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GREAT ORGAN MUSIC AT YALE

JONATHAN WILLIAM MOYER, ORGAN

MARCH 23, 2025

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# GREAT ORGAN MUSIC AT YALE

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| A solis ortus, from <i>Hymnes de l'Église</i>   | Jean Titelouze<br>(c. 1563–1633)          |
| Susana grosada a 4 sobre a de 5, from <i>Flores de musica</i>   | Manuel Rodrigues Coelho<br>(c. 1555–1635) |
| Tiento de secondo tono por Ge sol re ut sobre la Letanía de la Virgen   | Pablo Bruna<br>(1611–1679)                |
| In Nomine XII   | John Bull<br>(c. 1562–1628)               |
| Felix namque II, from the <i>Fitzwilliam Virginal Book</i>  | Thomas Tallis<br>(1505–1585)              |
| O Nata Lux, Varied<br>Theme by Thomas Tallis<br>Introduction<br>Perpetuum mobile<br>Inversions I<br>Inversions II<br>Ostinato | Jonathan W. Moyer<br>(b. 1975)            |
| Praeludium quarti toni  | Wilhelm Karges<br>(1613/14–1699)          |
| Magnificat sexti toni<br>Versus<br>Versus auff zwei Clavir pedahl<br>Versus pedaliter<br>Versus manualiter                    | Heinrich Scheidemann<br>(c. 1559–1663)    |
| Fantasia ex d   | Matthias Weckmann<br>(c. 1616–1674)       |

**Jonathan Moyer** writes that “the compositions in today’s program represent an array of geographies and liturgical traditions that fostered an abundant creation of keyboard music during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These composers each uniquely contributed to remarkable advancements in keyboard technique, elevating the art of intabulation into a complex and idiomatic tapestry of contrapuntal art. Parallel advancements in instrument sonority and technology further cultivated a special symbiotic relationship with the composer, developing into unique practices in tonal registration and performance practice. My own composition based on Tallis’s ‘O nata lux’ is a kind of neo-classical amalgamation of seventeenth-century keyboard techniques set within the context of modern harmonic and rhythmic sensibilities. My hope in today’s program is to illuminate the many unique and similar musical gestures found within these compositions, all through the alluring voices of the Marquand Taylor and Boody organ.”

### **Jean Titelouze, *A solis ortus*, from *Hymnes de l’Église***

Revered as the founder of the French organ school, Jean Titelouze presided for nearly half a century as organist of the magnificent Gothic cathedral at Rouen, where he gained a reputation as a brilliant improviser. All twelve hymns that comprise his 1623 collection *Hymnes de l’Église* are based on plainchants. Each consists of three or four self-contained versets, short pieces of an improvisatory character that were interspersed with choral hymns, psalms, or canticles during church services. In the first verset of “A solis ortus [cardine]” (From the direction of the rising sun), the slow-moving melody of the Christmas hymn serves as foundational *cantus firmus* in the bass, while the upper voices weave a lively contrapuntal fabric. The second verset is a four-voice fugue based on the first five notes of the chant, a simple rising scale, and the third verset flips the theme on its head and develops it in steadily accelerating note values.

### **Manuel Rodrigues Coelho, *Susana grosada a 4 sobre a de 5*, from *Flores de musica***

Titelouze’s Portuguese contemporary Manuel Rodrigues Coelho was prominently associated with the Habsburg court in Lisbon in the early seventeenth century. His elaborate organ improvisations are memorialized in the dozens of versets and virtuosic *tentos* (keyboard fantasies) published in the 1620 anthology *Flores de musica*. Coelho was one of many late Renaissance composers who adapted Orlando di Lasso’s popular “Susanne un jour” for their purposes. Its title notwithstanding, “Susana grosada” has no apparent connection to the Old Testament story of Susannah and the Elders—the subject of Lasso’s five-part motet—but its florid melodies, freely rhapsodic structure, and wealth of invention are nonetheless captivating on purely musical terms.

### **Pablo Bruna, *Tiento de segundo tono por Ge sol re ut sobre la Letanía de la Virgen***

Blind from childhood, Pablo Bruna enjoyed a long and distinguished career at the Basilica of Santa María in Daroca, Spain, some forty miles south of Zaragoza. At the time of his

appointment as organist in 1631, the original Romanesque church had recently been remodeled, but the ornate fifteenth-century organ was left intact and remains one of Spain's cultural treasures. Bruna specialized in writing contrapuntal *tientos* in a bravura, quasi-improvisatory idiom (the name of the genre derives from the Spanish verb meaning "to try out"); this one is a set of variations based on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bruna's music, with its serial imitative entrances and intricate passagework, reflects the intense spiritual ecstasy of the canonical prayer.

