



**SERIES IV**

# **CENTENNIAL ORGAN CONCERTO**

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**FEBRUARY 6, 2023 – 7:30 PM**

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# Programme Order

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*Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72*

*Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)*

*Concerto for Organ in G Major, Wq 34*

*I. Allegro di molto*

*II. Largo*

*III. Presto*

*Neil Cockburn, organ*

*Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach  
(1714-1788)*

## INTERMISSION

*Symphony No. 3 in C Minor ("Organ"), Op. 78*

*I. Adagio*

*Allegro moderato - Poco adagio*

*II. Allegro Moderato*

*Presto - Allegro moderato - Presto*

*Allegro moderato - Maestoso - Allegro*

*Più allegro - Molto allegro - Pesante*

*Camille Saint-Saëns  
(1835-1921)*

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# About Our Special Guest

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## Neil Cockburn *Organ*

After 22 years on the Alberta Music Scene, Neil Cockburn was appointed Director of Chapel Music at the University of King's College, Halifax NS from October 2022.

Hailing from St. Andrews, Scotland, Neil Cockburn's musical education was at Oxford University (BA Hons, Music), the

Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, (MusM, Organ Performance, and the Professional Performance Diploma, PPRNCM), the Conservatoire National de Région Rueil-Malmaison, France (Premier prix de perfectionnement), and the University of Calgary (PhD, Musicology). He won First Prize at the 1996 Dublin International Organ Competition, and has received numerous other prestigious awards, including the W.T. Best Memorial Organ Scholarship, a scholarship from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, and the Lili Boulanger Memorial Fund Prize.

Before moving to Canada in 2000 he was Director of Music at Bromley Parish Church in Kent, and an Organ Teacher at the St Giles International Organ School in London, UK. From 2000-2015 he was Head of Organ Studies at Mount Royal Conservatory in Calgary, where he worked alongside Simon Preston on the International Summer School (2000-2009), and he was Artistic Director of the Calgary Organ Festival (2010-2015). He was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award by Mount Royal University in June 2014. He held the University of Calgary's Cantos Music Foundation Organ Scholarship, a guest faculty position, celebrating the inauguration of the new North German Baroque organ built by the Ahrend Organ Company of Germany from 2006 until 2009. From 2015 to 2022 he was Director of Music at the Anglican Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary.

As an organ soloist, he is known for his diverse repertoire interests and expertise, and he performs an all-encompassing spectrum of recitals and concerts on a wide range of instrument types, from all-Bach recitals on historically inspired organs, to symphonic programmes on romantic instruments. In addition to many Canadian performances, his concerts have taken him to Scotland, England, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, France, Germany, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States. His most recent solo recording is of the Mass on the Sixth Tone with three Magnificat Suites by the seventeenth-century French composer, André Raison.



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Eva Muranyi +  
Maria Geppert  
Diane Valentine +

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John Gilliat ^  
Jessica Groeneveld  
Jacqueline Friesen  
Kelsey Jespersen  
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Stephanie Soltice +  
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# Programme Notes

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## Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) Organ Concerto in G major, Wq. 34

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the second son of Johann Sebastian Bach, was, in his lifetime, more famous and influential as a composer than his father, whose music had fallen out of fashion by the mid-eighteenth century.

No less a composer than Haydn stated that “whoever knows me thoroughly must realize that I owe a great deal to Emanuel Bach and that I understood him and studied him diligently” while Beethoven was taught the keyboard through C.P.E. Bach’s influential treatise *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*. Although today the judgement of time has turned decidedly in favour of the father over the son, C.P.E. Bach’s music is still admired for its striking originality and expressiveness. In fact, he was a leader in the north German *Empfindsamer stil* or “sensitive” style which cultivated the nuanced changes in emotion in the course of a piece of music.

C.P.E. Bach was born in Weimar in 1714 while his father was serving as chamber musician and organist at the Court of Saxe-Weimar. Later in an autobiographical sketch, he proudly stated that his father was his only teacher in music. As a court musician, Johann Sebastian had felt slighted and looked down upon for his lack of a university education, something he then insisted that his sons all acquire. Thus Carl Philipp Emanuel pursued a law degree first at the University of Leipzig and then at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder while at the same time engaging in music as a performer and composer.

Upon graduation in 1738, he was offered a position in the musical establishment of the future King of Prussia, Frederick the Great. He served Frederick as accompanist at the royal court in Berlin for the next thirty years until the very conservative musical tastes of the King and what Bach felt was the lack of appreciation of his music drove him to accept employment in Hamburg as the director of music for all of the city’s churches. This was a prestigious but extremely demanding position that required a constant stream of music and performances. He not only rose to the challenge but also continued to create and publish a large amount of music outside of his civic duties up to the year of his death in 1788.

