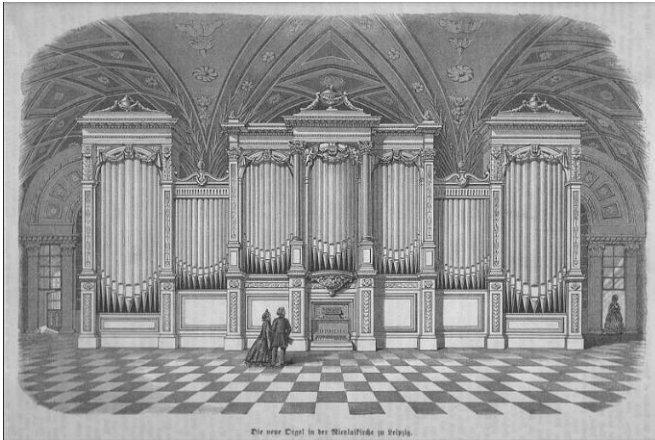




The Organ Masters:
Renée Anne Louprette, Organ
George B. Stauffer, Speaker



Saturday | February 8, 2020 | 2 pm

Unitarian Universalist Meeting House
1089 Main Street | Housatonic, MA



The Berkshire Chapter of
The American Guild of Organists

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The Berkshire Bach Society is pleased to present

RENÉE ANNE LOUPRETTE | ORGAN
GEORGE B. STAUFFER | SPEAKER

The Program

J.S. BACH
(1685-1750)

Prelude and Fugue in D minor, BWV 549a

Pastorella, BWV 590

I. Pastorale II. Allemande III. Aria IV. Giga

The Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes, BWV 651–668

An Wasserflüssen Babylon, BWV 653

Trio super Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, BWV 655

Jesus Christus unser Heiland, BWV 666

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 661

Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537

**Concerto in C Major (“Il grosso mogul,” after Vivaldi),
BWV 594: III. Allegro**



The program is performed without intermission.

*Audio recording services provided by
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Renée Anne Louprette, Organ



Hailed by *The New York Times* as one of New York's finest organists, **Renée Anne Louprette** has established an international career as organ recitalist, conductor, and teacher. She is associated with distinguished music programs in the New York City area and has served as Associate Director of Music at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Associate Director of Music and the Arts at Trinity Wall Street, Organist and Associate Director at the Unitarian Church of All Souls, and Director of Music at the Church of Notre Dame. She is Assistant Professor of Music and College Organist at Bard College and coordinator of the organ studio at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, where she has been University Organist since 2013. She is a former member of the organ faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, The Hartt School of the University of Hartford, and the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. She is an active freelance keyboardist, performing both in the U.S. and abroad in high-profile venues with important practitioners. She has appeared in concert halls and churches throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, including Westminster Abbey and the Temple Church in London, St. Giles Cathedral of Edinburgh and Dunblane Cathedral in Scotland, and Galway Cathedral and Dún Laoghaire in Ireland. In 2018, she made her solo debuts at the Royal Festival Hall in London and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. She regularly performs at regional meetings of the American Guild of Organists and was featured at two national conventions. Her 2014 recording of J.S. Bach's *Great Eighteen Chorales* on the Metzler Organ, Trinity College, Cambridge, was named a classical music *Critics' Choice* by *The New York Times*. She holds degrees in conducting from Bard College, piano performance and organ performance from The Hartt School, and honors from the Conservatoire National de Région de Toulouse and the Centre d'Études Supérieures de Musique et de Danse de Toulouse, France.

George B. Stauffer, Speaker



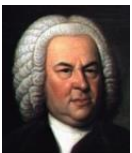
George B. Stauffer is Distinguished Professor of Music History and Dean Emeritus of the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Educated at Dartmouth College, Bryn Mawr College, and Columbia University, he is well known for his writings on the music and culture of the Baroque era in general and on the life and works of Johann Sebastian Bach in particular. He has published eight books, including *Bach: The Mass in B Minor: The Great Catholic Mass* (Yale University Press) and *The World of Baroque Music* (Indiana University Press), and has contributed numerous writings to American, European, and Asian publications, including *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Collier's Encyclopedia*, *Bach-Jahrbuch*, *Early Music*, and many other journals. As a feature writer, he has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The Weekly Standard*, and has held Guggenheim, Fulbright, ACLS, IREX, and Bogliasco fellowships. A past president of the American Bach Society, he is a frequent lecturer at David Geffen Hall, Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and other New York concert venues. He is currently at work on the volume *Why Bach Matters*, to be published by Yale University Press, and a book on the organ music of J.S. Bach for Oxford University Press. As an organist, he studied with John Weaver and Vernon de Tar at New York's Juilliard School and served as University Organist and Director of Chapel Music at Columbia University for 22 years. He co-authored the standard pedagogical text *Organ Technique: Modern and Early* (Oxford University Press) with fellow organist George H. Ritchie that is the classic text for educating students of the organ today.

