

Celebrity Organ Recital

Hans-Ola Ericsson

5pm

Oundle School Chapel

Prelude in B minor, BWV 544A J S Bach (1685-1750)

Melody to the Memory of a Lost Friend XIII (1985)  
for organ and tape Hans-Ola Ericsson (b.1958)

Sursoitto (Funeral Music), Op 111b (1925)  
Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Fantasia oder Fugen Manier 4 vocum  
from *Tabulaturbuch: Dass Vatter unser* (1627)  
Johann Ulrich Steigleder (1593-1635)

Ricercare a sei voci J S Bach  
from *Musical Offering*, BWV 1079, no 5

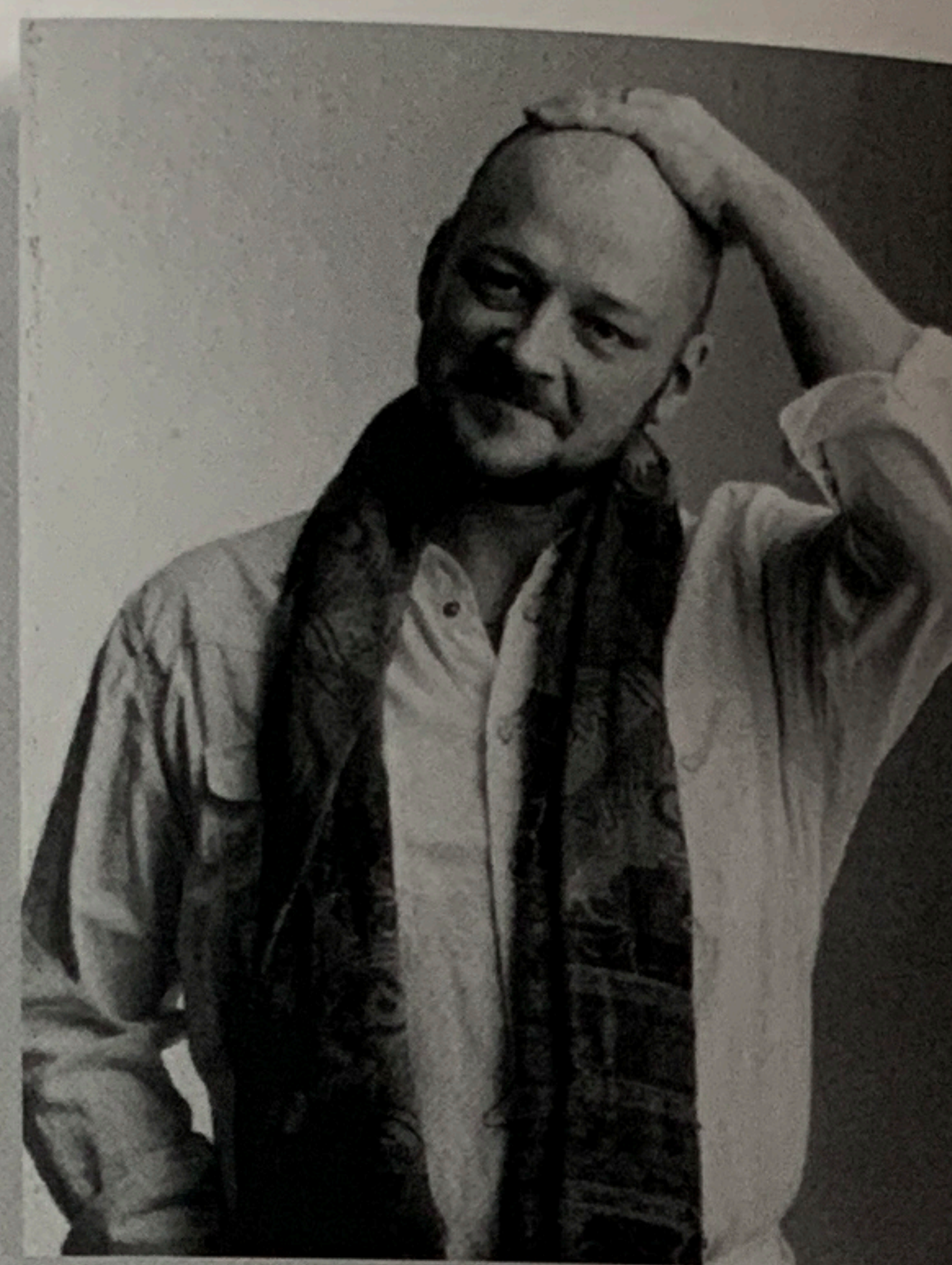
Final (40th) Variation /auffToccata Manier  
from *Tabulaturbuch: Dass Vatter unser* (1627)  
Johann Ulrich Steigleder

Intrada, Op 111a Jean Sibelius

Maroohdah Merzbau (1993/96)  
for Organ and Tape Stephen Ingham (1951)

Fugue in B minor, BWV 544B J S Bach

Organ specification on page 28



# Allegro Music

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From this imaginatively eclectic programme comes a highly original historical and musical symmetry of composers and styles. There are a number of themes to be found here, beginnings and endings, human and musical.

