

MUSIC at DUKE CHAPEL *presents*

Organ Recital Series

ROBERT PARKINS, *director*



Bálint Karosi



Duke
UNIVERSITY
CHAPEL

Sunday, January 29, 5:00 p.m.
Duke University Chapel

Program

Please reserve applause until the end of each half of the recital.

Praeludium in G Minor

NIKOLAUS BRUHNS
(1665–1697)

Obra del 8. tono alto: Ensalada

SEBASTIÁN AGUILERA
DE HEREDIA
(1561–1627)

Toccata settima

MICHELANGELO ROSSI
(1601/2–1656)

Estampie (2007)

FRANK DANKSAGMÜLLER
(b. 1969)

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott

MICHAEL PRAETORIUS
(1571–1621)

MEMORIAL CHAPEL ORGAN (BROMBAUGH 1997)

There will be a brief pause while the audience moves to the nave.

Praeludium in E, BuxWV 141

DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE
(1637–1707)

Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H
No 2. in A Minor (2021)

BÁLINT KAROSI
(b. 1979)

Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor,
BWV 1001/539

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685–1750)
ARR. OTFRIED BUESING

Herr Gott, dich loben wir,
BWV 725

J. S. BACH

Toccata and Fugue in D Minor,
BWV 565

J. S. BACH

THE BENJAMIN N. DUKE MEMORIAL ORGAN (FLENTROP 1976)

Bálint Karosi is represented in North America exclusively by Phillip Truckenbrod Concert Artists, LLC.

PROGRAM NOTES

Nicholaus Bruhns lived only until the age of 31; yet his few organ compositions are some of the greatest examples of the *stylus fantasticus* (“fantastic style”). The **Praeludium in G Minor** is no exception. It is as much in the style of Weckmann and Scheidemann as it is in Buxtehude’s, who was Bruhns’s mentor and teacher. Bruhns was an accomplished violinist as well, who was known to have accompanied his violin playing with his feet on the organ pedals. It is no surprise that the prelude has violinistic textures throughout; the fugue has a rather high tessitura with violinistic repeated notes and ends with arpeggiated figures.

Ensalada is a genre of Spanish polyphonic secular music—mixing languages, dialects, and ideas in a free musical form. Today’s work is an instrumental example of the genre, featuring loosely connected themes, mixed meters, and widely contrasting rhythms. **Sebastián Aguilera de Heredia** worked for most of his life in Saragossa on organs that were somewhat similar to the Brombaugh organ in Duke Chapel. They had Italianate principals and powerful Dutch reeds, tuned to meantone temperament. My registration choices are as free as this composition, with heavy use of some colorful stops, including the Regal, Trumpet, and Cornet.

Toccata settima is a multisectional Italian toccata, featuring **Michelangelo Rossi’s** signature chromaticism and violinistic textures. Rossi was known as an outstanding violinist in his lifetime, but none of his violin compositions survive today; his reputation rests chiefly on one surviving volume of keyboard music containing ten toccatas. *Toccata settima* [VII] is the best known of these, perhaps for its chromatic ending, which is stylistically close to the music of Carlo Gesualdo, Johann Jakob Froberger, and Girolamo Frescobaldi.

Frank Danksagmüller’s Estampie was commissioned in 2007 for the Buxtehude celebrations in Lübeck, Germany. “Estampie” denotes a medieval instrumental dance form, and it is also the title of the earliest surviving organ pieces from the *Robertsbridge Codex* (around 1360). The opening is based on the first few notes of Buxtehude’s *Passacaglia in D Minor* (BuxWV 161). The piece proceeds with the tone sequence in short, contrasting sections with different textural and rhythmic alterations and simple registrations, such as a Principal 8’, Octave 4’ and 2’, and Flute 4’. These registers could be found on any medieval organ, testifying to the composer’s deep understanding of the instrument. Danksagmüller, himself an accomplished organist, also takes advantage of the pure intervals in meantone temperament, venturing into distant key areas and dissonant intervals only for short periods. The smart use of a historical temperament as well as medieval rhythms and registrations gives this piece an eerily antique yet uniquely modern character.

