

Tautology

An exploration of ostinato forms through five centuries
of organ repertoire

Julia Tucker | March 19th, 2019 | DMA Recital
Organ Hall, Arizona State University

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Upon La Mi Re

Anon. 16th century

My Lady Carey's Dompe

Anon. 16th century

O Antiphon Sequence

Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951)

O Sapientia "...mightily and sweetly ordering all things"

O Adonai "...in the flame of the burning bush"

O Radix Jesu "...to you the nations will make their prayer"

O Clavis David "...you open and none may close"

O Oriens "...come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness"

O Rex Gentium "...the cornerstone making both one"

O Emmanuel "...come to save us, O Lord our God"

Joel Morehouse, Tenor

Passacaglia in G minor, from *Apparatus Musico-Organisticus*

Georg Muffat (b. 1653 – 1704)

From the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*

Praebulum super mi

Redeuntes in mi

Passacaglia in E minor from Organ Sonata No. 8, Op. 132

Josef Rheinberger (1839 – 1901)

Program Notes

J.S. Bach's **Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor** is one of his most well known and loved compositions for organ, having been transcribed by many composers in the 20th century. The work consists of twenty variations over a repeating bass line, immediately followed by a double fugue in which one of the subjects is the aforementioned bass line. The work may have been composed in homage to Buxtehude, whose ostinato forms appear in the same manuscript, the *Andreas Bach Buch*. The breadth and scope of the variations and the compositional prowess that underlays the architecture of the piece speak to the precociousness of a young man acutely aware of his own genius.

These two pieces by anonymous English composers both date from the 16th century and exemplify early use of ground bass patterns. **Upon La Mi Re** is a series of variations over the repeating ground bass which gain speed and intensity as the piece continues. The Lady Carey of **My Lady Carey's Dompe** may refer to Mary Boleyn, one of Henry VIII's mistresses and the sister of his second wife, Anne Boleyn. The word dompe is of Irish origin, and can refer to a dirge or melancholic love song. It is an oddly fitting choice, considering the fate of the two sisters.

Cecilia McDowall's **O Antiphon Sequence** was commissioned by the American Guild of Organists to premiere at their 2018 national convention. The movements are responses and meditations on each of the O Antiphons, which are Gregorian chants sung at Vespers during the last week of Advent. Each of the chants starts with addressing the Messiah by a different Old Testament name, and each chant references the prophecies of Isaiah concerning his arrival. McDowall has selected one line of text from each antiphon to set the mood for each movement, which quotes one phrase from the corresponding Gregorian chant. Joel Morehouse will sing each of the O Antiphons before I play McDowall's meditation.

Georg Muffat is an example of a true "internationalist" composer. Born and educated in France and of Scottish ancestry, he eventually settled in German for the greater portion of his career. His only publication for organ is his 1690 *Apparatus Musico-Organisticus*, which contains twelve toccatas, a chaconne, an air and the **Passacaglia in G minor**. Unlike Bach and Rheinberger's passacaglias, Muffat's does not have a repeating bass line throughout the work. Instead it is structured as a series of variations on a repeating harmonic pattern, with a refrain that appears several times.

Praeambulum Super Mi and **Redeuntes In Mi** both come from the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*, a German manuscript dated from the mid-15th century. These pieces would have probably have served to set the key or pitch for the sung chants, so they make a fitting introduction to Rheinberger's **Passacaglia in E Minor**.

Josef Rheinberger was a prolific 19th century German composer who his remembered primarily for his sacred music and organ works. Out of the twenty organ sonatas that he composed, this passacaglia from the eighth sonata has enjoyed particular fame in the 20th and 21st century. The blending together of the "old fashioned" passacaglia form with rich romantic harmonies is a thrilling combination! On the Fritts organ in particular, the piece helps to show off the wide variety of tone colors available on the instrument.

-Julia Tucker, 2019