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Reger

Complete Organ
Music

Roberto
Marini

Max Reger 1873-1916
Complete Organ Music

Symphonische Fantasie und Fuge in D minor Op.57 'Inferno Fantasie'

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 1. Fantasie | 13'36 |
| 2. Fuge | 10'16 |

Fantasie und Fuge in D minor Op.135b

- | | |
|-------------|------|
| 3. Fantasie | 7'26 |
| 4. Fuge | 9'58 |

Fantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H Op.46

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 5. Fantasie | 8'31 |
| 6. Fuge | 10'01 |

Fantasie un Fuge in C minor Op.29

- | | |
|-------------|------|
| 7. Fantasie | 7'59 |
| 8. Fuge | 7'46 |

*at the Bruckner Organ of the
Stiftsbasilika St. Florian bei Linz,
Austria*

Recording: 11-12 December 2010 & 4 June
2011 (Op.135b), St Florian bei Linz, Austria
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

Zwölf Stücke Op.59

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 9. Präludium | 4'26 |
| 10. Pastorale | 3'43 |
| 11. Intermezzo | 2'37 |
| 12. Kanon | 2'09 |
| 13. Toccata | 3'40 |
| 14. Fuge | 4'34 |
| 15. Kyrie eleison | 4'43 |
| 16. Gloria in excelsis | 4'20 |
| 17. Benedictus | 5'18 |
| 18. Capriccio | 3'13 |
| 19. Melodia | 6'28 |
| 20. Te Deum | 4'18 |

Neun Stücke Op.129

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 21. Toccata | 2'42 |
| 22. Fuge | 5'47 |
| 23. Kanon | 3'22 |
| 24. Melodia | 3'40 |
| 25. Capriccio | 2'22 |
| 26. Basso ostinato | 3'27 |
| 27. Intermezzo | 4'15 |
| 28. Präludium | 2'18 |
| 29. Fuge | 3'40 |

*at the Bruckner Organ of the
Stiftsbasilika St. Florian bei Linz,
Austria*

Recording: 11-12 December 2010, St Florian
bei Linz, Austria
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

**Variationen und Fuge über ein
Originalthema Op.73**

- | | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 30. Variationen | 28'00 |
| 31. Fuge | 4'52 |

Zehn Stücke Op.69

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 32. Präludium | 3'18 |
| 33. Fuge | 3'55 |
| 34. Basso ostinato | 4'41 |
| 35. Moment musical | 5'23 |
| 36. Capriccio | 2'10 |
| 37. Toccata | 4'19 |
| 38. Fuge | 4'03 |
| 39. Romanze | 4'32 |
| 40. Präludium | 3'11 |
| 41. Fuge | 3'48 |

Sechs Trios Op.47

- | | |
|----------------|------|
| 42. Canon | 2'17 |
| 43. Gigue | 2'14 |
| 44. Canzonetta | 4'51 |
| 45. Scherzo | 3'24 |
| 46. Siciliano | 2'52 |
| 47. Fuge | 3'18 |

Zwölf Stücke Op.65

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| 48. Rhapsodie | 7'24 |
| 49. Capriccio | 4'25 |
| 50. Pastorale | 5'24 |
| 51. Consolation | 4'49 |
| 52. Improvisation | 5'18 |
| 53. Fuge | 5'42 |
| 54. Präludium | 6'21 |
| 55. Fuge | 4'30 |
| 56. Canzone | 5'48 |
| 57. Scherzo | 2'45 |
| 58. Toccata | 4'43 |
| 59. Fuge | 6'17 |

*at the Rieger Organ of the Fulda
Cathedral, Germany*

Recording: 11-12 March 2011, Fulda
Catherdal, Germany
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 60. Fantasie über den Choral "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott" Op.27 | 16'07 |
| 61. Fantasie über den Choral „Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele!“ Op.30 | 20'14 |

Fantasie über den Choral

- | | |
|--|-------|
| „Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern“ Op.40 No.1 | |
| 62. Fantasie | 13'17 |
| 63. Fuge | 5'12 |

Fantasie über den Choral „Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn!“ Op.40 No.2

16'36

52 Choralvorspiele für Orgel Op.67

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 65. No.1 Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr | 1'39 |
| 66. No.2 Alles ist an Gottes Segen | 0'58 |
| 67. No.3 Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir | 2'56 |
| 68. No.4 Aus meines Herzens Grunde | 2'48 |
| 69. Fantasie über den Choral „Alle Menschen müssen sterben“ Op.52 No.1 | 17'16 |

Fantasie über den Choral „Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!“ Op.52 No.2

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 70. Fantasie | 13'06 |
| 71. Fuge | 6'49 |

Fantasie über den Choral „Halleluja! Gott zu Loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud!“ Op.52 No.3

- | | |
|--------------|------|
| 72. Fantasie | 9'24 |
| 73. Fuge | 7'05 |

52 Choralvorspiele für Orgel Op.67	
74. No.5 Christus, der ist mein Leben (Ach, bleib mit deinen Gnade) 3'02	
75. No.6 Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott 2'52	
76. No.7 Dir, dir, Jehova, will ich singen 2'02	
77. No.8 Erschienen ist der herrlich Tag 3'11	
78. No.9 Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend 1'12	
79. No.10 Es ist das Heil uns kommen her (Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut) 1'52	
80. No.11 Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele 2'58	
81. No.12 Gott des Himmels und der Erden 3'00	
82. No.13 Herr, wie du willst, so schicks mit mir (Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir) 4'45	
83. No.14 Herzlich tut mich verlangen (O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden) 3'21	

*at the Steimmeyer Organ of the
Ottobeuren Basilika, Germany*

Recording: 8 & 10 October 2011, Ottobeuren
Basilika, Germany
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

**Introduktion, Passacaglia und Fuge
in E minor Op.127**

84. Introduktion 4'43	
85. Passacaglia 14'28	
86. Fuge 10'41	

Zwölf Stücke Op.80	
87. Präludium 4'47	
88. Fughetta 4'10	
89. Canzonetta 5'35	
90. Gigue 2'58	
91. Ave Maria 4'55	
92. Intermezzo 4'08	
93. Scherzo 4'37	
94. Romanze 4'07	
95. Perpetuum mobile 1'54	
96. Intermezzo 4'59	
97. Toccata 3'38	
98. Fuge 4'08	

Drei Stücke Op.7

99. Präludium und Fuge in C 9'39	
100. Fantasie über „Te Deum laudamus“ 10'56	
101. Fuge in D minor 10'19	

Sieben Stücke Op.145

102. Trauerode 14'33	
103. Dankpsalm 8'09	
104. Weihnachten 8'28	
105. Passion 5'29	
106. Ostern 4'22	
107. Pfingsten 5'42	
108. Siegesfeier 7'57	

*at the Stahlhuth/Jann Organ of
the St Martin Church, Dudelange,
Luxembourg*

Recording: 13-14 April 2012, St Martin's
Church, Dudelange, Luxembourg
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

Sonata No.1 in F sharp minor Op.33	
109. I. Fantasie 4'58	
110. II. Intermezzo 6'02	
111. III. Passacaglia 12'07	

Sonata No.2 in D minor Op.60

112. I. Improvisation 8'16	
113. II. Invokation 7'51	
114. III. Introduktion and Fuge 7'25	

Werke ohne Opuszahl

115. Introduktion und Passacaglia in D minor WoO IV/6 7'33	
116. Präludium in C minor "Limonadenpräludium" WoO VIII/6 1'21	
117. Variationen und Fuge über "Heil, unserm König Heil!" WoO IV/7 9'16	
118. Präludium und Fuge in D minor WoO IV/10 5'35	
119. Postludium in D minor WoO IV/12 2'26	
120. Präludium und Fuge in G sharp minor WoO IV/15 7'01	

Monologe – Zwölf Stücke Op.63

121. Präludium 6'14	
122. Fuge 6'27	
123. Kanzone 6'36	
124. Capriccio 4'38	
125. Introduktion 3'47	
126. Passacaglia 9'59	
127. Ave Maria 5'20	
128. Fantasie 5'09	
129. Tokkata 3'56	
130. Fuge 7'49	
131. Canon 3'42	
132. Scherzo 5'00	

Zwei Transkriptionen

133. Präludium und Fuge in F sharp 6'09	
134. Romanze in A minor 3'30	

Werke ohne Opuszahl

135. Fuge in C minor WoO IV/8 2'38	
136. Altniederländisches Dankgebet WoO IV/17 3'00	

*at the Sauer Organ of the Erlöserkirche,
Bad Homburg, Germany*

Recording: 8-9 December 2011, Erlöserkirche,
Bad Homburg, Germany
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

Erste Suite in E minor Op.16

137. Introduktion und Fuge 16'53	
138. Adagio assai 10'24	
139. Intermezzo – Trio 12'24	
140. Passacaglia 12'44	

Zweite Suite in G minor Op.92

141. Präludium 4'30	
142. Fuge 3'43	
143. Intermezzo 6'56	
144. Basso ostinato 2'57	
145. Romanze 7'29	
146. Tokkata 3'40	
147. Fuge 4'00	

**Fünf leicht ausführbare Präludien und
Fugen Op.56**

148. Präludium und Fuge in E 9'34	
149. Präludium und Fuge in D minor 6'32	
150. Präludium und Fuge in G 11'32	
151. Präludium und Fuge in C 6'38	
152. Präludium und Fuge in B minor 12'36	

Vier Präludien und Fugen Op.85

153. Präludium und Fuge in C sharp minor	6'52
154. Präludium und Fuge in G	7'23
155. Präludium und Fuge in F	8'42
156. Präludium und Fuge in E minor	8'36

*at the Link Organ of the Evangelische
Stadtkirche, Giengen an der Brenz,
Germany*

Recording: 25-26 June 2011, Evangelische
Stadtkirche, Giengen an der Brenz, Germany
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

52 Choralvorspiele für Orgel Op.67

157. No.15 Jauchz, Erd, und Himmel, Juble!	3'57
158. No.16 Ich dank dir, lieber Herr	2'17
159. No.17 Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke	1'45
160. No.18 Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt	2'01
161. No.19 Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod	2'17
162. No.20 Jesus, meine Zuversicht	1'54
163. No.21 Jesu, meine Freude	2'08
164. No.22 Komm, o komm, du Geist des Lebens	1'04
165. No.23 Lobt Gott, ihn Christen alle gleich	1'04
166. No.24 Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren	1'37
167. No.25 Mach's mit mir, Gott, nach deinen Güt	2'14
168. No.26 Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht	2'01
169. No.27 Nun danket alle Gott	2'09
170. No.28 Nun freut euch, lieben Christen	1'32

