

LRCD-1119



MENDELSSOHN

Rarities

DAVID HIGGS
HANS DAVIDSSON
WILLIAM PORTER
ORGANISTS

CHRIST CHURCH
SCHOLA CANTORUM
STEPHEN KENNEDY, DIRECTOR



1	March in C Major	(David Higgs)	2:54
2	Andante in G Minor	(Thatcher Lyman)	1:29
3	Prelude in C Minor	(Thatcher Lyman)	2:52
	Sechs Sprüche (Op. 79)	(Schola Cantorum)	
4	Spruch #5 (Advent)		1:45
5	Spruch #1 (Christmas)		1:41
6	Spruch #2 (New Year's Day)		3:07
7	Spruch #4 (Holy Week)		1:56
8	Spruch #6 (Good Friday)		1:58
9	Spruch #3 (Ascension)		1:42
10	Präludium in D Minor	(Jonathan Wessler)	5:38
11	Allegro in B flat Major	(Stephen Kennedy)	2:59
12	Andante in F Major	(David Higgs)	3:20
13	Andante in D Major [with Variations]	(David Higgs)	5:41
	Aus tiefer Noth schrei' ich zu dir	(Schola Cantorum)	
14	1. Choral ("Aus tiefer Noth")		1:12
15	2. Fuga ("Aus tiefer Noth")		4:55
16	3. Aria ("Bei dir gilt nichts den Gnad' und Gunst")		4:10
17	4. Choral ("Und ob es währt bis in die Nacht")		2:53
18	5. Choral ("Ob bei uns ist der Sünden viel")		1:35
19	Nachspiel (D Major)	(Hans Davidsson)	5:38
20	Andante: Sanft (D Major)	(William Porter)	3:43
21	Allegro [Chorale & Fugue] in D Minor/Major	(William Porter)	8:42
22	Verleih' uns Frieden	(Schola Cantorum)	5:24

TOTAL TIME: 75:14

THE MUSIC

Originally intended as one of the movements of the Organ Sonatas (Op. 65), Mendelssohn vigorously rejected the Allegro moderato maestoso [March in C Major] by drawing a very large X across the entire page. It remained unpublished until 1988—an attractive example of the composer's oft repressed fondness for marches on the organ.

The *Andante in G Minor* (1833), a genuine and apparently Mendelssohn's only miniature for organ, was inscribed on a single page in Vincent Novello's autograph album. It is a charming example of the composer's ability to shape a skillfully finished and polished work *in nuce*.

Prelude in C Minor (1841) is an occasional work, written for the Edinburgh



organist and conductor, Henry Dibdin, who requested a "long measure psalm tune". Mendelssohn, having no idea what that was, sent him this prelude. Clearly based on the *Andante in G Minor* (track 2), it expands Mendelssohn's original thought and demonstrates his deft contrapuntal hand when operating within a limited scope.

Perhaps the most pertinent observation one might make about Mendelssohn's *Sechs Sprüche* is that they are almost never performed. And on those rare occasions when performances are given, they invariably take place in a concert rather than liturgical setting. The original purpose for which Mendelssohn wrote them—each as part of the Prussian king's new liturgical order of service—has vanished, and with it their musical *raison d'être*. Thus liturgically marooned, they have long existed in a kind of repertorial limbo. Between twenty and forty measures in length, these pieces are terse statements: too long for introits and generally too short for motets, which, in fact, they are. Written for the Berlin Cathedral Choir, which consisted of some of the most highly trained professional singers in the German capital, these six *a cappella* motets for double chorus are among the composer's more demanding choral works. This is Mendelssohn at his most intellectual, and most austere.

