Senior Recital
Julianne Zhu, organ
7:30pm, Saturday, September 26, 2020

Chaconne in E minor, BuxWV 160          Dieterich Buxtehude (1637 – 1707)
Trio Sonata No. 1 in Eb major, BWV 525       Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)
   1. (Allegro)
   2. Adagio
   3. Allegro

SundayMusic                             Petr Eben (1929 – 2007)
   3. Moto Ostinato

Rubrics, A Liturgical Suite for Organ     Dan Locklair (b. 1949)

Fantasia in G major, BWV 572              J. S. Bach

Intermission

Chorale in E major, FWV 38              César Franck (1822 – 1890)
Suite Gothique, Op. 25               Léon Boëllmann (1862 – 1897)
   3. Prière à Notre-Dame

Symphony for Organ No. 5 in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1    Charles-Marie Widor (1844 – 1937)
   5. Toccata

Live Streaming from Wait Chapel
Chaconne in E minor, BuxWV 160

Dieterich Buxtehude (c.1637–1707), the organist and Werkmeister at Marienkirche (St. Mary's Church) in Lübeck from 1668 to 1707, is one of the most representative figures of North German Baroque music. Abendmusiken, the concert series that he carried out made Marienkirche a famous center for sacred music, attracting numerous musicians including J.S. Bach, who was twenty at the time and walked 250 miles just to hear Buxtehude play.

Chaconne in E minor, one of the three ostinato works Buxtehude composed, is built on a four measure descending bass line. Compared to the other two pieces (Chaconne in E minor and Passacaglia in D minor), Chaconne in E minor treats the ostinato more freely, varying it and dropping it out from time to time, while the manual parts play a series of variations on the opening theme. Organs in Buxtehude’s time would have been tuned to meantone temperament, therefore making the chromaticism and dissonance in this piece particularly prominent, creating harmonic variety and elevating intensity. Such intensity is relieved in the final section, which stylistically is more like a free improvisation, marked by glorious semiquaver figurations.

Trio Sonata No. 1 in E-flat major, BWV 525

Trio sonata was a popular genre of chamber music during the Baroque era. The term “trio” refers to a three-part texture with two melodic instruments and continuo. J.S. Bach transferred this idiom to two manuals and pedal. The collection of six trio sonatas, according to Bach’s first biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel, was written for his son Wilhelm Friedemann as practice music. Theorist A.F.C. Kollmann, an admirer of Bach, described them as “when properly executed, exceed everything else in the art of organ-playing” for their delicacy and beauty.

Many movements of the six trio sonatas are revisions of earlier compositions, and Trio Sonata No. 1 in E-flat major was probably not intended as the first one of the set. The first movement is in ABABA form. It begins with a tonic triadic motive in the left hand, which is later exchanged among all three voices, and its recurrence creates a ritornello-like effect. The second movement opens with a fugal theme, as if the manual parts are engaged in a dialogue. The inversed theme opens the second section which explores through multiple keys and ends with a partial return of the first section, manual parts exchanged. The third movement is formally similar to the second movement: fugal opening of the first section; inversed theme of the second section; closing with a voice-exchanged first section. The fastrunning semiquavers create the spirit of an ecstatic dance.

Sunday Music

Petr Eben

Petr Eben (1929–2007) was born in Žamberk in north-eastern Bohemia. In 1943, despite the family being Catholic, Eben was sent to a concentration camp at Buchenwald because his father was Jewish. His career did not soar until 1989 as he refused to join the Czech Communist Party.

According to Eben, Sunday Music (Nedelní Hubda), formally a symphony for organ, was intended to be “a work of celebration” and the third movement, Moto Ostinato, depicts “the wars and struggles described in the Sermon on the Mount and the Apocalypse wash over humanity.” The opening four bars introduces the ostinato rhythm. Then the theme enters, first in the manual then in the pedal, its eccentricity invoking anxiety and disturbance. The harmony becomes increasing-ly dissonant and unpredictable, while highly chromatic melodies are juxtaposed to the perpetual rhythm. One dramatic turning point arrives as the melody breaks into a continuous string of semiquavers. This section, serving as a transition, is characterized by frequent dynamic and timber changes. Finally, the dissonance and tonal instability accumulated throughout the movement explode into a vigorous roar, bringing back the opening theme. The ending features a chord progression of f–c–E6–A–G–d–G♭6–B–g. Compared to the heavy harmonies in the previous sections, this progression seems exceedingly pure and satisfying to the ears, bringing an end to the chaos.
Rubrics, A Liturgical Suite for Organ

Dan Locklair (b. 1949) is Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence at Wake Forest University. Dr. Locklair’s music is performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. Rubrics (A Liturgical Suite for Organ) was a 1988 commission from the Organ Artists Series of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has been called “one of the most frequently played organ works by an American composer” by The Diapason magazine. The titles of each movement come from the service instructions in The Book of Common Prayer. The fourth movement, “The Peace may be exchanged.”, was played at the funeral service of President Ronald Reagan in 2004. It is a lyrical aria featuring a diapason solo accompanied by strings and double pedal. The melody soars like a prayer for peace.