The UU Meeting House Organ

The organ in the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House in Housatonic is a Johnson and Son (Westfield, MA) instrument dating from 1893 that has a “tracker” or mechanical action of the type that Bach and his contemporaries knew well. It has two manuals, 13 stops, 13 ranks, and 723 pipes, and produces wind with an electric blower that replaced the original hand-pumped bellows. For comparison, the Great Organ in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City has four manuals and pedals, 7 divisions, 151 ranks, and 8,514 pipes. It produces wind with an electro-pneumatic mechanism.

Organ music can be a bewildering experience for the listener. Being confronted by a powerful wall of sound without much to differentiate voices or notes, the audience can have difficulty understanding and interpreting what it hears. The Meeting House organ is different. Its voice is gentle but firm. The polyphony of Bach's music stands out clearly, and the progress of the counterpoint is easy to follow because all the voices can be heard distinctly. At the same time, the organ's color stops—string, flute and reed—are pretty and lyrical, and they support the musical lines without force or shrillness. The Pedal division, with only one independent stop, gently yet firmly supports both a single stop and full organ in equal measure. This is an organ that is a musical instrument, not a synthesizer or sound machine, and eloquently conveys a musical message. Though limited in diversity, it is arguably more appropriate as a vehicle for Baroque music than a large modern organ with electric or digital sound production. The Berkshire Bach Society is proud to showcase this unique organ—truly a hidden gem of the Berkshires.

Historical Notes



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750) was born in Eisenach to a respected family of musicians. He was well-educated in performance and composition, first by his father and, after his father's death, by his elder brother, who was a student of Johann Pachelbel. He attended the Lyceum School in Ohrdruf, where he studied tuition-free until his elder brother left the faculty for a position as organist at a local church, and then was sent to St. Michael's

School in Lüneburg, where he was a paid member of the matins choir and received free tuition, room, and board. Part of his education was copying the scores of other composers, which exposed him to a wide range of styles and developed his encyclopedic interest in all types of music. Over his life, Bach served as organist at Arnstadt (1703-1707) and Mühlhausen (1707-1708), court organist and Concertmaster in Weimar (1708-1717), Music Director in Köthen (1717-1723), and Cantor of the Thomas-Schule and Music Director in Leipzig (1723-1750).

During his lifetime he was recognized as an organ virtuoso and master of complex counterpoint, but he never traveled outside Germany and consequently was not especially widely known in an age dominated by international music celebrities. His music fell out of favor after his death but was studied and promoted in the 19th century by Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and others, leading to a permanent revival. With the exception of opera, which was frowned upon by his employers, Bach composed in all forms and styles of Baroque music—secular, sacred, solo, ensemble, vocal, and instrumental—achieving comprehensive perfection. After Bach, music developed in another direction, moving into the Classical Era of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Scholars conventionally use the death of Bach to mark the end of the Baroque era and consider him one of the greatest composers of all time.

As a professional organist, Bach was keenly interested in the construction and maintenance of organs and was often hired to assess the condition of instruments in various churches within Germany. The investment required for a church organ was (and still is) substantial, and inspections were an important activity that required the examiner to recommend improvements or to confirm that an instrument satisfied the terms of the construction contract for cost, specifications and quality. Several of the inspection reports that Bach submitted survive in the historical record, and it is clear that he derived a portion of his income from these examinations and often performed inaugural concerts on the organs he certified. Bach knew several organ builders personally, and because of his reputation as an organ master, builders coveted his endorsement as proof of the quality of their work.

Baroque organ music of the North German School was written in a sophisticated musical shorthand called *tablature* that used script letter names and other symbols to indicate pitch, duration, and register. The staves, note

heads, and key signatures familiar to modern musicians were omitted, making tablature an efficient way to notate complex and lengthy organ music in an era when manuscript paper was an expensive commodity. Learning tablature early in his studies, J.S. Bach was proficient by the time he was 12 or 13 and eventually developed his own signature characteristics and traits. The earliest manuscript believed to be in his hand dates from 1698/99 and includes works by Dieterich Buxtehude (d. 1707), Johann Adam Reincken (d. 1722), and Johann Pachelbel (d. 1706). Organ tablature as a common form of notation died out at the end of the Baroque era and was replaced by the staff notation familiar to modern musicians.