171. No.29 Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland	1'14
172. No.30 O Gott, du frommer Gott	1'40
173. No.31 O Jesu Christ, meines Lebens Licht	1'05
174. No.32 O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig	2'05
175. No.33 O Welt, ich muss dich lassen	2'32
176. No.34 Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele	1'54
177. No.35 Seelenbräutigam	1'54
178. No.36 Sollt ich meinen Gott nicht singen	2'37
179. No.37 Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn	1'43
180. No.38 Valet will ich dir geben	2'15
181. No.39 Vater unser in Himmelreich	3'09
182. No.40 Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her	2'37
183. No.41 Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme	2'48
184. No.42 Von Gott will ich nicht lassen	2'30
185. No.43 Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen	2'17
186. No.44 Was Gott thut, das ist wohlgethan	2'04
187. No.45 Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten	1'40
188. No.46 Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten	1'04
189. No.47 Werde munter, mein Gemüte	1'36
190. No.48 Wer weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende	2'20
191. No.49 Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern	2'13
192. No.50 Wie wohl ist mir, o Freud der Seelen	1'42
193. No.51 Jesus ist kommen	1'24
194. No.52 O wie selig	1'14

13 Choralvorspiele Op.79b

195. No.1 Ach Gott, verlass mich nicht	1'30
196. No.2 Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott	1'25
197. No.3 Herr, nun selbst den Wagen halt	1'23
198. No.4 Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit	1'14
199. No.5 Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin	2'08
200. No.6 Wer Weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende	2'03
201. No.7 Auferstehn, ja auferstehn	0'56
202. No.8 Christ ist erstanden von dem Tod	1'14
203. No.9 Christus, der ist mein Leben	1'24
204. No.10 Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin	1'34
205. No.11 Nun danket alle Gott	1'53
206. No.12 Herr, nun selbst den Wagen halt	1'12
207. No.13 Warum soll ich mich denn grämen	1'01

30 Choralvorspiele Op.135a

208. No.1 Ach bleib mit deiner Gnade	1'21
209. No.2 Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr	1'35
210. No.3 Alles ist Gottes Segen	1'14
211. No.4 Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir	2'38
212. No.5 Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott	1'13
213. No.6 Eins ist Not! Ach Herr, dies Eine	1'42
214. No.7 Es ist das Heil uns kommen her	1'08

215. No.8 Es ist gewißlich an der Zeit	1'21
216. No.9 Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele	1'41
217. No.10 Großer Gott, wir loben dich	0'59
218. No.11 Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend	1'00
219. No.12 Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt	1'01
220. No.13 Jesus, meine Zuversicht	1'46
221. No.14 Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier	1'23
222. No.15 Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren	0'55
223. No.16 Macht hoch die Tür	1'15
224. No.17 Meinen Jesum laß' ich nicht	1'34
225. No.18 Nun danket alle Gott	1'07
226. No.19 O daß ich tausend Zungen hätte	1'07
227. No.20 O Gott, du frommer Gott	1'47
228. No.21 O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden	3'04
229. No.22 O Welt, ich muß dich lassen	1'19
230. No.23 Valet will ich dir geben	1'00
231. No.24 Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her	1'15
232. No.25 Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme	1'34
233. No.26 Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan	1'13
234. No.27 Was mein Gott will, das gscheh allzeit	1'18
235. No.28 Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten	1'50
236. No.29 Wie schön leuchtet uns der Morgenstern	1'15
237. No.30 Wunderbarer König	1'13

6 Choralvorspiele ohne Opuszahl		253. Fantasie und Fuge	
238. No.1 O Trauerigkeit, o Herzeleid	6'01	in A minor BWV904	9'18
239. No.2 Komm, süßer Tod	4'55	254. Toccata und Fuge	
240. No.3 Christ ist erstanden von dem Tod	1'39	in D minor BWV913	7'45
241. No.4 O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden	2'17	Klavierwerke J.S. Bachs für der Orgel bearbeitet von Max Reger	
242. No.5 Es kommt ein Schiff, geladen	0'58	Zweistimmige Inventionen als "Schule des Triospiels" für die Orgel bearbeitet von Max Reger und Karl Straube	
243. No.6 Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern	1'32	BWV772-786	
		255. Invention I	1'34
		256. Invention II	2'13
		257. Invention III	1'38
		258. Invention IV	1'28
		259. Invention V	2'16
		260. Invention VI	4'27
		261. Invention VII	1'46
		262. Invention VIII	1'19
		263. Invention IX	2'26
		264. Invention X	1'11
		265. Invention XI	1'56
		266. Invention XII	2'00
		267. Invention XIII	1'41
		268. Invention XIV	2'01
		269. Invention XV	1'33
		270. Toccata und Fuge	
		in F sharp minor BWV910	12'33
		271. Toccata und Fuge	
		in C minor BWV911	13'15
		272. Fantasie und Fuge	
		in D BWV912	13'34
		273. Toccata und Fuge	
		in G minor BWV915	11'43

*at the Kuhn Organ of the Ref.
Stadtkirche St Johann, Schaffhausen,
Switzerland*

Recording: 19-20 April 2013, St Johann
Church, Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

Bearbeitungen

274. Franz Liszt: Der heilige Franz von
Paula auf den Wogen schreitend
13'02
275. Richard Strauss: Feierlicher Einzugs
der Ritter des Johanniterordens
6'40
276. Christian Sinding: Klavierquintett
in E minor Op.5 – Andante 10'49

Varianten

277. Sonate No.1 in F sharp minor
Op.33 – Passacaglia 9'58
- 278-279. Choralphantasie
"Wie Schön leucht't uns
der Morgenstern"
Op.40 No.1 16'29
[First Version]
- 280-281. Fantasie und Fuge
in D minor Op.135b 20'40
[First Version]

*at the Kuhn Organ of the Ref.
Stadtkirche St Johann, Schaffhausen,
Switzerland (1-3)*

*at the Sauer Organ of the Erlöserkirche,
Bad Homburg, Germany (4)*

*at the Steinmeyer Organ of the
Ottobeuren Basilika, Germany (5-6)*

*at the Bruckner Organ of the
Stiftsbasilika St. Florian bei Linz,
Austria (7-8)*

Recording: 19-20 April 2013, Ref.
Stadtkirche, Schaffhausen, Switzerland (1-3); 8
December 2011, Erlöserkirche, Bad Homburg,
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St Florian Basilika, Austria (7-8)
Recorded, edited and mastered by Federico
Savio

Roberto Marini



Recordings: between 2010-2013
Recorded, edited & mastered by Federico Savio
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Artist photos: © Roberto Marini
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Introduction to Max Reger's Organ Works

With almost 30 of the 146 catalogued works and 15 works without opus numbers, organ music represents an impressive proportion of Reger's oeuvre, comparable in number to his chamber and piano music, but far more influential in establishing his reputation. Around 1900, Reger made his mark as a controversial composer with his organ works. Organ works kept interest in him alive in times of oblivion and won him lasting international attention. But this happened only hesitantly, since Reger's tendency towards counterpoint and melancholy is considered by many to be "typically German".

Roberto Marini's interpretative feat of performing Reger's entire body of organ work in Italy in 2002 within a year was followed in 2011 by a discographic counterpart: on the basis of the new *Wissenschaftlich-kritische Werkausgabe* compiled by the Max Reger Institute, he recorded the works on historical instruments of Reger's time, which with their orchestral richness of colour and dynamic expansion tune in to the sound perception of an epoch that believed in progress in every dimension and discovered nervousness as an attitude to life.

Reger's path to the organ led via Bach. The 17-year-old son of a teacher from the Upper Palatinate had already brought *Six Preludes and Fugues for Piano* to his composition lessons with Hugo Riemann, which immediately won him acceptance into the latter's counterpoint class and led him to witness the creation of the phrased edition of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. In only two and a half years, Reger acquired a rock-solid level of craftsmanship and internalised an old-master conception of art that contradicted the aesthetic model of genius and spontaneous uniqueness that was prevalent at the time. In his debut, the *Organ Pieces Op.7*, he put on "a wig with pigtails" and dispensed with "the modern notation for organ".

The next work, under the credo "I have no direction; I take the good as it comes", shows a fusion of various influences into an independent autograph: *The Organ Suite in E minor, Op.16*, written between autumn 1894 and summer 1895, pays homage to Bach with its triple fugue, passacaglia and speaking chorale quotations, and mixes Wagner's chromaticism and Liszt's thematic transformations into an unmistakable language full of harmonic boldness, expressivity and differentiation. The sending of dedication copies

to Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss and Ferruccio Busoni shows that Reger regarded the suite as representative of his compositional position. With it, he won his most important interpreter: Karl Straube premiered the Suite in the imperial city of Berlin in March 1897, but while the performer was hailed, the composer was criticised as a "social democrat among current composers", who planned the overthrow of all musical conditions. The inevitable military draft year and the rejection of new compositions by his publisher plunged Reger into debts and despair that only alcohol made bearable.

In the summer of 1898, an illness forced the 25-year-old to return to his parents' house. The piano transcriptions of selected chorale preludes by Bach that Reger brought with him and which were rejected by the publisher, "symphonic poems en miniature", reminiscent of "Wagner's grandiose style" (Reger), point ahead to the elementary transgressions of boundaries that characterise Reger's next works. With the Fantasy on the Luther chorale *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott, Op.27*, he took up on a suggestion from Heinrich Reimann's chorale fantasy *Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern*, but it merely provided him with an example that he wanted to surpass through more complex structure, extreme expression and greater impact. *Opus 27* was the prelude to seven works written within two years, in which Reger not only combined the diatonic chorale with his own chromaticism into a convincing aesthetic concept, but also "old-fashioned" counterpoint with "modern" sonorities, improvisational design with strict compositional technique, obscurity with striking clarity, and monumental force with subtle differentiation. The third Fantasy on the chorale *Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern, Op.40, No.1* (1899) represents the type of the "Steigerungsfuge", which, with its final combination of fugue and chorale theme - later fugue and variation theme - eventually became Reger's trademark. 'I expanded the form of the chorale fantasy into a "symphonic poem" for organ', Reger wrote. He interpreted the chorale text, which he wrote under the notes, in an expressive manner, and thus created dramas of the soul that thematise the struggle between chaos and order, between doubt of faith and hard-won certainty of faith.

Parallel to the fantasies, he wrote chorale-free large organ works, with climaxes and interruptions, in tender, often mystically darkened, but also showy parts. The *Prelude*

and *Fugue in C minor Op.29* (1898), dedicated to Richard Strauss, proves that modern writing and expressive content are perfectly compatible with baroque forms. Reger calls his *Organ Sonata in F-sharp minor, Op.33* (1899) his “romantic” excursion and here relaxes the “principles one learns from studying Bach”. In the *Fantasy and Fugue on B-A-C-H Op.46* (1900), he goes “to the extreme limits of harmonic and technical ‘possibility’”, and he positions himself opposite Liszt using the latter’s *B-A-C-H Fantasy*. ‘One must have played Liszt before he can embark on my “elephants”!’

In the spring of 1901, when Reger was already planning his move to the musical metropolis and capital of the New German School of Composers, Munich, he wrote the *Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue Op.57*. Straube had already prepared the ground there and had divided listeners and critics into two camps with Reger’s works. Some raved about the “Bachian spirit”, others criticised the use of “absolute musical forms” cultivated with “reactionary energy”, which gave the composer an “isolated special position” at the “heyday of programme music”. No wonder Reger felt provoked into making forced progress. It was not until 1904 that he named Dante’s *Inferno* as a programmatic background, that could make the metamorphoses of motifs, tonality-expanding chromaticism and expressive outbursts more comprehensible.

