Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach
(1714 – 1788)

*Two Canon Studies
(from Sechs Studien für den Pedalflügel)*
Canon in C (Op. 56, No. 1)
Canon in b (Op. 56, No. 5)

Robert Schumann
(1810 – 1856)

Sonate II in E Minor
Vivace
Andante tranquillo
Fugue

Paul Hindemith
(1895 – 1963)

*Allegro, Chorale & Fugue
(from the Berlin-Krakow Manuscripts)*

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809 – 1847)

PROGRAM NOTES

Praeludium in C (BuxWV 137)

An imaginative composer of both early Baroque organ music and choral cantatas, **Dietrich Buxtehude** was organist in both the cities of Helsingborg and Helsingør in Denmark. He is considered to be the leading figure in the North German organ tradition, which flourished during the 17th century. One of the unique and individualized characteristics of that style of organ was a well-developed pedal division, which allowed independent and freely-written pedal lines to be performed with relative ease.

Buxtehude's bold and virtuostic *Praeludium in C* is one of the many multi-sectional free works which he wrote for the organ. It opens with an extravagant and brilliant pedal solo, which is answered by sweeping descending scales in 32nd notes in the manuals. The pedal solo provides motivic material for the subject of a delightful fugue performed on the Swell division, as well as the three-measure ostinato bass of the final section. The prelude divides clearly into three sections: after introductory passages and chords, a short fugal section gives way to another homophonic prelude, while the fugue opens with a freely moving musical figuration and leads directly into the *chaconne* (or closing section), where the ostinato in the pedal line is taken from the opening theme.

Sonata de 5° Tono (Sonata of the 5th Mode)

Although similar to Flemish/Dutch organ building until around 1580, Spanish organs developed quite independently from their European organ-building counterparts. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish organs for the most part had only one manual, whereas organs with two or three manuals (keyboards) were common on large organs everywhere in Spain by the 18th century. And, with few exceptions, pedals were underdeveloped until the late nineteenth century (hence the selection today has no pedal line). By the 18th century, Castillian organs of Spain expanded in both size and tonal quality. Typically these had two or three manuals (but in some instruments as many as five). Pedalboards were still limited to one octave, and independent pedal stops were gradually introduced.

Padre José de Larrañaga was the most important of the Aranzazú composers (a region in northern Spain) in the 18th century. He was born in Azkoitia in 1728, and entered the Franciscan order as a young man. He was a well-known organ consultant in the Basque country, providing expertise on technical plans, inspections, and the building and repairing of organs. Although formal music in Spanish churches was modelled on traditional models of Morales and Victoria, Larrañaga was also influenced by the late Baroque Italianate style of Handel and Scarlatti. His compositional output includes a number of religious vocal

works and secular instrumental pieces, but he is best known for his keyboard compositions.

The binary form (two different sections) of his *Sonata de 5° Tono*, with its opening ‘rocket figures’ (melodic notes outlining a rising triad), scales, and accompanying repeated and Alberti basses is symphonic in style and within the early Classical tradition. In its musical simplicity the sparseness of the right hand line benefits from added ornamentation.

Prelude & Fugue in G Major (BWV 541)

Artistic contributions to the world of organ literature made by the German composer **Johann Sebastian Bach** are so vast that studying his works could take a lifetime. He has often been considered the greatest musical genius of the Baroque era; He was a prolific composer in almost all fields of music, and although an accomplished improviser, educator, and pedagogue, it was as an organ virtuoso that he is most well-known. It wasn’t until the mid-nineteenth century – partly due to Felix Mendelssohn’s rediscovery of his compositions - that Bach became principally known as a composer.

His *Prelude & Fugue in G (BWV 541)* opens with a brilliant arpeggio line in G major, punctuated by repeated chords in the manuals, while the pedal line is filled with descending lines of 16th notes in various keys. The figuration of the prelude itself is a blend of the German organ *toccata* and what were elements that were borrowed from the new concerto traditions of the time. A dance-like theme presents the fugal subject, and towards the end of the movement a *stretto* (a musical passage at the end of the fugue and performed in a slightly quicker tempo) is easily heard.

Organ Sonata in D Major (Wq 70/5)

In contrast with his renowned father Johann Sebastian Bach, in whose output compositions for the organ reached their unparalleled peak, his son **Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach** provided the instrument with only a few occasional works, his preferred instrument being the clavichord. He was the fifth child of the Bach family, and was an influential composer working at a time of transition between his father’s Baroque style and the Classical style that followed.

His *Organ Sonatas (Wq 70)* were written for Princess Anna Amelia of Prussia (the sister to Frederick II), who had an organ built for her. The works are expressive & fluid, featuring striking dynamic contrasts and imaginative melodic decoration, showing Bach to be a masterful composer of the organ. His *Sonata in D major* calls

upon the organ's sustaining power (where the sound immediately begins to die away once the note is struck). The first movement – an *Allegro di molto* – makes highly effective use of long-held chords and chains of dissonance, and give the impression of a 'musical conversation' between two voices. A slow *Adagio e mesto* follows in the non-related key of G minor, while the third movement is bright and energetic in the original key.

