



Clifton Cathedral

Organ Music 23rd Sunday to Holy Family 2021

Cathedral Dean | Canon Bosco MacDonald
Head of Music Service | Richard Jeffrey-Gray

Choral Director | John Gibbons
Organist & Junior Choir Director | Stephen Bryant

Sunday 5 September 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (BWV 720)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Praeludium, Fuga and Ciacona in C
(BuxWV 137) Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Luther's *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* is the battle hymn of the Reformation, so you might expect Bach to have made more than one organ arrangement of it. Yet it remained a one-off despite dating from Bach's younger years, with the earliest copy to be found in the Plauener Orgelbuch compiled in 1708.

The *Praeludium, Fuga and Ciacona in C major* for organ begins with the prelude opening for pedals alone, and is expanded upon with the manuals in a free fashion until a fugal section begins. The fugue proper begins directly after the prelude. There is a freely written section after the fugue with a few runs and flourishes before the final chaconne begins.

Sunday 12 September 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Adagio Remo Giazotto (1910-1998)

Organ Voluntary: Toccata in C Jan P. Sweelinck (1562-1621)

The *Adagio in G minor*, often attributed to Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni (1671-1751), is widely familiar through its frequent use in film scores. Actually, this famed work is not by Albinoni at all. It is a mid-20th century creation by Italian musicologist Remo Giazotto, who claimed to have found a fragment of an Albinoni composition in the archives of a German library. From that meagre beginning, Giazotto fleshed out a complete composition according to established Baroque principles of composition, creating something generally in the style of a chaconne, in which a set of repeated pitches underlies an evolving melody. It is a gentle and ethereal work, one that has helped to bring Albinoni back to the musical mainstream; it also served to preserve the name of Giazotto for future generations.

Sweelinck is regarded as a key figure in the development of the North German and Dutch schools of organ playing and composition. Appointed organist of the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam at the age of 18, he was a friend of J. Bull, organist of Antwerp Cathedral. This is one of thirteen toccatas that have survived, and unusually, the whole piece is of one texture.

Sunday 19 September 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten (BWV 642)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Praeludium and Fuga in G minor (BuxWV 149)
Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

The chorale prelude *Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten* is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: Who only lets the good God rule.

The *Praeludium and Fuga in G minor, BuxWV 149* provides a splendid example of the North German organ tradition. It begins with a toccata-like flurry before settling into a sober four-voice fugue that reserves the pedals for the fourth, or lowest, voice. The pedals come into their own in the following Allegro with its almost nonstop running notes punctuated by rhythmic chords in the manuals. Another fugue follows, this time in a stately sarabande-like rhythm and extending far longer than its predecessor. That gradually gives way to figuration and passagework in the keyboards, bringing the whole to a decisive major-mode conclusion with a spray of decorative ornamentation.

Sunday 26 September 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir
Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Organ Voluntary: Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Pachelbel served as organist in Erfurt, Stuttgart, Gotha and finally of St. Sebald in Nürnberg. *Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir* is one of several 2-stave chorale-variations published in 1683 shortly after his wife had died from the plague. The text translates as: Lord God, we all praise you.

The famous *Toccata and Fugue* gives an opportunity to show the organ's full strength, quite literally. The style of the toccata is North German, and although Bach spent most of his life in central Germany, he did spend time in his student days in North Germany, around 1700, and so this work was probably written when Bach was 18 or 19. Bach was called upon to test many new organs, and based on his organ testing reports, the elements he tested for are evident in this piece. It contains many unusual features, but these are exactly what would have been required if Bach had written it in 1703 to show how he tested the new organ at Arnstadt, and indeed this piece with broad appeal could also have served to demonstrate the organ to the townsfolk who had contributed to an expensive instrument.

Sunday 3 October 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Prelude in C major (BWV 547)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Fugue in C major (BWV 547)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

In 1723 Bach moved to Leipzig, where it is thought that he wrote this piece (probably in his first few years there). It is a grand piece with a mighty architectural breadth. The 9/8 time signature of the Prelude almost automatically evokes a rocking motion, which is underlined in the first bar by the clear division into three groups of three notes. From the opening of the Prelude onwards, a world of movement unfolds. The hands start to play faster notes and the pedal enters below with a hop, step and a jump.

In the Fugue, Bach strategically breaks the ongoing movement. Just when the end appears to be in sight, he makes your heart

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jump when the pedal suddenly enters unexpectedly! The fugue theme is heard in a tempo that is twice as slow. Near the end there is a short chromatic ‘faltering’, after which the pedal comes to rest on the home base with a throbbing low C, while the rest of the parts run the final stretch.

