

Transcriber's Art

Dr. Richard Elliott, organist

School of Music
Herberger College of Fine Arts
Arizona State University

2:30 p.m. – February 20, 2005
Organ Hall

Program

Mohrentanz	Tylman Susato (ca. 1500-ca. 1560) arr. Noel Rawsthorne
Canzona Francese deta Martin Menoit	Andrea Gabrieli (ca. 1510-1586)
Aria, "Sich üben im Lieben" from Cantata No. 202 ("Wedding Cantata")	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) arr. R. Elliott
Concerto in D Minor after Vivaldi, BWV 596 [Allegro]--Grave Fuga Largo e spiccato [Allegro]	Johann Sebastian Bach
Two selections from <i>Musikalischer Zeit-Vertreib</i>	Valentin Rathgeber (1682-1750)
Dance of the Blessed Spirits, from <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> (1774)	Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787) arr. R. Elliott
Capriol Suite (1926) i. Basse-Danse ii. Pavane iii. Tordion iv. Bransles v. Pieds-en-l'air vi. Mattachins	Peter Warlock (1894-1930) arr. R. Elliott
Fantasia in F Minor, K. 608	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) arr. M. Dupré
Anitras dans, from <i>Peer Gynt Suite</i> , Op. 46	Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) arr. E. H. Lemare
The Liberty Bell	John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) arr. J. Linger

Program Notes

The Transcriber's Art

The organ boasts a large number of transcribed works among its literature because of the instrument's wide dynamic range and musical flexibility. There exists a surprising number of well-crafted organ transcriptions—some created by performers and others by first-rate composers such as Bach and Liszt. This afternoon's program provides just a few examples of organ transcriptions suited to the Fritts organ at Arizona State University.

Tylman Susato worked as a composer and music publisher in Antwerp during the early- to mid-1500s. He is best known for his numerous collections of vocal music. *Mohrentanz* is Susato's own transcription of a dance based on a popular tune. The version heard this afternoon has been arranged for the organ by Noel Rawsthorne from Susato's transcription.

The *canzona* was one of the most important keyboard music genres in 16th- and 17th-century Italy. While some *canzoni* were original compositions, the majority were arrangements of secular vocal music. Andrea Gabrieli's *Canzona Francese deta Martin Menoit* is based on a chanson by the French composer Clement Jannequin.

Nothing is known about the origins of Bach's Cantata No 202, *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, other than the fact that it was written for the secular part of a wedding celebration. The aria, "*Sich üben im Lieben*," is one of Bach's more playful compositions.

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote out several organ transcriptions of concerti by other composers, each one a model of ingenuity and creative adaptation. The *Concerto in D Minor after Vivaldi, BWV 596* is based on Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto for two solo violins, cello obbligato and string orchestra, Op. 3, No. 11, which was written as part of a collection titled "L'Estro Armonico" ("Harmonic Fancy"). Bach's organ adaptation is valuable for its compositional merits as well as its relatively rare inclusion of registration indications.

Musikalischer Zeit-Vertreib auf dem Klavier ("Musical Pastime for Clavier") is the title of a collection of brief song and dance transcriptions published in 1743 by Valentin Rathgeber, a South German Benedictine priest. In his preface, Rathgeber wrote: "I have ventured herewith to present the amateur with 60 very easy and short 'Schlag-Arien,' otherwise called Galanterie Pieces, so that such a one may be able to use them in private as well as in church for sacred service."

"*The Dance of the Blessed Spirits*," from Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, is among the opera's best-known melodies. Ironically, the piece did not appear in the original opera, but was added for the 1774 Paris version. The transcription performed on today's program was made at the suggestion of Russian flutist Alexander Korneyev after hearing the Flauto Mirabilis stop of the Mormon Tabernacle organ.

