

SPENCERVILLE EVENSONG CONCERT SERIES 2017-2018

Reverberations of the Reformation

Organists

Joy-Leilani Garbutt *and* Mark Willey

September 23, 2017

4 p.m.

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SPENCERVILLE EVENSONG CONCERT SERIES *at the*
Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church
16325 New Hampshire Ave ~ Silver Spring, MD 20905

Reverberations of the Reformation

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Mark Willey

Program

Sinfonia (from Cantata *Wir danken dir, Gott*, BWV 29)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)
transcribed Alexandre Guilmant

Tocatta and Fugue in D minor (from 12 Pieces, Op. 59)

Max Reger
(1873-1916)

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BuxWV 184

Dietrich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

Fantasy and Fugue on the theme: B-A-C-H

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)



intermission

Chorale: Jesu, Meine Freude

Tune: Johann Crüger (1598-1662)
Text: Johann Franck (1618-1677)

Fantasia super 'Jesu, Meine Freude', BWV 713

Johann Sebastian Bach

continued...

I. Introduzione (Inferno)

(Quiet, Vox humana)

Ach wie lang, ach lange
ist dem Herzen bange
und verlangt nach dir,
Jesu, meine Freude!

Ah how long, how long
is my heart filled with anxiety
and longing for you,
Jesus, my Joy!

(Allegriissimo furioso)

Mag' die Höll' auch wüten,
Ich kann Trotz ihr bieten,

Let Hell rage
I can resist its pull,

II. Canzone

Weg mit allen Schätzen,
du bist mein Ergötzen,
Jesu, meine Lust.
Weg, ihr eiteln Ehren,
will von euch nicht hören,
bleibt mir unbewußt.
Elend, Not, Kreuz,
Schmach und Tod
soll mich, ob ich viel muß leiden,
nicht von Jesu scheiden.

Away with all treasures
You are my delight,
Jesus, my desire!
Away with empty honours,
I'm not going to listen to you,
remain unknown to me.
Misery, distress, affliction,
Disgrace and Death
even if I must endure much suffering,
I will not be separated from Jesus.

III. Fuga

Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht
dir sei ganz, o Lasterleben,
gute Nacht gegeben.

Good night, pride and splendour,
once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you good night.

Corale

Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,
denn mein Freudenmeister,
Jesus, tritt herein.
Denen, die Gott lieben,
Muß auch ihr Betrübten
lauter Wonne sein.
Duld' ich schon hier
Spott und Hohn,
deunoch bleibst du auch im Leide,
Jesu, meine Freude, Jesu, meine Freude.

Go away, mournful spirits,
for my joyful master,
Jesus, now enters in.
For those who love God
even their afflictions
become blissful.
Even if here I must endure
shame and disgrace,
even in suffering you remain,
Jesus, my Joy, Jesus, my Joy.

The performers

Joy-Leilani Garbutt is the Minister of Music at Christ Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C. She also serves as the organist for the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, and choral accompanist for the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church. Joy-Leilani is pursuing a Ph.D. in musicology, a minor in sacred music, and organ studies with Dr. Jeremy Filsell at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at The Catholic University of America. Her research interests are focused on early 20th-century French organ music by female composers, particularly Joséphine Boulay, Mel Bonis, Nadia Boulanger, Lili Boulanger, and Jeanne Demessieux. She holds a Master of Education degree from The Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Master of Music in organ performance from Northwestern University.

Mark Willey is the Director of Music and Organist here at the Spencerville Adventist Church and the Artistic Director of the Evensong Concert Series, both positions he has held since 1996. Parallel interests in music technology have led to involvement in many recordings as an engineer, producer and editor including projects for the American Guild of Organists, Washington National Cathedral, PRI, and BBC Radio. Mark is Director of Music at Georgetown Presbyterian Church where he is also founding director of *Soul Food*, a concert series for the homeless. He holds degrees in music performance from the Peabody Conservatory (B.M.) and the Eastman School of Music (M.M.).

Joy-Leilani and Mark married in 2012. They live in Silver Spring with their cat, Marie-Madeleine Duruflé and several bicycles.

The music

In 1517 a 34 year old monk named **Martin Luther** published 95 ideas he had for changes he would like to see in his church. Luther was a great lover of music and a skilled composer and poet. Among other things he sought to increase the congregation's participation in the liturgy and add diversity to the literature of texts that would be sung in worship. This required a whole new body of songs and texts be written, a task Luther himself took up. Over the subsequent years, with the participation of other writers and composers, thousands of tunes and texts were written. In the German Lutheran tradition, the practice of hymn singing was supported by choirs, organs, or both. This drove technological developments in organ building and it gave inspiration to composers to create settings of the chorales to introduce and accompany them for the congregation. The simple structure and singable melodies of the chorale tunes proved to be a versatile staple ingredient that composers through the centuries combined with more elaborate contrapuntal techniques to create music to enliven and illuminate the underlying tune and its text. From sacred

cantatas, to shorter choral preludes intended as introductions to the singing, to more elaborate works for organ or orchestra, the humble chorale tunes provided a stable and recognizable thread.

