

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, COLUMBIA, MD

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord”
German Organ Settings of the Song of Mary

Adam Detzner, *Organist*

Sunday, September 6, 2020 | 5:00 PM

SOUTHERN GERMANY

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|---|--|
| * <i>Magnificat Octavi Toni</i> (from <i>Harmonia Organica</i> , 1645)
Primus Versus
Secundus Versus (Choral im Discant mitt 2 Clavirn à 3)
Tertius Versus
Quartus Versus (Echo mit 2 Clavirn)
Quintus Versus à 3 (Choral im Bass)
Sextus Versus Gloria (Tutti) | Johann Erasmus Kindermann
(1616-1655) |
| * Three Fugues on the <i>Magnificat Octavi Toni</i> | Johann Pachelbel
(1653-1706) |

NORTHERN GERMANY

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| * <i>Magnificat Tertii Toni</i>
[Primus Versus] Choral in Basso
Secundus Versus. Auff 2 Clavier
Tertius Versus a 4 V[oci]
Quartus Versus a 3 Voc: Manualiter | Heinrich Scheidemann
(1595-1663) |
| <i>Meine Seele Erhebt den Herren</i> , BWV 733
(Fuga sopra il Magnificat) | Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750) |

THE HYMNAL 1982

“Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord!” (see page 2)

Please sing along!

Works marked * will be performed in meantone temperament.

If you have any questions about the music, or any questions about or corrections for these program notes, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Adam at music@christchurchcolumbia.org.



1 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of the Lord!
 2 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of his Name!
 3 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of his might!
 4 Tell out, my soul, the glo - ries of his word!



Un - num - bered bless - ings give my spi - rit voice;
 Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
 Powers and do - min - ions lay their glo - ry by.
 Firm is his prom - ise, and his mer - cy sure.



ten - der to me the prom - ise of his word;
 his mer - cy sure, from age to age the same;
 Proud hearts and stub - born wills are put to flight,
 Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of the Lord



in God my Sa - vior shall my heart re - joice.
 his ho - ly Name— the Lord, the Might - y One.
 the hun - gry fed, the hum - ble lift - ed high.
 to chil - dren's chil - dren and for ev - er - more!

ABOUT TONIGHT'S THEME

Those of you who have been leading or following our daily services of Evening Prayer have become well-acquainted with the Song of Mary – the *Magnificat*. In Luke's Gospel, Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is carrying John the Baptist in her womb. When Mary appears, John moves within Elizabeth's womb, and Elizabeth prophesies that Mary will be the mother of the Lord. Mary responds with the *Magnificat*. In its Rite II incarnation, it goes like this:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

As we pray this canticle each day, we join an ancient tradition of prayer that goes back more than a millennium. Early Christian monastics chanted the *Magnificat* as a part of their Daily Office, a practice which persists in Roman Catholic religious orders today. Our modern Anglican/Episcopal daily office comprises just two services: Morning Prayer (when sung, some might call it Matins) and Evening Prayer (or Evensong). (One might also observe Noonday Prayer). The Roman Catholic daily office asks a ~~little~~ lot more of its worshipers. By the ninth century (and still today in some monasteries), the daily schedule looked like this:

Matins	Late at night
Lauds	Early in the morning
Prime	First hour of daylight
Terce	The third hour
Sext	Noon
Nones	The ninth hour
Vespers	At sunset
Compline	Before bed

The Vespers service featured the chanting of Psalms, hymns, and the Magnificat; Compline featured the chanting of the Song of Simeon, the *Nunc Dimittis*, the other Canticle we recite (or sing) at Evening Prayer (or Evensong). In fact, one of the key liturgical innovations of the first Anglican Prayer Book (of 1549) was the synthesis of Vespers

and Compline, resulting in the unique Anglican Evening Prayer (or Evensong) service. Many composers have set the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* as paired compositions, called collectively an “Evening Service;” this rich (and growing) repertory of “Mags and Nuncs” is one of the great musical jewels of the Anglican choral tradition. In recent years, our own choirs have offered services of Choral Evensong, using settings by George Dyson and Thaddeus Cavuoti, the latter formerly the musician at Christ Church, Rockville.

Some English and American cathedrals, and also some larger parish churches, offer Evensong as often as seven times a week; many of them have been doing so for decades, or centuries. When we pray Evening Prayer at 7 PM five days a week, we, too, take part in this ancient, unending nightly worship of God. How about that!

