

# ORGAN GIANTS

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

William Fox

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 4.30 pm

 St PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL

## Complete Organ Works of J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

*Recital XXII: works for Lent*

### **'Dorian' Toccata in D minor**

BWV 538i

Dating from Bach's youth in Weimar between 1708 – 1717, this free work was nicknamed 'Dorian' by later publishers to distinguish it from the iconic Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565). This expansive piece is built on one surging semiquaver motif, presented at the outset. Bach specifies dialogue through manual changes and thus demands in this work an antiphonal effect unique in his output.

### **O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig**

618

### **Christe, du Lamm Gottes**

619

Both setting German chorale paraphrases of the Agnus Dei, these two intimate and finely-wrought Lenten preludes emanate from the *Orgelbüchlein*. BWV 618 incorporates a 'sighing' motif perhaps signaling the forthcoming suffering of Holy Week, while the hymn is presented as a canonic cantus firmus between alto and tenor voices. BWV 619 is also founded on a canon of its chorale, accompanied by lyrical falling scalic passages.

### **Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt**

637

### **Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt**

705

This chorale text laments the fall of Adam through temptation in the Garden of Eden, outlines the consequent corruption of all humanity, and points to redemption offered by Christ. The chorale is presented as a cantus firmus in BWV 637, underneath which humanity's fall is made explicit with gaping falling intervals in the pedals and a slithering quaver accompaniment that perhaps depicts the snake which led to temptation. BWV 705, of doubted authenticity, is a fugue in the *stile antico*.

### **Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ**

623

### **Hilf Gott, daß mir's gelinge**

624

BWV 623 is a song of thankfulness; the chorale cantus firmus is presented above an active three-voice accompaniment, made buoyant by vivacious rhythmic motifs. *Hilf Gott, daß mir's gelinge* recalls the events of Passiontide. BWV 624 is a miniature characterised by swirling semiquavers and a deliberately botched canon – these harmonic abnormalities perhaps illustrate



the imperfections of the human condition without God, and the chaotic results of humanity's activities without Christ's intervention and salvation.

### **'Dorian' Fugue in D minor**

538ii

The *alla breve* 'Dorian' Fugue is founded on a versatile subject, distinguished by its syncopations and upward leaps of a perfect fourth. The fugue is one of Bach's most expansive, unfolding over 222 bars, the strict counterpoint – replete with chromaticism and suspensions – giving way to emphatic chords only in the final four bars.

*Notes by Samuel Bristow*

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## **William Fox**

William Fox is currently the Acting Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral, having been Sub-Organist since July 2018. He works with the world-famous choir of St Paul's, accompanying and directing the music at services, including services of national significance. He also works as part of the ambitious music outreach programme at the Cathedral and gives recitals throughout the UK and abroad. Since September 2019, William has additionally been a junior fellow at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. William was a chorister at York Minster, before holding organ scholarships at Wells and Hereford Cathedrals. Prior to his appointment at St Paul's, he was organ scholar and an academic scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, from where he graduated with a first class degree in Music. William became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists as a teenager, winning the Turpin and Durrant prize. He has appeared on BBC radio, BBC television, and Classic FM, and worked through much of Europe and in the USA. His debut recording, of the organ works of Cecilia McDowall, was released in 2021, gaining 5 \* reviews in *Choir and Organ* and *The Organ*. As a piano accompanist, he is the winner of the 2018 Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Competition.

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## **Next recital**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 4.30 pm**

Charles Maxtone-Smith

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Members of the audience are kindly requested to switch off all electronic devices, and are reminded that photography and recording are not permitted.

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