The *Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme Op.73* (1903) form the starting point for the consistent sequence of *Bach, Beethoven and Hiller Variations*, which expand the sound from the keyboard to the orchestra. Like the neighbouring *Violin Sonata in C major, Op.72*, and the *String Quartet in D minor, Op.74*, it is one of the most advanced works written before Schönberg’s break with tradition, with its tendencies to dissolve tonality, musical prose and direct expression. The motivic variations seem to lack the purposefulness of organic development. Sensibly, but not necessarily, they follow the laws of rich combinations, contrast and ambiguity.

Reger also wrote compositions that reflect his musical world in miniature and make it easier for organists and listeners to access his “big chunks”. These include above all his chorale preludes, which, like Bach’s models, are intended for church use and yet are autonomous works of art. In 1893, when Reger was given the opportunity to make his works more widely known through music supplements in periodicals, he chose two

complicated chorale preludes to the passion and death songs *O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid Woo IV/2* and *Komm süßer Tod WoO IV/3*, thus underlining his artistic seriousness and high standards. Even then he was planning a collection of chorale preludes, but in Weiden he composed only individual contributions which appeared in periodicals and were only later combined into an *Opus 79*. It was not until 1903 that *Opus 52*, his first compilation of 52 chorale preludes, appeared.

Reger’s organ works, like his piano works, include a large number of collections of character pieces. The first great success came in Weiden with the *Twelve Pieces Op.59* (1901), which have formal titles such as *Präludium, Canon, Toccata* and *Fuge* as well as content such as *Kyrie eleison, Gloria, Benedictus* and *Te Deum*. Rich in feeling and depth of expression, they do not take back the compositional claim, but strive for more moderate dimensions and clearer structures. Most of the eleven “Sammelopera” (compilations) were written during the Munich period. They often frustrated publishers, who were hoping for something more playable and saleable, since Reger lacked a sense of scale between easy, medium and difficult and it remained his primary goal to preserve his own character even in reduction.

During his time in Leipzig (from 1907) as a composition professor and travelling interpreter, and finally during his three years as court conductor in Meiningen (from the end of 1911), he mainly wrote orchestral and choral works as well as large-scale chamber music. It was not until the city of Breslau commissioned him in October 1912 to write a work for the “largest organ in the world” in the Jahrhunderthalle, that he felt the impetus for writing the *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue Op.127*. Reger balanced the overwhelming dimensions of the hall and instrument with his matured ideal of a “classically transparent” movement, which came about through his collaboration with the Hofkapelle and which he also applied in large orchestral compositions; the “Fruit of Meiningen” manifests itself in the lightened movement, fine tonal gradations and three-dimensional lines. Since Arnold Schoenberg’s break with tonality (1910), Reger increasingly adhered to his own path of exaggeration and extreme differentiation.

Forced by a breakdown to give up his post as Kapellmeister, Reger composed the *Mozart Variations Op.132*. Completed a few days before the outbreak of the

World War, they foreshadow the end of a historical epoch. With the collection of 30 *Choralvorspielen*, Op.135a, with his *Sacred Chants and Choruses*, opp. 137 and 138, Reger reacted thoughtfully to the catastrophe. Only with the *Vaterländische Ouvertüre* Op.140, dedicated to “Dem deutschen Heer” (To the German Army), did he meet patriotic expectations and, as a representative of “German” counterpoint, combined patriotic songs with a thanksgiving chorale. The *Requiem WoO V/9*, dedicated to the “fallen German heroes”, with its apocalyptic visions, makes no secret of his attitude to the war, but remained a fragment. In the *Orgelstücken*, Op.145, he took up the dedications again in the *Trauerode* and the *Dankpsalm*, supplemented them with four ecclesiastical works, and finally added the *Siegesfeier*, which takes up the combination of themes of the *Vaterländische Ouvertüre* and was sketched in the time of its composition.

After Reger got word of plans for a huge concert organ in Hanover in June 1914, a new large organ work began to “crystallise” in the autumn. However, he only overcame a creative crisis caused by the failure of the *Requiem* after moving to the university town of Jena in the spring of 1915. The *Fantasy and Fugue in C minor*, Op.135b, dedicated to Richard Strauss, is one of the late works in the “free, Jena style” that establish a counterworld of inwardness to the political and musical events of the time. With its unparalleled motivic interweavings, it once again illustrates Reger’s viewpoint of topical language in a traditional formal framework, which was obscured by severe cuts in the correction process completed only shortly before his death.

Reger’s organ works defy easy classification: constructive and improvisational, liturgical and concertante, absolute and programmatic moments, artistic aspiration and function, tradition and avant-garde do not form opposites. The scores with their giant bars, their abundance of accents and their dynamic and agogic instructions challenge the interpreters to follow the changing emotions and breaks with the greatest intensity and to maintain the arc of tension. In the juxtaposition of monumentality and intimacy, a musical cosmos is revealed in its entirety which, despite or because of many unresolved contradictions, arouses the interest and goodwill of the listener and keeps it alive.

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Translation: Jan Tazelaar

Einführung in Max Regers Orgelschaffen

Mit knapp 30 von 146 gezählten und 15 Werken ohne Opuszahl vertritt die Orgelmusik in Regers Schaffen einen imposanten Anteil, zahlenmäßig der Kammer- und Klaviermusik vergleichbar, jedoch weit stärker sein Bild prägend. Mit Orgelwerken errang Reger um 1900 den Durchbruch zum kontrovers diskutierten Komponisten, Orgelwerke hielten in Zeiten des Vergessens das Interesse an ihm wach und gewannen dauerhafte internationale Beachtung. Doch stellte sich diese nur zögerlich ein, gilt Max Reger doch vielen durch seinen Hang zu Kontrapunktik und Melancholie als „typisch deutsch“.

Der interpretatorischen Großtat Roberto Marinis, 2002 Regers gesamtes Orgelschaffen in Jahresfrist in Italien aufzuführen, folgte 2011 die diskographische: Auf der Grundlage der vom Max-Reger-Institut erarbeiteten neuen Wissenschaftlich-kritischen Werkausgabe spielte er die Werke auf historischen Instrumenten der Regerzeit ein, die mit orchestralem Farbenreichtum und dynamischen Steigerungsmöglichkeiten dem Klanggefühl einer Epoche entsprechen, die an den Fortschritt in jeder Dimension glaubte und zugleich die Nervosität als Lebensgefühl entdeckte.

Regers Weg zur Orgel führte über Bach. Schon zum Kompositionsunterricht bei Hugo Riemann hatte der aus der Oberpfälzer Provinz stammende 17-jährige Lehrerssohn *Sechs Präludien und Fugen* für Klavier mitgebracht, die sogleich seine Aufnahme in dessen Kontrapunktklasse erlaubten und ihn die Entstehung der Phrasierungsausgabe des *Wohltemperierten Klaviers* miterleben ließen. In nur zweieinhalb Jahren erlangte Reger ein grundsolides handwerkliches Können und verinnerlichte eine dem damaligen ästhetischen Leitbild von Genialität und spontaner Einmaligkeit widersprechende altmeisterliche Kunstauffassung. In seinem Debut, den *Orgelstücken op.7*, setzte er sich „eine Perücke mit Zöpfchen“ auf und verzichtete „auf die moderne Schreibweise für Orgel“.

Das nächste Werk zeigt unter dem Credo „Richtung habe ich keine; ich nehme das Gute, wie es eben kommt“ eine Verschmelzung verschiedener Einflüsse zur selbstständigen Handschrift: Die zwischen Herbst 1894 und Sommer 1895 entstandene *Orgelsuite e-Moll* op.16 verweist mit Tripelfuge, Passacaglia und sprechenden Choralzitatzen auf Bach und mischt Wagners Chromatik und Liszts Thementransformationen zu unverwechselbarer Sprache voll harmonischer Kühnheit,

Expressivität und Differenziertheit. Die Versendung von Widmungsexemplaren an Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss und Ferruccio Busoni zeigt, dass Reger die *Suite* als repräsentativ für seinen kompositorischen Standort ansah. Mit ihr gewann er seinen wichtigsten Interpreten: Karl Straube brachte die *Suite* im März 1897 in der Kaiserstadt Berlin zur Uraufführung und wurde gefeiert, während der Komponist als „Sozialdemokrat unter den jetzigen Komponisten“ kritisiert wurde, der den Umsturz aller musikalischen Verhältnisse plane. Das unvermeidliche Militärjahr und die Rückweisung neuer Kompositionen durch seinen Verlag stürzten Reger in Schulden und Verzweiflung, die nur Alkohol erträglich machte.

Im Sommer 1898 zwang ein Erkrankung den 25-Jährigen, ins Elternhaus zurückzukehren. Die mitgebrachte, vom Verlag zurückgewiesenen Klaviertranskriptionen ausgewählter Choralvorspiele von Bach verweisen als „symphonische Dichtungen en miniature“, die an „Wagner's grandiosen Styl“ erinnern (Reger), auf die elementaren Grenzüberschreitungen, die Regers nächste Werke kennzeichnen. Mit der Phantasie über den Luther-Choral „*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*“ op.27 folgte er zwar einer Anregung von Heinrich Reimanns Choralphantasie „*Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern*“, doch bot sie ihm nur die Folie, die er durch komplexere Struktur, extremen Ausdruck und größere Wirkungsmacht überbieten wollte. Opus 27 war der Auftakt zu sieben innerhalb zweier Jahre entstandener Werke, in denen Reger nicht nur den diatonalen Choral mit der eigenen Chromatik zu einem überzeugenden ästhetischen Konzept verband, sondern auch „altmodischen“ Kontrapunkt mit „modernen“ Klangballungen, improvisatorische Gestaltung mit strenger Satztechnik, Unklarheit mit plakativer Deutlichkeit sowie monumentale Wucht mit subtiler Differenziertheit. Die dritte *Phantasie über den Choral* „*Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern*“ op.40, Nr.1 (1899) vertritt den Typus der Steigerungsfuge, die mit der Schlusskombination von Fugen- und Choralthema, später Fugen- und Variationsthema zu Regers Markenzeichen wurde. Er habe „die Form der Choralphantasie zur 'symphonischen Dichtung' für Orgel erweitert“, schrieb Reger und deutete den Choraltext, den er unter die Noten schreibt, in expressiver Weise aus. So schuf er Seelendramen, die den Kampf von Chaos und Ordnung, von Glaubenszweifel und schwer errungener Glaubensgewissheit thematisieren.