### **John Bull, *In Nomine XII***

John Bull established his reputation in Hereford and London, where his keyboard skills won him a coveted place the Chapel Royal under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth I and her successor, King James I. In 1613 he abruptly took refuge in the Netherlands, having been charged with the serious crime of adultery by no less than the Archbishop of Canterbury, and spent his last years in exile as organist of Antwerp Cathedral. Bull's dozen keyboard "In Nomines" are settings of the plainchant "Gloria tibi Trinitas." (The Latin tag "In Nomine [Domini]," or "In the Name of the Lord," alludes to the text of a famous chant-based mass written by John Taverner in the early 1500s.) In this case, the *cantus firmus* melody appears in the uppermost of the three voices, set against faster-moving music in the lower parts. Bull's changing figurations and staggered harmonic rhythms make his music sound more complex than it looks on the page.

### **Thomas Tallis, *Felix namque II*, from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book**

England's greatest composer of the sixteenth century, Thomas Tallis successfully navigated the treacherous doctrinal waters stirred up by Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1534, Mary Tudor's bloody reimposition of Catholicism in 1553, and the re-establishment of Anglicanism as the state religion under Queen Elizabeth in 1558. As a gentleman of the Chapel Royal under four successive monarchs, he supplied music for both the Anglican and Catholic liturgies, although he himself remained a devoted follower of the Church of Rome. Like Bull's "In Nomine," Tallis's two settings of the Marian offertory chant "Felix namque [es]" (For you are happy) were included in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, a key manuscript source for Jacobean keyboard music. Here again the musical interest lies in the contrast between the sustained melody of the *cantus firmus* and the richly inventive contrapuntal skein in which it is embedded.

### **Jonathan W. Moyer, *O Nata Lux, Varied***

Although it takes barely two minutes to perform, Tallis's five-voice motet "O nata lux [de lumine]" (O light born of light) packs a hefty emotional punch. The texture is almost purely homophonic, or chordal, imbuing the music with exceptional harmonic richness and expressive potency. Jonathan Moyer writes that he has "long been seduced by the intoxicating effect" of Tallis's work, "its elegant counterpoint, its seductive harmony,

and its deeply symbolic text.” He goes on to explain that “my set of variations on ‘O nata lux’” begins with a straightforward statement of Tallis’s hymn. The Introduction features extended harmonies and motivic elements played in diminution and in dotted rhythms. Variation 2, ‘Perpetuum mobile,’ highlights the sense of static harmony in simple textures using repeated notes, scales, and arpeggios. ‘Inversions I’ develops the soprano’s opening motif in sequences against a two-voice counterpoint in the lower voices. ‘Inversions II’ presents three verses of two-voice canonical counterpoint interspersed by a dancing refrain. The final ‘Ostinato’ repeats the soprano motif in the bass as the outer voices close in a dense, ambiguous chord.”

### **Wilhelm Karges, *Praeludium quarti toni***

The three composers grouped at the end of tonight’s concert epitomize the so-called North German organ school, which stemmed from Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck in the late 1500s and reached its pinnacle a century and a half later in the towering genius of Johann Sebastian Bach. Wilhelm Karges was employed in the latter half of the seventeenth century as court composer to the aggrandizing Prussian elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm, and as organist of Berlin Cathedral. (The imposing building that greets visitors today, which has been called Berlin’s answer to St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, bears little resemblance to the relatively modest Calvinist parish church that Karges knew.) A mere handful of Karges’s works survive, including this quietly meditative prelude written in the fourth of the eight church modes, or *toni*. The music progresses from E minor to E major along a path strewn with imitation, sequences, and the sweetly yearning dissonances of *appoggiaturas*.

### **Heinrich Scheidemann, *Magnificat sexti toni***

Heinrich Scheidemann served for some thirty-five years as organist of St. Catherine’s Church in Hamburg, where his liturgical duties included improvising preludes on the four-manual organ built by Friedrich Stellwagen and enlarged by Gottfried Fritzsche in the early 1630s. (Virtually destroyed during World War II, the organ was reconstructed a few years ago using pipes salvaged from the original instrument.) Scheidemann composed eight settings of the Magnificat for this outstanding organ, one in each church mode. All are laid out in four “verses” that share a common theme, in this case the rising phrase that opens the underlying Latin hymn. In the first verse the entire hymn tune is intoned in the pedals. The second verse is marked “auff zwei Clavir pedahl,” referring to the two-manual pedal clavichord, a keyboard instrument outfitted with a pedal board that organists used for practice. The third and fourth verses are to be played respectively by both hands and feet (*pedaliter*) and on the manuals alone (*manualiter*). As this overview suggests, Scheidemann’s work is a tour de force of both the organist’s and the organ builder’s art.

