

Jonathan Ryan

ORGANIST

Johann Sebastian Bach.

GERMAN ORGAN MASS
CLAVIER-ÜBUNG III

presented by the

MUSIC AT
ST. PHILIP
CONCERT SERIES

in partnership with



*with chorales sung by
St. Philip Staff Singers*



Sunday
November 5, 2017
3:00 pm

St. Philip Presbyterian Church
Houston, Texas

ABOUT THE ARTIST

“Jonathan Ryan is one of the brightest younger artists in the field today ... mastery of the music, and a clear vision for its interpretation.” “Ryan will take your breath away.” (The Diapason)



Acclaimed by audiences and critics alike for his strong communicative skills in numerous styles, depth of musicianship, and passion, **Jonathan Ryan** is hailed as one of the premiere young concert organists of our time. His command of an exceptionally large breadth of repertoire, spanning from the Renaissance to numerous solo and collaborative premieres, coupled with striking virtuosity, enables bold, imaginative programming and exceptional use of each organ's unique capability.

Mr. Ryan has the rare distinction of holding six First Prize awards from major international and national organ competitions. He most notably entered the international spotlight when awarded both First Prize and the only auxiliary prize, the LeTourneau Concerto Prize, in the 2009 Jordan II International Organ Competition.

Jonathan Ryan's newest recording entitled *Influences*, recorded on the Stahlhuth-Jann organ at St. Martin's Church in Dudelange, Luxembourg, appeared in December 2015 on the independent boutique label Acis. It received the exceptional honor of nomination consideration in the 2017 GRAMMY® awards, and features major works by Dupré and Willan, a premiere recording of music by Ad Wammes, and a commissioned piece by renowned English composer Philip Moore. His debut solo organ recording, *A Cathedral's Voice* (Raven 941), was released in 2012 to immediate critical acclaim, including a five-star review in the London-based *Choir & Organ*. (Both of these CDs are available for purchase in the vestibule this afternoon.) Mr. Ryan's performances have also been featured on the nationally syndicated radio programs *Pipedreams* and *With Heart and Voice*.

Solo performance engagements have taken Mr. Ryan to numerous prominent venues, festivals, and conventions throughout the United States and Europe, including St. Paul's Cathedral in London (UK), the Nicolaikirche in Leipzig (Germany), the Cathédrale St-André in Bordeaux (France), international organ festivals in Zürich (Switzerland), Hamburg (Germany), Stuttgart (Germany), the Piccolo Spoleto Festival's prestigious Spotlight Series (Charleston, SC), the inaugural organ concert series at the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland CA, the 2014 Boston National Convention of the American Guild of Organists, and three National Conventions of the Organ Historical Society. This afternoon's program is the final installment in Mr. Ryan's 2016-2017 recital project featuring performances of J. S. Bach's monumental *Clavier-Übung III* on important organs by historically-informed builders in the United States.

Born into a musical family in Charlotte, NC, Ryan first started playing the organ at age eight. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Eastman School of Music, as well as Fellow (FAGO) and Choirmaster (ChM) certifications from the American Guild of Organists.

Ryan serves as Director of Music & Organist at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Dallas, TX, where his passions for conducting, performing and teaching combine with his love of sacred music at the country's second largest Episcopal church. Prior to his appointment in Dallas, he served as Associate Director of Music within the music program of nine choirs at Christ Church (Episcopal) in Greenwich CT. He also serves on the faculty of the Church Music Association of America and their annual summer Colloquia, for which he regularly gives lectures, masterclasses, performs as an organist and conductor, and pursues one of his greatest interests in Western music: Gregorian chant.

For additional information, including upcoming performances and purchasing recordings, please visit:

www.jonathan-ryan.com

Special thanks to St. Philip staff singers Julia Engel, Megan Gryga, Cecilia Duarte, Gerardo Nuñez, Esteban Cordero, César Torruella, Nicholas Rathgeb, organist Jeffrey Cooper, and music director Randall Swanson for presenting the original chorale tunes (most of them by Martin Luther) used by Bach in the chorale preludes heard this afternoon.

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach.

(1685-1750)

from **Clavier-Übung III** (1739)

Prelude

BWV 552/1

Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit

BWV 669

ORIGINAL GERMAN CHORALE TEXT

Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit,
groß ist dein' Barmherzigkeit,
aller Ding' ein Schöpfer und Regierer:
eleison!

LITERAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Kyrie [Lord], God Father in eternity,
great is your mercy,
Creator and Ruler of all things:
eleison [have mercy]!

Christe, aller Welt Trost

BWV 670

Christe, aller Welt Trost,
uns Sünder allein du hast erlöst.

O Jesu, Gottes Sohn,
unser Mittler bist in dem höchsten Thron;
zu dir schreien wir aus Herzens Begier:
eleison!

Christe [Christ], comfort of the whole world,
you alone have redeemed us sinners.

O Jesus, Son of God,
you are our mediator at the highest throne;
to you we cry with heart' desire:
eleison [have mercy]!

Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist

BWV 671

Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist, tröst',
stärk' uns im Glauben allermeist,
daß wir am letzten End'
fröhlich uns scheiden aus diesem Elend:
eleison!

Kyrie [Lord], God, Holy Spirit, comfort,
strengthen us in faith most of all,
that we at our death
[may] cheerfully depart from this misery:
eleison [have mercy]!

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'

BWV 676

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'
und Dank für seine Gnade,

To God alone on high be glory
and thanks for his mercy,

<p>darum daß nun und nimmermehr uns rühren kann kein Schade. Ein Wohlgefall'n Gott an uns hat; Nun ist groß' Fried' ohn' Unterlaß, all' Fehd' hat nun ein Ende.</p>	<p>since now and forevermore no harm can touch us. God is well-pleased with us; now there is great peace without pause, all feuds now have an end.</p>
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Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot'

BWV 678

<p>Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot', die uns gab unser Herre Gott durch Mosen, seinen Diener treu, hoch auf dem Berg Sinai. <i>Kyrieleis</i>.</p>	<p>These are the holy Ten Commandments which our Lord God gave to us through Moses, his true servant, high on Mount Sinai. <i>Kyrie eleison</i> [Lord, have mercy].</p>
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Wir glauben all' an einen Gott

BWV 680

<p>Wir glauben all' an einen Gott, Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden, der sich zum Vater geben hat daß wir seine Kinder werden. Er will uns allzeit ernähren, Leib und Seel' auch wohl bewahren; allem Unfall will er wehren, kein Leid soll uns widerfahren. Er sorget für uns, hüt't und wacht, es steht alles in seiner Macht.</p>	<p>We all believe in one God, Creator of heaven and earth, who gave himself as Father so that we became his children. He will nourish us at all times, also preserve body and soul; all misfortunes will he prevent, no sorrow shall come to us. He cares for us, guards and watches, all things are in his power.</p>
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Vater unser im Himmelreich

BWV 682

<p>Vater unser im Himmelreich, der du uns alle heißest gleich Brüder sein und dich rufen an und willt das Beten von uns han: gib, daß nicht bet allein der Mund, hilf, daß es geh aus Herzensgrund.</p>	<p>Our Father in heaven, who calls us all equally to be brothers and call on you, and who desires prayer from us: grant that we pray not only with our mouths; help it to come from the bottom of our hearts.</p>
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Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam

BWV 684

<p>Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam nach seines Vaters Willen, von Sankt Johannis die Taufe nahm, sein Werk und Amt zu 'rfüllen. Da wollt er stiften uns ein Bad, zu waschen uns von Sünden, ersäufen auch den bitteren Tod durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden, es galt ein neues Leben.</p>	<p>Christ, our Lord, came to the Jordan according to his Father's will, he received baptism from Saint John, his work and ministry to fulfill. By this he wanted to establish for us a bath, to wash us from sins, to drown also bitter death through his own blood and wounds. This meant a new life.</p>
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Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir

BWV 686

Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir, Herr Gott, erhöre mein Rufen. Dein gnädig' Ohr neig her zu mir, und meiner Bitt' sie öffnen. Denn so du willst das sehen an, was Sünd' und Unrecht ist getan, wer kann, Herr, für dir bleiben?	From deepest anguish I call to you, Lord God, hear my cries. Bow down your gracious ear here to me, and be open to my prayer. Since you see, according to your will, what sin and injustice is done, who can, Lord, remain before you?
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Jesus Christus, unser Heiland

