

Westfield Center & Christ Church Cathedral
present

Harald Vogel

Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693)

Toccata per li Pedali
Canzon in d
Bataglia
Capriccio Cucu

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Praeludium in d
Toccata in e

Georg Böhm (1661-1733)

Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig
Partita 1 Grand Plein-Jeu
Partita 2 Dessus de Cromorne
Partita 3 Dessus de Nazard
Partita 4 Basse de Trompette
Partita 5 Trio
Partita 6 Voix humaine
Partita 7 Grand-Jeux (dialogue)
Partita 8 Flutes
Partita 9 Petit Plein-Jeu

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722)

Toccata in A-Dur

Sauls Traurigkeit und Unsinnigkeit (Saul's Sadness and Craziness)

La tristezza ed il furore del Rè

-aus der zweiten Biblischen Sonate:

Der von David vermittelt der Music curierte Saul

Saul malincolico e trastullato per mezzo della Musica

Mr. Vogel's appearance is sponsored by Loft Recordings

J.S. Bach

Praeludium in g minor (BWV 535a)

O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (BWV 656), from the Leipzig chorales

3 Verses

Praeludium und Fuge in D-Dur (BWV 532)

Praeludium - Erde (earth)

Fuge - Wasser (water)

The Central/Southern European influences on J.S. Bach are focused strongly on the style of Johann Pachelbel and his school. The elder brother, Johann Christoph Bach, who gave the 10 year old Johann Sebastian a new home in Ohrdruf (Thuringia) after the death of their parents, was a student of Pachelbel. Pachelbel was a good friend of Johann Ambrosius, the father of Johann Sebastian. The early works of Johann Sebastian strongly show the Pachelbel models in figuration (“der figurirte Stil”) and counterpoint.

The organ works of Johann Pachelbel show the influence of Johann Caspar Kerll, who studied in Rome and where he acquired the new expressive organ style of Frescobaldi and his followers. After Pachelbel moved to Vienna in 1673 he probably had the opportunity to study with Kerll, who was organist of the cathedral (Stephansdom) and the imperial court.

The program starts with the famous Pedal-Toccatà by Kerll, which served as a model for representative plenum pieces in the South German organ repertoire up to the 18th century. The *Canzon* combines a virtuosic harpsichord style with the counterpoint tradition of Southern Germany.

The *Praeludium in d* by Pachelbel is very complex and shows surprising contrasts, using the possibilities of a two-manual organ with an independent pedal division. The chords in the penultimate section must be performed in a specific arpeggio manner to use several manuals. The Italian influence is obvious in the expressive *Toccatà in e*, a typical piece for the sound of the *Principale* (8'); a large registration obscures the elegant counterpoint.

Georg Böhm played a most important role for the musical formation of the young Johann Sebastian Bach. He was born in Hohenkirchen, a village near Ohrdruf. Johann Christoph Bach's wife was a close relative to Böhm. Johann Sebastian was under the influence of Böhm in Lüneburg, where he got his high school education at the Michaelis-Schule; Böhm served as organist in the Johanniskirche. Böhm was very well acquainted with the French style and it was certainly through him, that the Bach family learned many details about the French manner of playing keyboard instruments.

The Partita “Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig” is a good example of the French style in the organ works of Böhm. The individual movements of the Partita are in the order of a typical classical French organ suite. The character of the movements of a French organ suite is not obvious in the source because the piece is transmitted in a harpsichord version. For example, the low ‘A’ in Partita 4 is available on a harpsichord, but on the organ it can only be played in a ravalement (with a reed sound).

Organs in the Central German style in Bach’s time contained enough French elements to make such an adaptation of the classical French organ style work. It is interesting that this adaptation does not work on organs in the North German or the South German styles of this time.

Johann Kuhnau was Bach’s predecessor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig and one of the most highly esteemed keyboard composers in Germany around 1700. He received an excellent education at the famous Kreuzschule in Dresden and learned the Italian style through Italian musicians at the Dresden court. Very important was the influence of the court composer (Hofcapellmeister) Vincenzo Albrici, who was famous as organist and coincidentally served for a short time (1681) as organist at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Albrizi compiled one of the most important collections of keyboard music in the second half of the 17th century, which includes a few early works of Kuhnau. This collection was copied by Albrizi’s student Emanuel Benisch, organist in Dresden at the Sophienkirche, Frauenkirche and Kreuzkirche beginning in 1679. The manuscript (Codex E.B.-1688, Yale LM 5056) is the most important document for the transmission of the Italian keyboard style in Central Germany in the late 17th century. (It contains also strongly Italian influenced organ works by Dietrich Buxtehude.) A detailed study of this manuscript is in preparation.

Kuhnau received his musical education partly by Italian musicians in Dresden. An important element in this environment was the concept of program music (music that expresses a story). It is therefore not surprising that his Biblical Sonatas were published with both Italian and German titles. The first movement of the second Biblical Sonata represents a detailed description of the sadness and mental problems of Saul. The harmonies are extremely unusual for ca. 1700 and in many places resemble the harmonic language of a much later time. It is a perfect model of baroque program music.

The Toccata in A-major is a combination of the free Italian style (at the beginning and the end), *Imitatio violinistica* (imitation of a violin duo) and a fugue in the ensemble style.

The Central German influences on the young Bach contained both Italian and French elements plus the German tradition of keyboard counterpoint. Very important and until now not very much noticed is the importance of the “program music” concept. An example of the combination of keyboard counterpoint in the figuration style

(Figurations-Stil) of Johann Pachelbel and a programmatic interpretation of the text is Bach's *O'Lamm Gottes, unschuldig* from the Leipzig chorales. The melody is a version of the *Agnus Dei* by Nicolas Decius (1531), which has its place at the end of the mass. The first two verses show the melody in the upper and middle voices with the typical counterpoint style of Pachelbel and his school ("figurierte Choräle") in the other voices. The last verse introduces the melody in the bass (pedal) with a more dramatic style in the upper voices. In the next to the last phrase with the text "sonst müssen wir verzagen" ("else had despair reign'd o'er us") we hear the most expressive chromatic passage in the organ oeuvre of Bach. It represents extreme despair. A comparison with the first movement of Kuhnau's second Biblical Sonata is revealing. The last phrase of *O'Lamm Gottes unschuldig* has the text "Gib uns den Frieden, o Jesu" (*Dona nobis pacem*). Bach gives in his composition the impression of peace in a special sense: the very long pedal point on the last note of the melody represents the everlasting peace (immerwährender Friede).

Prelude and Fugue in D-major belong to the compositional experiments of the young Bach, in which he made use of various styles from other composers. The Prelude is divided in four parts and starts with a dialogue between manual and pedal. This dialogue leads to a short pedalpoint toccata à la Pachelbel, followed by a section in the style of Frescobaldi played with Principal 8'. This is also the case with the last part of the Praeludium. Noteworthy is here the expressive quality of the upper voice which is obscured if a plenum registration is used. The Allabreve section shows the instrumental style of Corelli with many suspension sequences (Vorhalt-Sequenzen).

The fugue is a *Sturm-und-Drang* piece of the young Bach and shows many traits of Scarlatti's motoric style. In this piece Bach explores the limits of virtuosic pedal playing. The programmatic content of the Praeludium can be seen in the representation of the element "earth" and in the fugue with the element "water". The representation of the four elements corresponded to popular ideas of baroque art.