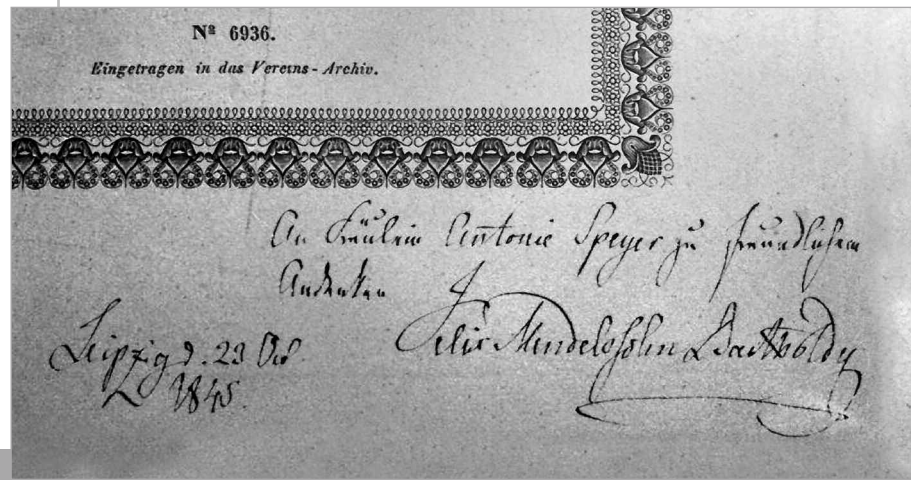
Neither the order in which the *Sprüche* were written (between 1843 and 1846) nor the jumbled sequence in which they were originally published has anything to

do with their thematic order in the liturgical year. Because there seems to be no reason for the order of their original sequences, they are performed here according to their chronological place in the liturgical year: Advent, Christmas, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Good Friday and Ascension. None of these seasonal or specific days necessarily falls on a Sunday, and thus the proscription against the use of "Halleluja" in the penitential seasons would seem to apply. Contrary to Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions, however, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV's service protocol clearly endorsed the use of "Halleluja" on virtually any occasion. The concluding "Halleluja" in each *Spruch*, although individually different and distinct, thus constitutes a common link within the entire set.

Composed at different times and under different circumstances, there is little other musical cohesion in the set. The two *Sprüche* for Advent and Christmas share G Major as their common tonality, and each begins with the outline of an ascending G major triad, while both are also linked by a textual exhortation to rejoice. In contrast

to the contrapuntal character of these first two *Sprüche*, the *Spruch* for New Year's Day is insistently homophonic; quarter and half notes prevail in a matrix of block chords, and the solitary instance of passing notes hardly softens the unrelenting aura of severity. ~ The *Spruch* for Holy Week is a study in contrasts ~ between *solì* and *tutti*, and between *pianissimo* and *forte*. A strongly homophonic element characterizes the motet until the brief polyphonic Halleluja at the end. Similarly, the *Spruch* for Good

Friday, the shortest of the motets, is a sustained study in block chords, marked *Sostenuto e grave*. The initial *pianissimo* gives way to *forte*, but the mood of the whole, including the jolting "Halleluja", remains unswervingly restrained and severe. In the final *Spruch*, intended for Ascension Day, the mood of joy and majesty ("*Allegro maestoso e moderato*") reflects the nature of the holiday, as Mendelssohn mixes homophony and polyphony in a blend of spirited exchanges between the two choruses.



Mendelssohn's first work written for organ and composed at age eleven, the **Präludium in D Minor** (1820) was doubtless a byproduct of his recently begun organ lessons with August Wilhelm Bach. Although it is manifestly a youthful endeavor—block chords predominate and pedals are largely ignored—Mendelssohn nonetheless managed to infuse it with a sense of direction and cohesion that holds the listener's interest for more than one hundred thirty bars.

The **Allegro in B flat Major** (Dec. 1844?) was originally intended as the final movement of Organ Sonata IV. Mendelssohn had severe reservations about it and finally discarded it in April 1845. Virtually never found on recital programs and almost never performed, this Allegro is certainly Mendelssohn's strangest organ work. Pianistic in character, its driving force is the relentless rhythmic pattern of descending chords against a melodic line that alternately soars above and below it. Despite its unorganistic nature, the Allegro possesses a contagious charm and deserves to be better known.

