

Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series

Erica Johnson, Organist

Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 3pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music presents

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.

Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.

Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

- Praeludium in G Minor, BuxWV 148** **Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)**
- Chorale Partita on “Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend”** **Georg Böhm (1661-1733)**
Six Variations
- Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541** **J. S. Bach (1685-1750)**
- Chorales for Lent** **J. S. Bach**
An Wasserflüssen Babylon, BWV 653b
Wo soll ich fliehen hin, BWV 646
Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott, BWV 721
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist, BWV 671
- Air with Variations** **Elizabeth Stirling (1819-1895)**
Three Variations
- Six Pieces for Organ**..... **Erzsébet Szönyi (1924-2019)**
Praeambulum
Bölcsödal (Lullaby)
Elszálló Harmóniák (Floating Harmonies)
Majdnem Tánc (Almost Dancing)

Program Notes

In a somewhat unintentional fashion, the tonality of G provides a solid foundation for this afternoon's program: the bookends of the majestic, yet somber beginning of Buxtehude's *G Minor Praeludium* contrasts with Szönyi's modal conclusion to a G major chord, while the *Prelude and Fugue in G Major* followed by the first and fourth Lenten chorales of Bach anchor us further to this "tender and rustic" key area as described by Schubart in 1806. Schubart continues that "every gentle and peaceful emotion of the heart is correctly expressed by this key" (G major), whereas "discontent and uneasiness" are suggested in the key of G minor. This range of emotions, the distinctive genres and textures of today's repertoire, and the amazing palette of tonal color available on PLU's Fritts organ generate a fascinating musical journey of depth and expression.

Buxtehude's *Praeludium in G Minor, BuxWV 148*, follows the somewhat typical structure of his other Praeludia, juxtaposing free with fugal sections, rhapsodic passagework with strict counterpoint, and the derivation of fugal subjects sequentially throughout the piece. The first fugue is singular for its descending leap of a diminished seventh and casts the subject in repeated notes, a favorite technique of the North German school. The final free section here is replaced with a ciaccona, grown organically out of the bass line found at the end of the preceding second fugue. Buxtehude unifies the sectional work through motivic repetition and development, with each movement contributing more and more to the "discontent" and gravity of this expressive work.

As the organist of St. John's Church in Lüneburg and harpsichordist of the Hamburg opera orchestra, **Georg Böhm** enjoyed access to the latest European musical fashions of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Moreover, Böhm's close ties to the secular and sacred musical sphere of Hamburg provided the young J.S. Bach, his probable apprentice, with unique opportunities to learn from old masters and new publications. The art of setting a chorale in a variety of techniques was a fascination for Böhm, who combines North German counterpoint together with French stylized dance in this chorale partita, "Lord Jesus, be present now." Bach is known to have copied at least one of Böhm's chorale partitas for inclusion in his brother's keyboard anthologies and to have emulated Böhm's genre in his own early chorale settings.

In June of 1733 Bach copied out his previously-composed *Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541*, for his son's (Wilhelm Friedemann's) application for the music director position at St. Sophia's church in Dresden. It is believed that W. F. Bach played this piece as part of his audition process when he wished to demonstrate his mastery of the instrument. It is fascinating to speculate whether Wilhelm Friedemann knew this piece well in advance, whether he had known it for years, or if it had been a teaching piece that Bach used to instruct his sons in organ playing and composition. The lively prelude draws on the popular ritornello form espoused by Albinoni and begins with an elaborate passagio imitative of a string soloist. The repeated notes of the fugue subject are reminiscent of Buxtehude's fugal technique in *BuxWV 148*, albeit not as a fuga pathetica but as a charming Italianate approach to the genre.