ABOUT TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

Anglicans and Roman Catholics didn’t have all of the fun – the *Magnificat* also appeared in the earliest Lutheran Vespers services. In these services, the organ often filled in for the choir, sometimes alternating verses with a choir or cantor (a practice called, anti-climactically, *alternatim*), and sometimes simply playing (an organ version) of everything a choir would have sung. These organ verses, or “versets,” were often extemporized, and many of the extant organ versets from German speaking lands functioned more as model compositions for improvisation than as music meant to be performed in worship. Seventeenth-century North and South German Lutheran worship wasn’t live-streamed on Facebook and archived on YouTube – there is only so much we can discover about how this music functioned liturgically, and, truthfully, not that much more I can tell you. I am sure there is a helpful dissertation somewhere.

Tonight’s recital features two geographical areas (Northern and Southern German speaking lands, the latter referring, specifically, to Nuremberg), two genres (verset collections and fugues), and two generations (early seventeenth century and the turn of the eighteenth). Here’s a grid:

	Southern Germany (“Nuremberg School”)	Northern Germany
Verset Collection	Johann Erasmus Kindermann (1616-1655)	Heinrich Scheidemann (1595-1663)
<i>(time passes...)</i>	<i>A teacher of</i> Heinrich Schwemmer, <i>who was a teacher of...</i>	<i>Possibly a teacher of</i> Dieterich Buxtehude, <i>who was possibly a teacher of...</i>
Fugue(s)	... Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
	<i>Was a teacher of</i> →	← <i>Was a student of</i>
	Johann Christoph Bach	

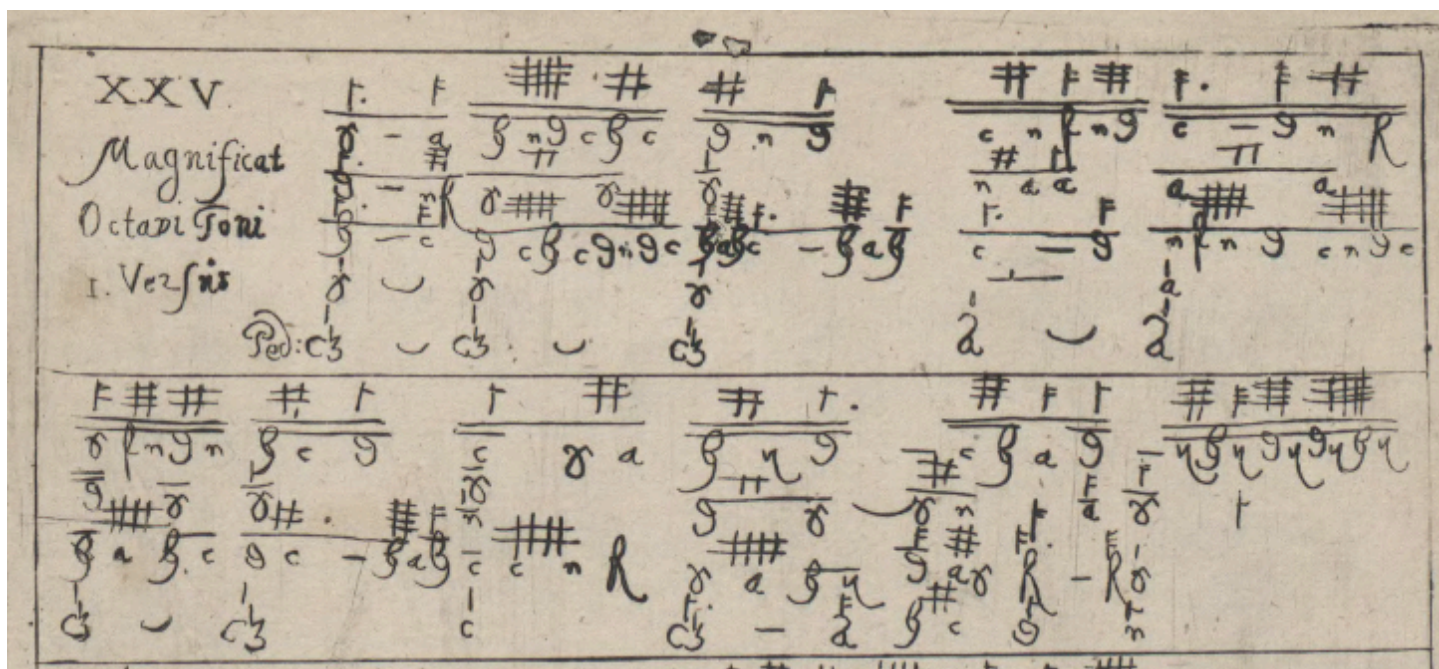
My hope in crafting this program was to hint at the connections within and across genre, space, time, and, incidentally, pedagogical traditions. As you listen, you might consider these connections. For example, how do Kindermann’s and Scheidemann’s *Magnificat* versets differ? How do the later fugues? How does Pachelbel’s music borrow from Kindermann’s? Or Bach’s from Scheidemann’s?

