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Great Falls, Montana  
59405

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WEDNESDAY  
MUSIC  
AT  
NOON (15H)

PROGRAM NOTES  
WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2020  
ORGAN WORKS OF  
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH  
(1685-1750)



Johann Sebastian Bach was better known as a virtuoso organist than as a composer in his day. His sacred music, organ and choral works, and other instrumental music had an enthusiasm and seeming freedom that concealed immense rigor. Bach's use of counterpoint was brilliant and innovative, and the immense complexities of his compositional style -- which often included religious and numerological symbols that seem to fit perfectly together in a profound puzzle of special codes -- still amaze musicians today. Many consider him the greatest composer of all time.

Bach was born in Eisenach in 1685. He was taught to play the violin and harpsichord by his father, Johann Ambrosius, a court trumpeter in the service of the Duke of Eisenach. Young Johann was not yet ten when his father died, leaving him orphaned. He was taken in by his recently married oldest brother, Johann Christoph, who lived in Ohrdruf. Because of his excellent singing voice, Bach attained a position at the Michaelis monastery at Lüneberg in 1700. His voice changed a short while later, but he stayed on as an instrumentalist. After taking a short-lived post in Weimar in 1703 as a violinist, Bach became organist at the Neue Kirche in Arnstadt (1703-1707). His relationship with the church council was tenuous as the young musician often shirked his responsibilities, preferring to practice the organ. One account describes a four-month leave granted Bach, to travel to Lubeck where he would familiarize himself with the music of Dietrich Buxtehude. He returned to Arnstadt long after he was expected and much to the dismay of the council. He then briefly served at St. Blasius in Mühlhausen as organist, beginning in June 1707, and married his cousin, Maria Barbara Bach, that fall. Bach composed his famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565) and his first cantatas while in Mühlhausen, but quickly outgrew the musical resources of the town. He next took a post for the Duke of Sachsen-Weimar in 1708, serving as court organist and playing in the orchestra, eventually becoming its leader in 1714. He wrote many organ compositions during this period, including his *Orgel-Büchlein*. Owing to politics between the Duke and his officials, Bach left Weimar and secured a post in December 1717 as Kapellmeister at Cöthen. In 1720, Bach's wife suddenly died, leaving him with four children (three others had died in infancy). A short while later, he met his second wife, soprano Anna Magdalena Wilcke, whom he married in December 1721. She would bear 13 children, though only five would survive childhood. The six Brandenburg Concertos (BWV 1046-51), among many other secular works, date from his Cöthen years. Bach became Kantor of the Thomas School in Leipzig in May 1723 and held the post until his death. It was in Leipzig that he composed the bulk of his religious and secular cantatas. Bach eventually became dissatisfied with this post, not only because of its

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meager financial rewards, but also because of onerous duties and inadequate facilities. Thus, he took on other projects, chief among which was the directorship of the city's Collegium Musicum, an ensemble of professional and amateur musicians who gave weekly concerts, in 1729. He also became music director at the Dresden Court in 1736, in the service of Frederick Augustus II; though his duties were vague and apparently few, they allowed him freedom to compose what he wanted. Bach began making trips to Berlin in the 1740s, not least because his son Carl Philipp Emanuel served as a court musician there. In May 1747, the composer was warmly received by King Frederick II of Prussia, for whom he wrote the gloriously abstruse Musical Offering (BWV 1079). Among Bach's last works was his 1749 Mass in B minor. Besieged by diabetes, he died on July 28, 1750.

*Artist Biography by Robert Cummings*

### Fantasia and Fugue in A Minor

BWV 561

The fantasia opens with a dark, burbling little figure that soon becomes a brighter, jagged theme presented as a single line (as if played by unaccompanied violin), gradually picking up a broad, chordal accompaniment as the melodic figurations become more complex. This flows straight into the three-voice fugue, the melody built from falling two-note units that Bach stacks one after the other to give the impression of ascent, before veering off into more noodling material. The structure is rather open by fugal standards, further suggesting that this was originally a violin showpiece. Midway through the fugue, the music descends into material reminiscent of the beginning of the fantasia, then settles into a stately chordal sequence, followed by more of the burbling material and its toccata-like elaboration. Effectively, the fugue has been interrupted by a return of the fantasia, which concludes the work in a combination of downward-rushing cascades of notes and sonorous chords.

*Description by James Reel*

### The Eight Little Preludes and Fugues

|                                   |         |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Prelude and Fugue in C Major      | BWV 553 |
| Prelude and Fugue in D Minor      | BWV 554 |
| Prelude and Fugue in E Minor      | BWV 555 |
| Prelude and Fugue in F Major      | BWV 556 |
| Prelude and Fugue in G Major      | BWV 557 |
| Prelude and Fugue in G Minor      | BWV 558 |
| Prelude and Fugue in A Minor      | BWV 559 |
| Prelude and Fugue in B Flat Major | BWV 560 |

The "Eight Little Preludes and Fugues" (BWV 553-560) have been a cornerstone of organists' repertoire for many years. They are among the first works encountered by most organists during their training, and for many, they continue to remain an essential part of the service-playing repertoire. These pieces came to be played often on the organ in the 19th and 20th centuries and were especially useful as teaching pieces. These eight pairs of preludes and fugues are essential material for any organist. They are frequently used as prelude music for church services across a broad range of denominations, but particularly in Lutheran churches.

