

**PROGRAM FOR ST MATTHIAS CHURCH
MINOCQUA, WISCONSIN**

4 MAY 2008

4:00 PM RECITAL, 5:00PM EVENSONG

JOHN KEVIN LINKER, ORGANIST

Felix MENDELSSOHN (1804-1847)

Sonate III, Op 65, No 3 (1844)

- I. Con moto maestoso
- II. Andante tranquillo

Dieterich BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707)

Magnificat primi toni, BuxVW 203

François COUPERIN (1668-1733)

Kyrie eleison from *Mass for the Convents*

- I. Plein jeu
- II. Fugue sur la Trompette
- III. Récit de Chromhorne
- IV. Trio à 2 dessus de Chromhorne et la basse de Tierce
- V. Dialogue sur la Trompette du Grand Clavier, et sur la Montre, le Bourdon et le Nazard du Positiv

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)

Canzona, BWV 588

Pièce d'Orgue, BWV 572

Charles-Marie WIDOR (1844-1937)

Symphonie gothique, Op. 70 (1895)

- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Allegro

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Fugue I on *B-A-C-H*, Op. 60

PROGRAM NOTES



FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1804-1847)

Almost every person in contemporary society is familiar with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. That was not the case in the early 19th century during the first half of Felix Mendelssohn's life. Mendelssohn, a famous musician and conductor in his own time, is who to thank for sparking the "Bach revival" of the 19th century. In entertaining his own interest in Bach's work, Mendelssohn organized and conducted a performance of St Matthew Passion in March 1829 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the work's first performance, thus generating enthusiasm in Bach's music that has trickled down to our generation.

Mendelssohn was born in Germany but found much fame as an organist and conductor in his adopted home of England. He would often perform very long recitals, and there is a popular story of a performance at St Paul's Cathedral that went so long the vergers ordered the organ pumper to leave the bellows, causing a confusing and abrupt conclusion to the recital. A particular London publisher was aware of Mendelssohn's great following and commissioned him to write some organ works. Within a year's time Mendelssohn produced his Six Sonatas, opus 65.

Mendelssohn's Six Sonatas for Organ appeared in print in London, Leipzig, Milan, and Paris in September 1845. The Third Sonata heard today begins with a most noble processional march. In the ensuing fugue Mendelssohn interweaves the sombre tune of Martin Luther's great chorale *Aus tiefer Not* (a paraphrase of Psalm 130: From deepest woe I cry to thee, Hymn 151). The march returns triumphantly in response.

The second movement bespeaks a quiet calm with Mendelssohn's trademark luscious harmonies. Mendelssohn takes the art of exquisite counterpoint first established by the great master himself and delivers it to us through refined Romantic chromaticism.



DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707)

Born in Denmark, Dieterich Buxtehude had the usual musical upbringing of first studying with his father, and in 1668 moved to Germany to take the post of organist at the Marienkirche in Lübeck. Buxtehude's fame spread as he expanded the Abendmusiken Concerts at the Marienkirche established by his predecessor Franz Tunder. Buxtehude's choral music exists today in greater quantity than his organ music, likely because he improvised on the organ for the services, and anything he committed to paper was for pedagogical purposes or for singers & instrumentalists.

Buxtehude was widely known as a popular teacher, and indeed he influenced the young Johann Sebastian Bach. The virtuosic passagework and equally demanding pedal solos that were part of Buxtehude's style, and the improvisatory brilliance of such contemporaries as Walther and Böhm, together with a deepening knowledge of form gained from studying Corelli, Frescobaldi, and Vivaldi, helped inspire the young Bach to devise his early works with unmatched virtuosity, unity, and depth.

The *Magnificat primi toni* depicts the verses of the Magnificat by dramatically contrasting sections. At times a stagnant reciting tone is heard in the upper voice representing the plainchant, and at other times the very mood of the music evokes the character of a particular verse. As Buxtehude did not write registrations in the score, today's performers can only speculate what sounds Buxtehude may have envisioned, allowing for great freedom in registration.