Parallel zu den Phantasien entstanden choralfreie große Orgelwerke, mit Steigerungen und Abbrüchen, in zarten, oft mystisch verdunkelten, aber auch auftrumpfenden Partien. Das Richard Strauss gewidmete *Präludium und Fuge c-moll* op.29 (1898) beweist, dass moderne Schreibweise und expressive Inhalte durchaus mit barocken Formen kompatibel sind. Die *Orgelsonate fis-moll* op.33 (1899) nennt Reger seinen „romantischen“ Ausflug und lockert hier die „Prinzipien, welchen einen das Studium Bachs lehrt“. In der *Phantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H* op.46 (1900) geht er „bis an die äußerste Grenze der harmonischen u. technischen 'Möglichkeit'“ und nutzt Liszts B-A-C-H-Fantasie zur Positionierung im Gegenüber: „u. Liszt muß einer gespielt haben, ehe er an meine 'Elefanten' gehen kann!“

Im Frühjahr 1901, als Reger bereits den Umzug in die Musikmetropole und Hauptstadt der Neudeutschen Komponistenschule München plante, entstand die *Symphonische Phantasie und Fuge* op.57. Straube hatte dort den Boden vorbereitet und mit Regers Werken Hörer und Kritiker in zwei Lager geteilt: Die einen schwärmten vom „Bach'schen Geist“, die anderen bemängelten die mit „reaktionärer Energie“ gepflegte Verwendung der „absolut musikalischen Formen“, die dem Komponisten zur „Zeit der Hochblüte einer Programmmusik“ eine „isolierte Sonderstellung“ verleihe; kein Wunder, dass sich Reger zu forciertem Fortschritt provoziert fühlte. Erst 1904 nannte er Dantes „Inferno“ als programmatischen Hintergrund, der die Metamorphosen der Motive, die tonalitätserweiternde Chromatik und expressiven Ausbrüche verständlicher machen könnte.

Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema op.73 (1903) bilden den Ausgangspunkt für die konsequente Folge der *Bach-, Beethoven- und Hiller-Variationen*, die den Klang vom Klavier bis zum Orchester erweitern. Wie die benachbarte *Violinsonate C-Dur* op.72 und das *Streichquartett d-moll* op.74 zählt sie mit tonalitätsauflösenden Tendenzen, musikalischer Prosa und unmittelbarer Expression zum Avanciertesten, das vor Schönbergs Traditionsbruch geschrieben wurde. Den motivischen Abwandlungen scheint die Zielgerichtetheit organischer Entwicklung zu fehlen; sinnhaft, aber nicht zwangsläufig folgen sie den Gesetzen des Kombinationsreichtums, des Kontrasts und der Vieldeutigkeit.

Reger schrieb auch Kompositionen, die seine musikalische Welt im Kleinen widerspiegeln und Organisten und Hörern den Zugang zu seinen „großen Brocken“ erleichtern. Allen voran Choralvorspiele, die wie Bachs Vorbilder für den kirchlichen Gebrauch gedacht und dennoch autonome Kunstwerke sind. Als Reger 1893 die Gelegenheit bekam, durch Musikbeilagen in Zeitschriften bekannter zu werden, wählte er zwei komplizierte Choralvorspiele zu den Passions- und Sterbeliedern *O Traurigkeit*, *O Herzeleid* WoO IV/2 und *Komm süßes Tod* WoO IV/3 und unterstrich damit seinen künstlerischen Ernst und hohen Anspruch. Schon damals plante er eine Sammlung von Choralvorspielen, komponierte in Weiden aber nur Einzelbeiträge, die in Zeitschriften erschienen und erst später zu einem Opus 79 zusammengefasst wurden. Erst 1903 erschien mit Opus 52 sein erstes Sammelopus von 52 Choralvorspielen.

Regers Orgelschaffen ist wie sein Klavierwerk reich an Sammlungen von Charakterstücken. Der erste große Wurf gelang in Weiden mit den *Zwölf Stücken* op.59 (1901), die neben formalen Titeln wie *Präludium*, *Canon*, *Toccata* und *Fuge* auch inhaltliche wie *Kyrie eleison*, *Gloria*, *Benedictus* und *Te Deum* tragen. Reichhaltig in Empfindung und Ausdruckstiefe nehmen sie den kompositorischen Anspruch nicht zurück, bemühen sich aber um maßvollere Dimensionen und deutlichere Strukturen. Die meisten der elf Sammelopera entstanden in der Münchner Zeit; oft enttäuschten sie die Verlegerwünsche nach Spielbarem und Verkäuflichem, da Reger ein Maßstab zwischen leicht, mittelschwer und schwer fehlte und es sein oberstes Ziel blieb, auch in der Reduktion seine Eigenart zu wahren.

In der Leipziger Zeit (ab 1907) als Kompositionsprofessor und reisender Interpret und vollends während seiner dreijährigen Hofkapellmeisterzeit in Meiningen (ab Ende 1911) entstanden vorwiegend Orchester- und Chorwerke sowie großdimensionierte Kammermusik. Erst der Auftrag der Stadt Breslau im Oktober 1912, ein Werk für die „größte Orgel der Welt“ in der Jahrhunderthalle zu schreiben, gab den Anstoß zur *Introduction*, *Passacaglia* und *Fuge* op.127. Den erdrückenden Dimensionen von Halle und Instrument setzte Reger sein im Reifestil entfaltetes Ideal eines „klassisch durchsichtigen“ Satzes entgegen, das er der Zusammenarbeit mit der Hofkapelle verdankte und auch in großen Orchesterkompositionen umsetzte; die „Frucht

Meinings“ zeigt sich in aufgelichtetem Satz, feinen Klangabstufungen und plastischer Linienführung. Seit Arnold Schönbergs Bruch mit der Tonalität (1910) hielt Reger verstärkt am eigenen Weg der Übersteigerung und äußersten Differenzierung fest.

Durch einen Zusammenbruch zur Aufgabe seines Kapellmeisteramts gezwungen, komponierte Reger die *Mozart-Variationen* op.132; wenige Tage vor Ausbruch des Weltkriegs vollendet, ahnen sie das Ende einer historischen Epoche voraus. Mit der Sammlung von *30 Choralvorspielen* op.135a, mit geistlichen Gesängen und Chören opp. 137 und 138 reagierte Reger nachdenklich auf die Katastrophe. Erst mit der „Dem deutschen Heer“ gewidmeten *Vaterländischen Overture* op.140 entsprach er den patriotischen Erwartungen und verband als Repräsentant des „deutschen“ Kontrapunkts vaterländische Lieder mit einem Dankchoral. Das den „gefallenen deutschen Helden“ gewidmete *Requiem* WoO V/9 macht mit apokalyptischen Visionen aus seiner Einstellung zum Krieg kein Hehl, blieb aber Fragment. In den *Orgelstücken* op.145 griff er in der *Trauerode* und dem *Dankpsalm* die Widmungen erneut auf, ergänzte sie durch vier kirchenzeitlich gebundene Nummern und reichte schließlich die *Siegesfeier* nach, die die Themenkombination der *Vaterländischen Overture* aufgreift und in deren Entstehungszeit skizziert wurde.

Nachdem Reger im Juni 1914 von den Plänen einer riesigen Konzertorgel in Hannover gehört hatte, begann sich im Herbst ein neues großes Orgelwerk zu „kristallisieren“. Jedoch konnte er eine durch das Scheitern des *Requiem*s verursachte Schaffenskrise erst nach dem Umzug in die Universitätsstadt Jena im Frühling 1915 überwinden. Zu den Spätwerken im „freien, jenaischen Stil“, die eine Gegenwelt der Innerlichkeit zum politischen und musikalischen Zeitgeschehen errichten, zählt die Richard Strauss gewidmete *Phantasie und Fuge c-moll* op.135b. Sie verdeutlicht mit unüberbietbaren motivischen Verflechtungen noch einmal Regers Standpunkt aktueller Sprache in traditionellem Formrahmen, den starke Kürzungen im erst kurz vor seinem Tod abgeschlossenen Korrekturprozess verschleiern.

Regers Orgelwerke widersetzen sich einfacher Einordnung: Konstruktive und improvisatorische, liturgische und konzertante, absolute und programmatische Momente, Kunstanspruch und Funktion, Tradition und Avantgarde bilden keine

Gegensätze. Die Partituren mit ihren Riesentakten, ihrer Akzidenzienfülle und ihren dynamischen und agogischen Anweisungen fordern die Interpreten heraus, den changierenden Emotionen und Brüchen mit größter Intensität zu folgen und den Spannungsbogen zu wahren. Im Nebeneinander von Monumentalität und Intimität offenbart sich in der Gesamtheit ein musikalischer Kosmos, der trotz oder wegen vieler unaufgelöster Widersprüche das Interesse und Wohlwollen der Hörer weckt und am Leben hält.

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CD1&2

Fantasie und Fuge C minor Op.29 was composed short after the completion of „*Freudich sehr, o meine Seele!*“ which is the second of lately seven *Choralfantasien* for organ (Opp. 27, 30, 40 Nos. 1-2 & 52 No.1-3) and nearly simultaneously to the *Cellosonate G minor Op.28*. On 25 October 1898 Reger put the closing mark under a manuscript which was determined for Karl Straube, the engraver's model for the publisher does not exist anymore. From Opus 27 to Opus 52 No.3, Reger used to work out two manuscripts of all his organ works. So, his trusted interpreter could perform the works independently of the date of publication or – like in the fragmentary fair copies of the last two choral phantasies – at least study. For the printing, non-other than Richard Strauss had recommended him to the Leipzig publishing house and Reger showed his gratefulness in dedicating him this work. He counted his Opus 29 among the works of „Grossen Styls“ (great style) (letter to C. Hochstetter dated 16 November 1898) and took reason of his former teacher H. Riemann's laud (“Phantasie & Fuge wird einigen Leuten Kopfschmerzen machen ist aber gut” - Phantasie & Fugue will give a cramp to some people, but it is good“) to present him his ideas concerning organ music: „By thorough studying I have come to the conclusion that, if we really want to have progress in the organ literature, this is solely possible on the basis of Bach tradition. Certainly we should do what we can to use the advancements of our modern organ [...], but we will have to adhere to the inexorable logic of the movement, the solidity of voice leading, the intentional avoiding of all so-called lyric, mostly sentimental moments“ (letter dated 18 March 1899). The idea of a „historistic modernity“ that insinuates in Reger's lines, already reflects in Opus 29: The enrichment of an established form by differentiation of all musical parameters that become obvious not least in the notation found favour with the reviewers. Straube significantly described „ardently increasing chromatic motions, piled dissonances, rolling figures and vast chords“ in the Phantasie, E. Segnitz noted in the entire work „a living out in important conditions, a tone language in veritable pathos“. Reger's identification with the musical heritage of J. S. Bach discloses the

