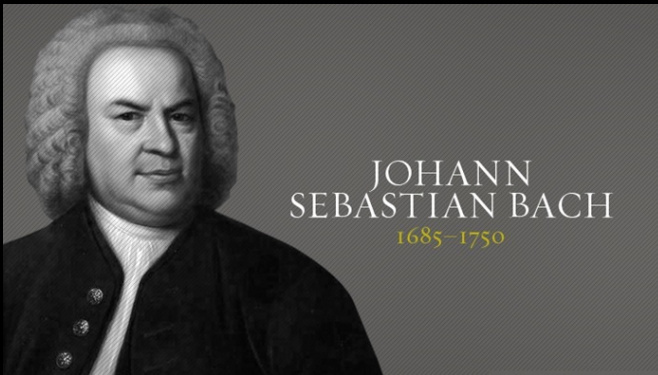


PEACE MEMORIAL CONCERT SERIES

presents



DEXTER KENNEDY, ORGANIST

The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Our Lord's Day – March 14, 2021
Three o'clock in the Afternoon

The Program

Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 543

The Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 543, appears to be a product of the early Weimar years, written a few years after Bach's famous visit with his North-German predecessor Dieterich Buxtehude in 1705-1706 but before his encounter with Vivaldi's *L'Estro armonico* concertos in 1712. The rhapsodic, pedal-point opening of the Prelude and the free, pedal-cadenza close of the Fugue point to Buxtehude's style and suggest that Bach was still looking to his forebear for compositional inspiration. But the second portion of the Prelude, with its imitative sequences and motor rhythms, and the general design of the Fugue, with its clear delineation of harmonic stations and modulatory episodes, point to the emerging Italian concerto — probably that of Torelli or Corelli rather than that of Vivaldi. At the same time, the dramatic sweep of the Prelude and Fugue and the technical demands of the pedal part point to no one other than Bach.

– Joan Lippincott

Concerto in G major, BWV 598

Allegro – Grave – Presto

The Concerto in G Major, BWV 592, is a transcription of Johann Ernst's Concerto in G Major for Violin, Strings, and Continuo, a work that Bach also transcribed for solo harpsichord, BWV 592a. Ernst's concerto survives as a set of handwritten instrumental parts, and a comparison of the original music and the organ arrangement shows that Bach tightened and improved the score as he transferred it to the organ. The music follows the traditional three-movement sequence of the Late Baroque Concerto: Fast—Slow—Fast. In the opening movement Bach assigns the solo violin episodes to the Rückpositiv, or secondary manual, and the tutti sections to the Oberwerk, or primary manual, and Pedal. At times he calls for double pedal, taking both viola and continuo parts with the feet in order to free the hands for the two violin lines. In the Grave middle movement a forte unison theme frames a melodic central section. And in the Presto finale, which like the first movement capitalizes on the alternation of a tutti ritornello theme and episodic segments, Bach adorns the music with 32nd-note scalar flourishes here and there to further animate the score.

Trio Sonata IV in E minor, BWV 528.
Adagio-Vivace – Andante – Un poco allegro

Bach’s children benefitted from having one of history’s finest music teachers as their father. None was more lavishly trained than Sebastian’s oldest, Wilhelm Friedemann, born in 1710 during his father’s service at the ducal court of Weimar. It was Friedemann for whom Sebastian wrote his *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, which contains early versions of the French Suites, Inventions, Sinfonias, and the first book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

The *Klavierbüchlein* also contains six sonatas for organ, nowadays known as the Trio Sonatas, BWV 525 through 530. The appellation “trio sonata” is excellent, given that the works transfer the overall styles and techniques of the Italian trio sonata—typically for two violins with cello-and-keyboard continuo underpinning—to the organ. Widely disseminated among Bach’s pupils, the trio sonatas combine superb pedagogical qualities with evocations of the Italian galant style that was coming into vogue as of the 1720s.