My notes below are meant to give some helpful background should you wish to think about these questions. You could also just listen – that’s fine too!

ABOUT THE MUSIC FROM THE NUREMBERG SCHOOL

Johann Erasmus Kindermann was an important part of the compositional legacy musicologists call the “Nuremberg School.” Born in that Bavarian city, he traveled to Italy to study the newest styles of composition there, which were very much in vogue. He ended up returning to his hometown and working at the [Egidienkirche](#), the third most prestigious post in the city, and taught the next generation of the Nuremberg School (see my helpful grid).

Kindermann wrote some sacred vocal music, but his most important contribution was the *Harmonia Organica*, first published in 1645. It was perhaps the first printed engraved music in Germany. And what an engraving:



The first few measures of Kindermann's **Magnificat Octavi Toni**.
(digital facsimile from the Jagiellonian Digital Library, Poland)

The twenty-five pieces of *Harmonia Organica* are all written using this notation, called the “New German Tablature.” Improbably, there is in fact an older German keyboard tablature notation, called – surprise! – the “Old German Tablature.” Some organists play directly from this notation, a skill I’ve never acquired. Life is short enough, even the untrained eye can see the multiple voices stacked on top of one another, four rows for the manuals, with the bottom row for the feet (marked Ped: for pedal).

It is useful to pause and consider the phrase *octavi toni*. The “Eighth Tone” is one of the formulae used to chant the *Magnificat*. Coincidentally, Christ Church worshippers are already familiar with the eighth tone:



This is the formula we used to chant Psalms responsively during Lent in 2019. This simple formula appears in all of the verses of Kindermann’s *Magnificat* setting, either literally repeated or hinted at in the musical texture. For example, in the **first verse**, you can hear this melody note-for-note in the pedal, with free figuration in the manuals above. In the **second verse**, the chant appears “*Im Discant*,” that is, in the top voice on a solo stop, accompanied by two voices on another manual. The **third verse** is a four-voice fugue whose subject hints at the first half of the chant. The **fourth verse** is an “Echo,” in which everything that is played on the *Forte* (loud) manual is immediately repeated, verbatim, on the *Piano* (soft) manual. The harmony here hints at the chant. In the **fifth verse**, the tune appears again in the bass, clearly audible. In the **sixth verse**, marked “Tutti” (meaning full organ – or all the stops – should be used), fragments of the chant appear throughout.

The sixth verse is also marked “Gloria,” and this suggests the possible liturgical use of this music. It doesn’t exactly map onto the version of the *Magnificat* in our BCP, but I think it could work like this:

Organ	Choir or Cantor
1. My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,	my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
2. for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:	the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
3. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.	He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
4. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, * and has lifted up the lowly.	He has filled the hungry with good things, * and the rich he has sent away empty.
5. He has come to the help of his servant Israel, * for he has remembered his promise of mercy,	The promise he made to our fathers, * to Abraham and his children for ever.
6. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *	as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Keeping in mind that this scheme is purely conjectural on my part, you might nonetheless consider how the musical settings reflect the text . For example, verse three has a kind of sneaky chromatic fugue subject, beginning in the top voice and migrating down to the bass – does this represent “those who fear him in every generation?” Verse four has Echo effects between loud and soft – does this represent the “mighty” and the “lowly?”

Johann Pachelbel was a grand-student of Kindermann, and his music represented the full expression of the Nuremberg tradition. After early training in Nuremberg, he went on to work in Vienna, Eisenach (the birthplace of J. S. Bach), and Erfurt, before returning to his hometown to take up the position at [St. Sebald’s Church](#), the most prestigious position in the city. He is best known today for his Canon in D, a perennial wedding favorite and the source of the harmony for [Graduation \(Friends Forever\) by Vitamin C](#). But he also made important contributions to sacred choral and keyboard music, particularly with the ingenious ways he manipulated and ornamented chorale melodies. Pachelbel was also a tutor of Johann Christoph Bach, Johann Sebastian’s older brother and first teacher, and his influence is felt most strongly in J.S.’s earlier compositions.