Sunday 10 October 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
Johann Gottfried Walter (1684-1748)

Organ Voluntary: Fugue in G minor (BWV 578)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr is an early Lutheran hymn, with text and melody attributed to Nikolaus Decius. It was intended as a German version of the Gloria. Walter, a cousin of J.S.Bach, was an organist in Erfurt and later at the court in Weimar. The text of the chorale translates as: All glory be to God on high.

Fugue in G minor, popularly known as the Little Fugue, was written during Bach’s years at Arnstadt (1703-1707). The fugue’s four-and-a-half bar subject is one of Bach’s most recognisable tunes. The fugue is in four voices, and during the episodes Bach uses one of Corelli’s most famous techniques: imitation between two voices on a semiquaver upbeat figure that first leaps up a fourth and then falls back down one step at a time.

Sunday 17 October 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Prelude: Lobe den Herren
Johann Gottfried Walter (1684-1748)

Organ Voluntary: Von Gott will ich nicht lassen (BWV 658)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Lobe den Herren is a hymn by Joachim Neander. Walter, a cousin of J.S.Bach, was an organist in Erfurt and later at the court in Weimar. The text of the chorale translates as: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.

The Chorale Prelude *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* (From God shall naught divide me) is based on a secular melody familiar to organists through Nicolas Lebègue’s *Une Vierge Pucelle*. This setting by Bach is from *The Eighteen Chorales*, although the title of the collection was not his. These works were revised in Leipzig from earlier Weimar preludes.

Sunday 31 October All Saints

Organ Prelude: Valet will ich dir geben
Georg Friedrich Kaufmann (1679-1735)

Organ Voluntary: Valet will ich dir geben (BWV 735)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Valet will ich dir geben is a Lutheran hymn written by Valerius Herberger in 1613. It is a hymn for the dying, written as a response to the plague in Fraustadt. Kaufmann was organist of Merseburg Cathedral where he commenced composing a cycle of Chorale Preludes for the church year. Sadly, he died of tuberculosis before he could complete this project. The text of the chorale translates as: Farewell I gladly bid thee.

Bach’s setting of *Valet will ich dir geben* is a whodunit for musicologists. Rewriting Bach is nothing new. Bach even rewrote his own music – sometimes for a special occasion and sometimes refining an earlier piece just because his taste had changed. Moreover, we are not always clear about who did what and when to a piece by Bach. There is an early variation (BWV 735a) of this fantasia based on the chorale *Valet will ich dir geben*. The last quarter, in particular, is very different. This early version is noted down in a source dating from before 1710. No sources from Bach’s day have survived that contain the later version, played here today.

Tuesday 2 November

All Souls

Organ Prelude: Alle Menschen müssen sterben (BWV 643)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Fantasia in C minor (BWV 562)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The chorale prelude *Alle Menschen müssen sterben* is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach’s time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: All people must die.

The *Fantasia in C minor* could not be more French-inspired. As a boy, Bach had transcribed Nicolas de Grigny’s *Livre d’Orgue* and the opening idea here is close to that of the first fugue for the Gloria in that volume. Further, the layout of the four manual voices in pairs is similar to other de Grigny movements, where the two hands (each in two parts) are registered differently over a continuo pedal bass. Bach further adds to the illusion with his copious ornamentation.

Sunday 7 November 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time / Remembrance Sunday

Organ Prelude: Elegy George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987)

Organ Voluntary: Toccata (Pièces de Fantaisie, 2me Suite)
Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Thalben-Ball composed organ works, of which the best known is his meditative *Elegy*, which was played at the Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. This piece originated in an improvisation which Thalben-Ball played at the end of a live BBC daily religious service during World War II, when the service finished a couple of minutes earlier than expected. So many listeners to the broadcast telephoned the BBC to ask what the composition was, that he decided to write down his improvisation as well as he could remember it.

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Louis Vierne (1870-1937) was organist of Notre-Dame in Paris from 1900 after serving as Widor's assistant at St. Sulpice from 1892. The 24 *Pièces de Fantaisie* of 1926/27 were originally composed for recital use. This toccata in B flat minor is the final piece in the second suite.

Sunday 14 November 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Organ Voluntary: Prelude in C minor (BWV 549)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Fugue in C minor (BWV 549)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The first version of this *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* dates from 1705 and was actually in D minor. Bach revised it around 1723, early on in his time in Leipzig. The prelude opens with a vigorous pedal solo which is followed by a section where dissonant harmonies are developed in the manuals supported by long low notes in the pedal.

The fugue starts in four voices, entering from highest to lowest. The pedal remains silent during this opening until finally entering triumphantly, adding a fifth voice from bar 40. The piece ends with a short coda which is free and virtuosic in character, recalling the conclusion of the much more famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565).