Michael Praetorius wrote some of the most influential works of the early 17th century, influenced by Italian composers and his younger contemporary Heinrich Schütz. He published 17 volumes during his time as Kapellmeister to Duke Heinrich Julius of Wolfenbüttel between 1605 and 1613. His best-known compositions are the polyphonic settings of Lutheran chorales in his seven volumes of *Musae Sioniae*. **Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott** (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”) is one of Praetorius’s three chorale fantasies contained in volume seven, published in 1609. It is one of the earliest and greatest examples of *pedaliter* chorale fantasies, which provided a blueprint for a genre that flourished in the works of Scheidemann, Weckmann, Lübeck, and Buxtehude later in the 17th century. This densely





contrapuntal work is based strictly on Luther's signature chorale, with seven distinct sections for each chorale phrase, featuring all the imitational techniques available at the time: diminution, syncopated rhythms, and augmentation. A *tour de force* of counterpoint, this chorale fantasy stays in C major for its entire duration of ten minutes, making it interesting with brilliant counterpoint, flourishes, relentless syncopation, and a rigorous adherence to the chorale theme throughout.

The music of **Dieterich Buxtehude** is no stranger to organ recitals, and his reputation rests chiefly on virtuosic and improvisatory organ *praeludia* and, to a lesser extent, on his chorale fantasies. The **Praeludium in E Major** (BuxWV 141) is one of the few works that could have only been conceived for an organ with a well-tempered tuning system. It certainly dates after the time when the main organ at the Marienkirche in Lübeck was tuned to Werckmeister's first correct—but still unequal—temperament during Buxtehude's tenure in 1683. Buxtehude likely conceived this work (and the *Praeludium in F-sharp Minor*, BuxWV 146) to demonstrate the capabilities of the new temperament that could play in more distant keys. This certainly had a lasting impact on the visiting young Bach, who later composed two volumes of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. BuxWV 141 consists of five loosely connected sections, bridged via improvisatory *fantasias*. The loosely tied contrapuntal fugues are in sharp contrast to the strict counterpoint of Praetorius. There we hear a composer working chiefly on paper, while in this piece Buxtehude is an improviser in action with all the digital mastery of his craft on display.

Four Preludes and Fugues on B-A-C-H was commissioned for the 2022 Boston Bach International Organ Competition. The candidates were required to play one of them for the semifinals on the Fisk organ at Old West Church. They

consist of four preludes and fugues loosely based on miscellaneous preludes and fugues from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and are in a succession of the tonalities B-flat major, A minor, C major, and B minor. The first one in B-flat uses the classic B-A-C-H motive (B \flat -A-C-B), whereas No. 2 in A minor is based on A-C-H-B, No. 3 on C-H-B-A, and No. 4 on H-B-A-C. I conceived the **Prelude No. 2 in A Minor** in a minimalist style, based on an interplay of open fifths between identical flute stops on two manuals and pedal. This open texture is enriched by the chorale-like presentation of the A-C-B-B \flat cell in the pedal. The **Fugue** starts with the same figure, developing it further with ascending fifths in a swinging, jazz-like character, achieved by frequently alternating between even and uneven meters.

The transcription by German organist Otfried Buesing of the sublime and deeply passionate **Prelude** (in D minor) of **J. S. Bach's** *Violin Sonata in G Minor* (BWV 1001) is a welcome addition to the standard organ repertoire. The violin fugue transcribed for organ has survived as BWV 539b; however, Bach's authorship is questionable. German musicologist Hermann Keller laments replacing the violin prelude with a "little, insignificant praeambulum." Therefore, Buesing's transcription fills a musical gap, replacing the one-page praeludium with the violin prelude. Even if Bach was not the arranger himself, the **Fugue** (BWV 539b) still stands as one of the most satisfying and beautiful fugues for organ. It plays especially well on a small instrument with only a few stops, imitating the sound of the violin. Today, I will play the opening of the transcribed Prelude on a dramatic French *grands jeux* registration and, in contrast, its episodes and the Fugue on the Quintadena 8' and Praestant 8' stops. These combinations, imitative of violins, are found on most Thuringian organs.