Though brief, Pachelbel’s 95 fugues on the *Magnificat* were some of his most clever and sophisticated keyboard compositions. These three **Fugues on the *Magnificat Octavi Toni*** don’t really use the chant at all. It’s not clear how they were used – perhaps as little introductions to give the choir their pitch? In any case, they are lovely little pieces, brief and to-the-point, quite unlike the Bach fugue that will close tonight’s program. The **first fugue** is in a lilting 6/8 meter, sometimes in three voices, sometimes in four. The pedal enters only towards the end. The **second fugue**’s subject features twelve repeated notes, a dramatic special effect. In this fugue, the pedal is not used at all – pieces that use only the hands are called “*manualiter*.”

The **third fugue** is meatier. In fact, it’s really a double fugue, in three parts. There is first a fugue in four voices, moving mostly at the rate of an eighth note. As before, the pedal only enters towards the end. This is followed by a fugue in (generally) three voices, in which the pedal is not used at all. This fugue moves at the rate of the sixteenth note – that is to say, it moves roughly twice as fast as the first fugue. Finally, a third fugue combines both subjects at once! This contrapuntal ingenuity hints at the accomplishments that would come in the next two generations, including the often mind-numbingly complex polyphony of Johann Sebastian Bach.

ABOUT THE MUSIC FROM NORTHERN GERMANY

Heinrich Scheidemann was one of the best known organists and composers of his day. He was born in Holstein, in what is now Northern Germany, and eventually ended up studying in the Netherlands with Johann Pieterszoon Sweelinck, the so-called “Orpheus of Amsterdam.” Though a Dutchman, Sweelinck is often considered the founder of the North German school of organ playing and composition. Many important German composers went to the Netherlands to study with Sweelinck, including Scheidemann, Scheidt, and Jacob Praetorius. Scheidemann returned to Germany to work as the musician at [St. Catherine’s Church](#) in Hamburg, where he played one of the most important organs of the Early Modern era – a mammoth instrument of fifty-eight stops, four manuals, and a luxuriously appointed pedal division. Sadly, this instrument was destroyed in World War II, although a [reconstruction](#) was added to the church in 2013.

Northern organs were generally larger than their counterparts in the South. This has to do with architecture (Southern Churches were often not as tall) and liturgical traditions (Catholic churches needed different styles of liturgical music than Lutherans), among other factors. Indeed, the organ at St. Catherine’s may have been the largest in the world when it was built. The many different stops and fully developed pedal board allowed for a broader “palette” of sonic colors to choose from. The pedal division, specifically, functioned more as it does today, generally supporting the harmony in the bass. Music written for this kind of organ allows an organist to take full advantage of their own instrument and use as many interesting sounds and colors as possible.

Scheidemann’s *Magnificat tertii toni* is a cycle of four verses on a different chant tone (the Third Tone) than the *octavi toni* we encountered before. Because there are only four verses, it is unlikely that these pieces were meant to alternate with a choir or cantor. It’s more likely that they served as model compositions for students, to learn how to compose and improvise *Magnificat* versets for their own church services.

The **first verse** opens with two voices in the upper register of the organ, the higher of them hinting at the *tertii toni* chant formula. The pedal rumbles in with an exact, note-to-note declamation of the chant. The **second verse** is almost six times longer than the first. This verse includes several pages of echo effects between two manuals on the organ, quite like the effects in Kindermann’s setting, but lengthier, more involved (and more difficult). Interspersed between these echo sections, and concluding the verse, are virtuosic solo melodies played in the right hand and accompanied by the left hand and pedal. The **third verse** is as fantastical as the second, but shorter, perhaps more introspective, without echo effects. The **final verse** is written for the manuals only. The chant appears in the middle voice, while a voice above and below engage in a friendly dialogue. This means that the chant is juggled between the two hands, played now by one thumb and then by the other.