Sunday 21 November Christ the King

Organ Prelude: Toccata in D minor (BWV 538)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Fugue in D minor (BWV 538)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Undoubtedly, this is one of the finest of Bach's organ works. Influenced by the works of Vivaldi, Bach produced some of his finest music in the prelude and fugue genre – this toccata showing

more virtuosity in the pedal writing than preludes from the same period.

The fugue is long and complex, and involves a rather archaic-sounding subject which prominently features syncopations and an upward leap of a fourth. The strict contrapuntal development is only broken in the final four bars, when a few massive chords bring the piece to an impressive close.

Sunday 28 November Advent Sunday

Organ Prelude: Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott (BWV 602)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Wachet Auf, ruft uns die Stimme (BWV 645)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Today's prelude, *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott*, is a tiny little gem from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) with a wacky twist at the end. The *Orgelbüchlein* dates from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717, and the text of the chorale translates as: Praise be to almighty God.

Wachet Auf, ruft uns die Stimme (Awake the voice calls to us) is the first item in this collection of six pieces transcribed from movements in Bach's cantatas. The cantata is unmistakably influenced by the early galant style, the melody of the obbligato voice being packed with unprepared appoggiaturas. Notice the simplicity of the bass line, which does not share in the motivic material of the upper voice. Also, the counterpoint is exceptionally bald and dissonant, the effect being exacerbated in the organ transcription by the absence of a keyboard continuo.

Sunday 5 December Advent 2

Organ Prelude: Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele
Georg Böhm (1661-1733)

Organ Voluntary: Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottessohn (BWV 601)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Georg Böhm was organist at the Johanniskirche in Luneburg and counts amongst his pupils one Johann Sebastian Bach. *Freu dich sehr* is one of only eight chorale preludes that he wrote and the text of the chorale translates as: Rejoice greatly, O my soul.

This chorale prelude is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: Christ the Lord, the only Son of God, with the Father in eternity, sprung from his heart, as it is written; he is the morning star, his radiance shines brightly for the other stars afar.

Sunday 12 December Advent 3

Organ Prelude: Gottes Sohn ist kommen (BWV 600)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Meine Seele erhebt den Herren (BWV 733)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Gottes Sohn ist kommen is a charming chorale prelude from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: God's son has come to this earth in humble circumstances to free and to deliver us from sin.

Meine Seele erhebt den Herren is an early example of the free chorale fugue and is a fine setting of the tonus peregrinus of the Magnificat. It is largely for manuals only with the pedals coming in with the subject right at the very end of the work.



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Sunday 19 December

Advent 4

Organ Prelude: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
Andreas Nikolaus Vetter (1666-1734)

Organ Voluntary: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (BWV 599)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland is a chorale derived from a chant. It is amongst the simplest of the Lutheran chorales, being framed by an identical first and last line. Andreas Nikolaus Vetter was a pupil of Pachelbel whom he succeeded as organist to the Predigerkirche in Erfurt. This is one of only eleven chorale preludes that he wrote.

This short setting by Bach of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: Come, Saviour of the world, born of a virgin, the whole world marvels that God chose such a birth.

Friday 24 December

Midnight Mass

Organ Voluntary: Final (1re Symphonie) Louis Vierne (1886-1971)

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) was organist of Notre-Dame in Paris from 1900 after serving as Widor's assistant at St. Sulpice from 1892. He was a pupil of Frank and Widor and was noted for his improvising. The exuberance of this Final from his youthful first symphony is tempered with the melancholy of a sensitive musician afflicted with failing eyesight.

Saturday 25 December

Christmas Day

Organ Prelude: Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar (BWV 607)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Voluntary: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (BWV 661)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: From heaven above to earth I come.

This setting of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* by Bach is from the Eighteen Chorales which was a collection of chorale preludes assembled by Bach during the last decade of his life revising earlier works from his time in Weimar. Beneath a three-part keyboard fugue, typical of Bach's large scale free organ fugues, with an angular quaver theme derived from the melody, the cantus firmus (tune) is heard in the pedal; the fugal theme, its counter-subject and their inversions are combined in numerous ways in the course of the piece.

Sunday 26 December

Holy Family

Organ Prelude: Jesu, meine Freude (BWV 610)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Communion: In dulci jubilo (BWV 729)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Jesu, meine Freude is from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) which seems to date from the end of Bach's time in Weimar, 1714-1717. The text of the chorale translates as: Jesus, my joy.

In dulci jubilo is one of several settings of this chorale by Bach. This setting was written by Bach to accompany congregational singing in Arnstadt and is now traditionally performed as the

first Organ Voluntary: at the end of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge. This voluntary was first introduced to the service in 1938 by organ scholar Douglas Guest. The text of the chorale translates as: In sweet rejoicing.