



First
Presbyterian
Church

New Bern, North Carolina

SPRING ORGAN RECITAL



DANIEL J.
SANSONE

MAY 3, 2024 7:00 PM
400 NEW STREET, NEW BERN

Organ works by Albright, J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Debussy, Franck, and Mendelssohn will be performed on C.B. Fisk opus 89 organ.

The performance is free and open to the public.

ORGAN RECITAL

May 3, 2024

7:00 pm

1. Praeludium in C Major (BuxWV 137)
Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)
2. Claire de lune
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
3. Sonata in A major (opus 65, no.3)
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
4. Sweet Sixteenths (A Concert Rag for Organ)
William Albright (1944-1988)
5. Prelude, Fugue and Variation (opus 18)
Cesar Franck (1822-1890)
6. An Wasserflüssen Babylon (BWV 635)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
7. Wir glauben all an einen Gott (BWV 680)
Johann Sebastian Bach
8. Passacaglia in C Minor (BWV 582)
Johann Sebastian Bach

Program Notes

Praeludium in C Major (*Bux*WV 137)

-Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

The Praeludium in C Major consists of three distinct sections; Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne. The Prelude begins with an extended virtuosic pedal solo that is further developed when the manuals enter and improvisatory passages between the pedal and manuals propels straight on into the fugue which follows. The third and final section is a Chaconne (the form of a chaconne is a continuous variation, usually in triple metre, and characterized by a short repeating bass line or harmonic progression), and it brings the piece to a brilliant close.

Claire de lune

-Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Clair de lune (French for "Moonlight") is a poem written by French poet Paul Verlaine in 1869. It is the inspiration for the third and most famous movement of Claude Debussy's 1890 *Suite bergamasque*. Debussy also made two settings of the poem for voice and piano accompaniment. The poem has also been set to music by Gabriel Fauré, Louis Vierne, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Josef Szulc, and Alphons Diepenbrock. This beautiful arrangement is transcribed for organ and features the delicate flute stops of the organ.

Sonata in A major (*opus 65, no.3*)

-Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

The outer sections of the Sonata III in A Major form two strong A-major homophonic pillars surrounding the two inner fugues in A minor with the chorale *Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu dir* ("In deep need I cry to thee") as a cantus firmus. By means of their dark chromatics, jagged rhythms and tumbling 16th notes, the fugues seem contrastingly very dark and stormy. In each fugue, after the

exposition for four voices in the manuals is completed, the chorale melody is introduced in the pedal as a fifth voice. The second movement that closes the work is a simple song form.

Mendelssohn composed six sonatas. By the time these sonatas were composed, Mendelssohn was well-known as composer, pianist, and organist, having made many tours as a soloist throughout Germany and England. His improvisations were highly regarded; and it was while on tour in England that he was approached, by a publisher there, to compose some works for the organ. The 35-year-old Mendelssohn may have wanted to impress his English colleagues, or perhaps even show them up, because he composed works with extremely virtuosic pedal parts, at a time in history when English organists had marginal pedal technique. Perhaps he wanted to assert his lineage to the great Bach tradition and the magnificent German organs which influenced his tonal palette. Regardless, his masterworks for organ are justly regarded as the finest examples of Classical German organ literature.

Sweet Sixteenths (A Concert Rag for Organ)

-William Albright (1944-1998)

When one thinks of Ragtime music, they probably would not expect to hear a Ragtime piece performed on a pipe organ. William Albright was a contemporary musician/composer who attended the Julliard Preparatory Department, the Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan. He was appointed to the faculty of the University of Michigan, where he taught composition and directed the electronic music studio until his death in 1998. Sweet Sixteenths is a delightful concert rag, and this lively piece captures the spirit of classic ragtime music!

Prelude, Fugue and Variation (*opus 18*)

-Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

Six Pieces he completed between 1859 and 1862. These exploited the power and colors of the Cavallé-Coll organs to the fullest and did much to establish the distinctively French school of symphonic organ music.

The third of the Six Pieces is the Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18, which was dedicated to Camille Saint-Saëns, himself an organist of considerable skill. Franck's dedications do not imply portraits, but the balance and clarity of the Prelude, Fugue, and Variation do suggest the classical orientation of Saint-Saëns. The flowing B-minor Prelude has a gentle melancholy, opening almost like Bach's "Liebster Jesu" prelude with three repetitions of an asymmetrical five-bar phrase. The Fugue has its own little prelude and clean textures, the polyphony is by no means hard to follow. Rounding the three-part work is the Variation, basically a repeat of the Prelude with a more active accompaniment, fading to the light of B major.