contemporary „monumental“ view (F. Nietzsche) on the choir director at Leipzig Thomas Church who, around 1900, emblematic got the „status of a super-temporal monument and the rank of the eternally new, of an in some extent institutionalised Avantgarde of the classical“ (W. Rathert). Reger composed the *Phantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H Op.46* in February 1900 and thus in the midst of the historic epicentre of the Bach reception – in 1899, the impressive undertaking of the first Bach complete edition was completed, one year later the Neue Bach-Gesellschaft was founded – and in which the discussions about the future of the musical art got fervid. Reger himself as a Riemann student had grown up with Bach music and had prior to 1900 established many of his works for piano or organ. The historic “furniture” (Nietzsche) which had been collected around the prominent B-A-C-H theme was impressive: In addition to Bach’s self-referents, also Schumann’s *Sechs Fugen über den Namen Bach Op.60* for organ and pedal piano and the No.3 of the *Zwölf Fughetten strengen Stils für die Orgel Op.123a* by J. Rheinberger should be named. While Rheinberger, whom Reger dedicated Opus 46, decided for a small form, Reger envisioned once more a “Werk größten Stils und Kalibers – work of a bigger style and calibre” (letter dated 25 January 1900 to C. Hochstetter). He said it would be “a presumption to compose such an oeuvre after Liszt’s Bach-Phantasie und Fuge für Orgel [S.260], however, I could not deny myself”, he confessed to the organist B. Pfannstiehl (letter dated 17 March 1900). *Phantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H Op.46* developed as a virtuosic-concerto counterpart to the *Sechs Trios* für Orgel Op.47 that were “designed for teaching”. Reger’s producing pace was enormous: On 13 February, he told the reviewer A. W. Gottschalg that he had completed one third of the work, and only four days later he had finished the first manuscript. The harmonic as well as the structural density are mighty: The B-A-C-H theme is not only the development of a citation, but a circumpolar element of his composition which is already in the Phantasie constantly present and serves as a material reservoir for a powerful double fugue. For the first time ever in his organ works, Reger uses metronome numbers in order to show “a rough indication of the gradual increase in

speed - whereat the climax curve in the autograph intended for Straube increases even faster than in the engraver’s model”. “Here I am extremely left-wing with such kind of organ music”, admits Reger to O. Leßmann, and “the most difficult thing in every respect is Op.46”. When interpreting, the reviewers borrowed from the holy-powerful pathos of the contemporary Bach reception: A. W. Gottschalg considered the Phantasie as an invitation of the “Manen des einzigen ‘Weltbaches’ zur Auferstehung”; Straube certified her a “Promethean atmosphere”; E. Segnitz detected an “enormous [...] homily about the greatness and glory of the Old Master”. The Reger community amongst the organists increased step by step, however, with the *Symphonische Phantasie und Fuge Op.57*, the last one of his great Weidener Orgelwerke, opened the rifts of the critics . REGER has started his work after 18 April 1901; on 12 May he could promise to Straube to send him the manuscript that he should have copied it as it was intended for the publisher. For the first time ever, Reger did not issue a private copy for Straube, telling him that the “work of a copyist is mouldy” - considering the wild-growing calligraphy of his Opus 57, this was a convincing argument. The premier performance by Straube on 20 February 1902 in the Berlin Garnisonskirche was commented by the press rather irritated: “I left the church with abused ears and unpleasantly frayed nerves”, was read in the *Vossische Zeitung*. A. W. Gottschalg (*Urania*), however, raved in his review of an “ultimate of all giant fantasies” and in another review he made the organists coyly complaints: “O Sancta Caecilia! Who will be able to play this and play it in the requested tempo?”; G. Göhler (Kunstwart) in turn discovered the sportsmanship. The accent became more fierce after Straube’s performance on 14 June 1903 in the Basel cathedral. The Haas organ which was as per Reger at that time “the horror” of the Swiss organists and antiquated, kneeled down with regard to the sound, so that “an immediate re-construction was decided” (letter dated 24 June 1903 to T. Kroyer). Faced with what he has heard, Rudolf Louis was excited and told in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* about the “sonic and psychological perversion” as well as the wallow in the “musical ugly”. Reger soon considered him, who was a fan of the so-called

Münchener Schule, as his worst enemy who was not bothered by the “cacophony” itself, but by its “end in itself”. He missed a comprehensible, at least illustrative requirement of the music. As per some reports, the composer had circulate such a requirement short after the concert as “retroactive and elucidation quasi”: under the impression of Dante’s writings, Opus 57 had been developed, and the title *Inferno-Phantasie* did the rounds - and so does it still today. Upon a concert in April 1904, Reger has printed this addition in the programme booklet - “inspired by Dante’s *Inferno*”. *Phantasie und Fuge in D minor Op.135b* is Reger’s last completed organ work; it has got his final form in April 1916, after the completion of *Orgelstücke* Op.145 and nearly one month before Reger’s death. He had passed some turbulent years in München, Leipzig and Meiningen, and since March 1915 he tried to calm down in Jena. The world had seen the inferno of the First World War, and the abortion of the *Requiem* (WoOV/9) in December 1914 at the recommendation of Straube had thrown him into a deep creative crisis, from which he only laboriously recovered. Already on 18 January 1915 - the composition was not even begun - Reger asked Strauss to accept the “dedication of a new work” - and so referred to *Phantasie und Fuge in C minor Op.29*. Like Opus 46, also Opus 135b formed the bigger part of one pair of works. The pendant, the *30 kleine Choralvorspiele zu den gebräuchlichsten Chorälen* was printed in May 1915 als Opus 135a. Only on 30 April 1915, Reger told Straube about his work on his opus 135b, then everything went fast again: Already on 17 May the manuscript was sent to the publishing house Simrock in Berlin whom he announced a “organ work of larger style - but not too long”. Today we have many sources concerning the development of this work at our disposal: There are not only the drafts and the engraver’s model, but also two proofreadings. The first proofreading that Reger could handle at the beginning of March 1916, is covered with annotations with pencil and red ink which show an intensive work in at least two steps. As a result, among others, were three drastic shortages (one in the Phantasie, two in the Fuge) - the extent of the work was reduced by approximately one third. The designated first performance interpreter Straube,

whom this work had been announced several times, saw it on 11 April 1916 for the first time during a meeting in the evening in Leipzig. The next evening, Reger informed him from Jena: “I have carried out already all changings in the organ work! I will send it to Berlin tomorrow and have made an exemplary copy for you as soon as possible!” But Reger did not experience the publication anymore. And it was not Straube to perform this “Swan Song of the greatest organ composer after Bach” (*Hannoversches Tageblatt*) in the Kuppelsaal of the Hannover town hall one month after Reger’s death, but Hermann Dettmer. Towards the end of his “Weidener Zeit” (1898 - 1901) which was mainly affected by the composition of large organ works with meaningful typology (*Choralphantasie*: Op.27, 30, 40 No.1-2, & 52 No.1-3; *Phantasie und Fuge*: Op.29, 46, 57; *Sonate*: Op.33), Reger addressed with his **Opus 59** to the rather unspecific collection of smaller pieces of music - an artwork which he used again and again until his death (Op.65, 69, 80, 129, 145 sowie *Monologe* Op.63). Reger’s former teacher and later biographer A. Lindner described this step flowery like usual: “From the symphonic realm of his opus 57, this oeuvre which glaringly illuminates the whole personality and life of our master, the restless active artist soon climbed down in quite friendly, less exciting regions, in the area of his Op.59 which breathes happiness and peace”. The *Zwölf Stücke* served as the entrée in the publishing house C. F. Peters who had some years before objected to his *Choralphantasie* “*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*” Op.27 and herewith had missed the chance to play an active part in his breakthrough as an organ composer. He promised his “completely print-ready manuscript prior to the end of July, beginning of August at the latest [...], early enough that you can count my pieces of music [...] still under the nova for the autumn of this year”. (Letter dated 31st May 1901). As per Lindner, the work arose within “fourteen days [...]”. Every evening (apart from Sundays) he brought me a print-ready composition together with the sheet of the first transcription as a gift (= draft) on which I always put the date. Number 1 bears the date 17 June, number 12 the 1st July (1901) as the date”. On 13 July, Reger finally presented the completed opus for engraving: “Please allow some annotations on it: **None** of the

pieces is more than middle-difficult. Nos. 2, 4, 9, 11 are even “most easy”; both manuscripts are most carefully read and both are thoroughly practically put to test. I am awaiting each kind of criticism with comfort”. He received the complementary copies with which he had planned to advertise on 4 September. In Germany there was a lot of renowned organists who supported Reger’s challenging works, but he obviously tried to reach a vast consumer class particularly at the universities and even asked the publishing house for more copies “in order to place them optimal i. e. to hand them over only to those personalities of whom I am convinced that they will actively support Op.59 and invent them in big conservatories!” The success came soon: The starting edition of 500 copies was exhausted after a rather short period of time so that already in 1903 200 copies of issue 1 and two years later of issue 2 had to be reprinted. A world premiere of the complete work has probably not taken place, an earlier first performance of two further pieces by Straube upon a Reger organ soirée in Munich on 9 November 1901 elated despite of a big concurrence (*Phantasie und Fuge über B-A-C-H Op.46 und Choralphantasien Op.52 Nos.1-3*) also the critics of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*: “In the two smaller pieces “Kyrie eleison” [No.7] and ‘Benedictus’ [No.9] the composer appears from his conciliatory side. They are fine natured compositions, rather evident than great, but by no means of low-value carat. It is real, refined gold of specific coinage. The audience which has appeared in considerable amount likes these smaller pieces more. It will surely understand also the Phantasies when they will have heard them several times”. The publishing house understandably jumped up this bandwagon: “Referring to your request concerning new compositions I would like to inform you that I would like to publish a second issue of 12 Orgelstücke in the style of your opus 59 in autumn this year, however, an easy playability would be a precondition”. (Letter from H. Hinrichsens dated 4 January 1902). Reger satisfied this wish still in the same year with Opus 65. When at the end of 1908 the main publishing house Lauterbach & Kuhn was on sale, C. F. Peters tried to buy it but Bote & Bock succeeded. Reger’s contractual obligations to regularly provide compositions that were easier to sell - also the *Neun Stücke Op.129*

should be one of them - passed on to the Berlin publisher which was not really loved. In 1913, Reger fulfilled this task during the summer vacation. On 9 September he wrote to H. von Ohlendorff, a generous, amateurishly organ playing friend of his in Hamburg: “Op.129 are 9 organ pieces that I have completed today and which I will dedicate to you. They are 9 simple, but very fine pieces.” Opus 129 was published probably in October 1913 - he had sent back the galley proofs on the first day of this month - with Bote & Bock. For Reger, these Neun Stücke belonged to the category “easily to play and to consume” which can be also learned from his recommendations to Straube for the inauguration of the new organ in the Meininger Schützenhaussaal in April 1914: “You must not play too big pieces 1) the people will not understand then and 2) the organ is too small. You take: Bach, Mendelssohn, Reger. The organ is nearly not big enough for my BACH (Opus 46). I would also like to urgently recommend that you also play some “soft Heinrichs”; you dispose of lots of such pieces from me (particularly in my Op.129, Bote & Bock).” The exact concert programme is not traded, further performances are not documented and also in the press, Opus 129 does not seem to have left any traces.

