

A Recital of Music for the Epiphany Season



Dr. Brent Nolte, Organ
with instrumentalists
Carl Boeder, Leah Boeder,
Isaiah Horn, Lena Petermann,
Daniel Stelljes, Jonathan Witte

Sunday, January 26, 2014

4:00 PM

Chapel of the Christ
Martin Luther College
New Ulm, Minnesota

Program

Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam, BWV 684 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Herr Christ, der einig Gottessohn G. F. Kauffmann (1679-1735)

Lena Petermann, Oboe

Herr Christ, der einig Gottessohn Melchior Schildt (1592-1667)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, Op. 54/2

Paul Müller-Zürich (1898-1993)

Daniel Stelljes, Jonathan Witte, Trumpet

Isaiah Horn, Euphonium

Carl Boeder, Trombone

Psalm 92, Op. 25

Dennis Janzer (b. 1954)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Naji Hakim (b. 1955)

1. Largo

2. Larghetto

3. Allegro con spirit

Leah Boeder, Flute

Passacaglia for the Epiphany

Brett McKern (b. 1972)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern Op. 40/1 Max Reger (1873-1916)

Dr. Brent Nolte, Organ

Program Notes

Bach's setting of "To Jordan Came the Christ our Lord" places the hymn tune in the tenor range, played by the pedal. Underneath the tune, the left hand performs a "stream" of flowing sixteenth notes, thought to represent the Jordan River. Above the tune, the two voices in the right hand feature variants of a four-note motive (descending fifth, ascending octave, and descending step) which musically forms the sign of the cross.

G. F. Kauffmann was one of the competitors for the position of *Kapellmeister* in Leipzig which was awarded to Bach in 1723. Kauffmann's pieces on this program come from his 1733 publication entitled *Harmonische Seelenlust* (Harmonic Joy for the Soul), a collection of chorale preludes.

Melchior Schildt, a student of Sweelinck, served as organist to the Danish king and at the Marktkirche in Hanover. His five variations on "The Only Son From Heaven" utilize the hymn tune, unelaborated, in long notes. The tune sounds in various registers, accompanied by florid movement which alternates between duple and triple meter.

Paul Müller-Zürich taught music theory at the Conservatory of Zurich. His expressive interpretation of "How Lovely Shines The Morning Star" employs changing meters. It alternates the roles of presenting and accompanying the hymn tune between the organ and the brass throughout the piece.

Dennis Janzer teaches at the University of Miami and at Florida International University. His *Psalm 92* was commissioned for the American Guild of Organists 2010 Region IV Midwinter Conclave. Felix Hell premiered the piece at Christ Episcopal Church in Bradenton, Florida; the stop list of the Letourneau organ there has many similarities to the Chapel of the Christ Schantz organ. The work is a musical expression of the verses of the psalm. In the Revised Common Lectionary, Psalm 92 is assigned for the Eighth Sunday after Epiphany.

¹ It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, ² proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, ³ to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. ⁴ For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. ⁵ How great are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts! ⁶ Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand, ⁷ that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be destroyed forever. ⁸ But you, Lord, are forever exalted. ⁹ For surely your enemies, Lord, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered. ¹⁰ You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured on me. ¹¹ My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes. ¹² The righteous will flourish like a palm tree; they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; ¹³ planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They will still bear fruit in old age; they will stay fresh and green, ¹⁵ proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.

Naji Hakim provides these notes for his setting of "How Lovely Shines:" "These variations were commissioned by Freunde der Musik am Münster, (Friends of Music at the Cathedral) Liebfrauenmünster, Ingolstadt, Germany for oboe and organ. The premiere was given on 14 September 2008 by Georgi Kobulaschwili, oboe and Naji Hakim, organ. The solo part could also be played by violin, flute, clarinet, or soprano saxophone." The music of the three variations paraphrases Philipp Nicolai's melody, and comments on the spirit and characters of selected stanzas from Nicolai's original poem *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* quoted here:

*How beautifully shines the morning star full of grace and truth from the Lord, the sweet root of Jesse!
Because of you, gracious rose of heaven, my heart is sick and smouldering, wounded with love.
Pluck the strings on the harp and let the sweet music resound full of joy,
so that with dear Jesus, my most beautiful bridegroom, in constant love I may make my pilgrimage.*

Brett McKern is Organist and Director of Music at St John's Church, Gordon, Australia. *Passacaglia for the Epiphany* is based on the chant 'Ecce advenit dominator Dominus', the Gregorian Introit for the Feast of the Epiphany. The text for this chant is as follows: *Behold, the Sovereign Lord is coming; kingship, government and power are in his hands. Endow the King with your judgment, O God, and the King's son with your righteousness.* (The music is on the next page.)