Our last piece of organ literature this evening is J. S. Bach’s *Fuga sopra il Magnificat*, or “Fugue based on the Magnificat.” The chant here is not one of the eight typical Magnificat tones, but rather a sort of “ninth tone” called the *tonus peregrinus*:



The *tonus peregrinus* is also called “the wandering tone.” If you take a look at the top line in the above example (thank you, [Wikipedia!](#)) you will see that the “reciting tone,” or the note on which most of the syllables are sung, is an A. (These are the notes in the parentheses). On the second line, the reciting tone switches to G. That is, the reciting tone “wanders,” rather than staying put as it does in every other chant tone. Luther’s German paraphrase of the

Magnificat was (and is) traditionally sung to this tone. And there is an interesting etymological story here, too, relating to one of the world's most famous [birds of prey](#).

Bach's fugue is notated "*pro organo pleno*," or "for full organ," meaning using many of the stops at once to create a full, rich, orchestral sound. It's also loud. It is not a typical Bachian fugue, in which a subject enters in one voice alone before being answered elsewhere – rather, from the very beginning, multiple voices are at work. There is almost constant eighth note motion, with intense chromaticism and cross-relations. One thing I love about this fugue is how it almost the entire keyboard compass, from a low D to a high C. Although I don't change registrations (choices of stops) in this fugue, the constant movement from the lower to the higher regions of the keyboard keeps the sound fluid and interesting.

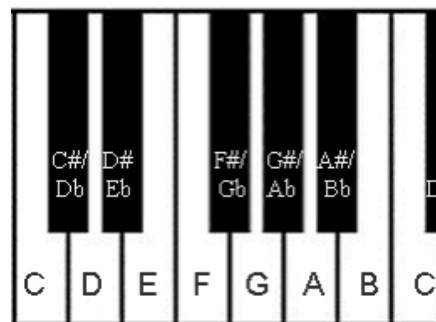
You can hear the first half of the chant (the top line above) echoing here and there within the texture, but only the first half. Towards the end of the piece, the pedal enters at the root of an electric 9-8 suspension. Only at the very end of the piece do we hear the second half of the *tonus peregrinus*, again in the pedal, ending on the root of a triumphant D Major chord. We've made it!

We close with a congregational hymn setting of the Magnificat, with a paraphrase by English clergyman Timothy Dudley-Smith set to a tune by the composer Walter Greathouse. To me, this is one of the great marriages of text and tune – the triumphant, trumpet-like leaps in the tune reflect and enhance the joyous tone of the text. Please stand and sing!

ABOUT TONIGHT'S TUNING

One of the advantages of a digital organ is the ability to instantly change its pitch or tuning. To change the tuning of an entire pipe organ would require making minute adjustments to every one of its (often more than a thousand) pipes. No thank you! With a flip of a switch, we move from an equal temperament (how a modern piano is tuned) to a well temperament (what I will use for the Bach) and a meantone temperament (what I will use for everything else).

Well temperament won't sound all that different from what you hear during a Sunday service. But meantone can sound very strange – at times, even harsh and ugly – so it's useful to consider what it is, exactly. You may remember our friend the labeled piano keyboard from our bulletins in the spring:



The problem is that this keyboard – and almost every other keyboard – is lying to you. It turns out that, for example, G# and Ab are not the same note. In modern equal temperament, the black keys work two jobs, functioning both as sharps and flats.

Suppose you want to create an E-Major triad. The notes would be **E, G#, and B**. If we want an extra-beautiful E-Major triad, we can tune the G# such that E-G# make a **perfect major third**. But suppose that we now want to create an F-minor triad, whose notes would be **F, Ab, and C**. That black key is pure G# - if we try to use it as an Ab, it will sound truly awful.

Modern equal temperament (as found at today's tuned piano) solves this problem by splitting the difference. That G#/ Ab key is tuned so that neither of our hypothetical chords – E Major and F Minor – sound awful, but also so that neither sound perfect. Meantone tuning, on the other hand, fixes the pitch of its accidentals (black keys) such that some chords sound supremely beautiful while others sound... well, awful. In meantone, you can't have both G# and Ab - you have to choose. In the first three pieces of my program, there are some moments where it sounds like the organ is "out of tune." In fact, the composers likely meant for those moments to be especially crunchy and spicy. Meantone tuning allows us to hear the music the way its composers did – in a sense, it lets us time travel.

Just above, I noted that "almost every other keyboard" is lying about its black keys. There are, in fact, honest keyboards. Some composers and organ builders wanted both a beautiful G# and a beautiful Ab. Here is an image of the keydesk of the (absolutely stunning) [gallery organ in Yale's Marquand Chapel](#):



You can see that all three manuals feature what are called "split sharps," allowing the organist to choose whether they want, for example, a G# or an Ab. Their cup runneth over!

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