

The Peoria Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the Peoria Bach Festival present

## **BACH: BEFORE AND BEYOND**

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Janette Fishell, organ

7:30 p.m. Monday 3 June 2013 | TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, PEORIA

Praeludium in G Minor, BuxWV 149.....Dietrich Buxtehude  
(1637-1707)

Chorale Prelude on “Vater unser im Himmelreich” (“Our Father, Who Art in Heaven”).....Georg Böhm  
(1661-1733)  
(with ornamentation by Johann Gottfried Walther, 1684-1748)

*For the text of the original hymn, please see Hymn 766*

From *Chorales of the Leipzig Manuscript*.....Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

“Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr” (“All Glory Be to God on High”), BWV 664

“Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr” (“All Glory Be to God on High”), BWV 662

*For the text of the original hymn, please see Hymn 947*

Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582.....Johann Sebastian Bach

### Intermission

From *Sechs Fugen über den Namen BACH* (*Six Fugues on the Name of BACH*).....Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

II. Lebhaft (*Lively*)

III. Mit sanften Stimmen (*With Soft Voices*)

IV. Lebhaft (*Lively*)

Sonate I (1937).....Paul Hindemith  
(1895-1963)

I. Mässig schnell (*Moderately fast*) – Lebhaft (*Lively*)

II. Sehr langsam (*Very slowly*) – Phantasie, frei (*Fantasy, freely*) – Ruhig bewegt (*Peacefully with motion*)

Sonata in B-flat Major, Opus 65, No. 4.....Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy  
(1809-1847)

Allegro con brio

Andante religioso

Allegretto

Allegro maestoso e vivace

*Janette Fishell concertizes under the auspices of Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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This recital explores the music of Johann Sebastian Bach within the context of those influential composers who came before him, his Prophets, and those who succeeded him, his Disciples. We begin with the magnificent Praeludium in G Minor by Dietrich Buxtehude, a master organist of Danish origin who settled in the North German town of Lübeck. In 1705 it was to Buxtehude's *Marienkirche* that the young J.S. Bach made his way (on foot, most likely) to learn from the elder musician and this work shows why he made the trip. Buxtehude's mastery of the *Stylus Phantasticus* ("Fantastic Style"), a method of creating and realizing music in which freedom and order are juxtaposed, is a hallmark of Buxtehude's organ works and this piece displays the style's defining characteristics. The opening section's cadenza leads to a rather well organized ostinato before the first fugue enters; remember its subject, for it will return, transformed, in the second fugue. After a charming "chamber music" incursion in which the left hand imitates basso continuo, the second fugue, majestic but as nimble as a dancing elephant, enters. All ends with a final flourish. Throughout, the performer is expected to collaborate in the process of realization: decisions regarding articulation, timing and ornamentation serve to heighten the "fantastic" nature of the work.

Bach was Central German, but he was a schoolboy in Lüneburg where the august musician Georg Böhm presided at the *Johanneskirche*. Bach's son C.P.E. Bach states explicitly that his father studied the elder musician's music and it is generally acknowledged now that Bach must have actually studied organ with the composer. This lovely setting of the chorale "Vater unser im Himmelreich" ("Our Father, Who in Heaven Above") exists in two versions: the first by the composer and the second, a highly ornamented version produced by Johann Gottfried Walther, Bach's cousin and fellow organist. While both versions are beautiful, Walther's is absolutely shocking in its exploration of ornamentation. One might say it is truly "over the top" but, if performed in a way that allows the ornaments to spin in a spontaneous, delicate web, it is truly special. It is also very interesting from the perspective of performance practice as it gives us a glimpse into how performers in the past felt free to put their personal spin on someone else's music.

And now we come to the music of Bach himself, beginning with two settings of the much loved hymn "All Glory be to God on High," an integral part of the Lutheran service that served as the *Gloria in excelsis*. Bach's ten surviving organ works on this theme include the two masterpieces heard today. Taken from the so-called "Great Eighteen Chorales" (also known as the Leipzig Chorales), these are works composed earlier in Bach's life to which he returned for revision when he lived in Leipzig. Although the later years of his life were primarily devoted to compositions for other media, Bach obviously thought about these earlier works and wished to improve them before leaving them to posterity. The result is a collection that is varied and masterful, displaying Bach's powers at their height. The first setting we hear is a sprightly trio in which the hands dance above the pedal in figuration drawn from the hymn itself. The tune is never heard completely but the chorale's first "stollen" (or melodic line) is heard completely in the pedal at the conclusion of the work. Bach's predecessors composed in the trio form but he is credited with inventing this Chorale Trio form in which every element of the work is drawn from the tune and developed in such a thoroughly contrapuntal manner. This is followed by an ornamented chorale in which the melody, placed in the right hand on a solo stop, is embellished with intricate ornamentation. As with Böhm's "Vater unser," we are moved by the beauty of the melody that sings with rhetorical ecstasy, but in stepping back we admire the absolute mastery of Bach's counterpoint and invention. Motifs from the tune create the supporting voices, which weave an accompaniment that unfolds with perfect contrapuntal ease.