As a musician, C.P.E. Bach was famous as a keyboard player. Consequently, keyboard music represents a large and important part of his musical output. Of particular interest are the many beautiful keyboard concertos he produced throughout his long career. Here he was following in a family tradition established by his father in the harpsichord concertos he composed in Leipzig and continued by his younger brother Johann Christian Bach, in his piano concertos which in turn influenced the young Mozart. The concerto we will be hearing tonight is one of two organ concertos C.P.E. Bach composed, most probably for Anna Amalia of Prussia, the sister of Frederick the Great and one of C.P.E. Bach’s friends and supporters in Berlin. Like Frederick, she was talented musically and even composed. Bach wrote the *Organ Concerto in G major* in 1755 at a time when Anna Amalia was passionately involved in organ studies. According to a contemporary source, she was not able to play the pedal work and indeed the Concerto has no pedal parts. It consists of three movements—a restless *Allegro di molto* filled with bright energy; a subdued and plaintive *Largo* in E minor and an exciting *Presto finale*.

# Programme Notes

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## Camille Saint Saëns (1835-1921): Symphony no. 3 in C minor, opus 78

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a brilliant flowering of French music that continued unabated into the twentieth century. Among the finest composers of this period was Camille Saint Saëns, who left a substantial legacy of beautiful works in virtually all of the major musical genres of his day, from imposing operas such as *Samson and Delilah*, to intimate pieces of chamber music, and, of course, the witty and delightful *Carnival of the Animals*.

Saint Saëns' first years were very precarious. His father died only three months after his birth and he himself was quite sickly needing special care from his mother and aunt for his first few years. Despite such a difficult beginning he enjoyed a long and very successful career in music. A child prodigy on the same level as Mozart, he gave his first public concert at the age of ten at the *Salle Pleyel* in Paris where he performed Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto by heart (a novelty in concerts of the period). At the age of thirteen he entered the Paris Conservatoire to study organ, graduating three years later with the *Premier Prix*. Over the following decades, he distinguished himself as a performer on both piano and organ, eventually winning the prestigious position of organist at *La Madeleine* in Paris, which he held from 1857 to 1877. In composition, Saint Saëns was equally successful, producing a wide variety of works in different genres and winning a number of competitions in the 1850s and 1860s as well as enjoying the friendship of many luminaries of the French musical world including Hector Berlioz and Charles Gounod.

One of the most important and influential friends that Saint Saëns made was Franz Liszt. Liszt first heard Saint Saëns perform at *La Madeleine* in the 1850s and immediately declared him to be the "greatest organist in the world." He also became a stalwart champion of the younger composer's music and remained so for the rest of his life. It was Liszt, for instance, who encouraged Saint Saëns to write *Samson and Delilah* and then conducted its premiere at the *Weimar Opera House* in 1877.

For his part, Saint Saëns was strongly affected by Liszt's music and after his death criticized the musical world for only seeing Liszt as a great pianist and not recognizing "his claims as one of the most remarkable composers." He was drawn to Liszt's symphonic poems in particular, producing four of his own and following a similar approach to composition. Above all he cultivated Liszt's use of the germ cell technique, in which an opening idea becomes the seed of many of the later musical ideas in the work. Furthermore he was influenced by Liszt's use of thematic transformation, in which a theme which appears early on in the work in one character returns in a completely different, often majestic, character at the end. The one work that exemplifies both the influence of Liszt and Saint Saëns' own individual voice as a composer is his magnificent *Symphony in C minor, opus 78* "with organ." Considered his greatest symphony, it was written in 1886 to a commission from the *Royal Philharmonic Society* in England and dedicated to Liszt, who had died a few months previously. Although Saint Saëns wrote the symphony in two movements, he stated that it still "maintained the usual four-movement structure" through the division of each of the two movements into two major contrasting sections.

# Programme Notes

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The first movement begins with an elegiac introduction (*Adagio*) consisting of a mournful sigh figure on the strings answered by a motive on the oboe rising towards the light. This material becomes the main substance of the whole work, returning in various guises throughout the course of the music. The ensuing *Allegro moderato* is cast in sonata form, with a dark and urgent main theme answered by a luminous and comforting subordinate theme. (Like the material of the introduction, the main theme becomes an important recurring element throughout the Symphony.) In the second half of the movement all of the struggle and agitation are swept away by what is essentially in itself a serene, deeply affecting slow movement. Here the organ makes its first appearance, serving as an inner light that transfigures the orchestral sonorities with its deep low notes and full chords.

The second movement begins with an aggressive opening section answered by a light and playful second section, which features sparkling piano arpeggiations. At the height of the movement, the organ enters with a full riveting C major chord, which announces the transformation of the first movement's main theme into a great chorale melody, first heard on the strings against a magic rippling accompaniment of two pianos. Here what had been dark and threatening becomes the bright and majestic subject of a series of choral variations (including a fugue) for the full orchestra ending in a fiery, brilliant coda.

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