

ORGAN GIANTS

J.S. BACH • MENDELSSOHN • SCHUMANN • BRAHMS • B-A-C-H

Samuel Bristow

Sunday 25th April 2021, 4.30 pm

Live-stream only



Complete Organ Works of Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

Recital IV

Prelude and Fugue in C minor (Op. 37, No 1)

Mendelssohn visited St Paul's Cathedral ten times during his short life, and enjoyed a fruitful friendship with its Organist, Thomas Attwood. Mendelssohn dedicated the *Three Preludes and Fugues*, an evident homage to J.S. Bach, to Attwood. The Fugue in C minor began life as a postlude improvisation after an Evensong at St Paul's. Stylistically revolutionary, the piece is a fusion of Baroque counterpoint and Romantic harmonies; while Beethoven introduced a similar fusion in piano sonatas (such as the *Hammerklavier*), Mendelssohn was the first composer to establish this as a successful style of organ writing.

Chorale Partita: "Wie gross ist des Allmacht gen Gute"

This charming early work indicates Mendelssohn's familiarity with the forms of the North German organ masters. His dedication to Bach's output is well known, though this piece hints at an association with the music of composers including Pachelbel and Böhm. It is plausible that organ playing had fallen into such decline throughout Europe by the time of Mendelssohn's birth that the compositional style of Pachelbel and Böhm, from over a century before, was still prevalent. Mendelssohn provides a set of three variations on the chorale, which are indebted towards the works of his predecessors, but nonetheless show flashes of Romantic revolution within.

Sonata in B flat Major (Op. 65, No 4)

- i. Allegro con brio
- ii. Andante religioso
- iii. Allegretto
- iv. Allegro maestoso e vivace

The first movement incorporates waves of pianistic figurations, possibly referring to the arpeggio sequences in Bach's Pentecost



setting *Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott* (BWV 651), juxtaposed with impassioned chordal sequences: their blend makes this one of the most riveting pieces of Mendelssohn's Organ Sonatas. The second movement is gentle and a reworking of an earlier piece. An expressive song without words follows. The energetic finale commences with an exuberant march and gives way to a surging fugue. The opening material of the march returns as the culmination of the work.

Notes by Samuel Bristow

Samuel Bristow

Samuel Bristow is a versatile young musician based in London, currently working as the Organ Scholar of St Paul's Cathedral. As one of the full time organists there, he gives recitals on the world-famous organ and regularly accompanies and conducts services, working with the eminent Cathedral Choir in the daily liturgy. Samuel studied at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, graduating with first class honours in 2019 and was a recipient of the John Campbell Keyboard Prize. His teachers were Daniel Moulton and Henry Fairs. Other influences were Kerry Beaumont, Paul Leddington Wright and Paul Spicer. He has held organ scholarships at Coventry and Birmingham Cathedrals, followed by a year at Salisbury Cathedral. He has performed in many high-profile venues throughout the United Kingdom, including St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol; University of St Andrew's, Scotland and the cathedrals of Bristol, Truro, Blackburn and Glasgow. He has broadcasted regularly for BBC Radio and made an appearance on BBC One's 'Songs of Praise'. He holds associateship diplomas from the Royal College of Organists and Trinity College London.

For more details, please visit www.samuelbristoworganist.com.

Next recital | Live-stream only

Sunday 2nd May at 4.30 pm

William Fox | Complete Organ Works of J. S. Bach Recital IX

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