

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

Saturday, May 6, at 5:00

Paul Jacobs Organ

Bach Organ Sonata No. 1 in E-flat major, BWV 525

- I. [Allegro]
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Bach Organ Sonata No. 2 in C minor, BWV 526

- I. Vivace
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro

Bach Organ Sonata No. 3 in D minor, BWV 527

- I. Andante
- II. Adagio e dolce
- III. Vivace

Bach Organ Sonata No. 4 in E minor, BWV 528

- I. Adagio—Vivace
- II. Andante
- III. Un poco allegro

Bach Organ Sonata No. 5 in C major, BWV 529

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro

Bach Organ Sonata No. 6 in G major, BWV 530

- I. Vivace
- II. Lento
- III. Allegro

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes, and will be performed without an intermission.

This recital is part of the **Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ Experience, supported through a generous grant from the Wyncote Foundation.**

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

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Internationally celebrated organist **Paul Jacobs** combines a probing intellect and extraordinary technical mastery with an unusually large repertoire, both old and new. He has performed to great critical acclaim on five continents and in each of the 50 United States. The only organist ever to have won a GRAMMY Award—in 2011 for Messiaen's towering *Livre du Saint-Sacrement*—he is an eloquent champion of his instrument both in the United States and abroad. He has transfixed audiences,

colleagues, and critics alike with landmark performances of the complete works for solo organ by J.S. Bach and Messiaen. He made musical history at age 23 when he gave an 18-hour marathon performance of Bach's complete organ works on the 250th anniversary of the composer's death. A fierce advocate of new music, he has premiered works by Samuel Adler, Mason Bates, Michael Daugherty, Bernd Richard Deutsch, John Harbison, Wayne Oquin, Stephen Paulus, Christopher Theofanidis, and Christopher Rouse. As a teacher he has been a vocal proponent of the redeeming nature of traditional and contemporary classical music.

Mr. Jacobs made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2008. He is repeatedly invited as soloist to perform with prestigious orchestras, making him a pioneer in the movement for the revival of symphonic music featuring the organ. He regularly appears with the Chicago, Cincinnati, Edmonton, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Lucerne, Montreal, Nashville, National, Pacific, Phoenix, San Francisco, Toledo, and Utah symphonies; the Cleveland and Minnesota orchestras; and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, among others. Recent season highlights include debuts with the Warsaw Philharmonic in the Lou Harrison Organ Concerto led by Alexander Shelley and with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic, both in recital and with the Horatio Parker Organ Concerto and Guillemant's Organ Symphony No. 1 led by frequent collaborator Giancarlo Guerrero.

Mr. Jacobs studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, double majoring with John Weaver for organ and Lionel Party for harpsichord, and at Yale University with Thomas Murray. He joined the faculty of the Juilliard School in 2003 and was named chairman of the organ department in 2004, one of the youngest faculty appointees in the school's history. He received Juilliard's prestigious William Schuman Scholar's Chair in 2007. In addition to his concert and teaching appearances, he is a frequent performer at festivals across the world, and he has appeared on American Public Media's *Performance Today*, *Pipedreams*, and *Saint Paul Sunday*, as well as NPR's *Morning Edition*, ABC's *World News Tonight*, and BBC Radio 3. In 2017 he received an honorary doctorate from Washington and Jefferson College.

The Music

Organ Sonatas Nos 1–6

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born in Eisenach, March 21, 1685

Died in Leipzig, July 28, 1750



Bach's six three-movement organ sonatas for two manuals and obligato pedal date from the latter half of the composer's career while in Leipzig and can be found in an autograph score dated between 1727 and 1730 and a later "fair copy" compiled by Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, and his son Wilhelm Friedemann. It is believed that Bach composed these pieces, among the most challenging of his works for organ, as both practice and performance repertoire for

Wilhelm. Bach also incorporated them into study repertoire for his own students. In fusing the six perfect miniatures of chamber-like music with his trademark fiercely demanding technical requirements, he created a new genre in 18th-century organ composition, envisioning music for two hands and feet using conventional compositional devices and a twist of revolutionary innovation.