Bach's intricate *B minor Prelude*, and his noble *Fugue*, serve as the starting and finishing point of Hans-Ola Ericsson's recital. The *Prelude* displays writing both rich and complex, which seems to evoke a deeply elegiac quality (another theme of the recital) as its firm, close harmonies intertwine in a labyrinth of almost symphonic harmony. The *Fugue*, by contrast, conveys a mood of restraint and calm, but toward the end of the work this reticence is exchanged for an imposing and self confident stride to the conclusion.

*Melody to the Memory of a Lost Friend XIII* was commissioned by South German Radio for the Bach year in 1985 and was premiered in Stuttgart the same year. Hans-Ola Ericsson writes: '*Melody...XIII* is the last work in a chamber music cycle for instrument and recorded tape. A close friend's choice to take his own life was the starting point and the driving force for this cyclical work. His hopelessness and despair began in me a search for meaning. I developed a system that can most closely be compared to a chess game where every interval was given individual rules like those assigned to each of the chess pieces.'

'Another major inspiration was Hieronymus Bosch's exceptional triptych *Ascension to Heaven* which, thanks to a friend of Luigi Nono, I was allowed to be locked in with for a morning in the spring of 1984. The painting was stored in an out of the way room in the Ducal Palace in Venice and was not accessible to the public. In this painting Hieronymus Bosch shows the tunnel that many people have described in near-death experiences: a divine revelation!

The music of Sibelius has an emotional ebb and flow which ranges from great elation (largely in the wake of political struggle and resulting triumph) to cold despair and isolation. The last thirty years of the composer's life were largely unhappy, marred by bouts of regular heavy drinking, frequent depression and a complete collapse of self confidence. His elegiac *Sursoitto* (Funeral Music) and *Intrada* were written in memory of Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Both pieces are particularly interesting and deserve greater recognition.

Johann Steigleder was a pupil of his organist father, and despite having to cope with lameness he became organist of the Abbey Church in Stuttgart in 1617, and ducal organist from 1627. His keyboard writing reveals that he was greatly inspired by instrumental music, not least the English virginal style. This isn't altogether surprising as he was surrounded by a number of English musicians who were also employed at the Stuttgart Court. In 1627 he published his *Tabulaturbuch* a work made up of forty variations on the chorale *Vater unser in Himmelreich* ('Our Father...'). The chorale undergoes a wide variety of manifestations, and consistent with this recital's symmetrical theme we hear today the first and the last - a free Fantasia and an inventive Toccata, influenced probably by the lute and virginals.

The title of Stephen Ingham's work *Maroohdah Merzbau* refers tangentially to the recycled constructions of Karl Schwitters as well as an extended poem by the Australian aboriginal writer Jack Warrnumburri. His poem *Maroondah*

*Dreaming* provided an initial impetus, whereby an assemblage of neo-Dadaistic 'found musical objects' (particularly some fragments of Franz Schubert) are juxtaposed against a grid in the temporal domain which is filtered through a stochastic grid generated by an Opcode 'Max' program running on a computer.

Towards the end of his life Bach visited Potsdam at the request of King Frederick the Great. The King invited Bach to improvise on a given theme. When Bach left the King's court, he knew he could improve on what he had played; he worked quickly and sent his *Musical Offering* to the King just two months after his visit. The work consists of a number of canons and fugues, thirteen pieces altogether. At either end, like bookends, are two fugues or *ricercare*, the first in three parts, the second in six.

### Hans-Ola Ericsson

The Festival is delighted to welcome Hans-Ola Ericsson to Oundle as a recitalist and tutor to the Summer School for Young Organists. Now Professor of Organ at Piteå in his native Sweden, and at Bremen in Germany, Hans-Ola Ericsson is a determined campaigner for the quality of new music and its right to be heard. He has worked with many leading composers in the preparation of performances of their works, including John Cage, György Ligeti, Olivier Messiaen and Bengt Hambraeus. In 1999 he received the Swedish Society of Composers interpretation prize, and a year later was made a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

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