

ORGAN GIANTS

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

William Fox

Sunday 4th December 2022, 4.30 pm

 **St PAUL'S**
CATHEDRAL

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

Recital XXIX

Meine Seele erhebt den Herren 733

Meine Seele erhebt den Herren 648

This chorale melody is a paraphrase of the Gregorian chant for the text of the Magnificat, the joyful song of Mary upon hearing the message of the Angel Gabriel. BWV 733 is an imposing fugue, the subject lifted from the chorale's opening phrase. BWV 648 is from the collection of six 'Schübler' chorales published during Bach's lifetime – this work is a transcription of a subdued and tender duet from Bach's earlier cantata, BWV 10, setting the words "he remembers his mercy and raises his servant Israel".

Gott, durch deine Güte 600

Herr Christ, der einge Gottessohn 601

Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott 602

Here are three miniature Advent preludes emanating from the *Orgelbüchlein*, Bach's comprehensive survey of the Lutheran liturgical calendar through organ music. BWV 600 is one of the few pieces in Bach's organ oeuvre for which he specifies registration; the cantus firmus is stated canonically between the soprano and tenor, the latter on a prominent solo trumpet. The cantus firmus of BWV 601 sings proudly above three buoyant accompanying voices, driven by a recurring pedal suspirans figure. BWV 602, incorporating a hymn based on the Advent chant *Conditor alme siderum*, adopts a similar texture; the inner voices filled with celebratory rhythmic energy.

Fugue in C minor 575

Founded on a subject rich in potential, this extraordinary contrapuntal flourish is most likely an early work dating from, or just after, Bach's organist post in Arnstadt (though no autograph survives to verify this). This rondo-fugue was considered by Dadelson to be 'the best example of the young Bach's treatment of the fugue style of the north Germans'.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland 659

Trio super 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' 660

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland 661

The vast array of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* settings found throughout Bach's oeuvre perhaps indicate his affinity for this particular chorale. These



settings are found in the Eighteen 'Leipzig' Chorales, a collection mostly comprising the mature Bach's revisions of his earlier organ chorale preludes. In an arrangement reminiscent of a middle movement from an Italian concerto, the solo cantus firmus in BWV 659 is richly embellished, singing above a darker accompaniment underpinned by a walking bass. BWV 660 incorporates the hymn into a finely wrought trio texture; the opening phrase subtly used as an opening canonic motif before a heavily ornamented cantus firmus enters. BWV 661 is a striking, grandiose fugue, its angular subject derived from the chorale, the cantus firmus firmly stated in the pedals.

Notes by Samuel Bristow

William Fox

William Fox is currently the Acting Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral, having been Sub-Organist since 2018. He works with the world-famous choir of St Paul's, accompanying and directing the music at services, including services of national significance. In June, William played the organ at the National Service of Thanksgiving for the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and at the Service of Prayer and Reflection the day following her death, broadcast to millions around the world. William began his musical education as 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 a prizewinning 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.

William's 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 continuo and orchestral organist William has recently appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the City of London Sinfonia, Gabrieli Consort and Players, the Cardinal's Musick, and the London Youth Choirs. Since 2019, William has additionally been a Junior Fellow at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he also studies. As a piano accompanist, he is the winner of the 2018 Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Competition.

Next recital

Sunday 11th December, 4.30 pm

William Fox | Organ Giants | Complete Bach Recital 30

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

The musical heritage of St Paul's has come under severe pressure as a result of COVID-19. There will be a collection as you leave the Cathedral today. We recommend a donation of £5, and thank you in advance for your contribution.