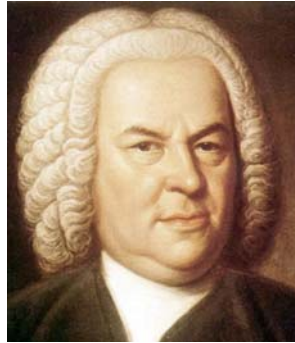


FRANÇOIS COUPERIN (1668-1733)

By the time François Couperin composed his organ masses, alternatim treatment of the Ordinary (i.e., the choir and organ alternately singing/playing verses of the chant) had long been a tradition of the French Roman Catholic Church. The two organ masses that Couperin composed (*Messe pour les paroisses* and *Messe pour les convents*) were his first published compositions (1690). He was organist at Ste Gervais in Paris and was one of the first organists for the Royal chapel of Louis XIV at Versailles.

That only two organ masses were published by Couperin attests to the fact that organists in France customarily improvised music during the mass. That tradition had long preceded Couperin and is still in existence today. The two published organ masses give a glimpse to what the music being improvised at the time may have been like in the 17th century. The versets in the published organ masses often were titles describing the registrations to be used (also registers commonly found on French Baroque organs) such as *Récit de Chromhone*, *Dialogue sur la Voix*

humaine, and so on. The chants are not always clearly detectable in the organ versets. Just as in Buxtehude's music mentioned above, some versets simply reflect the character of the text rather than quote the chant literally. Such as the case with the movements of the Kyrie heard today. The chant is never quoted literally, but after just having heard the chant sung, one might imagine the hints of the chant in the organ response.



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Canzona, BWV 588 is representative of Bach's early works for the organ, and displays a complete master of the art of counterpoint at an early age. The *Canzona* form was already ancient when Bach came across it in Gabrieli and had originally been choral (the instrumental offspring of the vocal French chanson), sometimes accompanied by instruments. In a typical *canzona* the same theme is treated fugally in duple rhythm and then, after a short transition, in triple. It remained for Bach to add a chromatic counter theme and by this addition give to an old form a profound expressivity that is creative and fresh.

Bach's reason for composing the *Fantasia in G Major (Pièce d'Orgue)* BWV 572 may probably never be discerned, and the work stands unique in his output and uniquely mysterious. In texture and temper its three sections could hardly differ more strikingly from each other, yet in conception they are clearly one. Further, although the work is in the major mode, it conveys such a sense of grief mixed with resignation – especially in the middle part, where five fugal voices interweave in unparalleled serenity and majesty – that one wonders if Bach wrote it just after the sudden death of his first wife. Whatever the truth may be, few works by any master reveal their consummate beauty more slowly or make greater demands on the listener. The title *Pièce d'Orgue* was adopted by Kenneth Gilbert and the editors of the New Bach Edition (NBA) in 1954, published by Bärenreiter, as a more appropriate reflection of the characteristically French ornamentation and tempo indications in certain sources of BWV 572.

In France during the mid 19th century a particular organ builder in by the name of Aristide Cavallé-Coll, often in collaboration with organist César Franck, developed a style of organ building that embodied lush symphonic sounds, a departure from the somewhat “top heavy” brilliance of organs of previous generations. The ability of these instruments to play a wide variety of dynamics kindled the development of the symphonic school of organ playing and

composition in France, chiefly thanks to an organist and entrepreneur-organ builder at the height of the industrial revolution.



ARISTIDE CAVAILLÉ-COLL (1811-1899)

Enter Charles-Marie Widor, hailing from Lyons and showing remarkable promise at a young age. M. Cavaillé-Coll introduced Widor to Jacques Lemmens, the famous teacher at Brussels Conservatoire, a “descendent” of Bach’s pupils. After Widor made remarkable progress, he was appointed organiste-titulaire (principal organist) of Saint-Sulpice in Paris succeeding Léfèbure-Wely, in 1869 at the young age of 24. It must have been a good job as Widor remained there for 64 years!

