

ORGAN GIANTS

J.S. BACH • MENDELSSOHN • SCHUMANN • BRAHMS • B-A-C-H

William Fox

Sunday 21st February 2021, 4.30 pm

Live-stream only



Complete Organ Works of J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

Recital IV: works for Lent I

Aus Tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir BWV 686

Aus Tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir 687

Both of these pieces emanate from Bach's large-scale organ mass, *Clavier-Übung III*. The text of this hymn is a paraphrase of Psalm 130, 'Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O Lord'. BWV 686 presents an imposing façade of masterly six-part counterpoint, the chorale presented in the pedals. BWV 687 is smaller in scale but equally refined as a manuals-only setting. The subject is founded on the chorale's melodic material, while the hymn also receives a complete rendition in the soprano part.

Sonata IV in E minor 528

Though conceived as a series of technical exercises for his son, Wilhelm Friedemann, the Trio Sonatas are arguably the jewel of Bach's entire organ output. The first movement of Sonata IV is a transcription of a sinfonia from Bach's cantata *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes* (BWV 76), in which a brief *Adagio* introduction gives way to an energetic *Vivace*. A deeply expressive *Andante* follows, before a vivacious and spirited finale.

Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh' darein 741

is a setting of Luther's paraphrase of Psalm 12, in which humanity pleads with God for forgiveness for their sins. This prelude is most likely an early work and is unreserved in its somber defeatism.

Ach Herr, mich armen Sunder 742

The text of this chorale bewails the sins of humanity and the fear of God's punishment. Bach's youthful response in this prelude is both introverted and sincere in its expressivity.

Ach, was ist doch unser Leben 743

This setting is divided into two sections. The first is founded on a falling figuration with a soaring solo embellishment of the chorale. This is



followed by a statement in the pedals accompanied by whirling semiquavers which build in intensity towards the work's conclusion.

O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig

656

From the Leipzig 'Great Eighteen' comes this setting of the 'Agnus Dei'. The piece is comprised of three sections: a tranquil imitative texture, incorporating a soprano cantus firmus of the hymn's melody, followed by a livelier and impassioned delivery as the cries for peace grow louder. Eventually joyous triplets appear, and though a short segment of intense chromaticism could signify the anguish of the crucifixion, peace is assured by the positivity of the final bars.

Notes by Samuel Bristow

William Fox

William Fox has been the Sub-Organist of St Paul's Cathedral, London, since July 2018. He works with the world-famous choir of St Paul's, accompanying and directing the music at services, including services of national significance. He also works as part of the ambitious music outreach programme at the Cathedral and gives recitals throughout the UK and abroad. Since September 2019, William has additionally been a junior fellow at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. William was a chorister at York Minster, before holding organ scholarships at Wells and Hereford Cathedrals. Prior to his appointment at St Paul's, he was organ scholar and an academic scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, from where he graduated with a first class degree in Music. William became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists as a teenager, winning the Turpin and Durrant prize. He has appeared on BBC radio, BBC television, and Classic FM, and worked through much of Europe and in the USA. As a piano accompanist, he is the winner of the 2018 Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Competition.

Next recital | Live-stream only

Sunday 28th February at 4.30 pm

William Fox | Complete Organ Works of J. S. Bach Recital V: works for Lent II

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