

The Western Early Keyboard Association Presents

ALL MY CHILDREN: THE BACH LEGACY

Julia Brown, Harpsichord

Saturday, February 15, 2020 - 2:00 p.m.

Reed College, Performing Arts Building, Room 320

An afternoon of the music of the Bach sons: Wilhelm Friedemann, Carl Philip Emmanuel, Johann Christian and Johann Christoph Friedrich. Brown will explore the expressive qualities in the music of Bach's children, who lived in a time of transition and change in musical taste. The fugues, sonatas, character pieces and fantasias display both contrapuntal and galant characteristics, each one of the sons writing in a deeply moving and personal voice.

Sonata in C minor Op. 5 No. 6

Grave/Allegro moderato - Allegretto

Johann Christian Bach
(1735-1782)

Eight Fugues Fk. 31

*No. 1 in C major
No. 2 in C minor
No. 3 in D major
No. 4 in D minor
No. 5 in E flat major
No. 6 in E minor
No. 7 in B flat major
No. 8 in F minor*

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach
(1710-1784)

Intermission

Sonata in D Major

Allegro - Andante grazioso - Rondo

Johann Christoph Friederich Bach
(1732-1795)

Sonata in G Major Wq. 55/6

Allegretto moderato - Andante - Allegro di molto

Carl Philip Emanuel Bach
(1714-1788)

Ricercare a 3 from Musical Offering BWV 1079

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Next WEKA Event: Saturday, May 16, 2020 - Spring Soirée held in Salem, OR - See wekaweb.org

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Julia Brown

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Julia Brown recently relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan, after twenty years in Eugene, OR. She is currently the Director of Music and Organist at Mayflower Congregational Church in Grand Rapids. Her many recordings with Naxos, including works of W. F. Bach, J. S. Bach, Buxtehude and Scheidemann, have gained high critical acclaim. Reviews hail her as an "unquestionably first-class artist and superb technician... exceptionally sensitive", "the playing...projects a warmly musical personality." In demand as a historical keyboardist and collaborative artist, Brown's performances include chamber music, orchestral repertoire, and continuo playing in addition to solo recitals. Brown has appeared in concert in North and South America and in Europe, having performed at the Oregon Bach Festival, Grand Rapids Bach Festival, Astoria Music Festival, Chico Bach Festival, American Guild of Organists Regional and National Conventions, Organ Historical Society Conventions, Latin American Organist Conventions, and National Public Radio. She has performed with such eminent conductors as Giancarlo Guerrero, Matthew Halls, Marcelo Leninger and Anton Armstrong. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brown studied piano, harpsichord and organ in her native Brazil before receiving her MM and DMA from Northwestern University as a student of Wolfgang RübSam.

Notes

Today's program features the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and four of his children. These works exhibit not only the lush contrapuntal writing from the height of the Baroque period, but also the experimentation of a younger generation searching for innovative elements of expression. The influence of J. S. Bach can be heard in the works of his children, but their generation slowly moved away from complex fugal writing to a clear, light, melody-dominated texture. This galant style features clear, homogenous structure and lyrical, elegant lines. Bach's children had been taught the notions that music should be thought of as a discourse which imitates declamation, and that musical gestures could be compared to rhetorical figures. With this foundation, they explored new ways of feeling and expressing music, also known as *Empfindsamkeit* (sensitivity), characterized by discontinuous and tormented flow, swift changes of affect, and surprising harmonies.

Johann Christian was the youngest son of J.S. and Anna Magdalena. Like his brothers, J. C. studied music with his father, moving to Berlin after his death to study with his older brother, Carl Philip Emanuel. In 1756, J. C. relocated to Italy, where he studied with Padre Martini in Bologna, served as organist at a Milan Cathedral, converted to Catholicism (much to his Lutheran family's dismay), and wrote operas for the famous houses in Turin and Naples. His move to London in 1762 earned him the nickname "the English Bach." Johann Christian's *Op. 5* was originally intended for either harpsichord or pianoforte. These sonatas made a strong impression on a young Mozart, who used three of them as templates for some of his earliest keyboard concertos. *Sonata No. 6* is in two movements, opening with a stately and serious *Grave*, leading directly into a fugue, reminiscent of J. S. Bach. The second movement, with its countless doubled thirds and a light texture, is more typical of J. C.'s writing.

