

# Bach 337



Sunday, March 20, 2022

**Cover:** The third console for Opus 414, a symphonic-style organ featuring 73 stops, 93 registers and 5,589 pipes.

Opus 414 was built for the First United Methodist Church in 1924 by famed organ builder E.M. Skinner. Incorporated into the facade above the Chicago Temple's first-floor sanctuary, the organ has provided music for church services, special events and the entire downtown community for nearly 100 years.

Opus 414 has begun to show its age, and the Committee for the Restoration of Opus 414 is spearheading an ambitious project to bring the organ back to its original condition and establish endowments for its continuing maintenance and an ongoing organ concert series.

# Program

## I. Prelude and Fugue in B Minor, BWV 544

This afternoon's recital opens with a brooding, dramatic prelude featuring many dissonances and a variety of textures, paired with a simple, scalar fugue subject that is eventually paired with a commanding countersubject after an extensive series of episodes and expositions heard without the pedal.

One of the relatively few organ works of J. S. Bach for which there is an existing autograph manuscript (signed by the composer), its prelude broadly reflects the form of an Italian concerto in which sections of the full orchestra alternate with a solo voice heard in high, low, or middle registers of the keyboard, accompanied by, at times, just one other voice. The simplicity of the fugue subject provides a compositional canvas upon which Bach adds and layers numerous techniques and devices. This work was completed sometime in the early years (1727-1731) of Bach's tenure in Leipzig and is one of his longest and most expansive works in this genre.

## II. Chorale Preludes from Das Orgelbüchlein (The Little Organ Book)

The Orgelbüchlein is one of Bach's most remarkable collections of organ music, for several reasons. Dating from Weimar, in 1714, where Bach served as the organist and chamber musician for the ducal court, The Little Organ Book appears to have been written as an instruction manual on how to create chorale preludes, i.e., short chorale-based compositions that served as artful introductions to a congregation's singing of chorales in worship. A rich variety of forms and textures are used in the 46 chorale preludes that Bach completed out of the 164 he had originally planned to include in this collection. The brevity of these unique works in no way diminishes their incredible craft and ingenuity of texture and figuration.

(41). *Ich ruf zu dir* (I call to you), BWV 639 Although this may be the best-known prelude of the collection, it is the only one in a trio (three-voice) texture. Its character is that of an accompanied aria.

(27). *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (Christ lay in the bonds of death), BWV 625 The melody of this Easter chorale forms the basis for Bach's most popular cantata, by the same name, and is derived from the Gregorian chant *Victimae paschali laudes*. This triumphant, celebratory setting reflects the exuberance of the Easter event with its large leaps and energetic figuration, as the chorale is heard in the top voice, virtually unadorned.

(17). *In Dir ist Freude* (In you is gladness), BWV 615 This chorale prelude is also one-of-a-kind, in so far as the chorale melody is presented in fragments, both homophonically and contrapuntally, throughout the prelude. Coupled with the ostinato pedal motive and the sweeping scales and arpeggios, this treatment of the chorale expresses the joy of the text.

(45). *Alle Menschen müssen sterben* (All people must perish), BWV 643 This buoyant, quietly expectant setting is perhaps counter-intuitive for a chorale concerning transformation through death. However, the perpetual sixteenth-note motion among the lower voices in every measure creates an urgency throughout and a sense of satisfaction at the end of this very brief piece.

### III. Sonata No. 4 in E Minor, BWV 528

Adagio – Vivace

Andante

Un poco allegro

Bach wrote six works not based on a chorale melody that imitate the Italian trio sonata in which two solo instruments, stringed or wind, are accompanied by a bass instrument. Without the benefit of a keyboard instrument to provide the harmonic accompaniment that would have been used in the Italian prototype, Bach displays some of his most effective and economical invertible counterpoint (each voice takes turns in playing the principal theme) throughout each movement to give the effect of a work for a complete chamber ensemble. Each of the performer's hands takes one of the solo instrumental parts, while both feet are engaged in covering what would have been played by a low stringed instrument, or the bassoon.

### IV. Allein Gott in der Höhe sei Ehr' (All Glory be to God on High), BWV 662

This elaborate extended chorale prelude was never intended to serve as a prelude to congregational hymn singing. Rather, it is an expansion of the genre to the farthest heights possible. In advance of the entry of the ornamented chorale, which constitutes the old Lutheran *Gloria in excelsis*, we experience a full fugal exposition that returns in varied form throughout the composition. The chorale melody is deeply embedded in the most ornately figured solo part of any of Bach's chorale preludes, and its unaccompanied mini-cadenza in the final measures is also remarkable in its evocation of Italian violin concertos of the day. This chorale prelude belongs to a collection of eighteen similarly large-scale chorale preludes in various styles assembled by Bach in Leipzig during the final decade of his life.

### V. Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major (St. Anne), BWV 552

The *Clavier-Übung* (Keyboard Practice) is a four-part series of publications Bach issued while in Leipzig between 1731 and 1742. The other three parts of the series are devoted to works for harpsichord, such as the *Goldberg Variations*, the *Italian Concerto*, and several partitas. Part III contains the grand organ Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major that closes the recital this afternoon and numerous organ preludes on chorales used in the German Lutheran Mass of Bach's day.