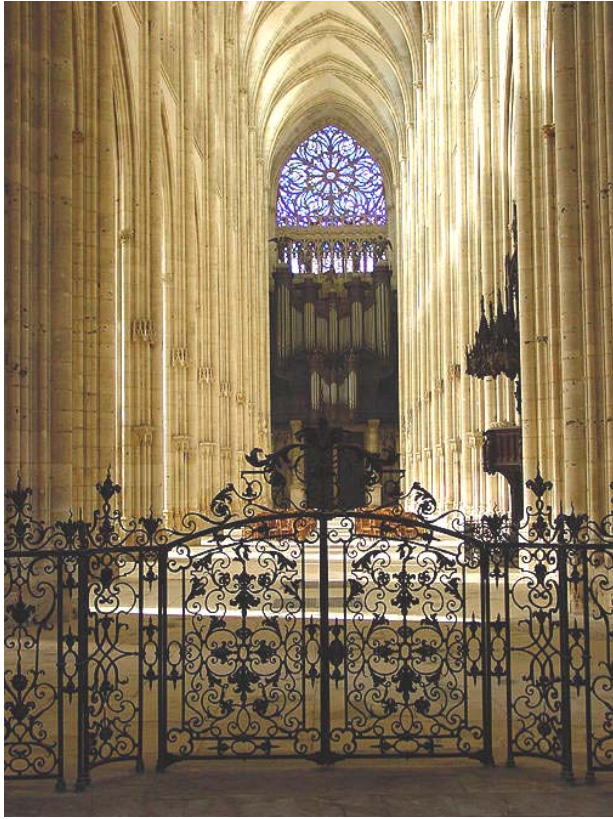


Widor at the monumental Cavaillé-Coll organ,
St Sulpice, Paris



Console of the Cavaillé-Coll organ,
St Sulpice, Paris

Widor, inspired by Cavaillé-Coll’s instruments, composed no fewer than 10 organ symphonies. *Symphonie gothique* is unique among them in that it is dedicated not to a person, but to a building, the soaring gothic structure of the Church of St Ouen in Rouen. This imposing edifice, begun in 1319 and bearing the name of a seventh-century bishop, and its superb Cavaillé-Coll organ were the objects of Widor’s greatest admiration. Of the organ, which Widor inaugurated in 1890, he liked to say, “There is some Michelangelo in this organ.” *Symphonie gothique* is in fact Widor’s ninth symphony, but he once stated that he should not allow it to be called a “ninth” out of respect to Beethoven.



Nave of St Ouen, Rouen



Cavaillé-Coll organ in St Ouen, Rouen

Of the first movement, musicologist Alfred Riemenschneider states: “The persistence of a flowing theme in eighth-notes with a chord theme as a countersubject, gives the impression of a desire to establish firmly the Gothique principles, such as the arch and flying buttress....” Émil Rupp, a friend and early writer on Widor’s music, suggests that the first movement represents the desolation and comfortless darkness that covered the world before the birth of Christ, which is then celebrated in the last two movements with the introduction of the Gregorian chant Introit antiphon for Christmas day, “Puer natus est.”

AD TERTIAM MISSAM. IN DIE.

Intr.
7.
P

U-er * ná-tus est nó-bis, et fi-li-us dá-tus est
 nó-bis : cú-jus impé-ri-um super hú-me-rum é-
 jus : et vocá-bi-tur nó-men é- jus, má-gni consí-
 li- i Ange-lus. *Ps.* Can-tá-te Dó-mi-no cánti-cum nó-
 vum : * qui- a mi-rabí-li-a fé- cit. Gló-ri-a Pá-tri.
 E u o u a e.

Introit for Christmas Day, "Puer natus est" ("A Child is born for us")

The **second movement** purportedly brings the listener inside the church. Riemenschneider describes it as "a rare movement with a spiritual content so chaste and pure that involuntarily the atmosphere of prayer and incense suggests itself."

The fugal **third movement** is at once brilliant and majestic. Riemenschneider describes this movement "in the tempo of a gigue or scherzo portrays the pomp of some grand-fete day when the splendour of the parades asserts itself." Towards the middle of the movement, the pedal introduces a slightly modified initial phrase of "Puer natus est" in solemn juxtaposition to the exuberant 6/8 lilt of the contrapuntal upper voices.

The fourth movement is entirely given over to the development of the plainsong melody in a theme, five variations, three of which are canonic, and a free-style finale. Again, Riemenschneider's analysis: "Thus one set of variations or choral preludes in various moods follows another, as if to portray the different parts of a service at the cathedral, until the entrance of a toccata-like allegro which designates the sortie at the close of the service. This allegro works up to a superb climax over the hymn and at the close dies away to a tranquil section, as if in benediction."



CHARLES-MARIE WIDOR (1844-1937)



ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Like so many eccentric artists, German composer Robert Schumann spent much of his life questioning his own sanity. Indeed his life was filled with melodrama. The emotional high points were periods in which he was most compositionally productive, and the times of depression saw very little flowing from his compositional pen.

