

Rhonda Sider Edgington  
Calvary United Methodist Church, Brownsburg, Indiana  
Sunday, April 27, 2014

Praeludium in d

Johannes Pachelbel  
(1653-1706)

Partita on Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend  
(6 Variations)

Georg Böhm  
(1661-1733)

Concerto in D Minor, BWV  
After the Concerto in D minor, Op. 3, Nr. 11 by Antonio Vivaldi  
I. [Moderato]  
II. Grave  
III. Fuga  
IV. Largo e spiccato  
V. [Allegro]

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

Chorale Prelude on Vater unser im Himmelreich, BuxWV 219

Dieterich Buxtehude  
(1637-1707)

Fantasie in F Major

Johann Gofffried Mützel  
(1728 - 1788 )

INTERMISSION

Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 531

Johann Sebastian Bach

Chorale Prelude on In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr

Heinrich Scheidemann  
(1595-1663)  
Franz Tunder  
(1614-1667)

Praeludium in d

Vincent Lübeck  
(1654-1740)

Organist Rhonda Sider Edgington is a creative and eclectic musician, with a diverse repertoire and wide range of musical interests. Often commended for her innovative programming, imaginative use of registrations, and exciting playing, Rhonda feels equally at home playing small mechanical-action instruments as well as large Romantic or symphonic-style organs.

Having spent seven years working and studying in Bremen, Germany (originally with a Fulbright scholarship to study with Prof. Harald Vogel), Rhonda has acquired an extensive repertoire, from Sweelinck and the music of 17th-century Northern Germany, through music of 19th- and 20th-century France, to the music of today. She has played recitals at venues such as St. Thomas Fifth Avenue in New York City, Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Buffalo, and Fourth Presbyterian and Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, as well as on many historic Arp Schnitger organs in Germany, such as those in Norden, Grasberg, and Weener. She has played at five national conventions of the Organ Historical Society and a regional convention of the American Guild of Organists. She has also been heard on the nationally syndicated radio program "Pipedreams."

Rhonda has worked as a church musician since her student days, and has held jobs in almost every major denomination here in the states, as well as working as a church musician in Germany. As organ teacher, Rhonda was Assistant Professor at Concordia University, River Forest (IL), and Interim Professor of Organ at Houghton College (NY), and now teaches privately. She also enjoys playing the harpsichord, piano, and carillon, and is an avid chamber musician.

Rhonda studied in Germany with Harald Vogel, Hans-Ola Ericsson, and Hans Davidsson, and in the U.S. with Larry Smith, Marilyn Keiser, John Chappell Stowe, Edward Zimmerman, and her father Ronald Sider. She has a Master's degree in Organ from Indiana University, a Bachelor's degree in Piano from Wheaton College (IL), and a Diploma in Organ Performance from the Hochschule für Künste/ University of the Arts in Bremen, Germany, where she was awarded the highest possible grade for her graduation recitals. She helped lead an educational tour for the European chapter of the American Guild of Organists in 2011 to visit organs of Northern Germany, and is currently Dean of the Holland, MI chapter of the AGO.

Rhonda lives with her family in Holland, Michigan, where she is the organist at Hope Church, a staff accompanist at Hope College, Seminary Organist at Western Seminary, and maintains a private studio, while continuing to perform regularly in the U.S. and abroad. Her website <http://rhonda.edgington.info> contains photos and recordings of some of her favorite pipe organs.

## Program Notes – by Rhonda Sider Edgington

The Pachelbel Praeludium that opens our program today is a dramatic, declamatory piece that sounds improvisatory in nature. It begins with a pedal solo, more common amongst the Northern German composers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century than in Central Germany, where Pachelbel lived and composed. It continues with a collection of virtuosic techniques, including arpeggiated chords, echoes with changing manuals, leaping chords, and scales. The improvisatory, dramatic sound of this piece is a natural beginning for a program – and guarantees that the organist is on her toes (so to say...)

Georg Böhm composed a number of partitas (or variation sets) on well-known hymns of his day. This set of six variations shows the French influence in Böhm's style of composition. The famous hymn translator, Catherine Winkworth, translated this German text, Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, into English. Since in Böhm's day, a familiarity of this tune and text would be common knowledge among listeners, the first verse of her translation is included below.

Lord Jesus Christ, be present now,  
Our hearts in true devotion bow,  
Thy Spirit send with grace divine,  
And let Thy truth within us shine.

