

Organ Concerto in D minor (after Vivaldi), BWV 596 - J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

- (i) Allegro – Grave – Fuga**
- (ii) Largo e Spicato**
- (iii) Finale Allegro**

In 1844 an edition was published of an Organ Concerto nominally by J.S. Bach's eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann (1710-1784). The concerto became very well known in this form. But in fact the work was a transcription by his father of a Vivaldi concerto for two violins and cello, which the son had intentionally misattributed to himself, perhaps to increase his income and prestige during his unsuccessful declining years.

Vivaldi's original concerto was the eleventh of a set of twelve concertos for different string combinations published by the Amsterdam firm of Estienne Roger as L'Estro Armonico (Harmonic Inspiration). J.S. Bach's organ transcription is largely faithful to the Vivaldi original; he adds just a single bar to the opening Allegro and necessarily makes many detailed changes to suit the organ. Bach not only transcribed today's D minor concerto, but also five others that impressed him with their ingenious counterpoint. He also modelled his own concertos on them, imitating, for example, the cantabile style that Vivaldi had introduced in his slow movements.

Counterpoint is evident with a canon between the two upper soloists (violins in the original) at the start of the short introductory Allegro. A 3-bar Adagio leads to a full-blown fugue introduced by the solo cello. The Sicilienne-style Largo gives the upper solo voice a beautiful long cantabile line, and the work ends with a lively Allegro.

Prelude, Fugue, et Variation, Op. 18 - Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

This work is dedicated to Saint-Saëns; the dedication does not imply any portrait, but the balance and clarity of Op. 18 indeed suggest Saint-Saëns's Classical orientation. In addition, the substantial fugue of this piece is clearly influenced by Franck's thorough study of Bach's music. It is absolutely amazing to see how Op. 18 displays the aesthetic of the Romantic organ, while adapts the classical forms to suit the instrument, the canonic, as well as the fugal language of the music.

The haunting melody of the pastoral Prélude is a typical Franckian theme - mostly stepwise and with an emphasis on specific notes of the scale. A brief bridge passage introduces the next movement, a solemn fugue. The vocal character and clear textures make the Fugue relatively easy for listeners. After the strettii, the music moves on to the Variation without a break. The cantilena from the Prélude now returns, but this time, it is accompanied by rippling semiquavers. The work quietly ends in B major.

Organ Voluntary in D Major No. 6, Op. 6 - J. Stanley (1712-1786)

- (i) Adagio**
- (ii) Andante**
- (iii) Adagio**
- (iv) Allegro Moderato**

John Stanley was an English composer and organist. At about the age of two, he had the misfortune to fall on a marble hearth with a china basin in his hand, an accident which left him almost blind. He began studying music at the age of seven under the guidance of Maurice Greene, composer and organist at St. Paul's Cathedral. When he was fourteen he was chosen as organist at St Andrew's, Holborn, and at the age of seventeen became the youngest person ever to obtain the Bachelor of Music degree (B.Mus.) at Oxford University. In 1734 he was appointed organist to the Society of the Inner Temple - a position which he held until his death in 1786. In 1779 Stanley succeeded William Boyce as Master of the King's Band of

musicians.

He wrote three volumes of voluntaries for the organ, with ten voluntaries per volume. Nearly all of the voluntaries feature a short, slow introduction followed by either a solo-stop movement (such as the so-called trumpet voluntaries) or a fugue.

Fugue in G minor, BWV 578 - J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

The pinnacle of the German Baroque era, Bach is revered by modern audiences for both his sacred and secular music. He is also held in awe by musical scholars as the one who forever changed the fundamental directions of music by his invention of vertical harmony. During his lifetime, however, Bach was much more famous as a performer than as a composer. Although he played all keyboard instruments, his specialty was the organ.

At that time it was normal for performers to compose their own music, rather than to rely on works written by others (as is common today). Therefore, Bach composed literally hundreds of works for organ, at all stages of his career. He was perhaps the first to treat the organ as unique, rather than just another type of keyboard instrument. Many of his organ works employ effects that are simply impossible on harpsichord or piano (or, its German Baroque predecessor, the klavier).

Although its exact date of composition is unknown, the 'Little Fugue' in G-minor is one of Bach's earlier compositions for organ, probably written before age twenty. Its fundamental theme is a catchy little tune, only four bars long. That Bach could expand it into such a complex, perfectly inter-locked fugue is one mark of his genius.

Mozart Changes - Zsolt Gardonyi (b. 1946)

Zsolt Gardonyi is the son of the distinguished Zoltan Gardonyi, the former student of Paul Hindemith and Zoltan Kodaly. Subsequent to his music studies in his native Budapest, as well as in Germany, he has been professor of music theory at the Music College in Würzburg, Bavaria, since 1980. After receiving the Bavarian State Competitive Award for Young Composers in 1979, he has gained international recognition as a composer, concert organist and music theorist. His wide-ranging activity in these fields is indicated by his numerous publications, concerts, guest lectures, workshops, and master courses given in various conservatoires and universities of Europe and America.

The title for this work suggests an association with jazz harmony. The international language in this field uses the word 'changes' to indicate chord progressions. This piece revolves around two dance-like motives from the final movement of Mozart's last piano sonata in D major (K.576). These exhibit a significant chord progression coming from the 18th century, which is characterised by three descending fifths preceding the final tonic (VI-II-V-I), a stylistically overlapping progression still employed in jazz today. The original motives gradually transform themselves as the piece progresses, and disclose in their cheerful metamorphosis an additional dimension for the word 'changes'.

The work was commissioned for the Oklahoma Mozart Festival in Bartlesville, USA, and was premiered there on June 15, 1995, by Eleanor Whitsett.