

Westfield Center & Christ Church Cathedral

present

William Porter

Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693)

Toccatina quinta

Canzon quinta

Johann Speth (1664-ca.1720)

Partite diverse sopra l'aria detta la Pasquina (6 variations)

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Ciaccona in D

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prelude and Fugue in d (BWV 539)

J. Pachelbel

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr

J.S. Bach

Machs mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güt (BWV 957)

J. Pachelbel

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan (9 variations)

J.S. Bach

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan (BWV 1116)

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr (BWV 663)

Toccatina and Fugue in F (BWV 540)

This recital is offered in memory of Alan and Judy Kotok, long-time members of Westfield

Tonight's concert begins with a freely-organized toccata for the *plenum*, or full ensemble sound of the organ. It then proceeds to compositions through which one can explore the different individual voices of the organ. To this end are included chorale preludes as well, in which one can hear many diverse ways of setting a chorale melody. Finally, a fugue, again played on the *plenum*, concludes the concert. Thus the outline of this concert follows loosely but clearly the way in which the organ was used by Johann Sebastian Bach when he played organ concerts, as described by Bach's first biographer, Johann Nicolas Forkel. Such a procedure as Forkel reports was probably not peculiar to Bach but may well have been an established tradition: Mattheson's description of a recital played by Johann Caspar Kerll in the presence of the Emperor Leopold shows a similar pattern to that reported by Forkel. So tonight we return to an older concept of

the organ concert-as-event, not often heard today. This is a concept which showcases the instrument itself rather than the repertoire played upon it, a concept in which the systematic exploration of tonal beauty the instrument affords is the guiding principle by which the event is shaped. This is a natural way to order a concert when the concert is largely improvised, and it may be true that when organ concerts became repertoire-dominated – as they usually are today – that older organizing principle was harder to maintain, and something of value was lost as a result.

This evening's concert is of course not improvised, but since the repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries has its roots in improvisational practice, it also has one of those qualities common to all good improvisations: when played on the right kind of instrument, it makes the instrument sound just right. Hellmuth Wolff's new organ at Christ Church Cathedral is the right kind of instrument for this music, and its newness invites one to discover the breadth of its colors. Accordingly, the Kerll Toccata will feature the principal chorus, or *plenum*, of each of its manual divisions, in dialogue, while the canzona will be played on smaller combinations of principal stops. Speth's aria and Pachelbel's ciaccona will display the many types of flute registers of the instrument, individually and in combination, with perhaps a reed stop included at various points. Flutes and principals will be heard in Bach's d minor prelude and fugues, and the chorale preludes will feature both half-*plenum* and quieter stops. The full *plenum*, with the manuals coupled together will be heard in the concluding work.



William Porter is Professor of Harpsichord and Organ at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and also teaches organ and improvisation at McGill University in Montreal. From 1985 to 2002 he taught organ, music history, and music theory at the New England Conservatory in Boston, and from 2001 until 2005 he taught improvisation at Yale University. He holds degrees from Oberlin College, where he also taught harpsichord and organ from 1974 to 1986, and from Yale University, where he was director of music at Yale Divinity School from 1971 to 1973. Widely known as a performer and teacher in the United States and in Europe, he is a leader among keyboardists working towards a recovery of an historical and instrument-based approach to musical performance, and has achieved international recognition for his skill in improvisation in a wide variety of styles, ancient and modern. He has taught and performed at major international festivals and academies, including the North German Organ Academy, the Smarano Organ and Clavichord Academy, the McGill Summer Organ Academy, the Göteborg International Organ Academy, the Dollart Festival, Organfestival Holland, the Lausanne Improvisation Festival, the Festival Toulouse les Orgues, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Oregon Bach Festival, the Italian Academy of Music for the Organ, and the National Convention of the American Guild of Organists. An active church musician, from 1985 to 1997 he was director of music at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Boston, and was Artist in Residence at Boston's First Lutheran Church from 1999 until 2002. He has recorded on historic instruments, old and new, for the Gasparo, Proprius, BMG, and Loft labels.