The *Chorales for Lent* reflect the themes of penance and reflection so frequently emphasized during the Lenten season. Within these four settings we hear a wide spectrum of compositional techniques, from sweetness of harmony to intense chromaticism, from simple repeated chords to dense five-voice counterpoint, and from cantata chorale to ornamented chorale. Böhm may have been the catalyst for the introduction of Bach to the elder Reincken at St. Catherine's Church in Hamburg in 1720, when Bach improvised extensively on the chorale "By the Rivers of Babylon." Bach's double-pedal setting heard this afternoon may indeed have been an homage to Reincken, whose own setting of the chorale Bach knew intimately. The trio texture of "Where Should I Flee" is found often in the cantatas and combines basso continuo, an obbligato solo instrument, and the chorale. Here the chorale sounds in the pedal and therefore is stated simply, without ornament, while the other voices create a two-voice counterpoint derived from the chorale melody. Only one copy of "Have Mercy, O Lord" survives through J. G. Walther's collection, which has raised questions about its attribution to Bach's oeuvre due to the unique texture. The repeated notes simulate the organ's Tremulant, or vibrato effect, and is not uncommon in the North German repertoire. Bach would have known of Scheidt's "imitation tremula organi" and possibly other examples of Kuhnau and Handel. Set as a lament in F-sharp minor, this beautiful effect matches the expression of the text exquisitely. As part of the large organ Mass found in the *Clavierübung III*, "O Lord God, Holy Ghost" comprises the final section of the three-part Kyrie. Bach composes it in "stile antico" as a four-part fugue in the manual over the plainsong cantus firmus found in the pedal. The text of this penitential chorale reads: "O Lord God, Holy Ghost, comfort and strengthen us in faith most of all that at the final end we may depart joyfully out of this misery – have mercy." After the stately fugue Bach launches a surprise and gut-wrenching *durrezze*-style chromaticism to illustrate the misery and the petition for final salvation indicated in the text.

As a departure from the aesthetic of the North and Central German schools of the 17th and 18th centuries, we will now hear from two female composers for the organ. Known for her mastery of organ technique and her interpretation of Bach's keyboard music, **Elizabeth Stirling** pursued a career in organ performance and church music during a period when few women chose such a path. She studied at the Royal Academy of Music and also at Oxford and must have spent entire days at the console, preparing her three-hour long organ recitals. Stirling's delightful piece presents the *Air* in ABA form with eight-measure

phrases followed by three variations, each setting the melody in a different voice before restating the *Air* to conclude. Her love of 18th century repertoire is clear in her contrapuntal treatment of the melody and florid approach to figuration. In moving from the 19th to the 20th century we encounter **Erzsébet Szönyi** as a similarly outstanding composer and advocate for the organ. After studying in her native Hungary, Szönyi continued her education in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen. Her collaboration with Zoltán Kodály is evident in much of her work and is particularly clear in the pieces on this program. The interval of the perfect fourth generates much of the melodic and harmonic material in addition to gestures from Hungarian folk music. Each movement offers a stylistic miniature for the organ, whether as a fugato, trio, dance, or meditative cluster.

- Erica Johnson

About the Performer

Erica Johnson, DMA, is a Boston-based organist and clavichordist. She recently joined the faculty of Wellesley College as College Organist and Instructor in Organ. As an organ instructor she has taught at the UNC School of the Arts, Salem College, the Oberlin Conservatory, in addition to designing and teaching the graduate course in organ literature at the Eastman School of Music from 2006-2008. In the realm of church music Erica served as Organ Scholar at the Memorial Church of Harvard University from 1999-2001, and she currently is the Director of Liturgy and Music at Sacred Heart Parish in Newton Centre, MA. Erica is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory, Oberlin College, New England Conservatory, and the Eastman School of Music. With a generous grant from the Beebe Fund for Musicians, she enjoyed two years of further study at the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen, Germany, where she learned from the instruments in Ostfriesland, particularly those of Schnitger. Her years in Germany yielded two honors: the 2004 International Arp Schnitger Prize awarded by the Arp Schnitger Gesellschaft for promoting the legacy of the organ builder, and also two performance awards during the 2002 Norddeutsche Rundfunk (NDR) Musikpreis, held on the instruments in Basedow, Stade-St. Wilhadi, and Norden-Ludgerikirche. In October 2017 she was featured as a performer during the Göteborg International Organ Academy in Gothenburg, Sweden.

