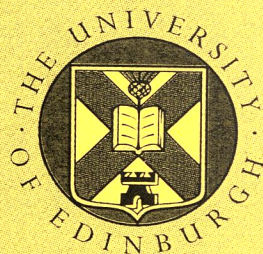
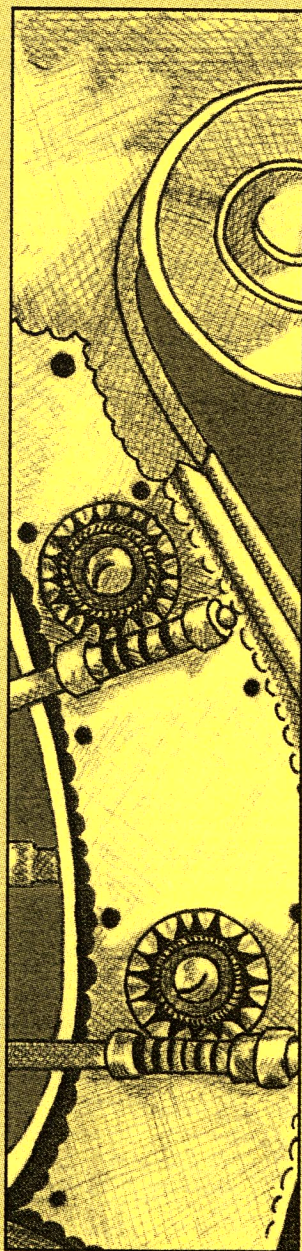
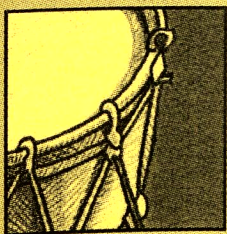
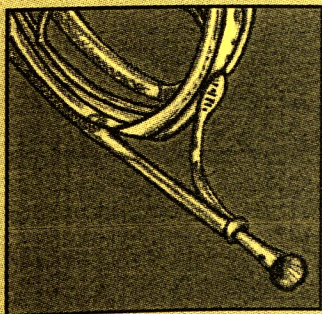
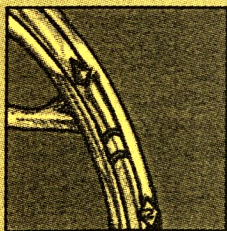


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CONCERTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH 2002-3

Lunch-hour recital

Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square, Teviot Place

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY at 1.10pm
(admission free)

JOHN BUTT *organ*

A RECITAL OF MUSIC BY J.S. BACH

Prelude and Fugue in B Minor, BWV 544

Chorale: 'Von Gott will ich nicht lassen', BWV 658

Sonata for two keyboards and pedal, No. 5 in C, BWV 530
Allegro - Largo - Allegro

Chorale: 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland', BWV 659

Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541

What makes Bach so demanding - and so supremely successful - as a composer for organ is his refusal to relate the medium to one particular genre or style; indeed one is just as likely to encounter dance and concerto styles in the organ music as the more traditional 'church style'. The latter style features as one of several in the solemn Prelude and Fugue in B minor, one of the few large-scale organ works from Bach's Leipzig years. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how many stylistic allusions are synthesised within its textures, with references to aria style, concerto and dance coupled with the idioms of the motet and strict counterpoint. Although both prelude and fugue introduce new ideas within their respective courses there is a sense in which both are supremely homogenous, far removed from the purposely disjointed forms of Bach's earliest toccatas. While the prelude presents a sublime arch-like shape that seems to end absolutely on time without seeming blandly predictable, the fugue is an exercise in intensification created with a plodding - almost nondescript - subject. The latter becomes the key to the relentlessness of the piece, a thread onto which several new ideas are tied, together bringing the piece towards one of the most magnificent conclusions in the organ repertoire.

The chorales on 'Von Gott will ich nicht lassen' and 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland' reflect Bach's own overview of his career: the collection from which they are taken was originally composed in the Weimar years, and the composer himself revised them in his last years at Leipzig, often extending and elaborating the existing pieces. Both of these settings show Bach's expressive style, developed specifically to move the listener and encourage greater attention to the chorale text. Such is their beauty though, that many of a puritanical bent must - like Augustine - have feared the seductive power of music in its own right.

Although Bach did not write his own concertos for organ (other than the sinfonias to certain Leipzig cantatas, adapted from concertos for melody-instrument) he did compose highly original trio-sonatas for organ, pieces in which the pedal takes over the function of the continuo line (normally played by a cello or viola da gamba) and the two hands take over the role of the two melody instruments. The results are stupendous, giving the organ a conversational ability that can hardly be achieved by any other instrument. While there is some evidence that some movements from these sonatas derive from instrumental works, the music is perfectly suited to the compass and sounds of the organ. In their technical difficulty, intensity of construction and distance from the most common idioms for the instrument, these sonatas must be considered a corollary to Bach's collected works for unaccompanied violin and violoncello.