An Wasserflüssen Babylon (BWV 635)

-Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

An Wasserflüssen Babylon is a Lutheran hymn written in 1525 and attributed to Wolfgang Dachstein, organist at St Thomas' Church, Strasbourg. The hymn is a closely paraphrased versification of Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon", a lamentation for Jerusalem, exiled in Babylon.

In 1720, at a celebrated organ concert in Hamburg, Bach extemporized a chorale setting of An Wasserflüssen Babylon in the presence of Reincken, two years before his death; earlier, during his second period in Weimar. Bach had already composed two organ settings of the chorale prelude. Finally, during his maturity in Leipzig, Bach reworked the chorale prelude as BWV 563, part of his Leipzig Manuscript written in 1739–1742.

Wir glauben all an einen Gott (BWV 680)

-Johann Sebastian Bach

This setting taken from the Third Part of the *Clavierübung* does not present the complete chorale melody and is the only one of the large settings that does not. One explanation may be that the chorale is very long. Bach chose instead to compose a towering fugue on the first line of the chorale. He adds a basso ostinato—probably a unique instance in a fugue—whose firm tread signifies reliance on faith. At the end, surprisingly, the last enters, unembellished, in the tenor, “Es steht alles in seiner Macht”, (By whose mighty power alone All is made, and wrought, and done). Bach therefore sums up the entire hymn in its first and last lines.

Passacaglia in C Minor (BWV 582)

-Johann Sebastian Bach

Though one of the great pieces in organ literature, the *Passacaglia* in C Minor was first composed for the double-manual harpsichord. Despite the fact that the key of C minor is constantly present throughout all 20 variations and much of the fugue, Bach maintains a freshness in each variation which distinguishes it from the next. Albert Schweitzer advised that “Each of the twenty sections...must have its own characteristic tone colour (but)...no colour must be sharply differentiated from its predecessor or its successor.”

The work opens with a stately eight-bar theme followed by 20 variations and an overwhelming tutti. The double fugue is built on the first part of the *passacaglia* theme in combination with a countertheme in eighth notes. The work closes with a massive climax of suspended harmonies and full instrumental sonority.

DANIEL SANSONE

Organist and Associate Director of Music,
First Presbyterian Church

Daniel Sansone received his Bachelor of Music Degree in Organ Performance from the State University of New York at Fredonia, studying with Dr. John T. Hofmann. He received a Master of Music Degree in Organ Performance and Literature from the University of Notre Dame studying under Dr. Craig Cramer. Daniel has worked as Organist and Director of Music in Churches throughout the United States. Most recently he served as Director of Music at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston, South Carolina. Most recently Daniel was Director of Music and Organist and First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, SC. Daniel has performed organ recitals throughout the United States, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. and St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA. He has appeared as guest organ soloist with the Peabody Concert Orchestra, the United States Naval Academy Brass Ensemble, and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. Daniel has also performed as organ soloist on the Baltimore Bach Festival and the Bach Society of Charleston. He was a committee member of the L'Organo Recital Series of Piccolo Spoleto in Charleston and performed twice on the series.

Daniel currently resides in New Bern with his wife Mikaele. In his spare time Daniel enjoys cooking, biking, hiking, taking walks with his two Airedales, Oscar and Millie, and spending time with his family.

C.B. FISK OPUS 89 ORGAN

The Memorial Organ for First Presbyterian Church, New Bern, was built, completely assembled, and tested in the Fisk workshop in Gloucester, Massachusetts. After careful packing it was placed by hand on the Bekins van and sent en route to New Bern. After church on February 9, 1986, the Fisk Organ was delivered to an excited crowd of 199 church members of all ages, who helped unload the long-awaited instrument. It was assembled in the church, and each pipe was tuned and tonally finished (voiced).

ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

Great, 56 notes

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| 1. Open Diapason 8' | 56 pipes |
| 2. Stopt Diapason 8' | 56 pipes |
| 3. Principal 4' | 56 pipes |
| 4. Flute 4' | 56 pipes |
| 5a. Fifteenth 2' | |
| 5b. Mixture IV | 224 pipes |
| 6. Cremona 8' | 56 pipes |

Swell, 56 notes, enclosed

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| 7. Spire Flute 8' | 56 pipes |
| 8. Chimney Flute 4' | 56 pipes |
| 9a. Nazard 2 2/3 | |
| 9b. Sesquialtera II | 112 pipes |
| 10a. Doublet 2' | |
| 10b. Sharp III | 168 pipes |
| 11. Hautboy 8' | 56 pipes |

Pedal, 30 notes

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|-----------------|----------------------|
| 12. Bourdon 16' | 30 pipes |
| 13. Posaune 16' | 30 pipes |
| Swell to Great | Wind Stabilizer |
| Great to Pedal | Tremulant |
| Swell to Pedal | Balanced Swell Pedal |