The Trio Sonata in E minor, BWV 528 dates from Bach’s years in Leipzig. Its opening *Adagio-Vivace* movement began existence as the Sinfonia that opens the second part of Cantata No. 76, *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes* (The Heavens Proclaim the Glory of God), one of Bach’s earliest Leipzig cantatas. One can easily hear the chamber quality of this movement, with its imitative upper voices unfolding over a bass-line continuo part in the pedal. It is followed by a second-place *Andante* characterized by pleasantly ear-bending chromaticisms and florid ornamentation of the melodic line. A concluding *Un poco allegro* is the most noticeably galant part of the work, with its dance-like rhythms and overall courtly demeanor.

– Paul Jacobs

Schübler Chorales

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645

Ach bleib' bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 649

Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter, BWV 650

Bach's chorale preludes are a much-loved part of the organ repertoire. The three we hear today are part of the collection known as the Schübler Chorales (BWV 645–650). Published in the final years of Bach's life (probably 1748–49), five of the six chorales were transcribed for organ by Bach from movements of his sacred cantatas. While over 200 of Bach's cantatas have survived, none were published during his lifetime. It is interesting to note, then, that he chose just these specific cantata movements, arranged them for organ, and saw to the publishing himself. Perhaps he was especially pleased with the music he had created for these cantata sections.

– Dr. Wanda R. Griffiths

Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582

The Passacaglia in C minor stands as an unusual entry in the vast catalogue of organ compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is the only one of his works to bear the title "Passacaglia," although that form – a set of variations based on an incessantly repeating short theme – stands nonetheless at the foundation of a number of his compositions in various genres. It is an astonishing piece, and it displays such mastery in every detail of its composition that it is hard to reconcile with the fact that it is among Bach's earliest compositions. Between about 1708 and 1713 the composer's elder brother Johann Christoph copied it out into the so-called Andreas Bach Book, a volume of keyboard works by various composers assembled over several years by the Bach family.

Bach's Passacaglia is built on a melody that is eight measures long. Sometimes the eight-bar melody is heard in the bass, sometimes in the treble, sometimes in the midst of a busy texture, but it is always present as Bach works his way through twenty variations following the initial, unadorned presentation of the theme. Bach achieves an extraordinary sense of unity and momentum in this set, partly by dovetailing the rhythmic or decorative details of contiguous variations. Generations of analysts have pondered the structure of this particular passacaglia, in which one senses such subtlety that it is tempting to agree with the assessment of the Bach authority Hermann Keller, writing in 1948: "A number of scholars have tried to interpret the design of Bach's twenty variations; yet its concealed laws cannot be rationally grasped!" An interesting analysis is proposed by Christoph Wolff, a kingpin of modern Bach scholarship, who hears the variations as assembled into groups defined by shared characteristics, groups that consist progressively of the first two variations, then the next three, then four, then two, four, three, two—the whole therefore adding up to a mirror structure centering on the two variations at the center (Variations Ten and Eleven), which are themselves linked in double counterpoint. But the end of the Passacaglia is not the last we hear of the eight-bar melody. Bach goes on to employ it as the principal subject of the ensuing four-part fugue (or "thema fugatum," as he termed it), which is worked out in masterly fashion, including even a spicy chord right before the final cadence.

– Paul Jacobs

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Johann Sebastian Bach." The signature is written in a cursive, calligraphic style with a period at the end.

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As the winner of the Grand Prix d'Interprétation at the 24th Concours International d'Orgue de Chartres, **Dexter Kennedy** has established himself internationally as “one of the greatest organists of our times” (Iceland Monitor). Praised for his “prodigious technique and grand style musicality” in *The American Organist*, his concert programs present performances that are fiery and historically informed, exciting both music connoisseurs as well as people who have never experienced the organ in concert setting. In addition to concertizing, Dexter Kennedy is a rising teacher, having taught at both the College of Wooster and Oberlin College Conservatory.