Our concert opens with the Sinfonia from the cantata *Wir danken dir Gott, wir danken* (We thank you God, we thank you), BWV 29 by **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750). The sacred cantatas of Bach serve as the ultimate example of the fruits of the union between the lowly chorale melody and intricate, inventive counterpoint. In the largest and most important churches, a cantor was employed to create and perform music for the church services, basing it upon the readings and themes of the particular occasion. In Bach's hands this duty was elevated to its most elaborate form with multi-movement works for chorus, soloists, and instruments. These cantatas, each lasting 20 to 30 minutes, would be performed in the church service as a musical illumination of the scripture readings. Over 200 of Bach's cantatas survive, though many more were lost to time. Cantata BWV 29 was composed for the occasion of the election of the town council. The text is celebratory, giving thanks to God and asking for His blessing on the good leadership of the newly elected council. For the opening instrumental sinfonia, Bach borrowed a movement from a work he had previously written for solo violin, giving to the organist to play on the manuals and surrounding it with strings and trumpets. The transcription by French composer and organist Alexandre Guilmant, gives all the parts to the solo organ.

Given the important musical role the chorale melodies played in the musical innovations of the Reformation, this afternoon's program, with its tongue twisting title "Reverberations of the Reformation" rightly includes three works based on chorale tunes, but the Reformation's reverberations were felt in other ways through the centuries and two of the major works on the program, those by Franz Liszt and Max Reger, show this influence. A close look at the composers' birth and death dates reveals an almost 75 year gap between the death of J.S. Bach and the birth of the next composer on the program, Franz Liszt. This period was a time of significant musical and technological change during which very little organ music was composed compared to the previous generation.

At the time of his death, Bach was respected as a composer and organist, but his music was regarded as old fashioned and the reputation of his composer sons Carl Philip Emanuel and Wilhelm Friedemann soon overshadowed the elder Bach. Musical tastes had been changing around Sebastian Bach for some time, moving away from elaborate counterpoint to a more galant, open musical texture. The newly developed piano, with its ability to sustain sound and produce shades of dynamic by varying touch, dethroned the organ as queen of the keyboard instruments, capturing the attention of the composers of this time period. Far fewer organs were built and existing instruments often fell into disrepair and out of use. The simpler dance suites and sonatinas of the galant period grew in length, complexity and virtuosity, culminating in the 32 piano sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827),

works that bridged the gap between private, salon performance, and public, concert hall recitals.

Into this world of the piano and the emerging virtuoso was born **Franz Liszt** in 1811. Liszt was a leader of the Romantic movement in music, and the foremost piano virtuoso of his time. A champion of new music and young composers (such as Wagner and Berlioz), he was also deeply committed to preserving the best of the past. Over the course of his career as a touring performer he made unprecedented advances in piano technique and established new heights of expressivity. Some of these breakthroughs were made possible by new developments in piano building which created instruments capable of producing more sound and a much greater dynamic range.

Meanwhile, in the world of organ building, parallel developments were taking place. Organs were being repaired, rebuilt and in many cases enlarged. The symphony orchestra, with its broad, smooth string sound and powerful brass and woodwind divisions inspired organ builders to seek similar characteristics in their instruments. There were many technical challenges to be overcome, as increasing the size of the instrument and the wind pressures of the pipes meant also increasing the weight required to depress the keys, a problem which, if not solved, would make the touch of the organ too heavy to play.

One of the most significant German organ builders of this time, **Friedrich Ladegast** (1818-1905) worked for a time throughout Europe as a journeyman organ builder, including a stint in France with the most famous of symphonic organ builders, **Aristide Cavaillé-Coll** (1811-1899). Both men got their organ building careers off to a quick start, building their first instruments in their early 20s. Cavaillé-Coll, with the help of English inventor Charles Barker, had solved the action weight problem using the Barker Lever Machine, a device that used air from the wind supply of the organ to assist the player in depressing a heavy key weighted with the palettes of many stops drawn. Ladegast took what he learned back to Germany to work towards his own symphonic organ visions. German organ builders developed their own innovative approaches and inventions to achieve their goals. Perhaps the most significant invention was the Rollschweller (roll swell), a wheel turned by the foot of the organist that successively added or, when the direction was reversed, retired the stops of the organ to create a smooth crescendo or decrescendo effect. It made possible dramatic effects that are synonymous with German romantic organ music. The modern crescendo pedals on organs today are the direct descendent of the German Rollschweller.