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Translation: Pia Steinhaus

CD3&4

CD3

Variationen und Fuge über ein Originalthema Op.73

Zehn Stücke Op.69

CD4

Sechs Trios Op.47

Zwölf Stücke Op.65

June 14th 1903 marks a central event in the history of performance and reception of Reger’s organ works: Karl Straube, Reger’s preferred performer, played the

Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue Op.57 (see CD1&2 of this complete edition) during the 39th Congress (“Tonkünstler-Versammlung”) of the German Music Association (“Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein”) at the already decrepit organ of Basel Minster and thus demonstrated its limits so clearly that »immediate rebuilt was decided upon« (Reger’s letter to Theodor Kroyer). The critic Rudolf Louis stated »something like a sound-psychologic perversity with the result that Reger indulged in cacophony, in the musically ugly, as others do in purely voluptuous harmony«. Yet Reger was convinced: »Basel will be eminently useful to me!« (letter to the publisher Lauterbach & Kuhn).

On the occasion of this memorable recital Straube asked his friend »for an organ composition without reference to Protestant chorale tunes [...] to have a secular piece for my programming for recitals in mostly Catholic cities, and proposed to him the form of a set of variations with fugue on an original theme«. Reger complied with this request during the already busy summer holidays which he spent with his wife at the bucolic Schneewinkl-Lehen close to Berchtesgaden. Amongst other works he had to finish composition of *Gesang der Verklärten* for choir and orchestra Op.71 and of the *Violin Sonata in C* Op.72. His publishers had been warned of a new organ work by Straube, but while reading through the engraving master concerns became overwhelming that with this further highly complex composition (Opus 73 is at least equal to the *Inferno-Phantasie* Op.57, both require a »”Reger-experienced” audience«) no big deal could be made. They thereupon consulted other advisors in addition to Straube, which did not meet Reger’s appreciation: »should my opera 71, 72 and 73 not please you, I beg you to send the manuscripts back as soon as possible, as I have got exceptionally favourable offers especially for these three works! I have got the impression that my opera 71, 72 and 73 do not appeal to you [...] – I ensure you that I will not be cross, should you sent my opera 71, 72 and 73 back, because I do not feel capable of fighting the wisdom of the critics – thereto I am too poor a musician!«

Finally Lauterbach & Kuhn published the opera 71, 72 and 73; the first print of

the *Variations and Fugue on an original theme in F sharp minor* appeared in print in February 1904. The premier to be played in spring by Straube, who first got a proof around New Year and thus pulled the emergency break due to the extraordinary difficulties, was postponed on mutual agreement to the following season. During his in-depth study Straube asked for an explanation of the work, which was rather unusual: »It is fine that you got so far with Op.73; what shall I say? The work itself was born out of a rather subdued mood; the theme in all its resignation provides everything; an important role for the entire piece is played by the “melancholic” bar 3 of the theme:



I think, this will do; you know I do not like to speak about it at all because I consider it “posing” to make a show of my moods and feelings.« (letter dated June 25th, 1904) To Walter Fischer, who got Op.73 immediately after appearance for review accompanied by the short note »a tough nut to crack«, Reger explained a fundamental aspect of his first big set of variations (after Variations and Fugue on »Heil, unserm König Heil!« WoO IV/7): »in my opinion variation means not only the changing of the musical appearance, but possibly also the changing of the mood itself; thus it is self-evident that the musical material will change, too.«

It was Fischer, too, who finally anticipated Straube with the premier at the Berlin New Garrison Church on March 1st, 1905. A projected performance by Straube at the Thomas Church in Leipzig prior to Reger’s recital at the Gewandhaus on November 19th, 1904, with the *Sheep-Ape-Sonata* Op.72 on the programme, had been cancelled in favour of some chorale preludes from Opus 67 – possibly as a concession to the audience. The premier was rescheduled for March 3rd, 1905. Straube intended to play the piece at the beginning and at the end of the recital. Reger disagreed: »For heaven’s sake, do not play Op.73 twice on March 3rd, you

will turn too many into your and my enemies! Believe me: if you play Op.73 twice, there will be a tremendous bluster and everybody will run away!« Straube persisted, which was honoured by the critics: »his method to play hardly accessible works twice on the same evening should be copied widely. What has been an ingenious caprice with Bülow nowadays proves in many cases to be the single appropriate mean to introduce the audience to the spirit of a composition, to be the way of art education of choice.« (Arnold Schering in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) The piece itself met with a mixed response. While Schering was speaking of »one of the most brilliant revelations in Reger's art, overwhelming in its pettiness of meaning«, Carl Ripke in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* complaint about Reger's »indifference towards a logic structure and purposeful conception of a musical piece on a grand scale. «

The premier by Fischer, one of the great Reger advocates, was very friendly commented by Hugo Leichtentritt in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*: »The piece belongs to the greatest presented by Reger. At the same time it is one of the least accessible compositions by Reger. [...] Mister Fischer [...] achieved to turn these tumultuous looking notes on the paper into flowering sound structures, which is definitely no small achievement regarding the required level of technique and musical comprehension.«

The *Ten Pieces op.69* belong to those shorter musical treasuries intended by Reger to reconcile his young and inexperienced publishers Carl Lauterbach and Max Kuhn, who tried to involve the composer into their »operation "artful house music"« right from the beginning of the business relationship, with his wild and large-scale compositions. The request for easy selling music while keeping his technical and aesthetic profile always meant walking a fine line Reger was exposed to with each new composition, especially in the collections of smaller pieces. On November 21st, 1902, Reger reported to Walter Fischer on working on ten organ pieces »which will appear in to books 20 pages each, and which I will dedicate to my Berlin "apostles", namely you and Mr Otto Becker!« The dedication of these *Ten Pieces* which got

the opus number 69 was an act of gratitude and of no little strategic meaning, as both organists avidly promoted Reger and thus – in a city where criticism hit thinned Reger especially hard – went »through fire and water« (letter by Reger to the publishers Lauterbach & Kuhn dated January 5th through 8th, 1903). After a musical soirée in the Beethovensaal in Berlin on March 2nd, 1903 Reger arranged for a personal meeting with his two musical allies and repeatedly swore both to »most active propaganda« for the benefit of his works.

For his new Opus 69, which the two dedicatees got delivered on June 24th, 1903 in first print, Reger counted on broadest effect: Otto Becker (1870-1954) who is dedicatee of the first volume was not only asked by Reger to »perform in any of your recitals one of my compositions« but also to introduce Opus 69 together with the *Chorale Preludes* Opus 67 in the curriculum at the Berlin conservatory (»Do you make my opera 67 and 69 diligently played?«). Walter Fischer (1872-1931) who premiered the second volume dedicated to him at the Berlin New Garrison Church on March 1st, 1904, was asked by Reger for some reviews (»Review in Leßmann's Magazine [= *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*] and *Organum*, because very detailed, of which I would be most grateful to you!«). Fischer readily complied with Reger's request and appeared enthusiastically about the polyphonic artistry of the composer: »A "Prelude" and "Fugue" in volume 1 and a "Toccatina" and "Fugue" in Volume 2 show Reger as the ingenious successor to Bach. [...] O, that he could live today and see what a titan created after him and on him!« (*Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, 31st vol. [1904], No.3, p. 51) Not less excitedly promoted the Saxon organist and early Reger advocate Georg Stolz Opus 69 – determined to clear Reger's organ works of the general suspicion of being unplayable: »the composer proves to be so extraordinary modest in these new pieces that the perfunctory accusation of those, who cross themselves and reject the partition "on first glance" without realizing at all its beauty, should finally be muted.« (*Allgemeine Zeitung Chemnitz*, July 5th, 1903)

»Finally something easy by Reger», a gasp of relief by anybody who comes across Op.47 after this Babylonian tower« states Friedrich L. Schnasenberg in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in January 1901 – not without irony. The »Babylonian Tower« was the in any respect heavy *Fantasy and Fugue on B-A-C-H* Op.46; the easier appeared the *Six Trios* Op.47, printed in October 1900 and dedicated to the Viennese critic Gerard George Bagster. Adalbert Lindner, Reger's former teacher called them »"a flower between to abyssal"«, looking back onto Op.46 and forward upon the Chorale Fantasies Op.52. The concept of contrasting bigger and smaller compositions, aesthetically fundamental and useful works is a characteristic of Reger's oeuvre and returns for example in the *Thirty little Chorale Preludes* and *Fantasy and Fugue in D minor* (opera 135 a and b). That Reger planned such a connection with his *Six Trios* (the name refers more to the conception on three different sound stages: two manuals and pedal, as to the compositional technique) during their composition is proved by the original opus number: »and I have just completed 6 Trios for organ Opus 46b; during the next days I will begin a large-scale Fantasy and Fugue on B-A-C-H«, as he reported to the critic Georg Köhler on February 10th, 1900. Accordingly he wrote to Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalk that the *Six Trios* would be the »contrary to this BACH Fantasy« and called them »rather tame music«.

Correspondingly his six new pieces have not been conceived for the concert hall solely, as he repeatedly stated, »but more for the musical tuition«. Reger had specific requests at hand which he related to Karl Wolfrum, Head teacher at the Seminary at Altdorf close to Nuremberg: »I would be most obliged to you, if you could be so kind to use these Trios Op.47 in the upper classes in the royal teacher seminary during organ lessons«. The composer and critic Roderich von Mojsisovics launched the collection later as »model of modern and easy performance pieces for the organ in composition class« (*Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, November 15th, 1906). At least at the seminary where Wolfrum taught Reger's request for inclusion of his works into the curriculum remained unfulfilled although he tried hard: »I can easily believe that there is nobody among your students who has any use for my Trios – also that you

are bound by official directive – and, as ever, with public institutions it will take a long time until a "living" composer is introduced to such an institution!«

The composition of the *Twelve Pieces Op.65* has been inspired by the publisher C.F. Peters and their new owner Henri Hinrichsen who, after the printing of Opus 59, asked for »a second volume of twelve organ pieces« in the same mood – of course not without the »precondition« of an »easy performance«. Reger set off composing his »"Romantic Pieces" for organ« (postcard to Theodor Kroyer dated April 22nd, 1902) quite enthusiastically and not without some foresight. He was hoping to publish his *Piano Quintet* Op.64 after a long struggle with this publisher (successfully) and to build a closer business relationship with Peters (not as successfully, instead he contracted with the young publisher Lauterbach & Kuhn in 1903). In May 1902 Reger had composed more than intended and offered fifteen instead of twelve pieces to be published in three volumes. Hinrichsen was »not quite happy« with this idea and slowed him down: »As it is already difficult to introduce new organ compositions – it is more of an „Affaire d'honneur“ – it is even more difficult with a third volume of the same opus. « The publisher nevertheless generously offered to pay for the three surplus pieces; they were later included in the *Twelve Pieces* Op.80.