BWV 688

Jesus Christus unser Heiland, der von uns den Gotteszorn wandt', durch das bitter Leiden sein half er uns aus der Höllen Pein.	Jesus Christ, our Savior, who turned God's wrath from us, through his bitter suffering helped us out of the pain of hell.
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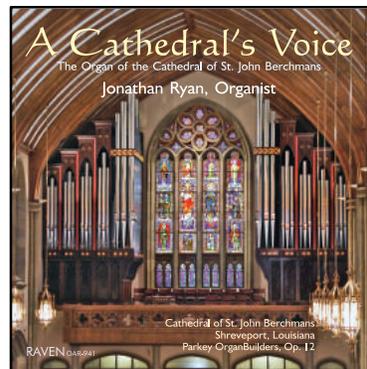
Fugue

BWV 552/1



**Please join us for a reception in the Gathering Area following the program.
A freewill offering in support of this concert series will be received at the Sanctuary exits.
Your presence and your generosity are welcome.**

Jonathan Ryan CDs are available this afternoon for \$20 each.



**Donations and CD purchases may be made by cash, check, credit card,
or Text-to-Give® (text **SPPC MASP** to **73256**, and enter the amount).**



ABOUT CLAVIER-ÜBUNG III

by Jonathan Ryan

The last 27 years of J.S. Bach's life, spent in Leipzig, Germany, where he was responsible for music at several of Leipzig's churches, rank among the most productive of any composer. With an astonishing output of nearly three hundred sacred cantatas, four passions, several oratorios, the *Mass in B Minor*, a number of enormous keyboard works such as *The Art of the Fugue* (the list can go on), these years constitute one of the great wonders of the Western musical world. In earlier positions, such as in Weimar, Bach wrote prolifically for the organ. In his Leipzig years, however, he would turn to the organ only to write the most profound music, such as his Prelude & Fugues in E Minor ("Wedge") and B Minor, which rank among the most mature of his free works. The "Great Eighteen" Chorale-Preludes similarly come from his Leipzig period. It's no surprise then that Bach's most significant single collection of organ music, the *Clavier-Übung III*, comes from his Leipzig years.

Unlike the First (1731) and Second (1735) Parts of the *Clavier-Übung* which drew heavily on music Bach had already written, the Third Part seems to have been all-new composition written expressly for this particular publication. Published in 1739, the *Clavier-Übung III* is really three collections in one: *pedaliter* pieces which use the organist's feet as well as the hands, *manualiter* pieces which use only the organist's hands, and four duos. Evidence indicates the four duetti might have been added after the lengthy printing process of the entire work was already begun. The title page of *Clavier-Übung III* indicates that the work is for music lovers, especially connoisseurs. Whatever the case, Bach clearly intended to demonstrate his brilliance, genius, and creativity. Although well received, many noted the music's virtuosic difficulty (a reputation which continues today!).

The structure of *Clavier-Übung III* is a bit of a curiosity. Sandwiched between a grand, French-overture style Prelude and a summarizing Fugue are both *pedaliter* and *manualiter* settings of the *Kyrie Eleison* and *Gloria in excelsis*, which are based on Latin plainsong melodies adapted to the vernacular. Next, six chorales, also in *pedaliter* and *manualiter* settings, outline the six articles of Martin Luther's Catechism of 1529. They also continue a strong liturgical order mirroring the Mass: Scripture in the Ten Commandments ("Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot"), the Apostles' Creed ("Wir glauben all an einen Gott"), the Eucharistic Prayer in the Lord's Prayer ("Vater Unser im Himmelreich"), and the sacraments of Baptism ("Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam"), Penitence (a paraphrase of Psalm 130, "Aus tiefer Not"), and Holy Communion ("Jesus Christus unser Heiland"). Four extraordinarily complex duets, with no chorale, liturgical, or religious connection, then follow. The structure of an opening prelude on full organ, much exploration of an existing melodic theme(s) using many different colors and sounds from the organ, and a concluding fugue again on full organ are along the lines of demonstrations Bach is known to have improvised outside of church services.

Whether or not Bach ever intended the entire *Clavier-Übung III* to be performed is not known. To my knowledge, there is no evidence to suggest either way. Adding four duetti after publication had already begun furthers the case that Bach didn't intend for the entire collection to be performed. *Clavier-Übung III* was the first collection of Bach's organ music published; perhaps it's unsurprising that it contains several volumes in one.