About the Organ Builder

Since the founding of the company in 1979, Paul Fritts & Co. Organ Builders has built forty-four instruments. The team has devoted considerable time researching and practicing the techniques developed by the finest organ builders working in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Mexico, France and the United States with an emphasis on the so-called Golden Age period of organ building. Organ building during these early times reached a very high level of sophistication, particularly when we study techniques of pipe construction and voicing. Elegant speech combined with a full yet sweet and colorful tone captivates the listener. The research also includes careful observations of the acoustical properties of the rooms in which the pipes speak; a key aspect to consider as one evaluates the sound of an organ. These experiences, together with the extensive expertise found within the workshop, contribute to each new project. The primary mission is to craft instruments that today's players and audiences will love and cherish.

Recent work has reflected a desire to expand further the range of the instruments while maintaining high musical standards within a meaningful and useful style. For the most part, this involves building larger, more expansive projects with additional features that broaden the musical scope of the organs. Among the most recently completed installations is a seventy-stop organ in the Basilica on the campus of The University of Notre Dame in Indiana. This is the firm's largest instrument to date with four manuals housed within a highly decorated case that includes a Rückpositive case cantilevered from the gallery rail similar to the organ here at PLU.

There are currently eight craftsmen working with Paul in the workshop. All design work along with the construction of the thousands of components (except for the electric blowers, electronic pre-set systems and small hardware items) is done in-house. The establishment of the pipe shop in 1983 completed this vision for the company, enabling personalized attention to the most important parts of the organs. The workshop itself, located just ten blocks from PLU, features a beautiful timber-framed structure with sufficient height and space for even the largest organs to be assembled prior to dismantling and shipment.

Want to skip the line at the door?

Tickets are available for purchase online up to two hours prior to each ticketed performance.

Visit www.plu.edu/music/calendar prior to any event to purchase your tickets ahead of time.

Simply select the event you'd like to attend and click "Buy Tickets" to visit the event ticketing page on www.eventbrite.com.

Spring Events

at Pacific Lutheran University

ALL MUSIC EVENTS ARE IN MARY BAKER RUSSELL MUSIC CENTER, LAGERQUIST CONCERT HALL AT 8PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

FEBRUARY

- 1 Saturday, February, 3pm**
WSMTA 4-Piano Benefit Concert, free admission
- 7 Friday, 8pm**
Choir of the West Tour Homecoming Concert
- 8 Saturday, 5:30pm**
Northwest High School Honor Jazz Band. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center, free admission
- 21 Friday, 8pm**
Showcase Concert, free admission
- 26 Wednesday, 8pm**
Artist Series: Duo Powers-de la Torre, free admission
- 29 Saturday, 8pm**
Choral Union. Tickets: \$17 general admission; \$10 Senior Citizen (60+), Military, Alumni, PLU Community; \$5 PLU students & 18 and under

MARCH

- 1 Sunday, 3pm**
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Erica Johnson, Organist
Tickets: \$17 general admission; \$10 Senior Citizen (60+), Military, Alumni, PLU Community; \$5 PLU students & 18 and under
- 2 Monday, 7:15pm**
Kelly Kuo Voice Masterclass. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission
- 7 Saturday, 4pm**
Washington Day of Percussion & Pan Celebration, free admission
- 10 Tuesday, 8pm**
University Symphony Orchestra: Student Showcase
- 15 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble, free admission
- 16 Monday, 8pm**
University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 18 Friday, 8pm**
Regency Series: Regency Jazz Ensemble. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall.
- 19 Thursday, 3:40pm**
Nicole Molumby Flute Masterclass. MBR 334, free admission
- 19 Thursday, 8pm**
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission
- 27 Friday, 7:30pm**
PLU Guitar Festival & NW Guitar Festival: Guest Artist Concert
- 28 Saturday, 8pm**
PLU Guitar Festival & NW Guitar Festival: Guest Artist Concert
- 29 Sunday, 1pm**
PLU Guitar Festival & NW Guitar Festival: Ensembles & Orchestras
- 31 Tuesday, 8pm**
Artist Series: Rhyne, Flute; Case, Harp; & Takekawa, Percussion

