

TRINITY CHURCH, MOORESTOWN
LENTEN NOONTIME ORGAN RECITAL SERIES

Wednesday, March 20, at 12:00 noon

Eric Plutz

University Organist, Princeton University

PROGRAM

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 533 ("Cathedral") Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

While no autographed manuscript of this work survives, scholars believe it to be written before 1705. The Prelude contains characteristics of North German Baroque composition (sectional and improvisational), perhaps due to Bach's visit to Lübeck to attend Buxtehude's Abendmusiken concerts in 1705-6. He was to have been gone four weeks, but extended his leave from Arnstadt by three months, which upset the church council. The work was given the name "Cathedral" by 20th Century editors to differentiate it from the much larger, later, and more mature Prelude and Fugue in e minor, BWV 548, called "Wedge."

Prelude and Fugue in A Major, BWV 536 Johann Sebastian Bach

Here, also, no autographed manuscript exists. While relatively brief, there is a lyricism about the Prelude, and a sunny character, similar to other preludes in bright major keys. Arpeggios permeate the work, offset by long sequences of suspensions. About the Fugue, Peter Williams states in his book, *The Organ Music of J. S. Bach*:

"This is an original fugal conception, with a smooth, effortless counterpoint treating the subject almost as an ostinato, an impression heightened by the fugue's rhythm and persistent eight-bar phrase. Although the work's invention has been called 'minimal,' merely fourteen variations on a subject, many players agree with Spitta [Bach's first biographer] in hearing a 'wonderful intensity' in the sustained three-and four-part counterpoint, where entries have a more singing quality than even those of BWV 535 or 578."

Also contained within this fugue is stretto. Normally, when writing a fugue, the composer finishes each statement of the subject before the next statement enters. In stretto, the succeeding subject enters before the preceding subject is finished - a challenge for any composer to accomplish while maintaining proper harmony.

Continued...

Chaconne (from Partita No. 2 for Violin, BWV 1004)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Transcribed for organ by Henri Messerer (1838-1923)

A Chaconne is a dance in triple meter, with its roots in Latin America. Once established in France, however, it developed into a slower dance that was more dignified, often for instruments alone. It was in this form that it spread to Germany and England, and composers found great potential for expression in the form. Early on it was linked with the Saraband, and therefore has the distinct characteristic of an accent on the second beat of the triple meter.

Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental Chaconne in d minor, the fifth and final movement of BWV 1004, is longer than the four previous movements combined. Regarded as one of the masterpieces of the violin repertoire, it has garnered the respect and admiration of composers and performers alike. The work is in three sections: d minor, D Major, and d minor. The four-bar theme, revealed at the outset, serves as the impetus for the sixty-four variations that follow. The work has been arranged for a great variety of instruments: 'cello, viola, guitar, full orchestra, and, of course, piano (by Busoni and for left-hand alone by Johannes Brahms), just to name a few. In fact, regarding the Chaconne, Brahms wrote in a letter to Clara Schumann,

“On one stave, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind.”

Henri Messerer (1838-1923) was organist at St. Charles in Marseilles from 1873 until his death. His 1896 transcription adheres to the original in structure and harmony, yet showcases the capabilities of the French Symphonic organ.

- Eric Plutz

SOUP LUNCHEON FOLLOWS

Chicken Tortilla Soup by **Geri Trost**
Black Bean and Corn Soup by **Maris Williams**

Please join us in the Parish Hall after the recital for a homemade soup luncheon.

THE 2024 LENTEN NOONTIME ORGAN RECITAL SERIES

February 21 ~ **Evelyn Larter**

March 6 ~ **Connor Fluharty**

February 28 ~ **Isza Wu**

March 13 ~ **Lawrence DePasquale**

March 20 ~ **Eric Plutz**

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TODAY'S RECITALIST

Eric Plutz is University Organist at Princeton University, where his responsibilities include playing for weekly services at the Chapel, Academic Ceremonies, and solo concerts, as well as accompanying the Chapel Choir in services and concerts. He manages the weekly After Noon Concert Series at the University Chapel, is Lecturer in Music and Instructor of Organ at Princeton University, and maintains a private studio. Also in Princeton, Mr. Plutz is Collaborative Keyboardist for Princeton Pro Musica. In 2016 Mr. Plutz received the Alumni Merit Award from Westminster Choir College. More information is available at www.ericplutz.com.



In celebration of Louis Vierne's 150th birthday in 2020, Eric initiated The Vierne Project: performances of the complete organ symphonies. One of a handful of organists to embark on such a venture, he performed in Beverly Hills (CA), Durham (NC), Minneapolis (MN), Lancaster and Reading (PA), Ithaca (NY), Houston (TX), Evanston (IL), Portland (OR), Olympia (WA), and San Antonio (TX). A CD recording of the symphonies on six different instruments was released on the Affetto label in 2022.

Mr. Plutz's most recent recording, "*B A C H - The Gamut from 'A' to 'G'*," was released on the Affetto label in 2023. Showcasing organ works in A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, the album was recorded on the Mander/Skinner organ in Princeton University Chapel.

As an organ concert soloist, Mr. Plutz, who "performs with gusto, flair, clarity, and strong yet pliant rhythmic control (James Hildreth for *The American Organist*)," has accepted engagements in distinguished locations across the United States and abroad. He has been a featured artist at three Regional Conventions of the American Guild of Organists (2007, 2011, and 2019), the Annual Convention of the Organ Historical Society (2016). His playing has been broadcast on "With Heart and Voice," "Pipedreams," and "the Wanamaker Organ Hour."

Eric has made four solo recordings on the Pro Organo label, www.proorgano.com. *French Trilogy* (on the Æolian-Skinner Organ at Byrnes Auditorium, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC), about which James Reed (*The Diapason*) wrote, "Plutz is a master craftsman... his performances are sensitive, emotional, stunningly accurate, and spectacularly musical... truly a world-class performance by a world-class musician," and *Denver Jubilee* (restored 1938 Kimball Organ of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver, CO), about which David Schwartz (*American Record Guide*) wrote, "...he understands, as would a great orchestrator, how to register the more orchestral side of the instrument..."

Two previous recordings are of the Princeton University Chapel Organ: *Musique Héroïque* and *Carnival*, about which Mr. Hildreth (*TAO*) writes, "Plutz's extraordinary musicianship and dexterous command allow him to perform the most challenging passages (of which there are many!) with apparent ease. He performs the quiet pieces with poetry and grace."

From 2005 to 2020, Mr. Plutz was rehearsal accompanist for the Westminster Symphonic Choir at Westminster Choir College. Additionally, he has worked with many organizations, including The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, National Symphony Orchestra, Choral Arts Society of Washington, and the Cathedral Choral Society (DC). As a teacher, he held the position of Adjunct Assistant Professor of Organ at Westminster Choir College three separate times.

Originally from Rock Island, Illinois, Mr. Plutz earned a Bachelor of Music degree, *magna cum laude*, from Westminster Choir College and a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. Additional study consists of two visits to Europe: in 2005, he studied the complete organ works of César Franck with Marie-Louise Langlais in Paris, and in 2019 he studied the complete organ symphonies of Louis Vierne with Ben van Oosten in The Hague, Netherlands.

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