I have chosen to perform the complete *pedaliter* portions for several reasons. First, they form a complete, large-scale work of full recital length with a clear structure. Second, they make a musically gratifying whole, and a comprehensive sampling of the brilliance and musical variety within the entire collection. Third, we rarely hear only the *pedaliter* portions — more commonly, it is the entire collection or only one or a few excerpts. I believe the *pedaliter* is a worthy recital program in its own right. Because it is what we are hearing in this program, I will refer only to the *pedaliter* movements for the rest of these program notes.

Compositionally, *Clavier-Übung III* incorporates numerous styles, both from various nationalities and eras. With such a synthesis of so many times and places, *Clavier-Übung III* is a keyboard work of

almost unequalled transcendancy and universality. A curiously large number of pieces use the pre-Baroque church modes, such as “Wir glauben” in the Dorian mode (i.e. D to D all white notes on the keyboard), “Aus tiefer Not” in the Phrygian mode (i.e. E to E), and “Dies sind” in the Mixolydian mode (i.e. G to G). Composition based on such scales was very much out of style well before 1739. Further, including a number of movements based on Latin plainsong (“Kyrie, Gott Vater,” “Christe, aller Welt,” “Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist,” and “Allein Gott”), and several movements in the *stile antico* contrapuntal style of Renaissance polyphony (e.g. “Aus tiefer” or the beginning of the closing Fugue), pays homage to Catholic roots. Yet, other pieces show a more modern style for the time. These include taking advantage of developments in tuning, such as in E-flat Major in the Prelude, a key that earlier generations couldn’t use. “Allein Gott” is firmly in a non-modal G Major despite being based on a modal plainsong. Adventurous counterpoint and harmonic clashes in “Jesus Christus unser Heiland” abound. “Allein Gott” uses an 18th-century Italian instrumental trio texture (yet, based on a Gregorian chant!). Several other pieces are based off the Italian ritornello form (“Dies sind” and “Christ unser Herr”). The *manualiter* movements include a dance fugue and use of the melody (*cantus firmus*) in contrary motion.

The clearest example of how Bach masterfully incorporates so many different styles and periods into his *Clavier-Übung III* might be, perhaps fittingly, the Prelude and Fugue. In the Prelude, Bach uses a French overture with an Italian ritornello form. The three-sectional Fugue incorporates motet, instrumental, and dance fugal styles. The Fugue is nicknamed “St. Anne” because its theme is the melody now used for the hymn tune St. Anne to which the text “O God our help in ages past” is often sung. We have no reason to believe, however, that Bach knowingly based the Fugue on this hymn tune.

Symbolism abounds in *Clavier-Übung III*. Its Trinitarian structure has been noted on many levels: 1) the 27 (3 x 3 x 3) pieces total; 2) the three inner groups of pieces (Kyrie/Gloria from liturgy, Catechism chorales, duets); 3) the 3 x 3 groupings of the Kyrie and Gloria (the *Kyrie eleison—Christe eleison—Kyrie eleison* is written in *pedaliter* and *manualiter* settings, and the Gloria has the exception of two *manualiter* settings alongside the *pedaliter* one). In the closing Fugue alone, the number three is everywhere: the key signature, the three sections each containing a number of measures which is a multiple of 3 x 3, and the three contrasting sections. The list goes on! Albert Schweitzer is known to have suggested that the Fugue’s three distinct sections represent the three persons of the Trinity. Again, whether this was all intended by Bach as such is unknown.

Of special note symbolically is “Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam” in which the bass voice (in the organist’s left hand) consists of unending sixteenth-notes in step-wise motion, often thought to depict the flowing waters of a river or the “sound of a mighty rushing wind” of the Holy Spirit at baptism. The organist’s right hand has a typical cross figure. Thus, Bach’s texture paints a kind of picture of baptism in the middle of which the chorale is placed.

Affekt is rampant through *Clavier-Übung III* as well. Writings exist in the Baroque era about the emotional character of music or the atmosphere it creates – *affekt*. The delightful joy of the *Gloria in excelsis* movement (“Allein Gott in der Höh”) is particularly contrasting to the anguished ending of the preceding “Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist”. The serene depiction of following the Commandments in “Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot” yields some of the most poignant writing from Bach’s pen for the organ. The *profundis* of Psalm 130 (“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee”) is vividly heard in “Aus tiefer Not” with its dense 6-voice texture including double Pedal throughout, i.e. two notes played by the organist’s feet on the lowest octaves of the organ.

