

# KOLA OWOLABI ORGAN

## A COSMOPOLITAN EXTRAVAGANZA BAROQUE MUSIC FROM ITALY, SPAIN, GERMANY, AND ENGLAND

Georg Muffat (1653-1704) Toccata Prima (*Apparatus musico-organisticus*, 1690)

Francisco Correa de Arauxo (1584-1654) Tiento 53, de medio registro de dos triples de Segundo tono

Michelangelo Rossi (1602-1656) Toccata Quarta (Toccate e correnti, Rome, ca. 1634)

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) Capriccio V sopra la bassa fiamenga (*First book of Capricci*, 1624)

Georg Muffat Toccata octava

Franz Xaver Murschhauser (1663-1738) Aria Pastoralis variata

Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759), arr. Kola Owolabi Concerto grosso in Bb Major, Opus 3 No. 2  
I. Vivace - II. Largo - III. Allegro - IV. - V.

Antonio Soler (1729-1783) Sonata No. 32 in G minor

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) Fugue in G Minor, K. 30

Domenico Scarlatti Sonata in D Major, K. 33

Antonio Soler Sonata No. 117 in D minor

16 JANUARY 2022, 3PM  
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

## NOTES

**Georg Muffat** (1653-1704) spent his childhood in Alsace, France, but lived in numerous cities during his lifetime. He studied in Paris for six years, possibly with Jean-Baptiste Lully, and later moved to Rome where he studied organ and harpsichord with Bernardo Pasquini and heard performances of Arcangelo Corelli's instrumental works. Muffat was employed as organist to the Strasbourg cathedral chapter and the archbishop's court in Salzburg. He finally settled in Passau where he was kapellmeister at the cathedral. His *Apparatus musico-organisticus* (1690) contains twelve toccatas, of which the first eight are ordered according to the eight medieval church modes, and the remaining four include "unusual" keys such as Bb Major and E minor. The collection concludes with a ciacona, a passacaglia and *Nova Cyclopeias Harmonica* (a set of eight variations). Muffat's toccatas are noteworthy for their perfect integration of French and Italian musical styles. Muffat's *Toccatà prima* in D minor, alternates sections in a serious style, featuring suspensions and dissonances, with flamboyant passage-work. *Toccatà octava* is characterized by capricious changes in tempo and character.

**Francisco Correa de Arauxo** (1584-1654) was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest and held various clerical and musical appointments at churches in Seville, was organist at the cathedral in Jaen for 4 years, and ended his career in Segovia, where he held an administrative appointment at the cathedral. His major publication was *Facultad organica* (1626), a collection of 69 pieces for organ. Almost all of these pieces were *tientos*, written in a conservative polyphonic style strongly influenced by the Renaissance motet. *Facultad organica* was written for pedagogical purposes, and Correa provides an extensive preface in which he discusses the modes, rhythm, ornamentation, fingering, and other aspects of performance. *Tiento 53* is one of the most expressive pieces, written in five voices, with two treble solos that at times are reminiscent of Italian repertoire for two cornettos.

**Michelangelo Rossi** (1602-1656) worked in Rome as a church organist, violinist, and opera composer at three different periods of his career. One of his Roman patrons, Cardinal Maurizio of Savoy, employed a large musical establishment which included the composer Sigismondo d'India and the poet Fulvio Testi. While Rossi's keyboard toccatas are often compared to the toccatas of Frescobaldi (1583-1643), they are as much influenced by d'India's madrigals. In any case, Rossi's keyboard works make a significant contribution to the development of the 17th century Italianate keyboard toccata, which is characterized by an improvisatory style, rhythmic freedom, bold harmonies, and extreme contrasts. Rossi's *Toccatà Quarta* consists of four sections: the first is improvisatory, the second features contrapuntal imitation of a short motif, the third explores surprising harmonic progressions, and the fourth makes use of brilliant keyboard figuration.

