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Pembroke College Chapel, Cambridge - 1.10 pm

Friday 22 July

Jacques van Oortmerssen - Bach Recital

The Programme

J S Bach (1685 - 1750)

Pièce d'Orgue (BWV 572)

Très vite - *Gravement* - *Lentement*

More usually known as *Fantasia in G*, this substantial work has three sections. The opening section is a sparkling movement for manuals alone followed by a chordal movement of dense texture. Some doubt exists whether the designation *gravement* should read *gayement*; thus the movement is sometimes played with a stately grandeur and sometimes in a vigorous, energetic French manner. The last section is toccata-like. Some scholars say that the three sections depict the faces of the Holy Trinity.

An Wasserflüssen Babylon (BWV 653)

Bach set this sombre chorale several times. However, he surrounds the melody with gentle, consoling figures in the major key. The Israelites' discomfort in captivity is translated in Bach's musical imagery to a yearning for heaven.

Fugue in D minor (BWV 539/2)

There is something violinistic about this lively five-part fugue based on a subject only one bar long. Beginning quite simply, it moves towards a sophisticated and vibrant conclusion with the right hand employing much decorative figuration.

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr (BWV 662)

The Lutheran version of the Gloria attracted Bach's attention many times, though this beautiful Adagio setting in A is unusual. The theme, played in the right hand, is presented with much introspection and expressive ornamentation.

Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C (BWV 564)

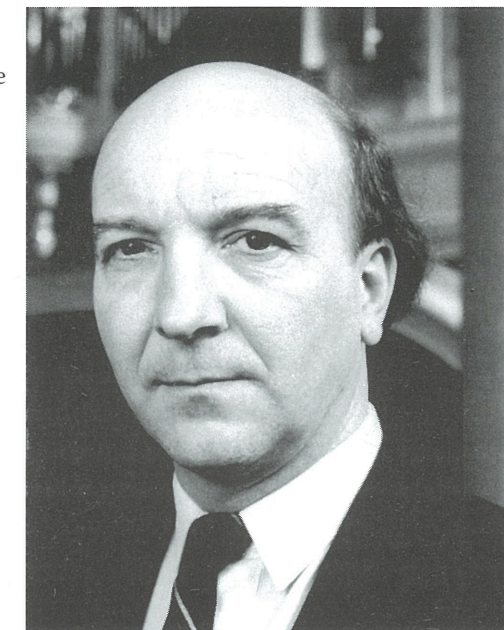
This celebrated work shows Bach's youthful exuberance, coupled with a developing mastery of musical form. The opening flourishes and pedal solo are gestures he learned from Buxtehude, whilst the sublime *adagio* and sparkling fugue bask in the sunshine of Vivaldi's new Italian manner.

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Pembroke College Chapel is, for the most part, an early architectural work of Christopher Wren. In 1663 Wren was a distinguished scientist, thirty-one years of age, and vaguely interested in building. Two years later, following a journey to Paris around the time of the Great Fire of London, he determined to devote himself to architecture. In that same year his uncle, the Bishop of Ely, was released from 18 years captivity and gave a celebratory gift of £5,000 to his college. Christopher Wren used the money to build this chapel, the first purely classical building in Cambridge. Much of the carving, particularly the plasterwork ceiling, is exquisite. The chapel was extended to the east in about 1880 to the design of George Gilbert Scott, Jnr.

The Performer

Jacques van Oortmerssen is generally considered to be one of the leading organists of our time. Born in 1950, he studied at Rotterdam Conservatory, and passed finals *cum laude*. He then studied with Marie-Claire Alain in Paris where he won the Prix d'Excellence. For over ten years, he has been Professor at the Sweelinck Conservatory and Organiste Titulaire of the Waalse Kerk. Recently he was Betts Fellow in Organ Studies at Oxford. He is engaged upon a comprehensive recording of the works of J S Bach on historically important European organs.



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