



Amanda Mole

Winner 2017
8th International Organ
Competition
Musashino-Tokyo

ALAIN
J.S. BACH
BRUHNS
BUXTEHUDE
MESSIAEN
MUHLY
REGER

Amanda Mole: Organ Recital
Jehan Alain • Johann Sebastian Bach • Nicolaus Bruhns • Dieterich Buxtehude
Olivier Messiaen • Nico Muhly • Max Reger

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707):
Praeludium in G minor, BuxWV 149
The *Praeludium in G minor* is remarkable among Buxtehude’s output in that it incorporates a number of unusual or unique compositional features. Its opening section contains a *ciaccona*, or ground bass, that follows free passagework, and the form only becomes clear with the second pedal entry, maintaining the unpredictable quality of the exordium. Uniquely, the following fugue is stylistically a *ricercar* – taken from the Italian ‘*ricercare*’, the term means to ‘search out’, implying particularly elaborate or exhaustive contrapuntal procedures. The second fugue subject is not simply the first rendered in triple metre as might be anticipated, but rearranges pitches from the first to make a new melody. A remarkable internal section, marked *Allegro*, has the style of a continuo realisation. Most startling of all is perhaps a chord in the last fugue, spelled E flat–B flat–G flat–D flat: a pungent harmony indeed in most 19th-century tuning systems.

Jehan Alain (1911–1940):
Variations sur un thème de Clément Janequin, AWW 99
Jehan Alain composed the *Variations sur un thème de Clément Janequin* in 1937, the same year in which his well-known work, *Litanies*, was composed, and three years before his death in combat at Petit-Puy, France. The *Variations* evoke old French traditions such as the Renaissance *chanson* within a modern style. Alain incorrectly attributes the theme to Clément Janequin (1485–1558), a master of the *chanson*; it actually comes from a 1529 source in which it is anonymously paired with the text ‘*L’espoir que j’ai*’. Alain was familiar with a 19th-century arrangement of the piece for solo voice with piano accompaniment by Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin (1821–1910), and the theme is almost an exact transcription of the Weckerlin arrangement. In another nod to the past, Alain indicates registrations reminiscent of the French Baroque

period. The effect of nostalgia, however, is accomplished not by mere historical imitation, but through a combination of early and contemporary idioms. If archaic organ sounds are called for, Alain’s use of octatonic harmonies in all three transpositions plants a foot firmly in the 20th century.

Max Reger (1873–1916):
9 Pieces, Op. 129 (excerpts) – I. Toccata in D minor; III. Kanon in E minor; VI. Basso ostinato in G minor
Despite his short life, Max Reger produced a massive *oeuvre* for almost every combination of instruments. He commanded a broad harmonic language, sweeping the gamut from a sweet, tonal style to intimidating clusters of black notes. He wrote much for the organ, and is best known for difficult works of considerable length: chorale fantasias, a variation set, and two sonatas. He did, however, compose several compilations of short pieces for organ as well. *9 Pieces, Op. 129* was composed in 1913. The first movement, *Toccata*, is akin to his larger works in that it exploits the entire dynamic range of the organ, from the very softest single stops to roaring chords on full organ. The third movement, *Kanon*, however, shows the composer’s sweeter side; alongside his fondness for learned counterpoint, the piece is almost entirely written in canon at the octave. The ostinato of the sixth movement, *Basso ostinato*, enlists a ground bass to explore myriad colours and textures, dialogues, solo melodies, colourful suspensions, and ornamentation in thirds.

Nicolaus Bruhns (1665–1697):
Nun komm der Heiden Heiland (Chorale Fantasia)
The Advent chorale *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* first appeared in the Erfurt Enchiridion of 1524, the melody based on *Veni redemptor gentium* by St Ambrose of Milan (340–397) with accompanying text written by Martin Luther (1483–1546). A fixture in Lutheran worship and traditionally sung on the First Sunday of Advent, this important hymn

attained unusual prominence among chorale-based compositions for centuries to come. The North German chorale fantasia, in which each phrase of the chorale is explored expressively, developed quickly in the 17th century, though was considered old-fashioned by 18th-century composers. Bruhns’ chorale fantasia *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* comprises four sections, each developing a line of the chorale melody. Within a narrative idiom, Bruhns’ use of rhetorical pauses after the initial statement of the theme might be taken to depict the sense of longing and unfulfilled anticipation characterising the season of Advent.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750):
Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 532
Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in D major* probably dates from his period of employment as Konzertmeister to the ducal court in Weimar (1708–17). Its opening figuration bears a strong resemblance to the *Toccata in D major, BWV 912* for harpsichord. Structurally, the piece is characterised by extensive sequences throughout both the *alla breve* sections of the *Prelude* and the *Fugue*. The *Fugue* ends in an extraordinary manner with a prolonged pedal solo; the cadence is not conventionally prepared, yet it is satisfyingly clear when the piece is finished. At the end of the *Fugue* in one manuscript (W.H. Pachelbel) is written: ‘note that in this fugue one must let the feet really kick about.’