The Passacaglia in C Minor, a work composed by a much younger Bach, is a theme and variation piece in which the initial eight bar melody, heard in the pedals, was taken by Bach from an organ Mass by the French composer André Raison. Reaching farther back, the *passacaglia* form has its roots in Spanish dance and the improvised guitar music that might accompany it. Whatever the origins or influences, Bach the Borrower once again eclipses all other examples of the form with one stroke of his pen. From Raison's simple theme Bach builds a veritable cathedral of sound in which complex counterpoint and compelling rhythmic gestures combine to enfold the listener and performer in an almost hypnotic musical web. The series of twenty variations ends with a fugue based on the *passacaglia* theme and can be viewed as the twenty-first variation, saving the most profound statement for the holy number 21 (3 of the Trinity X 7 of Creation).

"Again I thought how we are never at an end with Bach,  
how he seems to grow more profound the oftener he is heard."

Robert Schumann

It is difficult to believe that there was a long period after Bach's death when his work and life were kept in the memory of a relatively small band of elite professional and amateur musicians. Old fashioned "Papa Bach" would have to wait for the Romantics to be rediscovered; fortunately for the Ages, once the nineteenth century Bach Cult began its work Bach would never again be forgotten. Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn were at the forefront of Bach admirers. In 1844 Clara Schumann persuaded her husband to undertake daily counterpoint exercises in order to calm his increasingly disturbed mind. Working not at the organ but the pedal piano, Schumann produced an impressive amount of music in a short time, including six fugues on the musical formula for Bach's name: B (=B-flat), A, C, H (=B-natural). The three we hear today are typical of Schumann's style: a mixture of classical form (fugue) and Romantic character piece. Fugue II ("Lively")

might be regarded as a 19<sup>th</sup> century answer to Buxtehude's "*Stylus Phantasticus*," with its fiery and virtuosic writing, its quick mood and texture changes, and its easy movement between formal fugal and non-fugal writing. It leads to Fugue III, the most sensitive of movements ("With soft stops"): this is a gentle prayer to the Great Bach. Fugue V is an impish gigue on Bach's name and shows Schumann at his most genial, the miniaturist we've come to love through his piano and song cycles.

Before he escaped Hitler's approaching armies by moving to America, Paul Hindemith was one of Europe's brightest musical lights. Deeply committed to the reengagement of music into everyday life, he composed pieces he termed "*Gebrauchsmusik*," or "everyday, useful" music written for a specific purpose or instrument. Hindemith rebelled against what he saw as an interest among many early twentieth century composers in novelty and diversity at the cost of musical beauty. His first sonata for organ displays a characteristic attention to musical craft married to artistic inspiration. His use of musical forms hearken directly back to Bachian forms: most notably the lovely "*Sehr langsam*" ("Very slow") which is a 20<sup>th</sup> century version of a Bach Trio Sonata slow movement and the ensuing "*Phantasie, frei*" ("Fantasy, free"), which is pure *Stylus Phantasticus*. Both show Hindemith's interest in maintaining a connection with historic idioms and styles even as he created completely modern music.

We conclude with the music of Bach's greatest nineteenth century disciple, Felix Mendelssohn. The details of Mendelssohn's life are well known: a child of privilege, he studied the organ and counterpoint from a very early age but was known as a piano prodigy. Prodigiously productive, Mendelssohn was a primary leader in the movement to recognize and memorialize Johann Sebastian Bach's life and work. He organized three benefit concerts to raise money for the Bach memorial at the *Thomaskirche*, Leipzig, pictured below. Significantly, the first was an organ recital (August 6, 1840), for which Mendelssohn had to practice very hard for he wrote that he could barely walk in the street after having practiced the pedals! Mendelssohn's organ compositions often directly reflect his admiration for Bach, but they are also children of their own time. The sonatas, originally commissioned by the English publisher Vincent Novello as voluntaries, show characteristics of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic musical styles. The fourth sonata's first movement is a good example of how the composer references earlier musical idioms. The first theme, a horizontal curve of arpeggios and scales, unfolds in a contrapuntal manner. Some have noted the similarity between the subject matter and North German toccata figurations. The second theme, a strongly accented march, ultimately leads to the combination of the two themes. Its five-part structure could be likened to the North German *Praeludium* form of Toccata-Fugue-Toccata-Fugue-Toccata, albeit as seen through a 19<sup>th</sup> century prism. The second (a "hymn without words") and third (a "song without words") movements are patently Mendelssohn the Romantic but they give way to the fourth movement, the most Baroque-centric of the piece, that begins and ends with a grand march but, in the middle, delights us with a most triumphant fugue.



