

Chelsea Chen, *organ*

St. Cecilia Church, Boston
Friday, June 27, 2014, 2:30 p.m.

Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Three Taiwanese Folksongs (2007)

Four Seasons
Cradle Song
Song of the Country Farmer

Chelsea Chen
(b. 1983)

I Got Rhythm (1930)

arr. Roderick Gorby

George Gershwin
(1898–1937)

Prélude et danse fuguée (1964)

Gaston Litaize
(1909–1991)

Two Pieces for Violin and Organ (2007)

Rice Dumplings
Spring Breeze

Chelsea Chen

Viviane Waschbüsch, *violin*

Enchantement, for Violin and Organ

Viviane Waschbüsch, *violin*

Viviane Waschbüsch
(b. 1989)

Prélude et fugue no. 3 en sol mineur from **Trois Préludes et Fugues, Op. 7** (1912)

Marcel Dupré
(1886–1971)

*Chelsea Chen is represented by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.
Organ prepared by Timothy Smith.*

Program Notes

Bach biographer Philipp Spitta (1841–1894) considered the Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532, to be “one of the most dazzlingly beautiful of all the master’s organ works.” Generally dated to the early Weimar period, the work is notable for its charm, drama, and the unprecedented virtuosity of the pedal line. Opening with triumphant, ascending pedal scales, the prelude abruptly moves to F-sharp major before returning to D major. The second section of the prelude is of a more delicate texture, relying on a descending sequential figure and chains of suspensions. The writing is extroverted and the mood cheerful until an unexpected fully diminished chord begins a series of unstable harmonies, which eventually make their way back to D major. The idiosyncratic fugue subject is divided in half by a long rest and is almost childlike in the obstinate insistence of the opening figure. It remains lighthearted and playful through its final pedal flourish.

Chelsea Chen researched Taiwanese vocal folk music and traditional instruments during her 2006–2007 Fulbright year in Taiwan. She composed *Three Taiwanese Folksongs* for organ and Two Pieces for Violin and Organ, in 2007, for a concert at Grace Baptist Church in Taipei with violinist Daniel Chiang. Each movement features variations on early twentieth-century folk melodies. “Four Seasons” is a song about playful young lovers; “Cradle Song” is a soothing lullaby; and “Song of the Country Farmer” describes the life of a farmer in southern Taiwan. “Rice Dumplings” is about a vendor selling sticky rice wrapped in lotus leaves, a popular Taiwanese snack. “Spring Breeze” depicts the yearning for a warm breeze after a long and dreary winter.

Roderick Gorby is a composer, organist, and pianist steeped in both classical and jazz idioms. He has performed across the world as a soloist and chamber musician, and is currently a DMA candidate in composition at Florida State University, having studied organ at Juilliard. His arrangement of Gershwin’s iconic *I Got Rhythm* contains jazz trio-like textures—a solo reed, accompanying chords, and a double bass pattern in the pedals. After an introduction and two complete variations on the theme, the final variation features new, crushing harmonies under the opening bars of the melody.

Gaston Litaize studied with Adolphe Marty (a student of César Franck), Marcel Dupré, and Louis Vierne. Although not as well-known as his contemporaries, Litaize made significant contributions to the repertoire. His musical language embraces several competing currents in twentieth-century music, including non-Western scales, neoclassicism, and polytonality. *Prélude et danse fuguée*, written as a jury piece for the Paris Conservatoire, pairs an airy, capricious prelude with a boldly syncopated and dissonant fugue.

Viviane Waschbüsch’s *Enchantement* is a three-part suite for violin and organ, conceived as soloistic chamber music for both instruments. The piece mixes styles and influences from the Romantic period through contemporary music and jazz. The first movement features irregular meters and a strong dialogue (question/answer) between the violin and the organ. The second movement is slow and dreamy, evoking a feeling of wideness and space. The third movement is a rapid *moto perpetuo*. The “Enchantement” theme of the second movement returns to close the suite. *Enchantement* contains special harmonic elements including quartertones and microtonal variations in the violin.

Marcel Dupré was famous for performing more than two thousand organ recitals throughout Australia, the United States, Canada, and Europe. He more than once performed the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach entirely from memory. In 1916, he premiered his *Trois Préludes et Fugues*, Op. 7, at Salle Gaveau in Paris. Despite their “insurmountable difficulties”—as described by contemporaries such as Charles-Marie Widor—the pieces have become a part of the standard organ repertoire. No. 3 is a tightly constructed work in which the long, sustained melody from the prelude makes several appearances in the fugue against the fugue’s jaunty subject. A filigree of fast-moving notes characterizes the prelude, while a strong, 6/8 rhythm propels the fugue towards its climactic end.

– Chelsea Chen, David Crean, and Viviane Waschbüsch