Canons (Opus 56, Nos. 1 & 5)
(from *Sechs Studien für den Pedalflügel*)

Although German Romanticism culminated in the works of such composers as Mendelssohn, Reger, and Brahms, the keyboard works of **Robert Schumann** contain his highly individualized style which derived itself from many sources, and which had a strong influence on the music of the mid- and late- 19th century. As a child, Schumann was instructed in piano, but in 1828 he was directed towards pursuing a career in law at Leipzig University. His heart was in his music, however, and in 1830, he abandoned his law studies and continued his studies in music. It was in Leipzig that he founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (New Music Journal)*, and where he also served as a musical journalist who continuously fought for new music.

The first etude, or 'study' – as Schumann called them – consists of a trio of voices with the upper two parts presented in *canon* form at the octave, and therefore easily heard. The fifth study is a charming composition also written in the style of a canon, and combines a sense of energetic passion and simple lyricism. Its mutual content seems to present a feeling of carnival-like ambiance, along with a child-like sense of mischief. The upper voice that begins the canon line has changing accompanying notes which are set very close to the canon melody.

Sonate II in E Minor

Paul Hindemith has often been considered to be a "classical modern" composer, and is acknowledged as a 20th century master of counterpoint. As a teacher, he was a strong stimulus for neo-Baroque compositions during the 20th century. He was born in Germany, where he studied musical theory, and later taught at the universities of Berlin, Yale, and Zurich.

Of the many musical works which he composed throughout his lifetime, Hindemith's own organ contributions are limited to three sonatas and two concertos. The sonatas were conceived in the neo-Baroque style with conventional but diversified

and energetic rhythmic character. The second of the sonatas – in E minor – is written in the typical three-movement style. The first movement consists of swift and often surprising changes between homophonic bars, vibrant passages written in three parts, and polyphonic passagework between the upper voices. The second movement – very calm and tranquil in style – alternates between the Great and Swell manuals. The third movement – a fugue – is translucent and contains interludes which occur in a consistent series, clearly differentiated from the thematic sections. This playful basic pattern continues to the end of the piece, with parts fading away until only one is left to state the theme for the last time. This is a rare example of a fugue which sounds relaxed and imaginative while at the same time is soundly constructed.

Allegro, Chorale, & Fugue

(from the Berlin-Krakow Manuscripts)

Although he was regarded as one of the finest pianists of his day, the German born **Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy** maintained a lifelong interest in the organ. He was the most natural musicians of all the Romantic composers, and comes close as any in history to equaling Mozart's astonishing natural gifts. A magnificent organist, esteemed educator, and a world-class composer, he conducted a performance of J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829, thereby triggering a new level of interest in Bach's music.

For many years Mendelssohn's organ works were tolerated but nevertheless ridiculed as relics. Only one of his sonatas (the sixth) was occasionally performed, mainly because it featured the beloved and well-known *Our Father* chorale. Over the years, studies have shown that his organ works (which consist of three preludes and fugues, six sonatas, and other miscellaneous compositions), seem to form an important link between the Baroque and Romantic periods. More than a century and a half later, they have begun to take their rightful place among the great organ compositions ever written, due largely in part to their rediscovery in Poland by musical editor William A. Little.

In 1844, Mendelssohn wrote the majority of his compositions for the organ, many of which he compiled to create his *Six Organ Sonatas (Opus 65)*. One particular composition – which he did not include as part of this set – is the powerful *Allegro, Chorale, & Fugue*. It is introduced by an energetic 16th-note ascending scale in D minor, whereby a simple but expressive fugal subject arises. After modulating through various related keys, the brilliancy of the 16th-note passagework yields to a short cadence, whereby the mood of the piece is suddenly transformed to a triumphant and original chorale melody in the parallel key of D major, homophonic in both style & brilliance. The final fugue subject flows beautifully from the final chord of the chorale, and passes from one voice to another, until it is heard one final time with full organ.

Brian Bartusch has been the Director of Music and Organist at Christ Lutheran Church in Valparaiso, IN since August 2018. He brings with him over 30 years of experience in church music, and has served churches in Lakewood, OH, Niles, MI, and Grand Rapids, MI.

He graduated from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids with a major in organ performance and a minor in Liturgical Music, studying organ with William Elliott, and then post-undergraduate studies with Jonathan Tuuk. He has also studied voice with Kathleen Westdorp.

After working in the music retail business for 7 ½ years, he applied to graduate school and earned his Master of Arts degree in organ performance from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, studying organ with Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra and conducting with the late Leonard Riccinto.

During his years at Aquinas College, he was introduced to solo handbell ringing, has directed handbell ensembles, and has also formed handbell quartets for the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids, First Presbyterian Church in Niles, MI, as well as Christ Lutheran Church. He is also a founding member of *Embellish*, Grand Rapids' premiere handbell ensemble, performing under the direction of the late Carl Wiltse.