A Blend of the Past and the Future Rooted in Bach's sonatas for solo instrument and obligato keyboard, these works were ground-breaking in their inventive structures and intricate keyboard writing. Trio writing for the organ was heard before the 18th century from numerous German composers, including Bach's own teacher Georg Böhm. Instrumental trios with a fast-slow-fast design were especially popular in Italian Baroque chamber music, with two instruments carrying melodic material over a bass line or harmony-producing instrument. Bach borrowed this form and brought the melodic and harmonic components together on one instrument, with a particularly novel interaction between the two hands. He also refashioned the concept of basso continuo: While previously the bass instruments played continuously as the upper voices rested from time to time, the pedal lines of these sonatas employed the same periodic silences as the upper lines and often contained thematic material. What is truly ground-breaking about this set is that not even two instrumentalists in an orchestral trio would have been required to play in the fiendishly difficult manner that one organist with two hands must execute.

Bach began incorporating elements of the organ trio form into his music as early as his Weimar chorale preludes, but the lack of any cantus firmus separates these compositions from previous organ pieces. Tempo markings in Italian pay tribute

to the 17th-century Italian instrumental tradition, and Bach's lack of specified articulation gives performers free reign to follow trends of their own times or ornament in a manner feasible or appropriate for a given instrument.

A Closer Look Over the past 250 years, scholars have identified individual movements of these sonatas as either transcriptions or re-workings of prior Bach cantatas, organ pieces, and chamber music (some of which has been lost), or music freshly written for the collection. Speculation about the outer movements of **BWV 525** has generated several hypotheses, including their origins in chamber, organ, or string trios. The opening Allegro is in ritornello style, followed by a newly composed doleful second movement (Adagio) and a lively return to E-flat major to close. The first and third movements (Allegro) are linked by their canonic treatment of thematic material, while the middle and final movements are connected through their binary form. Throughout the sonata, both hands are equal technically, demonstrating the invertible counterpoint prevalent throughout the set.

The three movements of the more dramatic **BWV 526**, considered by some sources to be the first of the series, may be transcriptions of pre-existing but lost music. The opening Vivace alternates tutti with "solo" episodes over a basso continuo pedal. The second movement (Largo), unique in its harmonic shifts, is followed by a closing fugue (Allegro), with two canonic and contrasting themes in a "concerto fugue" similar to Bach's violin sonatas.

From start to finish, **BWV 527** is a conversation between the two upper parts, accompanied by continuo bass. The second movement, Adagio e dolce, suggests a graceful flute duet and was later reused both by Bach in a triple concerto for flute, violin, and harpsichord, and subsequently by Mozart. The closing Vivace fugue is in rondo structure, as imitative triplet figures leap from part to part.

BWV 528 shares its opening Adagio music with the Sinfonia that begins the second part of Cantata 76, "Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes" (The Heavens Tell the Glory of God). The Vivace that follows combines three viol-like lines in an imitative ritornello. The second movement Andante is derived from an organ work possibly dated as early as 1708 and features repeated sequences in two alternating themes over a basso continuo. The closing Un poco allegro is a rondo fugue likely previously composed for organ.

The elegance of the newly composed first movement Allegro of **BWV 529** implies a galant-style trio sonata for two flutes and continuo. Bach's bright and chipper upper manual parts extend well beyond the range of the flute, with two themes alternating in a call and response over long pedals. The subsequent Largo, previously composed for organ, was also performed in Bach's time between the two halves of the Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV 545. With two voices in dialogue over a bass line, this movement recalls the lyricism of Arcangelo Corelli's sonatas. The closing Allegro, which may be a transcription of prior music, also shows the possible influence of Corelli, with the pedal taking a new role as a third voice in the fugue.

The unison playing between the two upper manuals sets **BWV 530** apart from the other five compositions. Comprised of three movements composed specifically for the collection, this work opens with a concerto-like Vivace, with both hands playing in the same register. The long melodic lines of the second movement Lento resemble a vocal aria with obbligato instrument (with hints of the Agnus Dei from Bach's Mass in B minor), and the closing Allegro features similar counterpoint to Bach's three-part inventions.

The technical challenges of these sonatas continue to raise the bar of organ performance to this day, but the pedagogue in Bach may have thought he was merely presenting techniques and devices any organist should master. About his own other-worldly organ skills, he allegedly commented, "There's nothing remarkable about it. All one has to do is hit the right keys at the right time and the instrument plays itself."

—Nancy Plum



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