Nico Muhly (b. 1981):
The Revd Mustard His Installation Prelude
The Revd Mustard His Installation Prelude was written in 2013 by the American composer Nico Muhly for the installation of his friend as Rector of St Mary the Virgin, East Barnet. The archaic possessive form of the work’s title self-consciously evokes a stylistically common title among the English virginal composers of the Tudor and Jacobean periods, such as William Byrd’s *The Earl of Salisbury his Pavane and Galliarde*. The work, dedicated to the Revd James Mustard, begins with a melody played in two voices in the pedal. Developing slowly, it moves to the left hand for the middle portion of the work, returning to the pedals at the

recapitulation, now a half-step lower. The constant semi-quaver motion of the accompaniment provides an energetic and happy welcome for the Reverend to his new parish.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992):
La Nativité du Seigneur – IX. Dieu parmi nous
A devout Roman Catholic, much of Olivier Messiaen’s music – particularly, though by no means exclusively, the works for organ – depicts Biblical events with various degrees of programmatic literalism. *Dieu parmi nous* (‘God Among Us’) is the final piece in the Christmas suite, *La Nativité du Seigneur* (‘The Birth of the Saviour’). In an extension of, rather than a departure from, the Romantic and post-Romantic Parisian organ tradition, Messiaen broke new harmonic ground with his signature modes of limited transposition, here particularly modes ii and iii. The distinct themes of *Dieu parmi nous* are easily discernible from the preface: ‘Words of the communicant, of the Virgin, of the whole church: He who created me has rested in my house, the Word became flesh and lives within me. My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.’ Following crashing, descending manual chords, the principal theme is heard in the pedals. It descends, slowly, the length of the pedalboard to the lowest sound on the organ – a direct portrayal of the incarnation and Christ’s descent from heaven to earth. The second theme, played on the *Voix célestes*, represents the love for Christ that the believer experiences through Holy Communion. The third theme is fast, scalar, and joyful – a perfect musical representation of the Magnificat, Mary’s revolutionary and ecstatic hymn of praise on learning she would bear the son of God. Messiaen develops all three themes, but the most pervasive is the *Incarnation* theme, which is present for the remainder of the piece, significantly, in the pedals. It is first combined, staccato, with the *Communion* theme. Following an episode in which it is reversed, it suddenly returns in multiple transpositions to underpin the driving toccata. The toccata and rapturous coda ultimately speak for the entire piece as an expression of sheer joy.

Amanda Mole

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Amanda Mole is the recipient of numerous awards, including First Prize at the 8th International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo in 2017 and First Place and the Audience Prize at the Miami International Organ Competition in 2016. Since 2017, she has served as a juror for several organ competitions, and in 2016 was chosen as one of *The Diapason* magazine's 'Top 20 Under 30'. Mole has performed internationally, and in 2015 was a featured performer at the New Haven Regional American Guild of Organists Convention. In 2016 she joined the roster of concert artists at the Organ Historical Society (OHS) National Convention in Philadelphia, appearing again at the 2018 OHS National Convention in Rochester, NY. She has received critical acclaim in *The American Organist*, *The Diapason*, and *The Tracker* magazines, and her performances are frequently broadcast on the radio programme, *Pipedreams LIVE!*. Originally from Holden, Massachusetts, Mole is currently completing a doctor of musical arts degree as a student of David Higgs at the Eastman School of Music, New York. She earned her master of music degree from Yale University where she studied organ and choral conducting, and was the only candidate in her class to receive the Church Music Studies Certificate. Prior to Yale she obtained a bachelor of music degree with honors at Eastman. Earlier studies were with Larry Schipull and Patricia Snyder. www.amandamole.com



First Prize winner of the prestigious Eighth International Organ Competition Musashino-Tokyo, Amanda Mole, has selected music that fully exploits every aspect of the excellent Marcussen & Søn instrument at this venue. Buxtehude's remarkable *Praeludium* and Bruhns' chorale fantasia on the Advent tune *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* connect with the old French traditions evoked in Alain's *Variations*, while Reger uses the entire dynamic range of the organ in his *Toccata*. The programme is topped by Messiaen's expression of sheer joy in the rapturous conclusion to *La Nativité du Seigneur*.

AMANDA MOLE

Organ Recital

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|--|---|--|--|
| Dieterich BUXTEHUDE (1637–1707) | | Nicolaus BRUHNS (1665–1697) | |
| 1 | Praeludium in G minor,
BuxWV 149 | 9:22 | 6 Nun komm der Heiden Heiland
(Chorale Fantasia) |
| | | | 11:04 |
| Jehan ALAIN (1911–1940) | | Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750) | |
| 2 | Variations sur un thème de Clément
Janequin, AWW 99 (1937) | 6:00 | 7 Prelude and Fugue in D major,
BWV 532 (c.1710) |
| | | | 11:53 |
| Max REGER (1873–1916) | | Nico MUHLY (b. 1981) | |
| | 9 Pieces, Op. 129 (excerpts)
(1913) | 8:42 | 8 The Revd Mustard His Installation
Prelude (2013) |
| | | | 3:18 |
| 3 | I. Toccata in D minor | 2:49 | Olivier MESSIAEN (1908–1992) |
| 4 | III. Kanon in E minor | 2:31 | La Nativité du Seigneur |
| 5 | VI. Basso ostinato in G minor | 3:11 | (‘The Birth of the Saviour’) |
| | | | (excerpt) (1935) |
| | | | 9:06 |
| | | | 9 IX. Dieu parmi nous (‘God Among Us’) |

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