A transparent three-voiced movement, this attractive **Andante in F major** (1844) was the first piece composed by Mendelssohn, when he began work on what would eventually become Six Organ Sonatas (Op. 65). Although at first glance it appears to be a trio, the absence of an active and independent pedal part eliminates it as an organ trio in the traditional sense. It may, however, be more accurately characterized as a two-part invention over a supportive pedal line. In this respect it is not unrelated to the Allegretto of the Fourth Organ Sonata.

Originally intended for inclusion in the Organ Sonatas, but probably eliminated because of its length, the **Andante in D Major** [with Variations] (1844) was apparently dear to Mendelssohn's heart, since two surviving fragments suggest that he continued to tinker with it later. Here, in its definitive form, Mendelssohn features the theme in both the right and left hands, and against triplets, and in 6/8 meter. Predictably, at the end he restates the theme in its original harmonized form.



Inspired by a small volume of Luther's chorales given him by his Viennese host, Franz Hauser, upon his departure for Italy in 1830, Mendelssohn eventually composed a half dozen chorale cantatas based on the chorales in his *Lutherisches Liederbüchlein*.

Among the first of what he referred to as the "Lutheran Chorale Project" was "**Aus tiefer Noth**", completed in Venice on 19 October 1830. It is the only one of the set that he published during his lifetime (*Drei Kirchemusiken*, Bonn, 1832).

Surrounded in Venice by magnificent examples of renaissance and mannerist architecture, Mendelssohn seems to have found inspiration for "**Aus tiefer Noth**" as much in the late renaissance and early baroque composers as he did in J. S. Bach. Framed at the beginning and end by straightforward statements of the Chorale, the cantata is neatly constructed of five roughly equal parts. The two settings of the Chorale differ harmonically only to a slight degree: the first is more restrained and terse. The second setting of the chorale, at the end, is slightly more ornate, but otherwise, the differences are minor. This simple framework not only gives a contained form and shape to the motet, but it is also reminiscent of Bach's chorale partitas for organ, in which the composer



whether such an alteration was permissible (14 October, 1830). The Fugue itself is a model of 16th/17th century counterpoint and could quite conceivably have been written two hundred years earlier. Although impersonal stylistically, Mendelssohn was nonetheless as keenly aware of the overall sonority, as he was elsewhere in his choral music. The Fugue, unintentionally perhaps, also provides a valuable glimpse into Mendelssohn's understanding and appreciation of the popular "Palestrina Style" movement of mid-nineteenth century Germany. (Giuseppe Baini's seminal study of Palestrina's life

normally repeats the Chorale as the concluding movement.

The second movement is a fugue, with the first phrase of the Chorale as the subject. Mendelssohn changed the first note from a quarter to a half note, a move that caused him such concern, that he sought the advice of his teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, as to

and works had appeared only three years earlier, 1828.)

Mendelssohn's score implies that the third movement, the Aria with Chorus, should flow seamlessly out of the Fugue. Here, at the center of the work, Mendelssohn's style changes abruptly, as the impersonal gives way to the personal,

as counterpoint yields to harmony, and Mendelssohn's antiquarian stance is replaced by a clearly contemporary, indeed, intimate manner. Floating above a simple organ accompaniment, that doubles the melody, the tenor solo melds almost imperceptibly into the full choir, which in large measure is a reprise of the Aria. Handled with consummate restraint, the tempo is *Adagio* throughout, as is the dynamic marking, *piano*.

In the fourth movement, a *figuriertes Choral*, the *tutti* soprano line carries the chorale melody against a contrapuntally worked out development in the three lower voices (all *Solo*), continuing the tempo and mood of the third movement (*Andante, Dolce*). In closing the movement, Mendelssohn allows himself a brief indulgence in one of his favorite devices, *durezza e ligature*, as the soprano line remains stationary for the final seven measures over constantly moving harmonic line.