Bach compiled his manuscript of the six sonatas for two keyboards and pedal (often termed the 'Organ Sonatas' or the 'Trio Sonatas') during the late 1720s. According to Forkel's biography (1802), Bach prepared these pieces for his son Friedemann, so they seem to fit into the pedagogic series of keyboard works that began with the *Clavier-Büchlein* presented to Friedemann in 1720. The latter's work on the sonatas presumably paid off since he soon became well-known for his virtuosity at the organ. On the other hand, Sebastian Bach could perhaps be faulted for being too much of a loving - if not doting - father, one who so protected Wilhelm Friedemann that he even forged the application letters for his first job. It was for Friedemann that he penned a fine copy of the Prelude and Fugue in G major, BWV 541 for his son's application of 1733 to be organist of the Sopiankirche in Dresden. Quite probably Friedemann passed it off as his own composition, and it must surely have played a part in the successful outcome of the trial. It is one of Bach's most jubilant pieces for organ, beautifully integrated but supremely dramatic. The opening of the prelude to some extent sums up the 'free' and the 'strict' Bach. The opening virtuoso gesture is organised by its increasing rhythmic accents while the more organised thematic entry is coloured by many exuberant runs. The fugue is one of Bach's most accessible, since the subject itself is easily recognised and satisfying in its own right. Not only does it allow many different forms of combination and treatment, but its absence in the central section renders its eventual return particularly dramatic.

JB

As an undergraduate at Cambridge University, JOHN BUTT held the office of organ scholar at King's College. Continuing as a graduate student, he studied the music of Bach, surveying articulation markings in autograph manuscripts and receiving his Ph.D. in 1987. He was subsequently a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of Magdalene College Cambridge, joining the faculty at UC Berkeley in 1989 as University Organist and Assistant Professor in Music (Associate Professor in 1992). In 1997 he returned to Cambridge as a University Lecturer and Fellow of King's College, moving again in October 2001 when he took up the post of Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow.

Five books have been published by Cambridge University Press, the latest of which is a study of the philosophy and criticism of historical performance practice as a 20th-century phenomenon (Playing with History), published in 2002. While much of the rest of his

work has centred on Bach studies, he has also written on Handel, education in the German Baroque, the philosophy of music, 19th-century choral culture and Elgar.

John Butt is also very active as a performing musician: as conductor, organist, harpsichordist and clavichordist. Eleven recordings on organ, harpsichord and clavichord have been released by Harmonia Mundi France (Pachelbel, Cabanilles, Bach, Purcell, Kuhnau and Frescobaldi and Telemann). Recordings also include (with violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock) Bach's sonatas for violin and obbligato harpsichord. Recent releases include his recording of the Bach organ toccatas (2000) and Elgar's complete organ music (2002). His work as a conductor has taken him to Germany, USA and Bermuda. A programme of concertos and sonatas by Handel and Mozart has recently been recorded by the BBC for broadcast in February 2003.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Friday 7 February – 7.30pm – Greyfriars Kirk

Saturday 8 February – 7.30pm – Bute Hall, Glasgow University

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

THE KELVIN ENSEMBLE, WILLIAM CONWAY (conductor)

FEARGUS HETHERINGTON (violin)

Reich, Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky

Tickets: £6.00 (£4.00 concessions) Ticket Information: (07814) 944997

Tuesday 11 February – 1.10pm – Reid Concert Hall

REID MEMORIAL CONCERT

A recreation of the Royal Artillery Band of 1762.

Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12, Friday 14 and Saturday 15 February – 7.30pm –
Pleasance Theatre

EDINBURGH STUDIO OPERA

Stravinsky – The Rake's Progress

Tickets: £10.00 (£5.00 concessions) Ticket Information: 07946 330819

Friday 14 February – 1.10pm – McEwan Hall

STEPHEN DOUGHTY (organ)

Mussorgsky and Scandinavian organ music

Sunday 16 February – 7.30pm – Reid Concert Hall

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MUSIC SOCIETY CHORUS

MORGAN RUNNING BEAR BUNCH (conductor)

Tickets: £5.00 (£3.00 concessions) on the door.

Tuesday 18 February – 1.10pm – Reid Concert Hall

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET with GERVASE DE PEYER (clarinet)

Haydn and Mozart