APRIL

- 3 Friday and 4 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Opera Scenes. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 5 Sunday, 3pm**
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Zhen Piao, Organist
Tickets: \$17 general admission; \$10 Senior Citizen (60+), Military, Alumni, PLU Community; \$5 PLU students & 18 and under
- 6 Monday, 8pm**
University Symphony Orchestra: KammerMusikeren
- 8 Wednesday, 8pm**
Taipei Male Singers, free admission
- 13 Monday**
Knights Chorus & Normanna Male Chorus. Scandinavian Cultural Center, Anderson University Center, free admission
- 17 Friday, 4pm**
Tim McAllister Saxophone Masterclass. MBR 322, free admission
- 19 Sunday, 3pm**
Choir of the West
- 22 Wednesday, 8pm**
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission

APRIL, Cont.

- 26 Sunday, 3pm**
Regency Series: Lyric Brass Quintet
- 26 Sunday, 8pm**
Regency Series: Regency String Trio with William Chapman Nyaho, Piano
- 27 Monday, 6:30pm**
PLUtonic/HERmonic, MBR Amphitheater, free admission
- 28 Tuesday, 5:30pm**
Saxophone Quartets & Jazz Combos. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission
- 28 Tuesday, 8pm**
University Chorale Tour Homecoming Concert
- 30 Thursday, 8pm**
University Singers & Knights Chorus, free admission

MAY

- 1 Friday, 6pm**
Artist Series: Amity Trio. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall.
- 1 Friday, 8pm**
Steel Band & Percussion Ensembles, free admission
- 2 Saturday, 3pm**
Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, free admission
- 2 Saturday, 8pm**
PLU Ringers, free admission
- 3 Sunday, 3pm**
Woodwind Students Recital, free admission
- 3 Sunday, 4:30pm**
Brass Students Recital, free admission
- 5 Tuesday, 8pm**
University Symphony Orchestra
- 7 Thursday, 8pm**
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission
- 9 Saturday, 8pm**
Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission
- 10 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 11 Monday, 8pm**
Piano Ensemble, free admission
- 12 Tuesday, 6pm**
Chamber Music Kaleidoscope, free admission
- 12 Tuesday, 8pm**
String Kaleidoscope, free admission
- 13 Wednesday, 8pm**
University Concert Band with Camas Wind Quintet, free admission
- 14 Thursday, 8pm**
University Jazz Ensemble with Guest Artist Greg Gisbert, Trumpet. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 16 Saturday, 2pm**
South Sound Saxophone Ensemble, free admission
- 16 Saturday, 3pm**
Consonare Amici. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission
- 17 Sunday, 3pm**
Composers Forum, free admission
- 17 Sunday, 5:30pm**
Songwriters Workshop. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission

To Order Tickets:

On Line: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/pacific-lutheran-university-8233304504>
At the Concert: Lobby Desk in Mary Baker Russell Music Center

CONCERTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
All ticket sales are final - no refunds

MUSIC EVENT TICKET PRICES: \$10 GENERAL; \$5 SENIOR CITIZENS (60+), MILITARY, PLU ALUMNI, & PLU COMMUNITY; FREE TO PLU STUDENTS & 18 AND UNDER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. CONCERTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND SOME CONCERTS MAY BE ADDED AFTER PUBLICATION.
<http://www.plu.edu/music/calendar/> (updated February 20, 2020)