In the fifth movement, a restatement of the chorale, Mendelssohn, looks back to the Fugue (second movement) and again transforms the opening note of the

chorale from a quarter- to a half-note. Otherwise, the reiteration of the unadorned chorale serves as a symmetrical conclusion to the cantata.

Written in Rome during Mendelssohn's Grand Tour, the *Nachspiel* ("Postlude") is Mendelssohn's most enigmatic organ work. Specifically, its purpose is unknown (i.e., postlude to what?). Most probably, Mendelssohn intended it as a postlude to his chorale cantata "Wir glauben all' einen Gott", although that cannot be documented. In 1844 Mendelssohn returned to the *Nachspiel* and, with a slightly changed rhythmic pattern and minus its fugue, used it as the final movement of his Second Organ Sonata.

Although clearly an apprenticeship work, in which the composer is still trying to establish his own distinct approach and style, this amiable *Andante in D Major* seems to have been influenced, if not inspired, by one of many similar short movements, romantically described as *sanft* (gentle, soft, tender) by his former organ teacher, August Wilhelm Bach.

The *Allegro* [Chorale and Fugue] in D/d was the last of four movements written in the first inspirational heat of July 1844, as Mendelssohn began work on his “Voluntary” project, commissioned by his English publisher, Charles Coventry. Covering nearly two hundred measures, it is Mendelssohn’s longest work for organ, which may well be the reason why it was finally culled from the movements chosen for inclusion in his Six Organ Sonatas. This tripartite composition opens with a fiery toccata-like fantasy on a bold theme. Improvisatory in style and imbued with a ferocity and intensity virtually unparalleled in Mendelssohn’s *oeuvre* for organ, the composer combines rapid scale passages with block chords in an upward journey, that culminates with the Chorale bursting forth in D Major. The Chorale itself is an original four-square statement, alternating with and without pedals, and the Fugue that follows grows directly out of the final chord of the Chorale. The careful listener will hear in the fugal subject the opening melody of the Andante in D Major with Variations that Mendelssohn had completed only a day or so earlier. Curiously, Mendelssohn offers

only the dynamic indication, *forte* at the beginning of the *Allegro*, despite the fact that several implicit, but significant dynamic variations occur in the course of the work. Equally curious, but nonetheless characteristic, Mendelssohn concludes the Fugue in a descending, rather than ascending, direction, and ends at the rather low pitch of D above middle C.

Unlike “Aus tiefer Noth” or the other chorale cantatas, all of which were part of the Lutheran Chorale Project and based on chorale *canti firmi*, “Verleih’ uns Frieden” is not grounded in a chorale, but is an entirely original creation, a kind of non-sectarian *cantique* or sacred song. The text is simply a translation of the prayer for peace, “Da/Dona nobis pacem”, which is the concluding prayer in numerous liturgical contexts.

Although Mendelssohn gave the opening melody no specific designation, it would be quite appropriate to describe it as an Aria, precisely as he had explicitly titled the central movement of his cantata “Aus tiefer Noth”. Apparently not noticed until now, these two movements are

intimately related; the opening eight bars of both the Aria and “Verleih’ uns Frieden” are virtually identical.

The intent, as Mendelssohn originally planned it, was simplicity itself: “a canon with cello and basses”. As the work progresses, however, Mendelssohn brings in more instruments and more voices, but without losing in any way the work’s crystalline purity. The principal melody that Mendelssohn called his “little song” (“das kleine Lied”) ranks among the most moving and beautiful ever to come from the composer’s pen, yet strangely, the cantata is rarely heard. Robert Schumann was among the first to recognize this “uniquely beautiful composition”, and announced that it “deserves to become world-famous”. After all, “Raphael and Murillo cannot remain hidden for very long.” (Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III.40).

