

Catherine Todorovski, *organ*

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational
Wednesday, June 25 & Thursday, June 26, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Concerto, “La stravaganza,” Op. 4, No. 1

trans. Catherine Todorovski

Allegro

Largo e cantabile

Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi

(1678–1741)

Three Fugues from **Magnificat primi et secundi toni**

Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ

Johann Pachelbel

(1653–1706)

Pièce d’Orgue, BWV 572

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

Fantasia sopra “Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele”

Fantasia in F

Johann Ludwig Krebs

(1713–1780)

Sinfonia da La forza del destino

trans. Francesco Almasio (1806–1871)

Giuseppe Verdi

(1813–1901)

Sonata in D Minor (*Andante*)

Sonata in D Minor (*Allegro*)

Baldassare Galuppi

(1706–1785)

Sonata in D Major (*Allegro*)

Quirino Gasparini

(1721–1778)

Sonata per organo

Vincenzo Bellini

(1805–1835)

Organ prepared by Peter Sykes.

Program Notes

Born in Venice, buried in Vienna, Antonio Vivaldi enjoyed great celebrity in his time. The influence of his music was felt as far away as France, Germany, and Great Britain. No less a figure than Johann Sebastian Bach adapted nine of his concertos for keyboard, six of them from Vivaldi's Op. 3, *L'Estro Armonico*, originally for one to four violin soloists with strings. The concertos of Op. 4, known collectively as *La stravaganza*, are dedicated to a single violin solo in dialogue with the first and second violins of the orchestral *tutti*.

A highly important figure in European keyboard music of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Johann Pachelbel, a native of Nuremberg, wrote copiously for the organ. In his numerous fugues he gives free rein to a vivid imagination full of melodic invention, but it is in his chorale preludes that his musical language truly flowers. His output shows a mastery of every form known up to that time, without ever neglecting musical interest.

A highly original work, Bach's Fantasy in G Major also carries the French title *Pièce d'orgue* in several old sources, as well as French titles for each of its three sections: *Très vite*, *Gravement*, *Lentement*. The first is based on a series of arpeggiated chords in the manuals without support from the pedal. The second unfolds in five-part polyphony, its regular pulse enriched by hesitations and dissonances. A final section forms a long, chromatic descent, punctuated by arpeggios in both hands. According to the musicologist Gilles Cantagrel, one can discern in this triptych an allegory for the three stages of life: carefree youth; the power of maturity, with both its assurance and struggle; and the inexorable decline of old age, with perhaps a final glimpse of light at the moment of death in the last cadence.

Johann Ludwig Krebs was one of Bach's most brilliant pupils. His admiration for the Cantor of St. Thomas knew no bounds, and the teacher, in turn, held his student in highest esteem. A pun on their respective names enabled Bach (meaning "brook" or "stream") to say that Krebs ("crab" or "crayfish") was the best in his stream. Occasionally criticized for slavishly copying his master, Krebs was more than a simple imitator. While the imprint of Bach is certainly evident in Krebs' preludes and fugues, his originality becomes evident in his fantasies and chorale preludes. There he achieves a synthesis of the inheritance from his teacher and the new *style galant* with grace and simplicity.

Baldassare Galuppi is one of the most attractive composers of the Venetian School of the eighteenth century. Known as "il Buranello," after the place of his birth, the island of Burano in the Venetian lagoon, he was prolific in both vocal and instrumental genres. Almost ninety keyboard sonatas are attributed to him, although very few have been published. Those that we have demonstrate charm, elegance, and brilliant fantasy within their simple structure.

From the middle of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth, vocal music enjoyed pride of place in Italy, influencing all other genres. Organ music did not escape the influence of opera and the introduction of theatrical effects. Thus did music from the stage make its way into church in such works as Vincenzo Bellini's Sonata and the transcribed overture to Giuseppe Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*.

– Catherine Todorovski (trans. Ross Wood)