



Saint Patrick's Church in New Orleans

An Evening of Organ Music in Honour of St. Cecilia

Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Welcome to St. Patrick's Church! We are grateful for your presence here this evening. As a courtesy to your fellow listeners, please silence your mobile telephones. You are kindly requested not to applaud after the music. Thank you!

**The music this evening is offered
to the greater glory of God,
and in thanksgiving for the intercession of Saint Cecilia,
patroness of organists (22 November).**

Those who have been attending this series for several years will remember the oft-repeated assertion that North German organist-composers before Bach favoured fugue subjects with repeated notes. Nowhere is that predilection more obvious than in the fugue of this *praeludium*, whose subject comprises eight notes – seven A's (one with a short trill) and one G-sharp. That Buxtehude is able to craft fine music with this almost absurd theme is no less a testament to his genius than is the brilliant toccata which follows.

Sonata No. 3 in D minor, BWV 527

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

i. *Andante*

ii. *Adagio e dolce*

iii. *Vivace*

Bach wrote the organ sonatas for his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, who in 1746 was appointed organist at the Church of Our Lady in Halle, where several decades earlier the young Handel (a native of Halle) had studied with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow. Sebastian Bach himself had been offered the position upon Zachow's death in 1712, but had not accepted it, because the salary was too meager to support his large family. Although Bach and Handel never met, they both applied to become Buxtehude's successor at St. Mary's in Lübeck; both men declined to pursue their applications upon learning that a requirement was to marry Buxtehude's daughter, a lady some sixteen years their senior!

"Dorian" Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 538

J. S. Bach

This diptych is simply in D minor; there is nothing remotely "Dorian" about it. A nineteenth-century publisher noticed the lack of a key signature (common in Baroque music in D minor, since it saves the trouble of cancelling so many B-flats) and got the wrong end of the stick; the nickname has stuck. The toccata is a perpetual motion piece, and one of the few free organ works in which Bach carefully specified manual changes.

The fugue is a *tour de force* of canonic writing, involving both the subject (a long arch spanning an octave) and a secondary motif (neither a second subject nor a counter-subject). The working out of the counterpoint results in some extraordinary tonal adventures, including one thorny passage which Roger Bullivant accused of "def[y]ing] harmonic analysis."

Adagio for Strings, Opus 11

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

transcribed for organ by William Strickland

And now for something completely different! And yet, perhaps not entirely different, for Barber's famous *Adagio* is in fact a slow-motion fugue – further proof that counterpoint is not academic and boring.

Hymne d'Action de grâces, Te Deum, Opus 5, No. 3

Jean François-Hyacinthe Langlais III
(1907-1991)

Langlais was born and raised in Brittany. Blind from an early age, he studied organ with André Marchal at the *Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles*. His music was strongly influenced by Gregorian chant and by the folk music of his native province. This electrifying setting of the *Te Deum* is the third of *Trois Paraphrases Grégoriennes*, written before Langlais was appointed Franck's third successor at the Basilique Sainte-Clothilde.