Herr Gott, dich loben wir (“Lord God, We Praise You”) is Bach’s only existing written-out accompaniment for a multi-verse chant. It is printed with the words of Martin Luther’s German translation in rhyming couplets from the Te Deum, associated with Vespers and a hymn for New Year’s Day. The first four of 53 lines are:

*Lord God, we praise you.
Lord God, we thank you.
You, Father in eternity,
The world honors far and wide.*

The setting provides insight on how Bach may have accompanied congregational singing on festive occasions. While there are no indications for registration, the fact that the words are printed with the music and the number of unambiguous references to the text provide an incentive to illustrate the text with a creative use of organ stops. There are clear motivic references to angels, the incarnation and its purpose, and divine power in a strong pedal motive, plus an appeal for help in the chromatic lines (Vox Humana 8’). To illustrate the vigor of belief and praise, I will use the Bombarde 16’ in the final section. This piece would be most

appreciated with a full congregation singing, which is (sadly) impractical in organ recitals.

To illustrate the irony that one of Bach’s most popular and iconic works, the **Toccatà and Fugue in D Minor** (BWV 565), might not be authentic is beyond the scope of these program notes. The debate leads to a lot of speculation and offers more questions than answers. Whether it was Bach, his student Kellner, or Johannes Ringk (who might have arranged it from a string version or perhaps even composed the work), the author had an intimate familiarity with Bach’s harmonic and compositional language, and he was able to offer a concise essence of the composer’s early style. The questionable plagal cadence closing the work suggests that the work might have been composed after 1750, a Picardy third was originally intended, or there was no third at all, as is sometimes the case with solo string music. Questions of authorship set aside, the Toccatà in D Minor is still one of the most iconic and frequently played organ works. As my former teacher Lionel Rogg used to say, “This piece justifies the very existence of the pipe organ. Who else would have been able to compose it other than J. S. Bach?”

—Bálint Karosi

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Commended as “a most impressive musical interpreter” (Dr. Christoph Wolff, the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*) and for his virtuosity, “[He] inspired awe with the work’s marvelous scalar passages and fiery finish...” (*The Diapason*), Bálint Karosi earned a reputation for his expressive command of a wide range of repertoire that is guided by historical performance practice and a remarkably multifaceted musicianship enriched by his experiences as a composer, conductor, church musician, and clarinetist.

Since winning the International Bach Competition in Leipzig in 2008, Dr. Karosi has been recognized as one of the leading interpreters of the music of J. S. Bach worldwide. In 2020, he embarked on recording the complete organ works of J. S. Bach in fourteen recitals on different organs in the US and Europe. The series, designed by Christoph Wolff for Izumi Hall, Japan, is published on Bálint’s YouTube channel, and will be released in a CD set. He is one of few organists in North America to improvise regularly in recitals in authentic Baroque Style, which is informed by his research

in Baroque improvisation techniques of the 17th and 18th centuries. He has five recorded albums that have been received with critical acclaim—“[Balint Karosi] plays with self-understood naturalness, without trying to emphasize a sacred pathos” (*Gramafon*, Hungary, 2015)—including J. S. Bach’s *Clavier-Übung III* and the *Art of Fugue*, which he recorded on the organ, harpsichord, and clavichord.

Dr. Karosi has had an active career as a solo organ recitalist. In the summer of 2021, his engagements included concerts in Denmark, Hungary, and Finland. He has given solo organ concerts in concert halls in Budapest, Leipzig, Osaka, Yokohama, and Geneva, and on some of the world’s most significant historic organs in Lübeck, Leipzig, Norden, Leer, Paris, Freiberg, Merseburg, and Naumburg, among others. He has given masterclasses in improvisation at the Eastman School of Music, Yale, Oberlin, the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and the Cuneo Conservatory in Italy, and in Seoul (South Korea).