The *Prelude and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 549a* is an early work bridging the end of Bach's formal education in Lüneburg and the beginning of his professional career, c. 1700/03. During the period he was influenced by, among others, Dieterich Buxtehude and the composer Georg Böhm (d. 1733), organist at Lüneburg's Johanniskirche, who was known as a writer of fugues and for establishing the chorale partita as a recognized form. The *Prelude and Fugue in D minor, BWV 549a* is notable for its use of pedal, a specialty in Bach's performance practice that he developed from studying the music of Pachelbel and especially Buxtehude. The alternate title of the work, *Præliudium ô Fantasia, Pedaliter in D minor*, specifies the work is performed "on the pedals" (*Pedaliter*) as opposed to "on the manuals" (*Manualiter*). The pedals engage the deepest tones of the organ, sounding weighty and sonorous in a way that manual-only work does not. Pedal work remained an important element of Bach's music for organ throughout his life and distinguishes it from the organ works of many others, including Handel, who typically employed the manuals with little or no use of pedal. That Bach was well-known for this technique is clear from many contemporary accounts, including one from 1743 in which a church dignitary described the effect of Bach's performance on the restored organ in Kassel.

A Contemporary Account of Bach as Organist

Bach of Leipzig, author of profound music...deserves to be called the miracle of Leipzig....For if it pleases him, he can by the use of his feet alone...achieve such an admirable, agitated, and rapid concord of sounds on the church organ that others would seem unable to imitate it even with their fingers. When he was called from Leipzig to Kassel to pronounce an organ properly restored, he ran over the pedals with this same facility,

as if his feet had wings, making the organ resound with such fullness, and so penetrate the ears of those present like a thunderbolt, that Frederick, the...hereditary Prince of Kassel, admired him with such astonishment that he drew a ring with a precious stone from his finger and gave it to Bach as soon as the sound had died away. If Bach earned such a gift for the agility of his feet, what, I ask, would the Prince have given him if he had called his hands into service as well?

--Constantin Bellermann, Rector at Minden, 1743

The *Pastorella in F Major, BWV 590*, is a curiosity in Bach's body of work. Its stylistic characteristics suggest that he probably wrote it fairly late in life in connection with the Christmas liturgy. For many years, scholars have questioned its authenticity because no autograph manuscript exists and there are no external referents. The work comprises four sections—*Pastorale*, *Allemande*, *Aria*, and *Giga*—that do not appear to have been through-composed or written as an integrated set. The first two pieces use *Piffero*, a drone bass that is characteristic of Italian Christmas folk music. The third piece is in triple meter and the key of E-flat, both often used symbolically to represent angels and, presumably, their association with the Christmas story. The concluding *Giga*, according to Bach scholar Christoph Wolff, is based on the Medieval hymn *Resonet in laudibus*, a hymn celebrating the birth of Jesus as learned by the shepherds.

In 1840 Felix Mendelssohn included the work in his organ recital at the Thomaskirche, a rare performance that was given to raise funds for a monument to J.S. Bach in Leipzig. Among other works, the recital included the Chorale Prelude *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* (*Adorn thyself, beloved Soul*), BWV 654, and the Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582. Famously, Robert Schumann reviewed the recital and described the *Pastorella in F Major* as being “mined from the deepest depths in which such a composition may be found.” The concert achieved its goal: The Bach monument was dedicated in April of 1843.

The Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes, BWV 651–668

An Wasserflüssen Babylon, BWV 653

Trio super Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, BWV 655

Jesus Christus unser Heiland, BWV 666

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 661

Bach compiled the works known today as the *Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes*, BWV 651–668, in the last decade of his life based on works from his Weimar period. The autograph manuscript also contains the six trio sonatas for organ, BWV 525–530, the variations on *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*, BWV 769, and a version of *Nun komm' der heiden Heiland* dating from 1714/17, suggesting that it was more a working draft than a set of finalized pieces. Bach added the first thirteen chorale preludes between 1739 and 1742 and two more likely in 1746/47. The final three—in two different hands—were added in 1750, possibly after his death. Bach may have been motivated to start working on a collection of organ works by the success of Handel's *Organ Concerti*, Opus 4, published in 1738, or for some other purpose. The collection comprises preludes in several different styles, summarizing historical models dating back to the 17th century and including the motet, partita, *cantus firmus*, trio, and the ornamental.