During the winter of 1845 Schumann was able break one particular bout of depression by delving into the study of counterpoint, and together with his wife Clara began contrapuntal composition exercises. Schumann had a fixation on works of J S Bach, and possibly suffered an “anxiety of influence” of sorts with Bach, a similar relationship that symphonic composers after Beethoven had with their master on a pedestal. Considering Schumann’s admiration for Bach, is only fitting that his only pieces he composed for the organ are six fugues on the name B-A-C-H. In the German musical alphabet, B-flat is called “B”; A-natural is common to our “A”, as is C-natural. B-natural, however, is called “H”. Countless composers have written pieces (fugues in particular) based on this motive of B-flat, A, C, B-natural, or “B-A-C-H”, of course in reverence to the great master Johann Sebastian Bach.

Prior to composing the *Six Fugues*, however, Schumann rented a pedal piano to attach to his grand piano so that he may practice the pedals and become more acquainted with organ technique. The popularity of the pedal piano was fleeting, as it was primarily a home practice instrument for organists, and very little literature was specifically written for the instrument. Schumann was intrigued enough with the instrument to compose his *Studies*, opus 56 and *Sketches*, opus 58 for this instrument, and it is apparent that Schumann hoped the pedal piano would enjoy a longer period of popularity than it did. The advent of automatic winding for church organs soon outlined the demise of the pedal piano.

The *Sechs Fugen über den Namen BACH*, opus 60, are in homage to J S Bach, and mark the pinnacle of Schumann's contrapuntal writing. The two fugues performed today are very different, though based on the same subject. *Fugue I* is marked by a slow tempo, and the given the chromatic nature of the subject (clearly audible from the first measure) invites luscious harmonic development. Schumann creatively achieves a natural crescendo throughout by elevation of pitch register. Virtuoso octave pedaling ushers in a stunning deceptive cadence, weaving into the five-bar coda. A tonic pedal point provides gravitational stability through the final chromatic moments of the coda, until contrapuntal salvation is found in the form of a thickly textured B-flat major sonority.

Press release for 4 May 2008 Wisconsin recital

On 4 May 2008 international organ recitalist John Kevin Linker will present an organ recital followed by evensong in St Matthias Church, Minocqua, Wisconsin.

Linker has performed in countless venues throughout the United States and England as solo organist, chamber musician, and accompanist to critical acclaim. He is the organist and choirmaster of the historic Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Lexington, Kentucky where he leads a vibrant choir program for children and adults, a group which also makes frequent tours including four English cathedral invitations.

Linker's program on 4 May will include works by Buxtehude, Bach, Couperin, Mendelssohn, and Widor. Linker will also be organist for the office of evensong that follows, which will include original organ improvisations.

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.

In 2001 Linker was appointed 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. The choir maintains a rigorous rehearsal and service schedule, and sings two major concerts annually. Recent major works performed by the Choir include Maurice Duruflé, Requiem, Op. 9, J S Bach, Magnificat in D, BWV 243, Leonard Bernstein, Chichester Psalms, and Mozart, Requiem, K 626. The Choir has made two international tours under Linker's leadership, singing in Gloucester Cathedral in 2003 and in Lichfield and Durham Cathedrals in 2006. The Choir is scheduled to make appearances in New York in 2008 and Ely Cathedral (England) in 2009.

In addition to church work, Linker is increasingly busy as a recitalist and chamber musician. Linker is a past Dean of the Lexington Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and currently serves in the capacity of Registrar. Other recent projects include the forming of a new professional choir in Lexington known as the Lexington Bach Choir, for which Linker serves as Assistant Artistic Director.

For a full listing of John's professional engagements and Good Shepherd Choir's activities, please visit: www.johnlinker.com.

St Matthias organ specification:

Swell

8 Gemshorn
8 Koppel Flute
4 Koppel Flute
2 Principal
1 1/3 Nazat
1 3/5 Terz

Great

8 Koppel Flute 8
4 Principal
4 Gemshorn
2 2/3 Nazat
2 Blocke flute
II Mixtur
8 Rohr Schalmei

Pedal

16 Subbass
8 Rausch Bass
8 Gedackt Flute
4 Principal
2 Gemshorn
8 Rohr Schalmei
4 Rohr Schalmei

We have no pistons or swell/crescendo box.