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Nun danket alle Gott

From BWV 79

(Now Thank We All Our God)

"Now thank we all our God" is a popular Christian hymn translated from the German "Nun danket alle Gott", written c. 1636 by Protestant minister Martin Rinkart. The melody is attributed to Johann Crüger, who wrote it c. 1647.

Martin Rinkart was a Lutheran minister who came to Eilenburg, Saxony at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. The walled city of Eilenburg became the refuge for political and military fugitives, but the result was overcrowding, and deadly pestilence and famine. Armies overran it three times. The Rinkart home was a refuge for the victims, even though he was often hard-pressed to provide for his own family. During the height of a severe plague in 1637, Rinkart was the only surviving pastor in Eilenburg, conducting as many as 50 funerals in a day. He performed more than 4000 funerals in that year, including that of his wife.

*Nun danket alle Gott  
mit Herzen, Mund und Händen,  
der große Dinge tut  
an uns und allen Enden,  
der uns von Mutterleib  
und Kindesbeinen an  
unzählig viel zu gut  
bis hierher hat getan.*

*Der ewig reiche Gott  
woll uns in unserm Leben  
ein immer fröhlich Herz  
und edlen Frieden geben,  
und uns in seiner Gnad  
erhalten fort und fort,  
und uns aus aller Not  
erlösen hier und dort.*

*Lob, Ehr und Preis sei Gott,  
dem Vater und dem Sohne,  
und Gott, dem Heiligen Geist  
im höchsten Himmelsthronen,  
ihm, dem dreieinen Gott,  
wie es im Anfang war  
und ist und bleiben wird  
so jetzt und immerdar.*

Now thank we all our God,  
with heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done,  
in Whom this world rejoices;  
Who from our mothers' arms  
has blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace,  
and guide us when perplexed;  
And free us from all ills,  
in this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given;  
The Son and Him Who reigns  
with Them in highest Heaven;  
The one eternal God,  
whom earth and Heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

Virgil Fox (1912-1980) has arranged here a stirring and powerful organ arrangement of Bach's setting of the famous hymn, as originally presented by Bach in his Cantata No. 79.

There is an urban legend relayed that Virgil Fox conveyed to one audience that this piece is, in modern terminology, written for an emergent, precocious teenage bass player, a hurdy-gurdy, and three very inebriated trumpeters stumbling home from their night of carousing.

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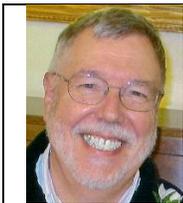
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### THE HOLTkamp ORGAN - 1982

The construction of the organ at New Hope Lutheran began in October 1981. It was completely built in Cleveland Ohio, at the Holtkamp Organ Factory. The firm has been producing instruments of various design and sizes continuously since 1855. And was built to the specifications of the third generation at the time owner, Walter Holtkamp. Eight months later the organ was completed, tested and packaged for shipping to Great Falls. It arrived on June 9, 1982. In two weeks, it was completely assembled and ready for voicing. The formal dedication of the instrument took place October 3, 1982, with John C. Ellis, University Organist for the University of Montana in Missoula.

### THE ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

|                     |                    |                    |     |                    |     |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
|                     | Keyaction          |                    |     | Electropneumatic   |     |
|                     | Stopaction         |                    |     | Electropneumatic   |     |
|                     | Compass of manuals |                    |     | 61 notes           |     |
|                     | Compost of pedal   |                    |     | 32 notes           |     |
| <b>PEDAL ORGAN</b>  |                    | <b>GREAT ORGAN</b> |     | <b>SWELL ORGAN</b> |     |
|                     | Pipes              | Pipes              |     | Pipes              |     |
| 16' Subbass         | 32                 | 8' Principal       | 61  | 8' Copula          | 61  |
| 8' Floten Principal | 32                 | 8' Rohrgedakt      | 61  | 4' Rohrflote       | 61  |
| 4' Coralbass        | 32                 | 4' Principal       | 61  | 1' Larigot         | 61  |
| 16' Fagott          | 32                 | 2' Daublette       | 61  | 3R Sharf           | 183 |
| Great to Pedal      |                    | 4R Mixture         | 244 | 8' Schalmey        | 61  |
| Swell to Pedal      |                    | 8' Trumpet         | 61  |                    |     |
| Swell to Pedal 4'   |                    | Swell to Great     |     |                    |     |



**James Franklin Rickley** (American; b. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 30 September 1948 - )  
Composer, Arranger; University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music Temple  
University, Philadelphia, University of Nevada – Reno; Owner of Publishing Firm  
WayWordBound with supporting branches Avanti Publishing Services and Tonal Function  
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