After a short introduction by the bassoons, violoncelli and contrabass/organ, which sets the serene mood of the work, the melody is first quietly intoned in the bass (*p e dolce*). Then, after the briefest of interludes, the alto repeats the melody (*p e dolce*) in dialogue with the bass. The use of low tessitura in both the choral and instrumental lines, to enhance the calm and peaceful aura that pervades the work, is characteristic of Mendelssohnian technique. Leading into the third and concluding part of the cantata the composer gradually introduces other instruments, and finally the full chorus enters in a conventional four part, hymn-like harmonization, but still at *mezzoforte*. In the final dozen or so bars Mendelssohn introduces a subtle figuration of the original melody and closes with a *diminuendo* to *pp* in all parts. ~ Extending for a mere 102 bars, “Verleih’ uns Frieden”

could perhaps also be described as a choral miniature. In the course of the entire cantata the range of every voice, with but a single brief exception, never exceeds an octave.

—WM. A. LITTLE



**THE CRAIGHEAD-SAUNDERS ORGAN AT CHRIST CHURCH, ROCHESTER, NY
MODELED AFTER THE 1776 ADAM GOTTLOB CASPARINI ORGAN
IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA.**

The Craighead-Saunders Organ in Christ Church, Rochester is the newest instrument in the collection at the Eastman School of Music. The organ is the result of an eight-year international research project documenting and copying the 1776 organ built by Adam Gottlob Casparini (1715-1788) in the Holy Ghost Church in Vilnius, Lithuania, one of the best preserved late-baroque organs in all of Europe. After a thorough documentation of the original instrument, a team from GOArt, at Gothenburg University in Sweden, led by Mats Arvidsson and Munetaka Yokota, worked closely with the Eastman School of Music and a group of some of the finest organ builders in America (Steven Dieck, Paul Fritts, Bruce Fowkes, Martin Pasi, and George Taylor) to

produce the first research instrument after Casparini anywhere in the world, and the first large-scale historical reconstruction at this level in America. The instrument opens a new window on the aesthetics of the Enlightenment Era and on the organ music of an often ignored period. At the same time this organ sheds new light on well-known repertoires not only from the 18th century, but also from a large part of the 19th century.



CLAVIATURA PRIMA

Bourdu. á 16.
Principal. á 8.
Hohlflaut. á 8.
Qvintathon. á 8.
Octava Principal. á 4.
Flaut Travers. á 4.
Qvinta. á 5.

(sounding at 3-foot pitch)

Super Octava. á 2.
Flasch Flot. á 2.
Tertia. á 1 3/5
Mixtura. á 5. Choris.
Trompet. á 8.

CLAVIATURA SECUNDA

I U L A. á 8.
Principal Amalel. á 8.
Unda Maris. á 8.
Flaut Major. á 8.
PRINCIPAL. á 4.
Flaut Minor. á 4.
Spiel Flet. á 4.
Octava. á 2.
Wald Flot. á 2.
Mixtura. á 4. Choris.
Dulcian. á 16.
Vox Humana. á 8.

PEDAL

Principal Bass. á 16.
Violon Bass. á 16.
Full Bass. á 12.
Octava Bass. á 8.
Flaut & Quint Bass. á 8.
Super Octava Bass. á 4.
Posaun Bass. á 16.
Trompet Bass. á 8.

Spellings & capitalizations are according to the original stop labels.

ACCESSORIES

Ventil ad Claviaturam Primam
Ventil ad Claviaturam Secundum
Ventil Pedall
Two tremulants
BEBNY (Drum)

Vox Campanarum (Glockenspiel)
Gwiazdy (Cymbelstern)
Kalilujactgo (Calcant)
Pedal Coupler (Claviatura Prima to Pedal)
Shove Coupler (Claviatura Secunda to Claviatura Prima)