Fragments of the chant melody form the basis of most melodies and accompanying voices in McKern's setting. A Baroque dance, the passacaglia is based on a ground (a repeating bass line). While the present work is similar to this, the chant in each section is not necessarily in the bass line. After the introduction, however, the bass line is featured in the next two sections and again towards the end. The work can be considered a contemporary approach to the passacaglia form.

The *Passacaglia* is to be part of a suite, which has yet to be published. The composer granted permission for the performance of the *Passacaglia* on this recital. McKern notes that "as well as Westminster Abbey, the work has now been performed at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney and St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne."

Introit - Epiphany - Extraordinary Form

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Ec - ce ad - ve - nit do - mi - na - tor Do - mi - nus; et re - gnum in ma - nu e - jus,
et po - te - stas, et im - pe - ri - um. De - us, ju - di - ci - um tu - um re - gi - da:
et ju - sti - ti - am tu - am fi - li - o re - gia. Glo - ri - a Pa - tri, et Fi - li - o, et Spi - ri - tu - i San - cto.
Ps.
Sic - ut e - rat in prin - ci - pi - o, et nunc, et sem - per, et in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum. A - men.

In a sense, today's recital comes full circle by beginning with Bach and concluding with Reger. Although a Catholic, Reger wrote 120 pieces based on Lutheran chorales. He valued Bach as the "source of all musical creation," and composed in a contrapuntal manner, although with a decidedly harmonic technique. Educator and philosopher Hermann Nohl felt that Bach and Reger were both composers who were able to use dissonance to reach the depths of emotional expression.

Reger's philosophy that "any chord can follow any other chord" is most evident in the dramatic introduction. The darkness of this brief opening section contrasts the light and joy of the chorale text.

The composition continues with four variations on the hymn tune. The music could be considered programmatic, as the musical character of each variation matches the stanza Reger chose to express. The first two variations present the tune in long notes. The third variation, an adagio, is an ornamented chorale in the tradition of Buxtehude and Bach. The pedal sounds the tune in the energetic fourth variation, initially in leaping octaves.

Reger concludes the composition with a fugue which eventually incorporates the hymn tune in the pedal, and finally in the upper voices of the manuals. A translation of Reger's German for the five stanzas is presented below.

- 1. How beautifully the morning star shines on us, full of grace and truth from the Lord, the sweet root of Jesse. You son of David, of Jacob's line, my king and my bridegroom, have taken over my heart. Lovely, friendly, beautiful and noble, honest, rich in gifts, raised high in splendor.*
- 2. O my pearl and worthy crown, the son of God and Mary, a high-born King! You are the fairest flower of the heart; your sweet Gospel is pure milk and honey. O my blossom, Hosanna! Manna from heaven for us to eat, I cannot forget you.*
- 3. Pour deep into my heart, sacred jasper, noble jewel, the flame of your love. O might it be that I through you am forever a limb of your body! My soul seethes for you, eternal goodness, afire with love, until it finds you.*
- 4. A look of joy comes to me from God, when you regard me with such friendly eyes. Your son has entrusted himself to me. He is my treasure; I am his bride and take great delight in Him. Hurrah! Hurrah! He will give me heavenly life on high; my heart will praise him eternally.*
- 5. Make strings sound sweetly and let the lofty song of praise resound all joyfully: That I may be with Jesus, my wonderful bridegroom, and quiver with constant love. Sing! Leap! Be joyful and triumphant, thank the Lord, great is the King of honor.*

Brent Nolte is adjunct instructor of organ and adjunct brass instrumental teacher at Martin Luther College. He also maintains a private studio of instrumental instruction. Nolte serves as organist at St. John's Lutheran Church in New Ulm, St. John's Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, and Grace Lutheran Church in Le Sueur.

Nolte graduated from DMLC in 1994 with majors in Elementary Education and Secondary Instrumental Music. His service to the church has included Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wisconsin, Peace Lutheran Church, Hartford, Wisconsin, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Michigan, St. Paul's Lutheran School, New Ulm, Minnesota and Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

He received his Master of Music in Organ Performance from Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan and completed the DMA in Organ Performance at the University of Minnesota in 2013. His organ instructors have included Prof. em. Bruce Backer, Dr. Steven Egler, and Dr. Dean Billmeyer. Nolte resides in New Ulm with his wife Laura and their three daughters.

The instrumentalists are students at Martin Luther College.