**Girolamo Frescobaldi** (1583-1643) spent most of his career working as organist at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and also performed as a harpsichordist at the residences of leading aristocrats and cardinals, including Cardinals Francesco and Antonio Barberino (nephews of Pope Urban II). His *Primo Libro di Capricci*, 1624 (First Book of Capricci) are written in the Renaissance polyphonic style, but also integrate instrumental styles and keyboard figuration. Each of the capriccios is based on a single theme that is developed in several short sections which introduce numerous transformations of the theme. Frescobaldi also introduces many new themes that are combined with the original theme in a feat of contrapuntal ingenuity. The *Capriccio sopra la bassa fiamenga* is based on fragments from the bass line of a Flemish allemande "Bruynsmedelijc," a popular dance tune that appeared in several collections of lute music between 1569 and 1583.

**Franz Xaver Murschhauser** (1663-1738)'s career had some similarities to Georg Muffat's, in that Murschhauser was born in Alsace and then settled in Southern Germany. By 1676, he was studying in Munich, and eventually took lessons from Johann Caspar Kerll, before taking the position of Director of Music at the Frauenkirche in Munich in 1691. His collection *Octi-tonium novum organicum* was published in 1696 in Augsburg, and mostly contains preludia and fugues in the 8 church modes, to be performed in alternatim during the singing of psalms and Magnificats during the Catholic liturgy. The collection ends with four *arie pastorali*, sets of variations based on Christmas folk songs.

**Georg Friedrich Handel** (1685-1759) began his professional career as organist at the Domkirche in his hometown, Halle. One year later, however, he moved to Hamburg, where he worked with the tenor and composer Johann Mattheson at the Hamburg opera. After four years of travel through Venice, Rome, Florence, and Naples, Handel settled in London in 1714, and he spent the rest of his life there as a composer of Italian operas and oratorios. Handel composed two sets of concerti grossi (Opus 3 and 6) as well as 14 organ concertos, which were typically performed between the parts of his oratorios. The 6 Concerti grossi, Opus 3, were published in 1738, but several of them date from Handel's earliest days in London. Opus 3 No. 2 is scored for two solo violins, 2 oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo. Overall, this piece reflects the various influences of Handel's musical training: the grounding in keyboard playing and counterpoint he would have received in Halle, and his exposure to Italian chamber music from his travels during 1706-1710. The third movement of this concerto is a double-fugue, recalling an anecdote from Johann Mattheson that he and Handel wrote double fugues as they travelled to Lübeck in 1703 to examine their prospects of becoming Buxtehude's successor at St. Mary's Church. The fourth movement is an elegant minuet, and the fifth movement is a Gavotte with two variations.

**Domenico Scarlatti's** (1685-1759) cosmopolitan career included serving as assistant director of the Cappella Giulia at St. Peter's in Rome and later as music director at the court of King John V in Lisbon. When Princess Maria Barbara of Bragança (Portugal) married the Crown Prince Fernando of Spain, the princess moved to Spain, taking Scarlatti with her. His primary role was to serve as keyboard instructor to the prince and princess, and many of his 550 keyboard sonatas were written for the princess. While these pieces were primarily written for the harpsichord, there is considerable evidence that they were also performed on the organ. For instance, two manuscripts from the Monastery of Santa Maria in Monserrat include several sonatas which either mention the organ in their title, or were transposed from their original keys in order to accommodate the compass and meantone tuning of Spanish baroque organs. Several pieces in these two manuscripts were copied by Antonio Soler.

**Antonio Soler** (1729-1783) received his early musical training as a choirboy at the Escolania, the famous choir school at the Benedictine abbey in Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain. In 1752, he became a priest in the Hieronymite order at El Escorial, near Madrid, and served as their organist until he was promoted to *maestro de cappilla* (music director). The royal families of Ferdinand VI and Maria Barbara spent each autumn at El Escorial, and brought distinguished musicians with them, including José Nebra and Domenico Scarlatti. Soler studied with Nebra, and although it is not clear whether he actually studied with Scarlatti, he considered himself to be a disciple of Scarlatti. Later, upon the accession of Carlos III to the throne, Soler became music tutor to Carlos' son, Prince Gabriel, for whom he wrote many of his 120 keyboard sonatas. It is not always clear which instrument Soler intended these sonatas for, since he had access to harpsichords, organs and fortepianos, and wrote specific works for all three instruments. Some of the later sonatas require a keyboard compass of 63 notes, which exceeds the range of the Viennese fortepianos for which Mozart composed.