Wilhelm Friedemann was one of the most independent-minded composers of his time: he was a brilliant improviser and keyboard player, and one of the first freelance musicians. The oldest son of J. S. and Maria Barbara, his musical talent was nurtured by his father, and by the age of 10, W. F. was working on the *Klavier-büchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* with his father. Over the course of his life, he held posts in Dresden, Halle, Brunswick, and Berlin, and accompanied his father on the famous *Musical Offering* visit to Frederick the Great. A Berlin account of one of his public concerts describes his music as having "just the right ingredients to set the pulse racing, fresh ideas, striking changes of key, [and] dissonant movements..." W. F.'s bold ideas were far ahead of his time, and his music required great technical skill. Consequently, he was not understood by his contemporaries. Despite this, Wilhelm Friedemann's *Eight Fugues* were widely disseminated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Manuscript copies of this collection were available from music dealers in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Vienna. There is also a copy with a dedicatory letter to Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia, sister to Frederick the Great. These fugues are characterized by highly individualized themes and the predominance of free episodes.

The variety of affects used and the highly individualized subjects makes them sound more like character pieces. They are all three-part fugues, and are small masterpieces of formal concision and thematic development.

Johann Christoph Friedrich is the second youngest child of J. S. and Anna Magdalena. If his name is less familiar than that of his siblings, it is because much of his music did not survive World War II. Having studied clavier, organ and composition with his father, J. C. F. left Leipzig in 1749 to take an appointment at the court of count Wilhelm von Schaumburg-Lippe at Bückeburg where he remained for the duration of his four-and-a-half-decade career. He was an outstanding harpsichordist and “the ablest performer of all the brothers and the one who played his father’s clavier compositions in the most finished manner” according to N. Forkel in his Bach biography of 1802. In 1778, J. C. F. returned from a three-month trip to London with an English fortepiano, and from that time forward conceived his keyboard works for that instrument. The *D Major Sonata* is the first in a cycle of six, which only survived in autograph form. In it you hear J. C. F.’s emphasis on thematic unity and fluid keyboard writing. This sonata cycle belongs to his last creative period and is in many respects more similar to the piano works of Johann Christian, Mozart, and Haydn.

Carl Philip Emanuel was the second son of J. S. and Maria Barbara. Like his older brother Wilhelm Friedemann, C. P. E. was strongly influenced by his father, and music was his intended vocation from the start. In 1740, he became the harpsichordist for Frederick II of Prussia (Frederick the Great), and in 1767 moved on to the post of music director in Hamburg. C. P. E. was perhaps the most famous of the musical brothers, making notable contributions in many musical genres as well as pedagogy (he was the author of the most important manual on keyboard playing in the 18th century). He wrote: “A musician cannot move others unless he too is moved. He must of necessity feel all of the affects that he hopes to arouse in his audience...constantly varying the passions, he will barely quiet one before he rouses another.” The *Sonata in G Major* from his collection “for connoisseurs and amateurs” is a wonderful example of his writing, demonstrating its extreme unpredictability and wide emotional range. C.P.E.’s desire for freedom and variety of structural design is also present, breaking from the traditional sonata form toward cyclical and improvisatory forms that would become common several generations later. It was on Carl Philip Emanuel’s recommendation that Frederick the Great invited Johann Sebastian to his court to demonstrate his skills as an improviser and to see the King’s collection of new fortepianos. When Bach arrived in Potsdam in May 1747, he was given a theme and asked to improvise a three-voice fugue. The composer accomplished his task with aplomb, but then the King told him to make it into a six-voice fugue. Bach replied that he would need to take a little time to work it out, and returned to his home in Leipzig. Two months later, Bach published a set of pieces based on the King’s theme, with the inscription: “Regis Iussu Cantio et Relinqua Canonica Arte Resoluto” (“The theme given by the King, with additions, resolved in the canonic style”). The initials of the inscription spell out the word Ricercar. The collection, known as *The Musical Offering*, opens with the three-voice fugue (Ricercare a 3) on the King’s theme. The eloquent, expressive, yet reserved theme is in C minor and contains a chromatic descent. This ingenious, skillful piece is a triumph of polyphony only to be surpassed by *The Art of the Fugue* two years later. The formalism of this piece never overshadows the sensitivity, the emotion and the light it contains. Bach’s voyage to Potsdam is a defining event in his life and in music history: it is the only time that he was accorded public honor and the only time he played the fortepiano. This event also brought him, and all his contrapuntal powers, into contact with the best of the next generation, those who would lay the ground for the music of Haydn and Mozart. - Notes by Julia Brown

About the Recital Instrument: Late 18th Century French Double Harpsichord

Reed alumna Wendy Robinson donated this instrument, built by Ken Bakeman in 1973 and fully restored by Byron Will in 2002. As was the style in the 17th and 18th centuries, this harpsichord is visually lavish, with a marbled case, cabriole stand, and paintings on the soundboard. The two keyboards (FF-e") are tuned at a' = 415. Starting in 2014, EKC Curator Paul Irvin began bringing its pinning, dampers, stringing, and voicing into closer conformance with the latest research discoveries in historical practices, including the use of phosphorus-iron wire, in order to more accurately reproduce the lush historical sound of this type of instrument.