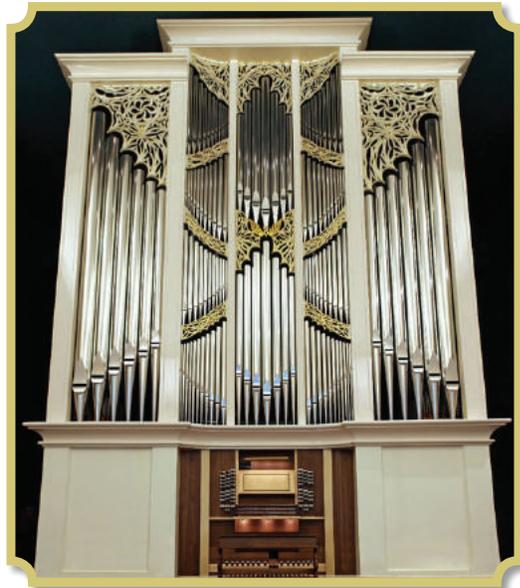
Bach’s harmonic writing also deserves mention. The conclusion of “Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist” begins with a complete restart of the counterpoint. This conclusion’s highly dissonant, chromatic writing, perhaps a sign of a final cry for mercy, pushes the boundaries of tuning systems of the time. Similarly, “Aus tiefer Not” depicts its penitential Psalm text “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee: Lord hear my voice” with astonishing dissonances. Composers of counterpoint 100 years after Bach would likely eschew the indulgent suspensions in “Dies sind.” Perhaps the most harmonically adventuresome of all is “Vater Unser,” whose complex rhythm nearly equals its harmonic language

in disorientation. To me, especially within the context of the larger collection, “Vater Unser” produces an *affekt* not unlike the Italian elevation toccatas of earlier composers, which were dissonance-filled pieces played outside of any recognizable, consistent tempo so as to evoke transcendency during the silent Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass.

Clavier-Übung III deservedly brought Bach much renown and praise. Indeed, few instances – if any for the organ – exist where we may savor such an insight into his genius and soul.

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ABOUT THE ORGAN



Designed and built by **Paul Fritts** and Company of Tacoma, Washington, the organ was installed in the newly renovated St. Philip sanctuary in early 2010. The case appearance, in keeping with the spare nature of the church architecture, is an original design and incorporates ideas found in several revered historic organ cases. The treble flats curve inward and alternate direction in ancient Dutch fashion, and the proportions of the bass and tenor flats follow well-established trends. The carvings are contemporary creations inspired by Renaissance-era Italian organ pipe shades. Tonally the organ is more strict and at its core Northern-Germanic, strongly influenced by the work of the late 17th-/early 18th-century organ builder Arp Schnitger. There is an abundance of reed stops, and the scope of the instrument is further broadened by the presence of a Swell with shades on three sides, along with string stops and an Hautbois (a

strict French Cavallé-Coll copy). There is also a wide variety of flute stops throughout the organ. The Fritts organ is routinely used for countless hours of practice and study each week, and serves not only St. Philip Church in worship but also the University of Houston as a teaching instrument.

GREAT (manual I)		POSITIV (manual II)		SWELL (manual III)		PEDAL	
Principal	16'	Principal	8'	Principal	8'	Principal	16'
Octave	8'	Gedackt	8'	Bourdon	8'	Subbaß	16'
Rohrflöte	8'	Quintadena	8'	Viol di Gamba	8'	Octave	8'
Salicional	8'	Octave	4'	Voix Celeste (from c)	8'	Bourdon	8'
Octave	4'	Rohrflöte	4'	Octave	4'	Octave	4'
Spitzflöte	4'	Octave	2'	Koppelflöte	4'	Mixture	VI–VIII
Quint	2 2/3'	Larigot	1 1/3'	Nasat	2 2/3'	Posaune	32'
Octave	2'	Sesquialtera	II	Blockflöte	2'	Posaune	16'
Terz	1 3/5'	Sharff	IV–VI	Tierce	1 3/5'	Trompet	8'
Mixture	IV–VII	Dulcian	8'	Mixture	IV–V	Trompet	4'
Cornet (<i>from c</i>)	V			Fagott	16'		
Trompet	16'			Trompet	8'		
Trompet	8'			Hautbois	8'		
Trompet	4'						
Baarpfeife	8'						

Mechanical key action
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