



Laureate Series • Organ



Niklas Jahn

First Prize

9th International

Organ Competition

Musashino-Tokyo 2023

ORGAN RECITAL

J.S. BACH

BRAHMS

HOSOKAWA

MESSIAEN

SZATHMÁRY

VIERNE

Niklas Jahn: Organ Recital

J.S. Bach • Brahms • Hosokawa • Messiaen • Szathmáry • Vierne

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Toccata and Fugue in F major, BWV 540 (before 1731)

Both the circumstances that led Johann Sebastian Bach to write the *Toccata and Fugue in F major, BWV 540* and its date of composition are unclear. While the *Toccata* was probably written sometime after 1714, the *Fugue* is thought to have been composed prior to 1731. Weighing in at 438 bars and serving as a prelude, the *Toccata* is the longest of all Bach's compositions in the toccata-and-fugue format and is therefore often regarded as his *pièce de résistance*. The monumental *Toccata* begins with an extended canon over a pedal point, followed by a virtuosic pedal solo. The canon and pedal solo are repeated with slight variations in the dominant key of C major and lead into an imitative concertante development combined with incisive chords, culminating in a grandiose conclusion. The opening of the double fugue is reminiscent of the sublime *stile antico*. By contrast, the second subject is characterised by flowing movement. It is subsequently presented perfectly formally combined with the first subject, before the tension resolves in majestic melodious sound in the final two pairs of entries.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

**Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. 122 –
No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen**

(with A major chord ending after autograph held at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien in the *Nachlass Johannes Brahms*) (1896)

The tenth of Johannes Brahms' *Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. posth. 122, Herzlich tut mich verlangen*, is one of the last pieces he composed before his death in the spring of 1896. The *Op. 122* pieces, which are mainly based on hymns about death and of eternity, weren't published until 1902, after Brahms had died. This piece he based on the Protestant hymn *Herzlich tut mich verlangen*, a prayer yearning for deliverance and redemption through death. And just as Brahms became increasingly preoccupied with the subject of death towards the end of his life, so his use of darkish sonorities, with the melody line in the tenor clef, and his development of the chorale using lyrical but monotonous-sounding counterpoint to express the text's world-weary character makes chorale prelude *No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen* feel as though it is expressing a desire for death.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

L'Ascension (1933–34)

III. Transports de joie d'une âme devant la gloire
du Christ qui est la sienne

IV. Prière du Christ montant vers son Père

Transports de joie d'une âme devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne ('Outbursts of joy from a soul faced with the glory of Christ, which is its own glory'), from the cycle *L'Ascension*, was given its first performance by the composer Olivier Messiaen himself, in 1935. Messiaen initially conceived the cycle as an orchestral work on the Christian Feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ. He arranged it for organ at the request of the publisher, Leduc, composing a new third movement for solo organ because the third movement of the orchestral version wasn't suitable for transcribing. The movement is in the style of a toccata and stands out for its incisive chord sequences and deployment of freer and more strictly metrical passages. Highly virtuosic phrases and majestic tones express the outburst of joy at Christ's Ascension.

Movement four, *Prière du Christ montant vers son Père* ('Christ's Prayer as he ascends to his Father') is an arrangement of the orchestral version, where it is played just by the string section. This musical prayer is characterised by an extremely slow, rapt tempo. The rising melodies and transcendent harmonies point to the prayer being offered up to God. The extremely long, open final D7 chord is remarkable. It is intended to evoke an image of Christ ascending into heaven but remaining with us through his Spirit.

Zsigmond Szathmáry (b. 1939)

Feuertaupe (2004)

Zsigmond Szathmáry's *Feuertaupe* ('Baptism With Fire') was composed in 2004 and commissioned by the International Organ Festival in San Sebastián in Spain. Because of its extreme virtuosity, its energy and its stunning diversity, Szathmáry himself associates it with the events of Pentecost – forceful utterance with tongues of fire. Formally speaking, Szathmáry sees his work as a five-part toccata with a freedom of form and contrasting structure reminiscent of North German antecedents, but without the fugues. His love of experimentation is expressed in extreme contrasts in sonority, character and exuberant virtuosity.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Prelude and Fugue in D minor, BWV 539 –

Fugue (c. 1720)

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Fugue in D minor, BWV 539* is not an original composition for organ but an arrangement of one of his fugues for solo violin (movement II of *Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001*) with two extra bars. The organ version of the fugue dates from 1720 (or later) and Bach's years in Leipzig. The subject of the fugue is marked by playful brevity and a steady rhythm, and its cheerful, virtuoso character sets the tone of the piece. Repeated notes give the work an air of easy virtuosity. Because it has been arranged for organ, this fugue doesn't exhibit the same dense polyphony as all Bach's other organ fugues and is thus something of a one-off.

Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955)

Cloudscape (2000)

Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa's *Cloudscape* was written for the fourth International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo in 2000. In it, the organ takes on the role of the *shō*, a Japanese mouth organ that is one of the instruments used in traditional Japanese court music or *gagaku*. The sounds produced by the left and right hands and the pedals should be seen as three *shō* playing music belonging to different dimensions. These three layers of pitch, sometimes converging and harmonising with one another, then drifting apart and contrasting, create a dense web of sound. The piece is characterised by the impression of celestial music it evokes by means of sustained high pitches and the resultant dissonant soundscapes. It reaches a central climax with harsh chords in the lower register, then the celestial air of the first part resumes and fades away to nothing.

