



ORGAN GIANTS

J.S. BACH • MENDELSSOHN • SCHUMANN • BRAHMS • B-A-C-H

William Fox

Sunday 10th April 2022, 4.30 pm

 **St PAUL'S**
CATHEDRAL

Complete Organ Works of J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

Recital XXIV: works for Palm Sunday

Valet will ich dir geben

BWV 735

Though this chorale melody is now commonly associated with the Palm Sunday hymn 'All glory, laud and honour', its original subject matter is concerned with life after death. The authorship of this fantasia is disputed, though it is likely an early work emanating from Bach's Weimar period or before, indicated by an abundance of decorative figurations which betray the influence of Georg Böhm, Bach's mentor. The manual material for this improvisatory piece is largely founded on the chorale, which also sings through the contrapuntal texture as a poised pedal cantus firmus.

Sonata V in C

529

The *Trio Sonatas*, composed in Leipzig between 1727 – 30 as a series of technical exercises for Bach's son, Wilhelm Friedemann, proved to be among the central jewels of J.S. Bach's output for organ: Johann Nikolaus Forkel, the composer's biographer, states they 'were written when the composer was in his full maturity and can be considered his principal work of this kind'. Perhaps the most substantial of the set, BWV 529 opens with a sparkling *Allegro* incorporating nimble semiquaver passagework and imitation akin to the most radiant Italian chamber music movements. The *Largo* is an elaborate movement of refined delicacy, sometimes heard as a central movement in the *Prelude and Fugue in C* (BWV 545). The final *Allegro* sees an ingenious fugal texture, based on a sprightly motif presented at the outset.

Fugue in G minor

578

originates from Bach's youth in Arnstadt and has been widely known as the 'Little Fugue' to distinguish it from the later *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* (BWV 542). Despite its relative brevity, there is finely-crafted contrapuntal treatment of a lyrically elegant subject, demonstrating Bach's early disciplined command of creative

proportioning. The piece's popularity was elevated due to a twentieth-century orchestration by Leopold Stokowski.

Valet will ich dir geben

736

In contrast to the robust character offered by the more stable contrapuntal texture of BWV 735, the jubilation of this Weimar setting is energised by rhythmic flurries of swirling triplet figurations, which bustle busily above long-breathed pedal cantus firmus statements.

Notes by Samuel Bristow

William Fox

William Fox is currently the Acting Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral, having been Sub-Organist since July 2018. He works with the world-famous choir of St Paul's, accompanying and directing the music at services, including services of national significance. He also works as part of the ambitious music outreach programme at the Cathedral and gives recitals throughout the UK and abroad. Since September 2019, William has additionally been a junior fellow at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. William was a chorister at York Minster, before holding organ scholarships at Wells and Hereford Cathedrals. Prior to his appointment at St Paul's, he was organ scholar and an academic scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, from where he graduated with a first class degree in Music. William became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists as a teenager, winning the Turpin and Durrant prize. He has appeared on BBC radio, BBC television, and Classic FM, and worked through much of Europe and in the USA. His debut recording, of the organ works of Cecilia McDowall, was released in 2021, gaining 5 * reviews in *Choir and Organ* and *The Organ*. As a piano accompanist, he is the winner of the 2018 Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Competition.

Next recital

Easter Day, Sunday 17th April at 4.30 pm

James McVinnie

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