That Reger who confessed to the organist Gustav Beckmann in February 1910 to have »lost any idea of difficulty and playability« interpreted the aspect of »easy performance« rather casually, was reported to Hinrichsen »by consultants« who considered these pieces to be »definitely not easy or just medium difficult«. Confronted with this well-known accusation another time (see opus 69) he stood up for his new work: »1.) technically it is not more difficult than Op.59. 2.) regarding the harmony: believe me, it would neither serve you nor me to walk on trodden paths in my work; it would at best result in a momentary success, not in a lasting one!«. In the specialized press Opus 65 was rather judged as virtuoso music than as Gebrauchsmusik. Heinrich Pfannenschmidt noticed »M. Reger's gigantic style« already in the opening Rhapsody which would be »capable of putting player and

listener alike into ecstasy with its haunting rhythms, crescendo and contrasts« (*Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst*, October 1904). Regarding the first volume a colleague from *The Monthly Musical* put it somewhat more practical: »the rhythms are intricate, the accidentals are numerous [...] the composer is still in his storm and stress period« (Oktober 1902).

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Translation: Gesa Graumann

CD5&6

When Reger came back to his parents' home in Weiden on 19th June 1898 from Wiesbaden, he seemed a loser both as a man and as an artist: critics had been ignoring him for almost two years; a Concert for piano and orchestra and a Symphony were unfinished; his one-year voluntary military service (from October 1896) had nearly ruined his financial situation; his demanding job as a teacher at the Conservatory of Wiesbaden was more and more stressing; he suffered from a serious mycosis on his neck and he was more and more socially isolated because of his problems with alcohol. In spite of all that, the quiet atmosphere of the Upper Palatin-Bavarian region had a therapeutic effect on the body and mind of the twenty-five year old composer who, in the three following years and before his new move to Monaco on 1st September 1901, composed his chorale fantasies which gave him the so much longed-for success. Reger was also an important interpreter of his compositions: he was a piano accompanist, in particular of his vocal works, and a conductor, but he never played his most important organ compositions in public concerts. When he was young, he had attended organ lessons and after some time he had reached a good level both as a piano and as an organ player (however, evaluations on his ability meet with different responses), but perhaps from 1895 on he had no occasions to keep the level of his ability up). A happy coincidence was the growing friendship with the organ virtuoso Karl Straube, who first performed the *Suite in E minor* Op.16 and who was introduced to Reger on 1st April 1898 during a concert in Frankfurt. The friendship with Straube probably

contributed to the fact that in Weiden Reger started composing for organ again and in addition a succession of events took place: in the following four years Straube played at least ten premiers (Opp. 27, 29, 30, 33, 40 No.1, 46, 52 No.1-3 & 57). Only the first performance of the *Fantasy on chorale "Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn!"* Op.40 No.2 was played by O. Buckert who, together with Straube, K. Beringer, H. Dettmer and P. Gerhardt, was a member of the bigger and bigger group of organists who did their best for the production of Reger. Generally, in Reger practical reflections about the possible performers play an important role in the choice of the musical genres: "Protestants are willing to spend money for their organists, so you can find some wonderful virtuosi there. From that originate my fantasies on protestant chorales" (letter of the 25th January 1900 to A. Gloetzner). But for sure the catholic Reger approached with style the Lutheran liturgical music -already two 1893 chorale preludes use Lutheran chorales- also for the content. In 1895 Heinrich Reimann, Straube's teacher, had published a *Fantasy on chorale "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern"* Op.25, whose form derives from the succession of the stanzas of the chorale. Perhaps it was a review of June 1896 in *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* that drew Reger's attention to the piece, but he actually worked on it only after his move to Weiden. But it is unknown if Reger already knew the score when he first began to dedicate himself to this musical genre in August 1898. The fact is that on November 1st in the same year he wrote a dedication to Reimann and added: "I bought your Fantasy on Chorale "Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern!" and I believe it is a wonderful and masterly work. Salvation for our organ music lies in using and revisiting the old liturgical chant. I hope you'll be able to publish a lot of other fantasies on chorales". Other foundations for Reger's fantasies on chorales are- in addition to J.S. Bach's music- the *Anleitung zum Generalbaßspielen*, a work by his conservatory teacher Hugo Reimann, where there is the quotation of several chorales which guided Reger's rhythmical disposition- and the fact that the municipal church of Weiden, St Michael, where a young Reger had taken the place of his organ teacher A. Lindner, was a church for both religions- it is obvious that in some ways Reger got used to Lutheran chorales there.

We don't have much information about the origin of his fantasies on chorales "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" Op.27 e "Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele!" Op.30, which at first were conceived as a double opera with the numbers 27a & b. On 16th August 1898, Reger wrote to one of his few friends with whom he was still in touch: "In this period I am writing some organ operas!" (letter to E. Guder), probably referring to the two fantasies. The opera 27(a) was probably finished after a short time, considering that on September 20th was first performed in the cathedral Willibrordi in Wesel by Straube, who played it from the manuscript, created only for him; the second manuscript, created by Reger, was used at the same time to find a publisher. This demanding procedure to create two manuscripts (Straube probably received the second clearer manuscript of the Op.27 and 30) was adopted by Reger up to the Op.52 No.3. He acted this way first of all because he was in search of possible executions and in related reviews which could be helpful to find a publisher. The opera 30 was first mentioned -both expressly and rather 'en passant'- in the following "request of publication" to the publishing house C.F. Peters on 28th September: "After taking the liberty to send you some manuscripts some days ago, now I dare to enclose an organ fantasy on the chorale 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott'. The opera, dedicated to the well-known organ virtuoso K. Straube, was first performed on the 20th of this month and I dare to enclose a review. Technical difficulties are not higher than in Fantasy and fugue in sol minor by J.S. Bach. In the meantime I have also written a second organ fantasy on the chorale 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele!' which I could send in the next days, if you were interested in publishing it". In the end the Op.27 was published by the Rob Forberg in March 1899 in Leipzig, after the introduction of Strauss and the opera 30 by the Jos Aibl in April 1899 in Munich (like all the following fantasies on chorales). The first performance of the Op.30 took place again in Wesel, on 22nd August 1899. Reger described his first fantasy on chorale with these words to Hochstetter, from the conservatory of Wiesbaden: "I have musically illustrated every single line by preserving the melody of the chorale as cantus firmus; my passacaglia Op.16 will furnish you some information about my

style, but the opera 27 is still more solid and more flowing. The notable organ player K. Straube, to whom is dedicated, defines the fantasy as a colossal work and the more inspired written so far on this chorale. The last line is musically illustrated with a free fugue upon the initial tune of the chorale, while in the divertimenti of the fugue the chorale goes quietly on; I don't want to sound boastful, but I played this opera myself 8 days ago and the impression is extremely positive- the best thing I have ever written so far". In fact, when Reger was alive, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' was the most performed organ work, together with *Fantasy and fugue on B-A-C-H* Op.46. With the Fantasy on the chorale "Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern" Op.40 No.1, of the following year (September 1899), Reger deliberately started competing with Heinrich Reimann and his fantasy of 1895, which he had used as a model for his compositions in this musical genre (see above). On October 2nd he finished his second manuscript, while he sent the first to Straube shortly afterwards. It is probable that Reger wrote a new version of the third stanza even before the premier of 24th October, after Straube's advice: "For the second line, in the first version of his fantasy he had used the pedals for the chorale melody and the manual for a meaningless succession of harmonies in three parts. From Wesel I let him know my opinion and I suggested to introduce a melismatic variation (letter of 28th June 1944 by Straube to H. Klotz). Only a month after the premier of the *Fantasy Morgenstern*, that had the number 40 up to then and that Reger named significantly a "work of program music" in a letter to Reimann of November 1st 1899, "Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn Op.40 No.2" was composed - probably in only one week's time - (the creation of the first manuscript had the date of 29th November). On December 15th Reger handed out both works to the publisher Jos. Aibl, the first editions were released in March 1900. The premier of the Op.40 No.2 was played by O. Burkert on 24th June 1900 in the Deutsches Haus in Brünn. Compared to Op.40, the Op.52 was immediately conceived as a collection of some fantasies on chorales, whose composition was started by Reger around the end of August 1900. The second manuscript was sent to the publisher already on October 21st. Straube always got the first manuscript. But

Reger was more and more tired of carrying on with this way of working and as a consequence the first manuscript of “**Alle Menschen müssen sterben**” Op.52 No.1 was still completely composed (the annotations with black ink, the dynamics with red ink), but already in “**Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!**” Op.52 No.2 there aren't any indications about the dynamics and, to conclude, in the “**Halleluja! Gott zu loben, bleibe meine Seelenfreud!**” Op.52 No.3, there is only black ink (without any red ink) starting from halfway the piece and then it is stopped some bars before the end with the notation: “from this point on it is composed only the version for printing”. However, Straube obviously used the first manuscript with several annotations for the first performance of “*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!*” on 28th April 1901 in Wesel. Instead for “*Alle Menschen müssen sterben*” (Wesel, summer 1901) and “*Halleluja! Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreud!*” (Munich, Kaim-Saal, 9th November 1901) he used the first printings. The premier of the Op.52 took place during one of those spectacular monographic concerts held by Straube in the first years: in the programme there are the whole Op.52, *Kyrie eleison* and *Benedictus* from the Op.59 and -to conclude- *Fantasy and Fugue on B-A-C-H* Op.46. With his fantasies on chorales Reger filled a wide gap in the musical repertoire, especially in the concerts for organ players: they fulfilled their technical and musical requests and turned to J.S. Bach's music- as Reger himself underlined. The fact had already been stated by Reimann in 1894 in a series of articles called “*Orgel-Sonaten*”: “There is no salvation but this style!... Bach becomes almost the guideline of our art to compose organ works”. Reger himself expressed that to Reimann on 18th March 1899: “For the organ, unfortunately I am not able to familiarize with the organ works by Bach. The better, for sure the better is still Liszt, whose great originality covers the organ, too -but apart from this, the situation is serious. And what has been written for Bach's instrument by the French and the English people is often horrible. Through an in-depth study of the situation I have realized that if we really want to improve organ repertoire, this is possible only by means of Bach tradition. For sure we have to use the conquests of our modern organ with all our strength- I myself play colour Bach

on the organ”, but what we have to keep is the inexorable logic of the sentence, the solidity in the running of the parts and what we have to avoid by any means necessary is every single lyric moment, that is to say above all sentimental; we have never to play with the timbre effects of the different stops, but we have to reach a composition aimed at organ for itself. So I have tried to use this style in my Opp. 27, 29 & 30”. This position is also restated in his letter of 10th February 1900, addressed to the critic G. Gohler: “With no problem we Germans can have our German organ style, referring to Bach style, without drawing inspiration from French and English. We have only to rely on the conquests of organ studies - and then to apply the Bach way of composition to organ. That is what I think about our German organ style (maybe of the future) and I believe that fantasy on chorale is righter for the purpose than sonata to organ characteristics, for very intrinsic aesthetic reasons!”. And so F. L. Schnackenberg, to whom Op.52 No.3 was dedicated, summarized in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik towards the half of 1901*: “...Even if only few people will perform these compositions in public... every single above the average organ player is supposed to know them”. Reger devoted himself to Lutheran chorales also in the minor genres. Above all in 1901 several chorale preludes were composed and they were first published in periodicals as appendices or they were planned for that and only later they were collected in the Op.79b. But however the longest opera is by far **Zweiundfünfzig leicht ausführbaren Vorspiele zu den gebräuchlichsten evangelischen Chorälen** Op.67, published by Lauterbach & Kuhn in April 1903. Reger had already been conceiving the idea of an independent opera for a long time (“around the end of autumn 1894 a big collection of chorale preludes of every type will be ready”, he wrote to Lindner on 19th December 1893), but he didn't start before May 1901: “I will soon write more or less 30 preludes based on the most well-known chorales: a quite good idea!” (letter to Straube of 7th May 1901). In September Reger started working on it: “I am writing simpler chorale preludes ‘en passant’ and they are also not technically difficult! They will probably be 50. In a year's time they will be published for sure!” (letter to Gottschalg of 30th September 1901). But some time