In 1848 Liszt accepted a position at the court in Weimar, and it was during this time that he became interested in the organ. Weimar had a long tradition of organ music and a strong connection to J.S. Bach. While in Weimar Liszt created piano transcriptions of six of Bach's preludes and fugues, a process which taught him much about writing for the organ. According to one of his colleagues, Liszt was a respectable organist, but he had some

difficulty with the pedals, and some unusual ideas about registration. After hearing a fellow organist play Bach's Toccata and Fugue in d minor on just one manual, as was customary at the time, Liszt remarked "When you are playing on a three-manual instrument, why should the other two manuals be ignored?"

Through his kaleidoscopic colors, dramatic dynamic extremes, and technically innovative music, Liszt has been credited with bringing organ music out of churches and into concert halls. His *Fantasy and Fugue on the Theme B-A-C-H* is certainly an example of this, employing pianistic compositional techniques and elements of virtuosic showmanship. The first version of this piece was initially intended for the inauguration of the Ladegast organ in the Merseburg Cathedral in 1855—the largest instrument in Europe at the time, with four manuals, 81 stops and 5686 pipes—but unfortunately the piece was not completed in time for this event, and was instead premiered the following year.

The use of the letters of Bach's name as a musical theme, played as the pitches B-flat, A, C, B-natural (H in the German musical alphabet), is a compositional device that Bach himself used in the *Art of the Fugue*, Contrapunctus XIV. Some of Bach's children and pupils also experimented with this theme, but it was not until the 19th century that it really gained popularity, due in part to renewed interest in the music of Bach, and a rich harmonic vocabulary that could accommodate such a chromatic theme.

Max Reger (1873-1916) was a towering figure in the German organ world and brought a complexity and formal rigour to his music that harkened back to the music of J.S. Bach. His father was the author of a well-known harmony textbook, and his mother was deeply religious; the influence of each of his parents is notable in Reger's life and work. After visiting Bayreuth in 1888 and seeing two of Wagner's operas, the young Reger told his father that he wanted to become a professional musician. Early on he was enchanted by the music of Liszt, but later came to a systematic study of all of Bach's keyboard music. According to Reger, "Bach is the beginning and end of all music." Along with a deep admiration for Bach's music, Reger shared a devotion to the genre of the Lutheran chorale. For a life-long Catholic, Reger represents somewhat of an ecumenical figure both in his personal life—marrying a Lutheran in a protestant ceremony—and through his oeuvre which includes many chorale based compositions.

Reger was highly respected in many circles, though not beloved by all. One critic proclaimed that the music of Reger was much like his name: it sounded the same forwards and backwards. Dense chromatic harmonies paired with meticulous counterpoint give Reger's music a weighty and monumental quality, and his organ music especially shows the influence of both Bach and Liszt. The *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* are extracted from a set of 12 pieces, published in 1901. Like Liszt, Reger's use of musical forms from the Baroque

era creates a powerful link to the past. But unlike Liszt, Reger carefully follows the formal conventions and compositional rules of counterpoint, while maintaining an improvisational feel complete with virtuosic musical gestures. The style of the Toccata also references the early Baroque *Stylus Fantasticus*, with short contrasting sections. The *Fugue* is textbook in its adherence to the rules of fugal writing, culminating in a grand stretto.

As the 20th century dawned in Germany, no one could know that within the span of 50 short years, Europe would see two World Wars, in large part initiated by Germany. The spirit of invention and innovation that had born such rich cultural fruits would be twisted to create war machines that brought destructive powers never before seen. Along the way, the Nazi party would rise and holocaust would bring national shame to a proud country. In retrospect, we can see the seeds of these events already sprouting at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Intense Nationalistic pride inspired philosophers, artists, poets and composers to depict and define what a true and pure Germany should look and sound like. This pursuit, perhaps innocent in many hands, nevertheless had uglier facets. Into this world, unknowingly moving toward catastrophe, came **Sigfrid Karg-Elert** (1877-1933).

