



SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Presents

David Preston, organ

November 6, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Ed Landreth Auditorium

Program

Toccat, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major, BWV 546

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Warum Betrübst du Dich, Mein Herz, SSWV 106
From *Tabulatura Nova* (1624)

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)

Naiades
From *Pieces de Fantaisie*, op. 55 no. 4

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Clair de Lune
From *Pieces de Fantaisie*, op. 53, no. 5

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Praeludium und Fuga über B-A-C-H

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Music in Church Music.
Mr. Preston is a student of Dr. H. Joseph Butler.
The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.

Toccat, Adagio and Fugue in C Major

By Bach's time, toccatas were generally multi-sectional works featuring an improvisatory opening giving way to fugal sections. Bach often expanded on the form by including an adagio section between fugal sections in his harpsichord toccatas. In similar fashion, Bach includes an adagio between the concerto-like toccata and the fugue in BWV 564. A notable aspect of the work is the recurring theme of rests, which permeate every theme in each movement. The opening manual and pedal solos are punctuated with rests of varying length, as is the remainder of the toccata, the adagio, and the fugue subject. The fugue ends on an eighth note chord and the remainder of the measure filled out with rests. The focus on silence defies the expectations of the listener and creates numerous surprises throughout the work.

Many aspects of different styles are found throughout the various movements. The main section of the toccata is in ritornello form, like a concerto. Bach creates a thematic link between the opening solo and the ritornello by including aspects of both themes in the pedal. The adagio is Vivaldian in character, using a basso continuo-style bass line and a free, violinistic melody on the solo stops of the organ. The transition from the adagio to the fugue is in the style of a French *plein jeu*, a slow, movement on the mixture stops of the organ. Bach again expands on existing forms by setting the grave in six voices. Additionally, the fugue synthesizes north and central German styles, especially towards the end when Bach uses broken-up textures to accompany the theme before ending with a brusque C major chord.

Variations on *Warum Betrübst du Dich, Mein Herz*, from *Tabulatura Nova* (1624).

Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz,
bekümmerst dich und trägest Schmerz
nur um das zeitlich' Gut?
Vertrau du deinem Herren Gott,
der alle Ding' erschaffen hat.
(Hans Sachs)

Why art thou thus cast down, my heart?
Why troubled, why dost mourn apart,
O'er nought but earthly wealth?
Trust in thy God, be not afraid,
He is thy Friend who all things made.
(Catherine Winkworth)

Samuel Scheidt was one of the leading organists and composers of his time. He studied with Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck in Amsterdam, a connection firmly established by his theme and variation settings of melodies with imitative counterpoint and idiomatic keyboard figuration. Scheidt's *Tabulatura Nova*, published in 1624, was written in the Italian style of open score rather than German alphabetical tablature. This change was the reason for the title "new tablature." In his preface to the *Tabulatura Nova*, Scheidt prescribes that the melody should be played as a solo when possible, specifying, for example, that if the melody is in the alto part, it should be taken with the pedals. I will play the melody in the pedals in the third, fifth, and eighth variations in the tenor, soprano, and tenor voices respectively.

In *Warum Betrübst du Dich*, Scheidt retains the *cantus firmus* for most of the movements, pairing it with imitative, canonic, and other motivic devices. Scheidt wrote twelve variations, but I will omit the fourth, sixth, ninth, and tenth of these. The original fourteen-stanza song is by Hans Sachs, a Reformation-era shoemaker and Meistersinger who authored over 6000 poetic works. He was also the inspiration for Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

***Naïades*, from *24 Pieces de Fantaisie*, vol. 4, op. 55**

Louis Vierne led a troubled, though productive life. He was born with a congenital cataract condition that plagued him for the duration of his life, leading to his enrollment at the National Institute for Blind

Children. Among other hardships, Vierne's brother and son died in World War I, his wife left him while he was in Switzerland for eye treatment, and a carriage accident almost required a leg amputation. These losses and ailments caused Vierne to suffer from depression, for which he was counseled by his teacher and mentor, Charles-Marie Widor. In possibly the brightest spot of his life, he won the position of organist at Notre-Dame de Paris, a post Vierne held from 1900 until his death at the console of the same instrument, during his 1750th organ recital (!)