Mr. Kennedy is an active recitalist throughout both Europe and North America, having performed in great cathedrals, churches, and concert halls including: Notre-Dame de Paris; Berliner Dom; St. Bavokerk, Haarlem; Slovak Philharmonic Hall, Bratislava; Chartres Cathedral; Grossmünster, Zürich; Chichester Cathedral; Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík; Basilica of St. Nazaire, Carcassone; St. George's, Hannover Square, London; Auditorio Manuel de Falla, Granada; San Luigi Dei Francesi, Rome; St. Willibrordus Basilika, Echternach, Luxembourg; and



Bergen Cathedral. His performances have been heard at the St. Albans International Organ Festival, the 51st Bratislava Music Festival, the Bergen International Organ Festival, the London Handel Festival, the Eccles Organ Festival, the Arizona Bach Festival, the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians, and two regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists. In 2017 he was the lone American to be invited to perform at the Catédral Primada of Bogotá, Colombia, for the Bach en Bogotá Festival, where he performed for an audience of over 2,000 people as part

of the first organized performances of Bach's complete organ works in the country's history. Also in demand as an orchestral player, Kennedy frequently performs with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In December 2017 he performed and recorded with the orchestra Strauss's Eine Alpensinfonie for future CD release under the baton of music director Andris Nelsons, and during the 2018-2019 season he performed with the ensemble at Carnegie Hall. His playing has been broadcast nationally on the American Public Media's Pipedreams. Recent concert highlights include: Wichita State University, Cornell University, Montreal Bach Festival, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Arizona State University; he has also performed for many American Guild of Organists chapters in recent seasons, including Kansas City, Southern Nevada, Charleston, Atlanta, and Grand Rapids.

As a church musician, Kennedy serves as the Assistant Director of Music of Christ Church Grosse Pointe (Michigan) where he serves as the principal organist for all choral services and concerts and directs the training of the novice boy and girl choristers. He traveled with the Christ Church Choirs to England and Wales in the summer of 2014, Spain in 2016, to the UK 2017 for choral residencies at Salisbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and again in 2018 at Durham and Canterbury Cathedrals. Additional choir tours as a freelance accompanist have taken Kennedy to the organ benches of St. Peter's Basilica; La Sagrada Familia; Stephansdom, Vienna; St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin; and St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Kennedy's previously held positions include Director of Music and Organist for Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University, Organ Scholar at St. Paul's on the Green Episcopal Church, Norwalk, CT, and Organist for Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School.

Dexter Kennedy holds the Artist Diploma from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He holds a Master of Music Degree from the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, where he was a recipient of the Robert Baker Award, and the Mary Baker Prize for Excellence in Organ Accompaniment. Kennedy has studied under Olivier Latry, Martin Jean, Jeffrey Brillhart (improvisation), Arthur Haas and Webb Wiggins (harpsichord), and has attended several international organ festivals where he has coached with distinguished European artists. He enjoys golfing and following the professional sports teams in his native Detroit.

Mr. Kennedy is represented by Seven Eight Artists.



*Mr. Kennedy's appearance is made possible, in part,
by the American Guild of Organists Clearwater Chapter.
Accommodation and hospitality for Mr. Kennedy
is provided by the American Guild of Organists Tampa Chapter.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ATTENDEES

COVID-19 has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization and is known to be extremely contagious. The virus is believed to spread from person-to-person contact and/or by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, and/or through the air. People can be infected and show no symptoms and therefore spread the disease. Although it will endeavor to apply all reasonable health protocols, the Peace Memorial Concert Series cannot guarantee you will not become exposed to or contract COVID-19 while attending one of our performances. Therefore, if you choose to attend our performance, you acknowledge and accept the risk that you may be exposing yourself to and/or increasing your risk of contracting COVID-19, and you release and waive any claim and any right to bring suit against the Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church of Clearwater in Florida and its trustees, agents, employees, or other representatives for any harm, injury or damage arising therefrom.

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