**Kola Owolabi** is Professor of Organ at the University of Notre Dame. There he teaches the graduate organ performance majors in the sacred music program, as well as courses in hymn playing and improvisation. He previously held faculty appointments at the University of Michigan from 2014 to 2020, and at Syracuse University from 2006 to 2014.

Dr. Owolabi has had an active career as a solo recitalist, including performances at St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York, St. James Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, The Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, NY, St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, Cornell University, Pacific Lutheran University and Yale University. International venues include Klosterneuburg Abbey, Austria, Église du Bouclier in Strasbourg, France and the University of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica. He was a featured performer at the American Guild of Organists National Convention in Boston in June 2014, performing three recitals at Methuen Memorial Music Hall. He also performed a concert for the Organ Historical Society Convention in Syracuse in August 2014. He has performed numerous concerts as organist and harpsichordist with the Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire and Firebird Chamber Orchestra, based in Miami, FL. He has released two solo CD recordings on the Raven label: "Sacred Expressions: Twentieth-Century Music for Organ" featuring works by Olivier Messiaen, Petr Eben and Calvin Hampton performed on the historic Holtkamp organ at Syracuse University; and Jacques Boyvin: Four Suites from the Second Livre d'Orgue (1700), performed on the 1732 Andreas Silbermann organ in Saint-Maurice Abbey, Ebersmunster, France.

Dr. Owolabi is a published composer and has received commissions from the Royal Canadian College of Organists and the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. His solo organ composition Dance was selected for the Royal Canadian College of Organists National Competition in August 2013, where all of the finalists performed this composition. His choral works have been performed internationally by ensembles such as the Santa Cruz Chorale, CA, Nashville Chamber Singers, Illinois Wesleyan University Choir and the Elmer Isler Singers in Toronto.

In 2002, Dr. Owolabi was awarded second prize and audience prize at the American Guild of Organists National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance. He holds degrees in organ performance and choral conducting from McGill University, Montreal, Yale University and Eastman School of Music. His former teachers have included Bruce Wheatcroft, John Grew, Martin Jean, Thomas Murray, Hans Davidsson and William Porter.

# THE ORGAN

C. B. FISK, INC., OPUS 148

## MANUAL I

Principale 8' (façade)  
Ottava 4' \*  
Quintadecima 2' \*  
Decima nona 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ ' \*  
Vigesima seconda 1' \*  
Vigesima sesta 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ' \*  
Cornetto III (A<sub>0</sub>-d<sub>3</sub>)  
Flauto in Ottava 4'  
Flauto in XII 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '  
Voce Umana 8' (C<sub>0</sub>)

## MANUAL II

Principale 8'  
Viola da Gamba 8'  
Flauto Traverso 8' †  
Flutta Camino 8'  
Violino 4'  
Flauto in Selva 4'  
Frazolé 2'  
Tromba 8'

## PEDAL

Violoni Bassi 16'  
Bassi Stoppi 16'  
Principale 8' (Man. I)  
Ottava 4' (Man. I)

\* Stops that are brought on by depressing the Ripieno pedal

† CC-BB from Flutta Camino

## Couplers and accessories

Manual II to Manual I

Manual I to Pedal

Manual II to Pedal

Tremolo

Mechanical key action | Mechanical stop action—Italian lever system

Casework: a single cabinet of wood, designed to harmonize with and adorn the chapel architecture

Hand carved decoration | Front pipes of polished hammered tin | Two manuals and pedal, 56/30

Wind system: In addition to an electric blower, a manually operated system of 3 single-rise cuneiform bellows, based on historic examples, is included. Also included is a mechanically controlled automatic bellows lifting system.

22 stops, 20 independent voices | 22 ranks | 1,078 total pipes



This concert is made possible by contributions  
to Christ Church Cathedral's  
**Friends of Music Fund.**

To become a Friend of Music,  
visit [cincinnati.cathedral.com/e-donate](http://cincinnati.cathedral.com/e-donate)  
or by texting "giveccc" to 73256 and  
selecting Friends of Music.

Christ Church Cathedral  
318 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
513.621.1817  
[cincinnati.catholic.org](http://cincinnati.catholic.org)