The four volumes of *Pieces de Fantaisie* come from Vierne's concert tours in the 1920s to raise money for the restoration of the Notre-Dame organ. The first two volumes (opp. 51 and 53) were published in 1926 while the third and fourth (opp. 54 and 55) came out in 1927. *Naiades* is impressionistic in character, depicting water sprites frolicking in a stream, as represented by the continuous scalar figures. In the B sections, a sweet, siren-like melody emerges on the strings of the organ.

***Clair de Lune*, from 24 *Pieces de Fantaisie*, vol. 2, op. 53**

The genesis of Paul Verlaine's *Clair de Lune* comes from the baroque painter Jean-Antoine Watteau. Watteau's paintings of *fêtes galantes* ("elegant festivities") birthed an artistic genre of the same name. Verlaine saw these paintings and composed a collection of poems based on them, also called *Fêtes Galantes*. Verlaine's *Clair de Lune* is loosely based on Watteau's ca. 1714 *Les Plaisirs du Bal*.

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et
bergamasques,
Jouant du luth et dansant, et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques!

Your soul is a chosen landscape
Filled with charming masquers and
bergamasquers,
Playing the lute and dancing, almost
Sad beneath their fantastic disguises!

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune.
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur
bonheur,
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

All sing in a minor key
of victorious love and the opportune life.
They appear not to believe in their
happiness,
and their song mingles with the moonlight,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver, les oiseaux [dans] les arbres,
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.

In the tranquil moonlight, sad and beautiful,
which makes the birds dream in the trees,
and the waters sob with ecstasy,
The tall, slender streams of water among the
marble statues.

Clair de Lune has been set numerous times as a song or as a tone poem by composers such as Fauré, Bonnet, Vierne, and Debussy. Since Debussy's setting is the most popular, it is hard to imagine a different setting than his. Vierne seems to acknowledge this by beginning his piece in the key of D-flat Major and on the same first few pitches as Debussy. The homage to Debussy ends there, as the musical texture is more orchestral than Debussy's. To accentuate the orchestral flavor of the piece, I will utilize a solo flute stop for the opening theme and the French horn stop in the pedal for the secondary theme. Each will be accompanied by the string stops, demonstrating the orchestral capabilities of this organ.

Praeludium and Fugue over B-A-C-H

Franz Liszt's Präludium und Fuge über B-A-C-H was originally composed for the dedication of the Ladegast organ in Merseberg in 1855 and was to be performed by organist Alexander Winterberger. The piece was not completed in time, so Liszt substituted his recently published *Fantasia and Fuge über Ad Nos ad Salutarem Nostram*, which had yet to be premiered. The B-A-C-H would receive its premier the following year. The Ladegast organ was the largest in Germany at the time, with eighty-eight stops (twenty-three larger than tonight's concert instrument) over four manuals and pedal. Its wide variety of stops allowed seamless crescendos and diminuendos. Liszt explicitly calls for a rare tone color called "aeoline" in both of these works, a unique feature of the Ladegast organ. The stop is quite soft and its timbre is similar to the buzzy, reedy sound of the harmonium.

This work stands as a tribute to Bach by spelling his name with German key names, where H is the American note B and B is what we know as B-flat. Liszt begins the work by presenting the B-A-C-H theme in the pedal, developing it in numerous motivic ways throughout the prelude. Both the right and left hands receive virtuosic solos in the prelude, showing Liszt's technical prowess at the keyboard. The prelude ends with a dramatic diminuendo from full organ down to pianississimo (**ppp**) on the softest stop of the organ. The fugue begins with the marking "mysterioso," and remains quiet until the exposition ends. The next section is meant to feature the aeoline, but I have instead used the vox humana stop to imitate the effect. After a dramatic crescendo and scalar full organ passage, Liszt makes one last attempt at fugal writing with two-part counterpoint doubled in octaves, a rare technique on the organ. The piece seems on track to conclude dramatically, with climax after climax, but Liszt defies expectations by inserting a second pianississimo passage just before the bombastic final chords.