THE ARTISTS

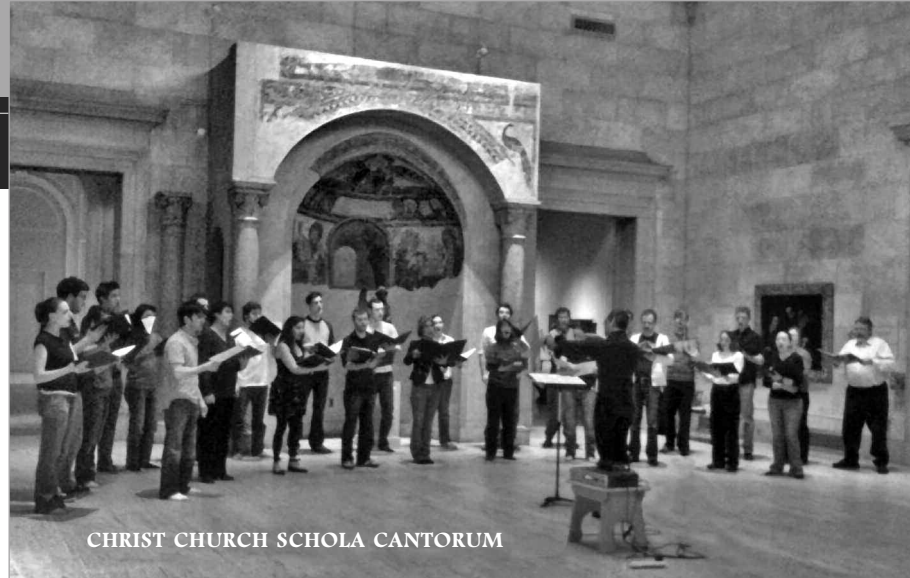
Hans Davidsson served as Professor of Organ at the Eastman School of Music, and Project Director of the Eastman-Rochester Organ Initiative from 2001 to 2012. In 2012 he began work as Professor of Organ at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. From 1987 to 2005 he served as Professor of Organ at the School of Music at Göteborg University in Sweden, and he is the founder of the Göteborg Organ Art Center (GOArt). He participates in festivals and organ academies worldwide.

One of America's leading concert organists, **David Higgs** is also Professor of Organ, and Chair of the Department of Organ and Historical Keyboards at the Eastman School of Music, where he has been a member of the faculty since 1992. He performs extensively in North America and abroad, has

inaugurated many important new instruments, and performs, teaches, and adjudicates at many of the world's major festivals and competitions.

Stephen Kennedy is Director of Music and Organist of Christ Church, Rochester, Instructor of Sacred Music at the Eastman School of Music, and Instructor of Organ for Eastman's Community Music School. He is the founder and director of the Christ Church Schola Cantorum, a vocal ensemble that specializes in the weekly performance of Compline at Christ Church. Stephen performs often as organ soloist in programs of standard repertoire as well as recitals consisting solely of improvisation.

Thatcher Lyman holds degrees from Oberlin College and Conservatory, the University of York, England, and the



CHRIST CHURCH SCHOLA CANTORUM

Eastman School of Music, where he is pursuing a DMA degree in Organ Performance. In 2009, Thatcher received Eastman's Gerald Barnes Award for Excellence in Pipe Organ. He is Director of Music at St. Mary's Church, Rochester, and Assistant Director of the Schola Cantorum of Christ Church.

William Porter is Professor of Harpsichord, Organ, and Improvisation at the Eastman School of Music, and also teaches organ and improvisation at McGill University in Montreal. Widely known as a performer and teacher in the United States and Europe, he has also achieved international recognition for his skill in improvisation in

a wide variety of styles. He teaches and performs at the world's leading festivals and academies.

Jonathan Wessler is the assistant organist at St. Paul's Church and Choir School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he accompanies the famous Choir of St. Paul's. He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Eastman School of Music, and has studied organ performance with David Boe, Craig Cramer, and William Porter.

The **Christ Church Schola Cantorum** was founded in 1997 by Stephen Kennedy for the purpose of performing the weekly Office of Compline at Christ Church each Sunday night. The Schola Cantorum is comprised of parishioners of Christ Church, Rochester-area musicians, and Eastman School of Music faculty and students, all of whom volunteer their time and talent. Course credit at the Eastman School of Music is offered for participation in the ensemble.



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CREDITS

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