Philip Heseltine is one of the most colorful figures in 20th-century English music. Under the pen-name of Peter Warlock, he composed a large number of songs, as well as some choral and instrumental music. Under his birth name he was known as a musicologist and editor. While studying music from the Elizabethan period, he became captivated by the pieces contained in *Orchésographie*, a 16th-century treatise on dancing. These became the inspiration for his *Capriol Suite*, originally composed in 1926 for string orchestra and later scored for full orchestra. The suite is named for the fictional pupil to whom the dance lessons in *Orchésographie* were directed. Each movement of the suite retains the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic language of the original pieces, but also includes subtle hints of Warlock's own dialect. The "Basse-Danse" is a modest dance requiring the feet to glide over the floor; the "Pavane" is similar to the Basse-Danse, but in duple, rather than triple meter; the "Tordion" is a lively dance in triple meter, usually consisting of 2 or 3 repeated 8-bar strains; the "Bransles" is a rollicking peasant dance; "Pieds-en-l'air," while not an actual dance, is based on two measures of "Air of the Branle

de Poitou," embellished in Warlock's elegant musical language; the concluding dance, "Mattachins," evokes a sword dance performed in cardboard fighting garb.

In a letter to his father, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote, "In my eyes and ears the organ is the king of instruments." It is ironic that he actually wrote down very little organ music, most likely due to its limited market at the time. Mozart's monumental *Fantasia in F Minor, K. 608* was actually composed for a mechanical "player" organ in a Viennese wax museum. In its original version, the piece contained more notes than could be played by one person on the organ, resulting in its publication as a piano duet. Since that time, numerous organists have tried their hand at transcribing the piece for organ solo. The version heard on today's program was arranged by the 20th-century French organ virtuoso, Marcel Dupré. The work is in sonata-rondo form (with coda) and demonstrates Mozart's facility in fugal composition.

Edwin H. Lemare ranks as one of the greatest organ virtuosos and organ transcribers of all time. Lemare created arrangements which are neither too spare nor too busy, and are thus well suited to a variety of organ types. *Anitra's Dans* is an exotic mazurka danced by a Bedouin chief's daughter in order to win the favors of Peer Gynt.

As Bach is to organ repertoire, so is John Philip Sousa to marching band repertoire. It is nearly impossible to imagine how high school, college, and military marching bands would sound were it not for Sousa's large and enduring contribution to the genre. Fans of British TV will also recognize Sousa's *Liberty Bell March* as the theme music to "Monty Python's Flying Circus."

BIOGRAPHY

Richard L. Elliott is one of three full-time organists at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, where he participates in the daily recital series on the 206-rank Æolian-Skinner organ and accompanies the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on their weekly radio and TV broadcast, "Music and the Spoken Word." As accompanist for the Tabernacle Choir he has performed in many of the world's great halls and appeared on numerous television and radio programs such as the NBC "Today Show," the "CBS Morning Show" and "A Prairie Home Companion."

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Dr. Elliott received his early musical training at the Peabody Conservatory. He went on to study organ at the Catholic University of America, the Curris Institute of Music, from which he received the BMus degree, and the Eastman School of Music, where he received MM and DMA degrees. His organ teachers have included David Craighead, William Watkins, and John Weaver.

Prior to his appointment as a Tabernacle organist in 1991, Dr. Elliott was an assistant professor of organ at Brigham Young University. He has performed extensively as a recitalist and accompanist in the United States and Europe, has appeared as soloist with the Utah Symphony and the Salt Lake Symphony, and for several years was assistant organist at the John Wanamaker Department Store (now Lord & Taylor) in Philadelphia, home to the world's largest playing pipe organ. A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, Dr. Elliott was a featured performer at the guild's 1992 national convention held in Atlanta, Georgia and more recently at the multi-regional convention held in Salt Lake City in 2003.

Dr. Elliott appears on fourteen recordings with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. In 1994 he recorded his first solo compact disc, entitled, "In the Shadows of the Everlasting Hills," on the Pro Organo label. He recently recorded a second CD on the Mormon Tabernacle organ, which will be released in the summer of 2005 on the Mormon Tabernacle Choir label. He has also recorded two compact discs in collaboration with fellow Tabernacle organists John Longhurst and Clay Christiansen.