Fantasia in G major, BWV 572

J. S. Bach

The exact year of composition of BWV 572 is unknown since no autograph survives, but it was most likely written around 1710, during Bach’s time in Weimar. Its alternative title, Pièce d’Orgue, as well as the tempo markings (Très vitément; Gravement; Lentement) suggest a French influence. The three sections, although seemingly sharply separated, are bound by common features.

The first section is in the style of a toccata, with energetic tripartite figurations that develop into scales. The majestic second section is characterized by its dense texture and an improvisatory style. The abundance of seventh and ninth chords again indicates a French harmonic influence. The BB in measure 94, which exceeds the range of most organs, also suggests that the piece could have been written as a test piece for a French one since some French organs have a low BB. Most remarkable is the use of suspensions, which organize individual lines into a continuous unity, like a ladder swirling skyward. This glorious ascension is then halted by a fully-diminished chord in C#, a tritone away from the tonic. The third section resembles the first stylistically, but with much more intensity. It features broken chords in the manual and a punctuated descending chromatic scale in the pedal, as if tumbling down into hell. The dissonance reaches its peak until it resolves to the dominant, the soul rises again and enters heaven in a blaze of light as the tonic is finally struck.

Chorale in E major, FWV 38

César Franck

César Franck (1822–90) was born in present-day Belgium and taken to Paris by his father. He entered Paris Conservatoire in 1837 but withdrew four years later and then made a living through teaching, accompanying, and composing. The turning point came when he was appointed the organist at Sainte-Clotilde in 1858, where a Cavaillé-Coll organ was installed and inspired him tremendously. He remained on that post until his death.

Trois Chorales were composed in his final year when his physical state deteriorated rapidly after a head injury. Chorale in E major is essentially in the form of a theme and variations but has the spirit of a fantasy, featuring continual modulations and frequent alternations between manuals. The first variation starts as a beautiful cantabile with running sixteenth notes. It closes just like the opening chorale and after a loud maestoso passage, the second variation starts in E minor. Phrases are repeated with increasingly dissonant harmonies and tension builds up. The third variation is the darkness before the dawn. It breaks into a string of triplets and introduces the final section, a victorious outburst, and the full principal melody is stated for the first time. This is perhaps what Franck meant when he said the piece “creates itself” and “grows out of the work.”

Suite Gothique, Op. 25

Léon Boëllmann

Léon Boëllmann (1862–97), born in Alsace, entered the Ecole Niedermeyer at age nine where he studied with Gustave Lefèvre and Eugène Gigout while winning numerous prizes. In 1881, Boëllmann became the sub-organist of the St. incend-de-Paul and in 1887, the titular organist. He died very young of tuberculosis, cutting short a promising career Suite Gothique is Boëllmann’s most famous work. The pious and tranquil nature of Prière à Notre-Dame is distinctively different from the other three movements. It is a prayer to the Virgin Mary, poignant yet dignified, and as I play it, I cannot help but think about the tragic fire of 15 April 2019.
The last movement of Suite Gothique, Toccata, falls under a popular style in French Romantic organ music, originated by Charles-Marie Widor.

**Symphony for Organ No. 5, Op. 42 No. 1**  
Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937) was born to a family of organ-builders. Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, the celebrated organ-builder and pioneer of the symphonic organs, was a family friend and nominated Widor for the post of organist at St. Sulpice in Paris. It was a provisional one-year appointment; Widor remained there for sixty-four years.

Inspired by Cavaillé-Coll’s organs, Widor invented the organ symphony, which is more like sonata but termed “symphony” for its orchestral use of organ timbres. He wrote ten such symphonies and No. 5 is the most famous. The fifth movement, often referred to as “Widor’s Toccata,” is one of the most played organ pieces. It is a brilliant burst of joy, with a scale melody in the pedal and frantic ever-going staccato arpeggios and block chords in the manuals, which grow to a monumental climax in the most exuberant manner. Widor once said that “organ playing is the manifestation of a will filled with a vision of eternity.” *The Toccata* is that vision.

**About the Performer**

Julianne Zhu is a senior double majoring in Music Performance and Psychology and minoring in German. Born and raised in Shanghai, China, she had never touched nor seen an organ until 2017. She is currently studying with Susan Bates and has also studied briefly with Daniel Gottfried. This program, originally conceived for last April, is built around a theme of fortitude.