*Thomaskirche*, Leipzig – Woodcut around 1850, based on Eduard Bendemann.

## TONIGHT'S ARTIST

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Janette Fishell holds degrees in organ performance from Indiana University and Northwestern University; her teachers include Wilma Jensen, Wolfgang Rübsam, Richard Enright, Anita Werling, Robert Byrd, and Clyde Holloway with further coaching on Baroque and German Romantic repertoire with Ludger Lohmann. Named Young Organist of the Year by Keyboard Arts, Inc. while still an undergraduate, Janette is a recitalist and teacher of international standing. She has performed in many of the world's greatest concert venues including Suntory Hall, Tokyo; King's College, Cambridge; Berlin's Schauspielhaus; the Liszt Academy, Budapest; the Prague Spring Festival; and has been a featured recitalist and lecturer at five national conventions and five regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists. Her solo recitals for the 2006 national convention of the AGO in Chicago were critically acclaimed as "flawless" and a convention highlight. The author of numerous articles and a book on service playing published by Abingdon Press, she is widely recognized as a leading authority on the organ music of Czech composer Petr Eben.

Her numerous compact disc recordings include performances of the music of Marcel Dupré, Petr Eben and J. S. Bach as well as duet literature performed with her husband, British organist Colin Andrews. *Pas de Dieu: Music Sublime and Spirited*, a recording of French Romantic repertoire and the world premiere of Frank Ferko's *Livre d'Orgue*, was released by Loft Recordings in July, 2006, the premiere recording on C. B. Fisk opus 126. She has been featured in live radio broadcasts worldwide, including live recital broadcasts for the BBC from St. Marylebone Church, London, NHK, Tokyo, and Czech Radio. A frequent adjudicator, she has been tutor and artist four times at the Oundle International School for Young Organists and was a judge for the recorded rounds of the National Competition for Young Artists sponsored by the American Guild of Organists, Canadian Organ Competition, Montreal, and the inaugural Longwood Gardens organ competition in 2013. She served as Chair of the NYACOP committee from 2004 to 2006 and is a member of the Committee on Ongoing Professional Education (COPE).

Janette is Professor of Organ and Chair of the Organ Department at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, where she teaches a full studio of organ majors. From 1989 to 2008 she headed the Organ Performance and Sacred Music degree programs at East Carolina University and was Director of Music/Principal Organist at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville, NC, where she remains Director of Music Emerita. She is currently Artist-in-Residence at Christ Church (Episcopal) Cathedral, Indianapolis. At its most recent conclave the alumni of the Jacobs School of Music bestowed upon her the 2012 Oswald Gleason Ragatz Distinguished Alumni Award.

Her students have distinguished themselves in academia, concerts and as prizewinners in competitions throughout the US and Europe, including first prizes at the 2012 Arthur Poister Competition, the 2012 Albert Schweitzer Competition and the Joseph Fuchs Prize at Austria's 2012 Franz Schmidt Competition. Her former students successfully serve in churches and on university faculties throughout the US and Asia. She is a frequent adjudicator, most recently serving on the recorded round panel of the Canadian International Organ Competition (Montreal) and the upcoming Longwood Gardens Organ Competition (Philadelphia).

Janette's commitment to the creation and sustenance of excellence and creativity in organ performance and sacred music has led to a variety of projects: she founded the East Carolina Religious Arts Festival, and was pivotal in the design and fundraising for the C. B. Fisk opus 126 pipe organ that functions both as the organ for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Greenville, NC, and the major teaching and performance instrument for East Carolina University School of Music. She has received numerous commissions for choral compositions and hymn tunes, some of which are featured on *Love Bade Me Welcome: Music from St. Paul's*, and is a regular contributor to professional journals, a participant on panels and an active lecturer and adjudicator.

In addition to a full schedule of eclectic programs, Janette is nearing the completion of a twenty-one concert project, "The Seasons of Sebastian," in which she is performing the complete organ works of J. S. Bach for the first time at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Most recent and upcoming engagements outside of Bloomington include venues across the United States and multiple concert tours of Asia and Europe, including recitals at the Beijing National Center of the Performing Arts, Shanghai Oriental Arts Center, Sydney Town Hall, Lilia Hall, and Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. In the United States she performs under the management of Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.

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