Like BWV 544 that opened this recital, BWV 552 is an expansive prelude and fugue of intriguing variety and ingenuity. This monumental work displays the master Bach combining stylistic and formal elements in ways unique to his time. This Prelude is cast in the Italian concerto form, AB AC AB CA. The regularly recurring sections, which represent the playing of the full instrumental ensemble (A), are written in the style of a French overture, with bold dotted rhythms, scalar flourishes, and a lush, multi-voice texture. The contrasting sections, B and C, in which one can imagine the playing of a soloist, are comprised mostly of spare, two-voice textures that elaborate upon the scalar figuration of the "A" sections and feature echo effects, intriguing modulations, and rhythmic syncopations derived from Italian and German models. The Fugue is, likewise, a study in contrasts and complexity: there are three distinct subjects, the first of which recalls the hymn tune "St. Anne", to which is sung the enduring text "O God, Our Help In Ages Past" (Methodist Hymnal #117). The second subject is in running eighth notes and eventually combines with the first subject as a four-voice double fugue. The third subject is a lively dance rhythm in compound triple meter that is eventually combined with those that come before it, culminating in the profound triple fugue and transformation of the "St. Anne" subject from duple into triple meter. Numerous numerologists have enjoyed dissecting the work to point out the many ways that the number 3 is reflected in the melodic, rhythmic, and structural aspects of the work, but such an understanding is not necessary to appreciate the brilliance and magnificence of this work.

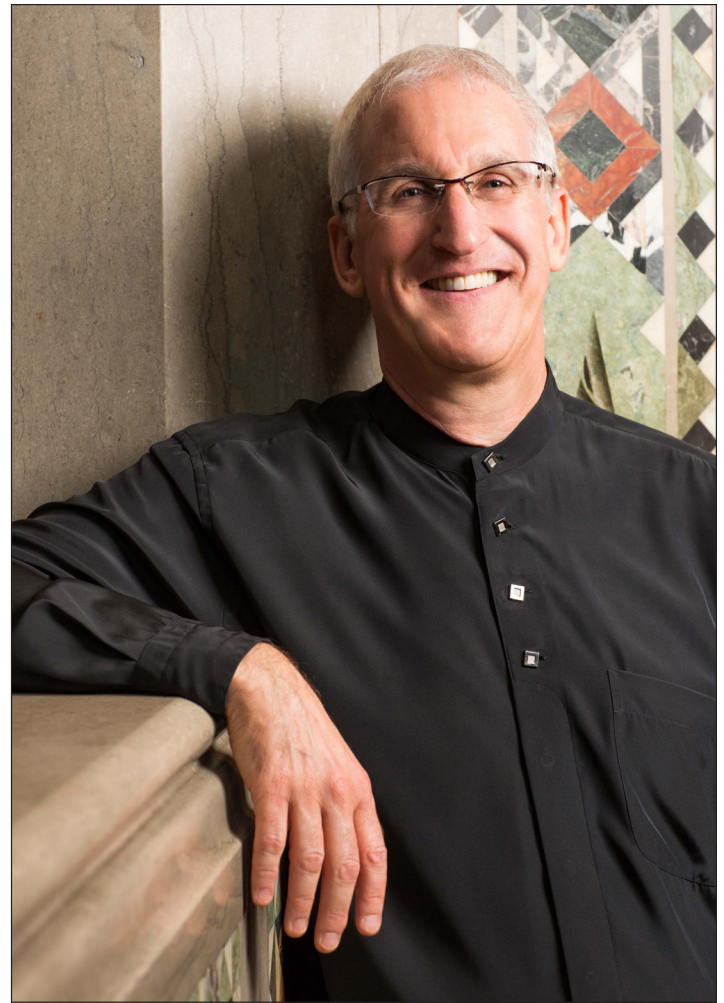
# Biography

Phillip Kloeckner is an organist, harpsichordist, pianist, conductor, teacher, and scholar who uses his broad interests and numerous talents to engage in unique projects throughout the world. Most recently, he presented the newly discovered organ works of Giacomo Puccini to the American Guild of Organists at their convention in Kansas City. He is the founder and artistic director of the Chicago International Organ Academy ([cioa.global](http://cioa.global)), which is pioneering online lessons and courses for organists of all levels of achievement throughout the world. His textbook, *Functional Hearing: A Contextual Method for Musicianship*, is now being prepared for a second edition by Routledge Publishers. In 2012, he joined the music faculty of The University of Chicago and founded the Rockefeller Chapel Organ Studio, where no formal program of instruction had previously been offered to students.

Dr. Kloeckner earned degrees at Swarthmore College, the Oberlin Conservatory, and at Rice University, where he was invited to serve on the faculty after receiving his doctorate degree and was integrally involved in the creation of the Fisk-Rosales organ there. His first solo CD, *Exotic Variations*, was recorded on this instrument for Raven Recordings. While in Houston, he was the artistic director of the United Nations Association International Choir for nine seasons and wrote his doctoral dissertation on nineteenth-century organs in Perú.

His solo and collaborative performances as organist, harpsichordist, and conductor continue to be critically praised and appreciated by live and broadcast audiences in many of the most prominent venues in the USA, Europe, and Latin America.

Phillip Kloeckner has been the organist of First United Methodist Church of Chicago since October, 2016. In addition to playing the organ for all services at the church, he is leading the effort to establish the non-profit organization Opus414.org, dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and appreciation of the church's historic E. M. Skinner organ, built for the Chicago Temple building in September of 1924. Pending funding, the Schantz Organ Company of Orville, Ohio, has been selected to carry out a comprehensive restoration of Opus 414 in advance of its centenary year.



*Phillip Kloeckner*

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