The observant listener can hear snatches of the tune throughout each variation. Easiest to pick out are the first three notes, in an ascending triad, heard often at the beginning of the movement, and then at varying intervals throughout.

Bach took Concerto Number 3 that Vivaldi originally composed as a concerto grosso for two solo violins, as well as strings and continuo, and arranged it for solo organ. In the opening movement, we can hear the two solo violins, against a plucked string bass accompaniment. The second movement is only three measure long – these powerful, dramatic harmonies lead us into the third movement, a fugue. The fourth movement contains a lyrical and beautiful singing melody, over accompanying chords, and in the final movement, the organist must quickly jump back and forth between manuals, showing aurally and visibly the contrast between the small group of solo instruments, and the larger ensemble.

Buxtehude has written many settings of German chorales of his day – some, like this one, are shorter and simple, taking the listener through just one repetition of the melody. Others are elaborate fantasies, using text painting to depict many different verses of the hymn. This text is the well-known Vater unser (Our Father, who art in heaven). Buxtehude sets this as a beautiful, yet also mournful and pleading cry – using chromaticism in the melody voice, which as the piece nears the end, becomes more dramatic in range and figurations. Here is one translator's version of this hymn text.

Our Father, who from heaven above  
Bids all of us to live in love  
As members of one family  
And pray to you in unity.  
Teach us no thoughtless words to say  
But from our inmost hearts to pray.

Müthel is a little-known contemporary of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. The son of an organist, he studied with Telemann, and was later J. S. Bach's last student, notating a number of the last works for the now-blind composer. He also studied with C.P.E. Bach, and the two eventually became good friends and colleagues. Müthel was a court organist and harpsichordist in the German town of Schwerin, and later moved to Riga, now in Latvia, where he worked as a court and church musician.

That he was highly regarded as a virtuoso player can be seen in this difficult Fantasie, with its pedal solos, many ornaments, and fast-moving scales, arpeggios, and leaps. In spite of the virtuosity, the piece exhibits a calm and galant air, that is in contrast to the intensity and drama of the earlier North German works on the program.

J.S. Bach's mature preludes and fugues are among the best-known of his organ works. However, the preludes and fugues from his younger years, like the one heard today, are not played nearly enough (in my opinion!), and equally well-deserving to be heard and performed. They are often much shorter, more playful in nature, and not as ponderous and complex as the works of his mature years. Frequently they involved pedal solos – perhaps the young Bach liked to show off, or had more time to practice! This Prelude and Fugue opens with a lengthy, robust and energetic pedal solo. The fugue is more dance-like and cheerful, though with a few opportunities for the feet to once again show off. The piece ends with a rather abrupt and almost anti-climatic ending – not a good piece to end a program, however, an opener that makes sure the audience will be awake and ready to listen.

Scheidemann and Tunder have both written beautiful settings of this chorale – In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr. The English translation included here is a literal one, so I include also the German text, if you wish to sing along as I play the hymn tune.

In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr,  
Hilf, daß ich nicht zuschanden werd'  
Noch ewiglich zu Spotte!  
Das bitt' ich dich, erhalte mich  
In deiner Treu', mein Gotte!

In you I have placed my hope, Lord,  
help, so that I may not be ruined  
or forever despised.  
I ask this of you, uphold me  
in your love, my God.

It is interesting to note the differences and similarities between these two settings. Both composers open with a scalar movement from the low registers to high – perhaps evoking the sound of a plaintive cry. I have chosen to keep the Scheidemann setting simple in registrations – using the same sound throughout, while with the Tunder, the registers will vary occasionally, when the section and/or texture changes. Note both composers' use of echo techniques.

Lübeck was organist in the German towns of Stade and later Hamburg, playing at St. Cosmae, and St. Nicolai on some of the great organs of the day, both built by Arp Schnitger – the master organ builder of the North German 17<sup>th</sup> century. In his great Praeludiums, we see all the characteristics of the North German style – long and virtuosic pedal solos (such as this praeludium contains in the first two pages), contrasting sections, containing one or more fugues, as well as free and improvisatory sections, grand stylistic architecture, and a dramatic flair. We will hear a contrast of registers and sounds, as well as varying figures and motives in this concluding piece, along with one of the registers of the organ not yet heard this afternoon.