Our Pipe Organ: A BRIEF HISTORY

The original organ of 2 manuals and full pedal board, was begun in the Fall of 1972 in the shop of Ulm Orgelwerke, Howard Nolte, owner, located at rural Belle Plaine, MN.

The original design was intended to be a House Organ, and the work was begun and under the direction of one employee; Ron Black, who was full time with the company.

After a year or so of construction on a part-time basis, Mr. Black decided not to continue on the project himself, so arrangements were made to have others work on it as well. Mr. Nolte began on the voicing, as well as supervising other details of the construction.

During the Spring of 1974, contact was made with the personnel of the Baroque Music Festival, which had an annual gathering in Eagle River, WI and arrangements were made to bring the organ to this week-long event, so that it would be available for at least 2 concerts scheduled for later in the week; one at the Eagle River Hockey Arena, and the second at the Catholic Church in Rhinelander. The organ was hauled in a Pick-up Camper, unloaded inside the Arena, re-assembled, tuned and made ready for rehearsals. Many comments were made about having a real pipe organ for such an event.

One of the directors of this event inquired whether this same organ could be made available for a Full-length performance of Handel's Messiah, scheduled for later Fall of the same year, to be done by the Janesville Area Choral Union, which would be performed in a large auditorium there. After some negotiating, the owner decided that it could be available, if some of the expenses were covered, and assistance offered to place it in

a suitable stage location for the organist; Tom Sanborn played the organ as 'continuo' for the whole performance. This event was also a success, and favorable comments made regarding the 'real organ'.

Sometime during one of these concerts, a lady by name of Jane Binkley inquired of the instrument and the builder, and whether such an organ could be installed in a small church. We responded to that inquiry in the affirmative, only the Binkley's were living in Kentucky, and Jane and her husband were considering purchase of the organ for their church in their home town. Following a few discussions on this subject, the Binkley's noted that they were nearing retirement age, and were already planning to make their permanent home in Northern Wisconsin, so why not arrange for having an organ such as this installed in their 'second home' church, which was St. Matthais of Minoqua.

Meanwhile, the organ in the Pick-up Camper went other places; among these were: St. John's Benedictine (parish chapel, undercroft) Chapel, at Collegeville, MN; in New Ulm, MN in the residence of Prof. W. Nolte for practice and music lessons.

Then in the Spring of 1977, the organ made a one-week tour through South Dakota, under the sponsorship of the SD Arts Council, and arrangements made by Dr. Harold Krueger, instructor of Brass at Augustana College, and along with Dr. Mary Helen Schmidt, Keyboard instructor, they played Trumpet and Organ duets at these concerts.

There were eight concerts in one week, all in separate locations, which required setting the organ up, and tuning it prior to each concert. The tour covered almost 2000 miles, (remember the open spaces of this state) and all concerts were on time with the exception of one; this was on Sunday AM at Ipswich, SD because the driver forgot to fill the gas tank on Saturday after the concert; then ran out before getting on location! However, the concert began only ½ hour late, and all persons waited patiently while the organ was assembled and tuned before their eyes.

The next summer, this organ again made the trip to Eagle River for the Baroque Music Festival. Again discussions were continued as to whether this organ could be installed into St. Matthias Episcopal Church in near-by Minocqua. The organ was brought to the church for a 'trial concert', but placed on the lower level. Many of the parishioners were very receptive to the idea, and soon thereafter negotiations were completed for the sale and installation; however, that was not completed until the following year. The organ was installed in its original format, along with 12 large Oak pipes made in Milwaukee, as were all the wood pipes in this instrument; the oak Pedal board was also made by the Milwaukee firm, Edmund Sobczyk Organ Supply Co. Most of the Metal pipes were made in Holland by the J. Stinkens Orgelpijpenmakers; Zeist

In 1989, the congregation decided that it would be nice to have additional voices, or added variety of sounds for the organ; our firm offered a set of Reed pipes, named the Dulcian 8', and also a small set of Mutation pipes, named the Terz 1 3/5'. About 2 years later, a remodeling of the church was done and a new floor installed in the balcony, which dictated that the organ be moved off the floor for a few weeks.

Now we have relocated the organ into the new sanctuary. We are also considering the possibility of adding a few more voices (8' principal and strings), and/or other capabilities for the instrument to be able to produce other voices, as well as a number of convenience features, such as Combination (memory) Pistons, and possibly even a self-player system, in which an absent organist could still be heard on the instrument.