

Program Notes



Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643)



This evening's program could rightly be labeled "eclectic" as we survey organ music from 17th century Italy to 20th century African American composers. Throughout the history of organ music innovation and preservation have ensured its longevity.

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) was a pioneering performer, composer, and teacher in the early 17th century. He had two approaches to composing toccatas: either in the form of dazzling displays of passage work or entirely slow and sustained, as in several of his toccatas written for the Elevation in the Mass. The showier variety of his toccatas were usually secular pieces, and may be more appropriately played on harpsichord.

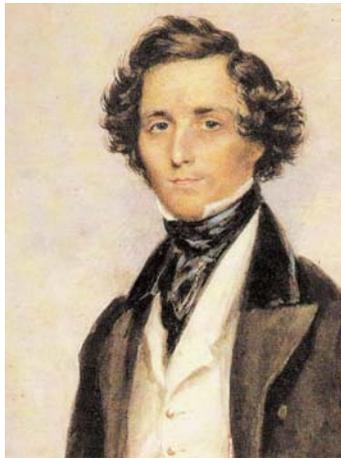
Toccata Ottava has all of the ingredients of Frescobaldi's style. Melodic motives are imitated, worked through a phrase, and clear cadences delineate sections. Flexible tempo is required of the performer so that the music sounds more improvised rather than notated. Frescobaldi's style is known to have influenced Froberger, Purcell, Pachelbel, and Bach. The nature of these toccatas, with their multiple sections and improvisatory character, also influenced the German Baroque technique *stylus fantasticus*.





Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), though not widely traveled, was certainly worldly educated. He took a keen interest in foreign music and incorporated these styles into his own music. Bach's **Concerto BWV 594** is an arrangement of Vivaldi's Concerto Op. 7 No. 5 for violin and bass continuo, RV 208. The Bach/Vivaldi arrangements likely date between 1714 and 1717, when Bach was in one of his strongest Italian phases. General features Bach adapted from Vivaldi include the unifying use of motivic work, the motoric rhythmic character, the modulation schemes and the principle of solo–tutti contrast as means of formal articulation; the influence may be seen in Bach's Toccata in F, BWV 540.



Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

The music of **Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)** is often paired with Bach works because of Bach's great influence on his music. Mendelssohn was a strong advocate for Bach's music, and accomplished monumental efforts to spread awareness of Bach's music to 19th century audiences.

The form of Prelude and Fugue reached its zenith with Bach, but successive composers such as Mendelssohn cast a more chromatic flavor to this form, shaded through the lens of romanticism. **Prelude and Fugue in G** from Op. 37 was written between 1836-37. The prelude is characterized by a gentle them flowing in a 6/8 meter. This pastorale-sounding piece employs

three voices of the manuals winding tenderly and quietly around one another while the pedals add a discrete cushion.

The Fugue is cast in 4/2 time, a comparative oddity of ta meter rarely found in music of Mendelssohn's day, but found much more often in earlier Baroque music upon which Mendelssohn was basing his efforts. Its firm, square subject is proffered by the pedal voice and then tried out in turn by three upper voices.



Udine Smith Moore (1905-1989)

Last month (February) was Black History Month, during which the music of African American composers is featured among programs and church services. Two pieces from the *African-American Organ Music Anthology* display the influence of western form (i.e., variations treating a hymntune) as well as modern treatments of harmony and rhythm.

Udine Smith Moore (1905-1989) graduated from Fisk University (1926) with highest honors and received a MM degree at Columbia University. She pursued additional study at the Julliard School, the Eastman School, and the Manhattan School of Music. From 1927-1972 she served on the music faculty of Virginia State University in Petersburg. She received honorary doctorates from Virginia State University (1972) as well as Indiana University (1976) in Bloomington. Although she wrote for organ, piano, voice, flute, and chamber ensemble, Moore is primarily known for her choral compositions. *Variations on Nettleton* (1976) was commissioned for the graduate recital of a Virginia State University organ student.

Thomas H. Kerr (1915-1988), native of Baltimore, served on the music faculty of Howard University as Professor of Piano (1943-76). The *Procession of the Gargoyles* is extracted from Kerr's *Suite Sebastienne* (1974), an eight-movement work written for the dedication of the organ at Plymouth Congregation Church in Washington, DC. Based on an original theme, the suite is cyclical in form.



After visits through 17th century Italy, 18th & 19th century Germany, 20th century United States, we return to the music of the great master who has no equal in the craft of contrapuntal composition.

The exuberant **Toccata** and the restrained **Fugue in F (BWV 540)** make a strongly contrasting combination. Two opening canonic sections, one in the tonic and one in the dominant, are answered by brilliant pedal cadenzas. Following the opening canons, a new theme is drawn from an ascending arpeggiated figure on a triad which is followed by chords on the second and third beats. Neapolitan sixth chords bring a surprise element to the harmony several times. The fugue is in the old *ricercar* style, and Bach's dignified contrapuntal mastery is constantly exhibited in the double fugue.

JOHN KEVIN LINKER

A native of Princeton, Illinois, John received a Bachelor of Music degree from Northern Illinois University (DeKalb) in 1997 where he studied organ with Robert Reeves and Richard Hoskins, and a Master of Music degree from the Chicago Musical College (Roosevelt University) in 2003, an organ and harpsichord student of David Schrader. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Cincinnati (College-Conservatory of Music) where he is an organ student of Roberta Gary. At CCM Linker has served as staff accompanist for the University Men's Chorus, and has performed with the CCM Chorale, CCM Chamber Singers, and as organ soloist with the CCM Philharmonic. Linker was first place winner in the annual Strader Organ Competition at CCM in 2004.

Since 2001 Linker has been Organist/Choirmaster of the Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal) in Lexington, Kentucky, where he leads a vibrant choir program of professional and volunteer singers of trebles and adults. In addition to the usual rigorous rehearsal and service schedule, the Choir has performed in concert numerous masterworks, including Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem*, Op. 9, J S Bach, *Magnificat in D*, BWV 243, Leonard Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms*, Mozart, *Requiem*, K 626, and Benjamin Britten, *Rejoice in the Lamb*. National and international tours also occupy much of the Choir's time, and under Linker's leadership the choir has honored four English Cathedral residency invitations, (Gloucester Cathedral, 2003; Lichfield Cathedral, 2006; Durham Cathedral 2006; Ely Cathedral 2009). The Choir has also made many stateside tours including Atlanta, Chicago, Washington DC, New York, and all around Kentucky.

In addition to church work, Linker keeps busy as a recitalist and chamber musician, making numerous tours in the United States and abroad. He is an active member of the Association of Anglican Musicians, the American Guild of Organists (former Dean of the Lexington Chapter), and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity.

Linker is married to Lexington native Molly McCann Linker, and both are proud guardians to two lively felines, Nigel and Pierre, and a porch cat, Tom. www.johnlinker.com