Initially, his relationship with Max Reger, five years his senior, was one of great admiration and even emulation. Karg-Elert saw Reger as a mentor and his early compositions often follow in the footsteps of Reger's, but Karg-Elert soon tired of living in the looming shadow of Reger. Frustrated that his own compositions were misunderstood and infrequently performed compared to the adulation and frequent programming of Reger's works, Karg-Elert took to writing a flurry of letters to his publisher Karl Simon. In 1905 his frustration at full boil, he wrote:

“Dear Mr. Simon, you would just throw up if you lived here. For five weeks, one hasn't heard or seen anything other than Reger, Reger, Reger. 'Reger is the greatest organ virtuoso, greater than Bach', 'Reger is the most tremendous piano titan, much greater than Liszt and Rubinstein put together', 'Reger is the greatest pedagogue'...'Reger is the most tremendous, greatest composer, already today he is head and shoulders above Beethoven–Bach–Brahms'!!! And this is how the nonsense and the common, blind adoration have been going on for five weeks now.” Strangely, Karg-Elert added “Apart from this, I really love Reger!”

It is a fascinating, if sad glimpse into the troubled, jealous soul of Karg-Elert. His intense feelings of being overshadowed by Reger and misunderstood continued and seemed to serve as a motivation for an intense compositional output during the first decade of the 20th century. Desperate to grasp a footing among the musical elite, in 1911, he composed his *Three Symphonic Chorales*, opus 87, casting them in a similar way to the Chorale fantasias

written by Reger a decade earlier. The second of these, the setting of the tune *Jesu, Meine Freude*, played today, seems intended as musical calling card, a magnum opus that should finally get him noticed as a serious composer of virtuoso organ music. He dedicated it to *Karl Straube* (1873-1950), a prominent organ virtuoso and influential champion of the music of Max Reger, perhaps hoping that Straube would perform the work and thus help his name and music to become known. If that was his plan, it doesn't seem to have succeeded as, in a letter from 1916, Karg-Elert laments that none of the great organists of his time were interested in playing his new music, specifically naming Karl Straube.

Into this symphonic chorale, Karg-Elert pours all of his significant skill as a composer and his kaleidoscopic knowledge of harmony. For most in the audience, including the organists, this work is not well known. Like so many of Karg-Elert's works, beside the one or two shorter chorale settings (*Nun danket...* being the most popular) this has suffered the continuing neglect that stemmed from the anti-Karg-elert climate in Germany at the time of its composition. The work is in three main movements with a closing coda that fully states and lushly harmonizes the chorale. At certain entrances of the chorale melody, Karg-Elert has written portions of Johann Franck's hymn text, indicating a kind of programmatic thread. Those texts can be found on the second page of this program.

In preparing this work, I have found the following story sketch illuminating of the journey this piece seems to take. Being a visual person, it even seems that this is music for a silent film, without the images.

Inferno: the hero begins a perilous journey, meeting Bach, who makes frequent enough appearances throughout the piece that we could call him a companion in the adventure. He stumbles, cries out for help and longs for and commits to Jesus as a companion for the journey. Soon enough he encounters and does battle against the fury and tumult of hell, arrives at the end of the movement secure in his ability to resist hell with Jesus as joy and companion.

Canzona: Having survived the fires and temptations of hell our hero enjoys a moment of peace and healing. The bliss of a relationship with Jesus is savored while building strength for the journey to come.

Fuge: Physically refreshed and strengthened by the peaceful episode of the Canzona, the hero sets out on a swashbuckling adventure in 6/8 time rarely stumbling through a long crescendo to a glorious and victorious statement of the complete chorale played by the full forces of the organ.

Joy-Leilani Garbutt and Mark Willey

The Spencerville Evensong Concert Series

The first concerts offered to the community by the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church were in 1986, increasing in numbers in the following years. In 1991, the gift of the Moller pipe organ by Frank and Dolly DeHaan prompted the church congregation to carry out a complete renovation to make the sanctuary a fitting acoustic home for congregational singing, the organ, and for music overall. The congregation and the donors of the organ wished that the beauty of these musical resources should be shared with the community and this desire prompted a formalizing of the Evensong Concert Series, which officially began in the Fall of 1991 with the dedicatory concert of the organ by famed English organist, Simon Preston. In the early seasons, many of the greatest organists of our time played recitals including Peter Hurford, Marie Clair Alain, David Higgs, and Gillian Weir. After the addition of a Steinway D concert grand piano, the scope of the concerts was broadened to include solo pianists, chamber, choral and orchestral music. Now in its 25th official season, the Evensong Concert Series continues to offer great music to the community and to the glory of God.

From the beginning, these concerts have been presented free of charge, making it possible for all persons, no matter their financial station, to experience beautiful music in this beautiful place. This has been made possible, year by year, through the generosity of donors from within the Spencerville church congregation and through the offerings received from those in our concert community. Thank you for helping to make this music possible and for being part of our musical community.