An Wasserflüssen Babylon (By the Waters of Babylon), BWV 653, a paraphrase of Psalm 137, is an example of the ornamental chorale in which the melody is taken in one voice and highly ornamented throughout. Buxtehude popularized the style in Northern Germany and is known to have influenced Bach's early performance practice and compositional style. Bach knew the version of the same chorale by Johann Adam Reincken (d. 1722), a chorale fantasy of some 20 minutes' duration that he had studied and copied in tablature when he was 13 or 14. According to C.P.E. Bach's obituary for his father, J.S. Bach visited Hamburg around 1720/22, and performed on the organ at the Katerinekirche, improvising on the chorale theme for nearly half an hour. Reincken, still the church organist in his late 70s, attended the performance and complimented Bach on his skill in improvisation, an art he otherwise thought had died out. When Bach wrote his own setting, which predates the Hamburg episode, he used a four-part structure, placing the chorale melody in the tenor and framing it above by the accompaniment in the upper voices and below in the pedal.

Trio super Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend (Lord Jesus Christ, turn to us), BWV 655, is an example of the trio style of chorale, in which two voices are taken by the manuals, and the basso continuo is played on the pedals. Bach presents the chorale tune multiple times and in different keys, ultimately inverting the voices and sounding the melody in the pedal. The work has a lighter texture than many of the other chorale preludes, reflecting the text that speaks of eternal joy and everlasting light.

Jesus Christus unser Heiland (Jesus Christ our Savior), BWV 666, is an example of the chorale prelude motet that is based loosely on the Renaissance motet or madrigal and employs imitative voices and some word painting. Bach used the style particularly in his early career in cantatas such as No. 106, *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbest Zeit (Actus Tragicus)*, BWV 106, and others from his time in Mühlhausen. In 1750 he returned to the chorale motet with BWV 666, one of three late chorale preludes he wrote as his eyesight began to fail. He reportedly dictated the work to his student and son-in-law, Johann Christoph Altnikol, who copied it into the existing manuscript, possibly after Bach's death. The work is short, simple in form, and passes the *cantus firmus* (chorale melody) between and among the different voices.

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland (Now come, Savior of the Heathen), BWV 661, is an example of the *cantus firmus* chorale in which the chorale melody is sounded in long notes throughout the piece. Pachelbel popularized this style and passed it to his student, Johann Christoph Bach, the older brother who continued the musical education of J.S. after their father's death. In BWV 661, Bach sounds the chorale melody in long notes in the pedal and enriches the texture with fugal counterpoint.

The *Fantasia and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 537*, is most likely a work that dates from Bach's Leipzig period. For many years it was thought to have originated during his time in Weimar, when he was court organist to Duke Wilhelm Ernst, and his employment contract required him to compose music for the organ. Recent scholarship has revised this view, separating the work's creation from that of many other important compositions for organ that Bach wrote between 1714 and 1723. The Fantasia reflects Bach's late interest in using expressive vocal idioms as a source for organ music, and uses a dotted figure treated imitatively. The Fugue for four voices has a distinctive subject that provides a clear organizing thread in the fugal texture.

The *Concerto in C Major, BWV 594*, is a transcription for organ of the Concerto for Violin in D Major, RV 208, by Antonio Vivaldi, subtitled *Il grosso mogul*. A lifelong student of the works of other composers, Bach was especially fond of the music of Vivaldi, studying in particular the violin concerti in manuscript and transcribing them for keyboard, c. 1713/14. Bach may have had a copy with the extended solo cadenzas for the first and third movements that survive in at least two sets of parts for Vivaldi's original. The

subtitle, *Il grosso mogul*, refers to Akbar, Mughal Emperor of India (d. 1605), who expanded the geographic and economic power of his empire in part through trade with the Venetian Republic, Vivaldi's native city.

—T.A. McDade

Special Thanks

to Karen Clark and the Unitarian Universalist Meeting, Terrill McDade, Perry Boles Brooks, John Lynn Jones, Nancy King, Mal Wasserman, Paul Johansen, our dedicated ushers, the Berkshire Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and our season-long sponsors.

—Paula Hatch, Executive Director



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Bach's Birthday Bash—On Saturday, March 21, 2020, we celebrate Bach's 335th birthday and his dedication to developing young musicians. Join us at The White Hart Inn (Salisbury, CT) for period food, fun, and a recital by elite young musicians.

Berkshire Bach Fundraiser: Eugene Drucker and Friends—On Saturday, May 16, 2020, Eugene Drucker (violin), Roberta Cooper (cello), and Arthur Haas (harpsichord) perform Bach sonatas in a private residence in South Egremont.



Announcing Berkshire Bach's 30th Anniversary Season Fundraiser: Orli Shaham—On Saturday, August 22, 2020, Berkshire Bach kicks off its 2020-2021 season with a special recital by pianist Orli Shaham in a private residence in Hillsdale, NY.