### **Matthias Weckmann, *Fantasia ex d***

Largely forgotten until the early twentieth century, Matthias Weckmann is now recognized as a key link between the two giants of North German Baroque music, Heinrich Schütz and J. S. Bach. As a boy, Weckmann sang under Schütz in the Dresden court chapel choir and segued into a position as court organist. He spent the last two decades of his life in Hamburg, where he rubbed shoulders with the aging Scheidemann and founded a collegium musicum that served as a prototype for the famous ensemble that Bach would later direct in Leipzig. In addition to nine sets of chorale variations for organ, Weckmann wrote a small number of pieces in a free and richly embroidered style that were probably intended for performance on the harpsichord or clavichord. The bracingly virtuosic organ *Fantasia in D* opens with a majestic fugue in strict style, followed by music of a more rhapsodic character featuring long stretches of busy, ingenious imitative writing and a dazzling array of registrations.

*Notes © by Harry Haskell*

Harry Haskell is a regular program annotator for New York's Carnegie Hall and Metropolitan Opera and the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin. He is the author of *The Early Music Revival: A History*, winner of the Prix des Muses in musicology awarded by the Fondation Singer-Polignac, and editor of *The Attentive Listener: Three Centuries of Music Criticism*.

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**Jonathan William Moyer** is the David S. Boe chair and associate professor of organ at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he oversees one of the largest and most diverse collegiate collections of pipe organs in the United States. He is organist of the Church of the Covenant in Cleveland, OH, and actively concertizes throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan, specializing in a vast repertoire from the renaissance to the 21st century. *The Baltimore Sun* said of his complete performance of the organ works of Olivier Messiaen: "Moyer revealed the composer's musical genius as vividly as his spiritual richness, taking full advantage of the cathedral's organ....Passages of rapt reflection were shaped with a keen sense of import." His lauded CD *Voices of the Hanse*, recorded on the 1637 Stellwagen organ in Lübeck, Germany, released on Gothic Records, features music from 17th-century North German sources.

He has performed concerts in such notable venues as Katharinenkirche (Hamburg), Jakobikirche (Lübeck), Ludgerikirche (Norden), Laurenskerk (Alkmaar), Bachkirche (Arnstadt), Schwerin Cathedral, Marienkirche (Stralsund), Marktkirche (Hannover), St. Sulpice (Paris), Blois Cathedral, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Washington D.C.), the Eastman School of Music, the Charlotte Bach Festival, as well as National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society. He has performed with ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Blue Water Chamber Orchestra (Cleveland), and the Oberlin Symphony Orchestra.

Recognized by the Oberlin Conservatory with the excellence in teaching award, Dr. Moyer guides his students to cultivate within themselves a deeply authentic musicianship that is rooted in excellence, historical awareness, radiant beauty, and a sense of service. He has been a visiting lecturer in organ at the Hochschule für Musik in Lübeck, Germany, the Yale Summer Organ Academy, and the Interlochen School of the Arts, and has adjudicated both national and international competitions.

Dr. Moyer holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree and Graduate Performance Diploma in organ from the Peabody Conservatory of Music (Baltimore) as a student of Donald Sutherland and Gillian Weir, where he also completed a Master's degree in piano as a student of Ann Schein. He earned an Artist Diploma in organ from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music as a student of James David Christie and Olivier Latry, and a Bachelor of Music degree in piano from Bob Jones University as a student of Laurence Morton. He studied further with organists Susan Landale, Marie-Claire Alain, Guy Bovet, and Michael Radulescu. In 2008, he received the second prize in the Sixth International Musashino Organ Competition in Tokyo, Japan, and in 2005 he was a finalist in the St Albans International Organ Competition. He is represented by WindWerk Artists.

*Cleveland Classical.com* described his playing: “Moyer skillfully chose registrations that showed the range of color the instrument can produce and suited them perfectly to the music at hand...It's delightful to hear an organ recital where everything seems so right and the playing so much in the service of the instrument and the repertoire.”

Dr. Moyer resides in Shaker Heights, Ohio, along with his wife, organist, Dr. Kaori Hongo, and sons, Christopher Sho and Samuel Kazu.