Louis Vierne (1870–1937)

Organ Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 59 –

V. Final (1930)

Louis Vierne's *Sixth Organ Symphony, Op. 59* was his last major work, composed in 1930. It was premiered on 3 June 1935 in Notre-Dame in Paris by his famous pupil Maurice Duruflé. The *Sixth Symphony* is cyclical, and is built around a unifying theme that is presented in a different rhythmic guise in each movement. Despite the many blows fate dealt him, Vierne's fifth-movement *Final* is a joyful, dance-like musical celebration. In it, a glittering theme in radiant B major unfolds above an incisive timpani rhythm in the pedal. In the central section a *cantabile* second theme unfurls first in the pedal, then in the soprano. After the cyclic theme has been stated one last time in the pedal in combination with the cantabile second theme, the legendary highly virtuosic pedal scales erupt, ending in a frenetic conclusion.

Niklas Jahn

English translation: Susan Baxter

Musashino Civic Cultural Hall, Recital Hall

(Musashino Shimin Bunka Kaikan)

3-9-11 Naka-cho, Musashino-City, Tokyo 180-0006 JAPAN

Marcussen & Søn, 1984

I. Brystværk C-g³ (schwellbar)

Gedakt	8'
Quintatøn	8'
Principal	4'
Kobbelfløjte	4'
Gemshorn	2'
Sesquialtera	II
Quint	1 1/3'
Scharf	III
Dulcian	8'
Tremulant	

II. Hovedværk C-g³

Gedacktpommer	16'
Principal	8'
Hulfløjte	8'
Gedackt	8'
Oktav	4'
Spidsfløjte	4'
Octav	2'
Cornet	III
Mixtur	V
Trompet	8'

III. Svelleværk C-g³

Rørfløjte	8'
Gamba	8'
Vox Celeste	8'
Principal	4'
Traversfløjte	4'
Nasat	2 2/3'
Waldfløjte	2'
Terts	1 3/5'
Mixtur	IV
Fagot	16'
Obo	8'
Vox humana	8'

Tremulant

Pedal C-f¹

Principal	16'
Subbas	16'
Oktav	8'
Gedackt	8'
Oktav	4'
Nathorn	2'
Rauschquint	V
Basun	16'
Trompet	8'
Skalmeje	4'

I-II, III-II, III-I, I-P, II-P, III-P
 Mechanical key action
 Mechanical and electric stop action,
 41 stops, 2780 pipes
 Expression pedals for BV and SV
 1000 x 4 general combinations
 Step pistons
 Crescendo pedal
 Tutti, Mixtur ab, Zungen ab
 Tuning: equal temperament
 a¹=442Hz



Niklas Jahn



Photo: Tobias Ritz, Stiftung Frauenkirche Dresden

German-born organist Niklas Jahn studied with Hans-Jürgen Kaiser and Gerhard Gnann at the Hochschule für Musik Mainz, and Matthias Maierhofer, Vincent Dubois, David Franke and Frank Markowitsch at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. He is a laureate of numerous internationally renowned organ competitions, including the 32nd St Albans International Organ Festival (organ improvisation category, First Prize), the 9th International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo (First Prize), and the 53rd International Haarlem Organ Improvisation Competition (finalist), as well as the 13th International Organ Competition in Korschenbroich (First Prize). On 1 December 2024 – exactly 288 years to the day after Johann Sebastian Bach played an acclaimed organ concert on the then newly consecrated Silbermann organ – Jahn was appointed organist at the Frauenkirche in Dresden. He has lectured at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken and the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg, and currently teaches at the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt in Weimar.

Niklas Jahn, winner of the 9th International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo in 2023, was appointed organist at the Frauenkirche in Dresden in December 2024, the site of an acclaimed concert by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1736. This album features two works by Bach, including the monumental *Toccata and Fugue in F major*, as well as Toshio Hosokawa's celestial *Cloudscape*, and the ultra-virtuosic *Feuertaufe* by Zsigmond Szathmáry. French repertoire by Messiaen and Vierne can also be heard alongside Brahms whose *Chorale Preludes* are among the last pieces he composed.

NIKLAS JAHN

Organ Recital

on the Marcussen & Søn Organ of the Musashino Civic Cultural Hall, Tokyo

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) | 4 IV. Prière du Christ montant
vers son Père | 7:15 |
| 1 Toccata and Fugue in F major,
BWV 540 (before 1731) 14:22 | Zsigmond Szathmáry (b. 1939) | |
| Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) | 5 Feuertaufe (2004) 11:01 | |
| 2 Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. 122 –
No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen
(with A major chord ending after autograph
held at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde
in Wien in the <i>Nachlass Johannes Brahms</i>)
(1896) 3:58 | Johann Sebastian Bach | |
| Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) | 6 Prelude and Fugue in D minor,
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| L'Ascension (1933–34)
(version for organ) (excerpts) | Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955) | |
| 3 III. Transports de joie d'une âme devant
la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne 4:34 | 7 Cloudscape (2000) 7:19 | |
| | Louis Vierne (1870–1937) | |
| | 8 Organ Symphony No. 6 in B minor,
Op. 59 – V. Final (1930) 7:37 | |

Booklet notes in German can be accessed at www.naxos.com/notes/574649.htm

Recorded: 19–20 September 2023 at the Musashino Civic Cultural Hall, Tokyo, Japan

Producer: International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo

Engineers and editors: Yasuhisa Takashima, Taiki Kubota (Camerata Tokyo, Inc.) • Booklet notes: Niklas Jahn

Publishers: Éditions Bärenreiter Verlag **1** **5** **6** **8**, Breitkopf & Härtel **2**,

Alphonse Leduc **3** **4**, Schott Music Co. Ltd., Tokyo **7**

Kindly sponsored by the Musashino Foundation for Culture and Lifelong Learning

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