His six volumes of organ music, published by Wayne Leupold Editions, include his *Organ Book No. 1* (2017), conceived for historic organs, and works in a more symphonic idiom, often drawing inspiration from Hungarian music as in his *Symphony on a Chorale by Béla Bartók* (2012). His *Toccata in Memory of Béla Bartók* (2007) was the compulsory piece for the finals of the 2020 National Young Artist Competition in Organ Playing at the AGO National Convention in Atlanta.

As an active composer, he has received commissions from the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Spectrum Symphony of New York, the New Hungarian Music Society (UMZE), Musiciens Libres, the Miskolc Symphony Orchestra, Anima Musica Chamber Orchestra, Antico Moderno, the Norfolk Festival Chorus, the Yale Philharmonia Orchestra, Canto Armonico, and the Boston Choral Ensemble. His opera, *Lonely Hearts*, won the Most Dramatic Opera award and audience vote at the 2020

Contemporary Opera Showcase at the Hungarian State Opera. The libretto, written by Hungarian playwright Almási András Tóth, is based on a true story of a fraudulent American dating service from the 1980s. Dr. Karosi’s compositions include works for choir, solo voice, solo clarinet, piano, harpsichord, symphony orchestra, and wind symphony. He has composed cantatas; concertos for organ, harpsichord, clarinet, and baroque violins; a triple concerto for harp, cimbalom and guitar; and a Requiem. Three of these are featured on his critically acclaimed album *Existentia*, released in 2019 on the Hungaroton label. Of the concerto, *Records International* wrote in 2019: “The soloists, joined by others within the ensemble, emerge to play beautiful, exotically tinged melodies, like tellers of ancient tales.”

Dr. Karosi is the recipient of numerous first prizes in organ competitions: the J. S. Bach Competition in Leipzig, the International Organ Competition in Miami, and the Dublin International Organ Competition, which he won at age 22. He currently serves as Cantor at Saint Peter’s Church in New York City, where he is artistic director of the Saint Peter’s Bach Collegium, which he founded in 2015 for annual performances of J. S. Bach’s Passions and cantatas, and to commission and to premiere new sacred repertoire. From 2007 to 2015, Dr. Karosi served as Minister of Music at the First Lutheran Church of Boston, where he established a Bach Cantata Vespers series, raised funds for the completion of the Richards, Fowkes & Co. pipe organ, Op. 10, and founded the church’s successful annual Boston Bach Birthday in 2008, which has since developed into the most popular organ-related event in Boston.

Aside from solo organ performances and composing, he enjoys work as a collaborative harpsichordist, continuo player, and occasional clarinet player, often featuring historical clarinets. He has been broadcast numerous times on American Public Media’s *Pipedreams*, as well as WGBH Boston and Bartók Rádió in Hungary.



MUSIC *at*
Duke Chapel



Candlemas Service
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 7:00 P.M.

Ash Wednesday Service
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 7:00 P.M.

Evensong Singers Concert
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 4:00 P.M.

Schola Cantorum Concert
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 7:00 P.M.

Bach Cantata Series
SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 5:00 P.M.

Piano Recital: Cole Burger
SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 5:00 P.M.

Jazz Vespers
THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 7:00 P.M.

Organ Recital: Robert Parkins
SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 5:00 P.M.

Palm Sunday Service
SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 11:00 A.M.

Palm Sunday Evensong
SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 4:00 P.M.

Maundy Thursday Service
THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 7:00 P.M.

Good Friday Stations of the Cross
FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 11:30 A.M.

Good Friday Tenebrae
FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 7:30 P.M.

Vespers Ensemble Concert
SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 4:00 P.M.

Easter Sunday Communion
SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 9:00 A.M.

Easter Sunday Service
SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 11:00 A.M.

Easter Evensong
SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 4:00 P.M.



Spring Oratorio
SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 4:00 P.M.



Indicates ticketed performance.

Tickets are available for purchase at tickets.duke.edu.

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