MARIE-CLAIRE ALAIN, organ

Tuesday, October 24, 1978
8:00 p.m., at Pilgrim Lutheran Church

RICE UNIVERSITY

Shepherd School of Music

Samuel Jones, Dean
PROGRAM

Toccata in D minor (BuxWV 155)  
Dietrich Buxtehude  
(1637-1707)

Choral "Vater unser im Himmelreich"  
Georg Böhm  
(1661-1733)

Trio-Sonata No. 1 in E flat Major (BWV 525)  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

Concerto in A Minor (Vivaldi)(BWV 593)  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Intermission

Sonate No. 6  
Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

Choral
Fuga
Final

Two Chorales  
"O Lamm Gottes unschuldig" (BWV 656)  
"Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele" (BWV 654)  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565)  
Johann Sebastian Bach

Improvisation (themes by Paul Cooper)

Murtagh/McFarlane Artists Management

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited. We further request audible paging devices not be used during the performance. Doctors on call may make paging arrangements with the ushers.
NOTES

Toccata in D minor

Dietrich Buxtehude

It is always interesting to notice how much J. S. Bach was influenced by the works of Buxtehude. He had certainly heard this Toccata in D minor while being in Lübeck and remembered it afterwards.

Buxtehude, as usual, begins with a Toccata and continues with two Fugues. The style of the Toccata comes back for the final part.

Choral “Vater unser im Himmelreich”

Georg Böhm

“Our Father who art in heaven” – This is an ornamented chorale accompanied in the style of a string orchestra, with detached chords and a “basso ostinato”. J. S. Bach’s Adagio (from Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C Major) recalls this procedure.

Trio Sonata No. 1 in E flat Major

Johann Sebastian Bach

No doubt that the young Wilhelm Friedemann, to whom these Sonatas were dedicated, was an accomplished organist when he finished studying these works. The technical level of the three movements is very high, but the musical content is so beautiful that any organist can enjoy learning such difficult pieces.

The first Allegro is full of rhythm and charm. The Adagio is a little sad, but quite elegant. The final Allegro sounds amusing and brilliant.

Concerto in A minor (Vivaldi)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Under the influence of his cousin Johann Walther, J. S. Bach made an acquaintance with Italian literature and especially with Vivaldi. He was so enthusiastic about this composer that he transcribed 16 of his concertos for the harpsichord, and three more concertos for the organ.

It seems very strange in modern times to make transcriptions, because people of earlier times were not “purists” as we are now. Bach knew very well that it was not sufficient to write down the orchestral parts alone; he really transformed the Concerto for two violins into a new work for the organ, changing ranges, embellishing chords and melodies, and filling in the rests which sounded too empty.

Sonate No. 6

Felix Mendelssohn

Everyone knows about the famous “Bach recital” given by Mendelssohn in Leipzig in 1840. The program of this recital included the chorale “Schmück dich, o liebe Seele” and the “Toccata and Fugue in D minor” among other pieces. It is in the same period of his life that he composed the Six Sonatas, whose first title was “School of organ-playing”. The renewal of interest for the organ and for the improvement of technique is greatly due to his influence.

After the Choral, exposed in a very slow tempo (probably the habit at Leipzig in this period) he composed four variations: the first is a trio, the second uses the chorale with large chords while the pedal in triplets plays an “ostinato”. In the third variation, the theme is in the tenor. The forth variation is a brilliant Toccata.

The Fugue is built in a very severe style, using all of the procedures of the classical Fugue, and referring to Bach’s example.

The Final is a “Romance without words”, soft and sweet, but very elegant.
Two Chorales Johann Sebastian Bach

Excerpts from the “18 Chorales” that were Bach’s last work—It is now proved that the unfinished copy of these chorales is later than the “Art of the Fugue”. They really represent Bach’s testament.

“O stainless Lamb of God” —It was usual in the Lutheran liturgy to repeat the invocation three times. Thus, the Choral is in three sections. Bach then dedicated the first section to God the Father (theme in the soprano), the second section to God the Son (theme in the middle voice) and the third section to the Holy Ghost (theme in the bass). Once more, Bach emphasizes the idea of the Holy Trinity.

“Deck thyself, o my Soul” is the preparation for the Holy Communion, in a mood of prayer and of confidence in God.

Toccata and Fugue in D minor Johann Sebastian Bach

Certainly inspired by the two travels to Lübeck and by the works of Buxtehude, this work of youth is the work of a master. No one can resist the marvelous impulse of this piece, and the atmosphere of improvisation which gives a beautiful feeling of freedom.

Notes provided by Marie-Claire Alain.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, October 25 SHEPHERD BRASS QUINTET

Wednesday, November 1 THE PAILLARD CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, co-sponsored with the Houston Friends of Music, Inc.; admission charged.

Wednesday, November 15 Music from the Shepherd School at 10:00 p.m. on KLEF, 94.5 FM presents selections from the MARIE-CLAIRE ALAIN and SHEPHERD BRASS QUINTET recitals.

Monday, November 20 SHEPHERD SINFONIA, Dr. Samuel Jones, conductor

Tuesday, November 28 WARREN DECK, tuba, and PAUL ELLISON, double bass.

Thursday, November 30 SYZYGY presents a retrospective of chamber music by PAUL COOPER.

All concerts are at 8:00 p.m. in Hamman Hall.

For further information, please call 527-4933.