passed before he was finally able to present the Op.67 to Lauterbach & Kuhn on 21st October 1902: "... and I dare say, with no arrogance, that such a collection of chorale preludes hasn't been released since J.S. Bach's time". At first Reger had included only two preludes which had already been published in periodicals as appendices: "*Jauchz, Erd, und Himmel, juble*" (No.15) e "*Wer weiß, wie nah emir mein ende!*" (No.48). But during the printing process he added two more pieces, which had already been published as appendices some time before, but they couldn't be integrated in the opera anymore due to the fact that it was in alphabetical order and so they were introduced at the end: "*Jesus ist kommen*" (No.51) e "*O wie selig*" (No.52). Reger appreciated this collection also from an artistic point of view: "there is no necessity to assure you explicitly that these chorale preludes are at least of the same quality of all my works published up to now, apart the fact that they are technically simpler and so their diffusion can be much easier and so with my chorale preludes I can give you something out of which you will make a profit, especially if you think that I am considered the most important organ composer of present days in almost all the specialized periodicals!" (letter to the publishing house of October 22nd). It is quite difficult to find evidence of performances – for a musical genre which is not very common in concert halls -, but pieces from Op.67 have also been often performed (from Straube too) outside religious services. That is probably due to the fact that the collection was very positively reviewed by the critics: "Reger's preludes prove once again that no one is his equal in the planning stage, energy of musical thinking and poetical vision. So they can be considered amongst his most refined gifts and they are strongly recommended to all the people who devote themselves to high-quality organ performing, both inside churches and in concerts (R. Frenzel, *Sächsische Schulzeitung* 1903, No.7).

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Translation: Rossana Gentilini

CD7&8

On 8th December 1912 Max Reger, Kapellmeister at the court of Meiningen, wrote to the duke of Sachsen-Meiningen about an important commission for a composition: "In Breslau, in August 1913, a new hall is going to be opened on the occasion of the centenary of the war of liberation [...] In this hall they intend to place the biggest organ in Germany and they want to inaugurate it during the festivity. I have just received the official invitation to write a new organ opera; I have accepted [...] (letter of 8th December). With the room for the centenary (*Jahrhunderthalle*) in Breslau, built from 1911 to 1913, two records were set at the same time: a dome of concrete with a 65 meter span and an organ by P. Walcker (manufactured W. Sauer) with more than 15,000 pipes and 200 organ stops arranged in 5 keyboards and a pedal key (including the *Fernorgel*). Thanks to this commission Reger had the occasion once again to dedicate himself to virtuoso-monumental organ works, similar to the ones written between 1898 and 1903 in Weiden and Munich (the 7 Fantasies on chorale; the two sonatas; the three Fantasies and Fugues and the Variations and Fugue upon an original theme in F sharp minor Op.73). Reger's circle of friends, always bigger, was waiting for a work of great importance.. "But, I am sure, [...] there will be a time when organ players will get again the mature fruits of his genius", wrote Fisher, organ player at the the *Neue Garnisonkirche* in Berlin and a true Reger supporter. At the beginning Reger had thought of an organ and orchestra concert, but soon he decided for a solo opera divided into three parts: **Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue**. Reger could start to work on his **Op.127** in E minor only at the end of winter 1912-13 because the concert season, as usual, had been organized with pressing times and had taken away from him all his energies: between October 1912 and April 1913 Reger gave no less than 108 concerts in the whole territory of the Reich with the court chapel of Meiningen and as a piano accompanist. When Reger came back to Meiningen he kept on working very hard: on 20th April he had "already finished the introduction" (postcard to Straube) and was working on the passacaglia; on 16th May wrote the last note of the composition. In the initial stage

of the work, Reger told his friend F. Stein these things: "The work is classically limpid; I firmly reject every eccentricity and all that is exaggerated, etc. etc in every form. This is the "fruit" of Meiningen and this cure was extremely good for my person; it was not only useful for me, it would be the same for a lot of people!" (letter of 26th April). For the first performance on 24th September 1913, they chose Straube as interpreter, an organist of the *Thomaskirche* of Lipsia. Even before delivering the manuscript to the publisher Bote&Boch in Berlin, Reger asked his longtime friend an appointment: "Wouldn't you be able to come and see me tomorrow, that is to say on Thursday between five and seven in the afternoon, at the conservatory, room n.1; I could at once play for you my new organ work [...] I would be very glad to let you hear it at the piano" (postcard of 21st May 1913). We do not know if the meeting really took place. Anyhow, very soon Straube received the draft from Reger, specially made to give him the possibility to study the hard work. Moreover Reger wrote to his publisher: "I beg you not to print the work already now once and for all; maybe Mr. Straube will find again some mistakes in his draft, [...] [that] are going to be corrected before the last printing" (letter of 16th June 1913 to Bote&Bock). Two days after the first performance in Breslau, Reger asked for first-hand news: "How was the Op.127? Was it really so 'exotic' as written in the local newspapers? Please give me an immediate and full answer about that" (postcard of 26th September to Straube). For sure he did not like the reviews he received: P. Riesenfeld, critic of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, complained about the fact of hearing "40 minutes of uninterrupted experimental music" and B. Paumgartner, in a discussion about the score published later in the periodical *Der Merker* wrote: "With an unceasing growth, loads of extravagant harmonies heap and melt together, fluttering with no logic and no end like a summer cloud, alarming and full of heavy rain; you long for the lightning, the thunder, the rain, the liberation, something which could interrupt that threatening uniformity, but you hope in vain: inexorably, the clouds pile up together, they twist, they untie and flutter until all at once the same old major final triad and in *fff* confirms a tonality you have never known". When the first edition of the Op.127

was at last published, some changes in the field of dynamics and time were observed with respect to the manuscript and they are mostly Straube's work. In October/November Straube repeated the performance of the work in Leipzig (*Thomaskirche*) and Berlin (*Garnisonkirche*); the Swiss organ player E. Isler, who played it in Zurich in 1914, expressed in such a way: "After an introduction of primordial force, where strange mystic sounds are twisted, the structure of the passacaglia rises over the bass in a three-four time, sometimes in a steep way and other times insisting on ornaments of strange mystic music, carefully handled, then going up to the peak, from where the structure of the fugue starts, at last losing itself in the universe with solemnity". The origin of the **Twelve pieces Op.80** starts with *Little Fugue, Gigue* and *Intermezzo*, three short compositions which were already sent to the publishing house C.F. Peters in May 1902, but that weren't introduced in the *Twelve pieces Op.65* because "in excess". So Reger, together with the publisher H. Hinrichsen, decided to create a new collection of organ works around these three pieces and composed nine additional pieces, from May to June 1904: *Prelude, Canzonetta, Ave Maria, Scherzo, Romance, Perpetuum mobile, Intermezzo, Toccata* and *Fugue*. In September 1904 the *Twelve pieces Op.80* were published in two volumes in the sequence decided by Reger. The fact that some of these "easy short pieces" required a big effort both from the organ players and the organs themselves was a scandal for some critics. "It seems as Reger is willing to say too many things at one time", accused the reviewer of the periodical *Siona*, who above all considered the harmony too rich. Whereas A.W. Gottschalg, the publisher of *Urania* and a true supporter of Reger's organ works, reviewed the Op.80 with a humorous wink: "If you really want to keep the arranged time – Vivacissimo! – you are to be afraid to have an accident on the old organs", was his short review on the *Gigue* (No.4) and on the *Toccata* (No.11), you can't "put your feet at the end of your arms!". One of the most diligent interpreters of the *Twelve pieces* was H. Reimann, a teacher of Straube's, who presented seven numbers in Berlin in October 1904. In May 1913 Reger himself recorded the *Ave Maria* and the *Romance* on the cylinders Welte-Philharmonie in Freiburg in May 1913. "In my

opinion (corresponding also to Mr Reimann's one), no progress has been done in the organ style since J.S. Bach's times, on the contrary we have gone back [...] So I have tried to connect to Bach in my organ works – that's why Mr Best thinks that the works aren't quite interesting (nowadays) – and I have simply given up the modern way to write organ works. In my other things I am for sure in a modern territory – but not Wagner". On 8th December 1892 these are the words of the nineteen-year-old composer, full of projects and ideas, who tries to win the approval of the publisher G. Augener for his **Three organ pieces Op.7**. All his life long Reger was strongly convinced to be bound to J.S. Bach's musical heredity and to be obliged to resume the threads of tradition, which once converged into the work of the famous *Thomaskantor* of Leipzig. The impassioned persistence to be on the side of his 'children in spirit' remained untouched even when he became a famous composer. In September Reger presented to Augener "a prelude and fugue of merry and joyful nature" for the series of publication *Cecilia. A Collection of Organ Pieces in diverse styles*, edited by W.T. Best. But the double movement was refused, because "too serious for England", and his teacher Riemann devoted himself to have the work published by C.F. Peters – Reger had meanwhile developed it with a *Fantasy* and a double fugue- at the publishing house C.F. Peters. But once again success wasn't obtained, with the negative circumstance of the hasty retreat of Reger's mentor: "I myself could not deduce Reger's autonomy from these pieces with a clear inspiration by Bach" (letter to Peters of 3rd November 1892). Maybe it was thanks to Reger's convincing methods that Augener was at last persuaded to publish the *Three pieces Op.7* in December 1893. On sending a copy to the reviewers, Reger wrote to O. Leßmann, publisher of the *Allegemeinen Musik-Zeitung*: "I beg you not to panic over the fact that I also want to be solemn in the pieces, I wear a wig and I do not forget even the short tail. (in these pieces I do not mean to be original at all - I only meant to write some serious organ pieces!)" (letter of 11th December). Already in his op.7 Reger offered the interpreters some technical challenges: H. Keller, who had studied with Reger in Munich and Leipzig, evaluated the work as the product "of a really

young Reger whose first fugue [in do major] was even harder than the most difficult fugue by Rheinberger (the theme is twice in the pedal!)" . In the *Fantasy* Reger, with the Gregorian *Te Deum*, dedicates himself to a melody that he is going to repeat in the last of the *Twelve pieces* Op.59. In the Op.7 he revises several parts of the composition which contains some passages of fugue among other things. Similar references to Catholic liturgical music are quite unusual in Reger's works and he later relied on Lutheran chorales, especially in his organ works. Already in 1890, during his first year as Riemann's student, Reger had worked on the main theme of the final double fugue in re min. "He was evidently struggling with big thoughts, but seemed unable to reduce them to their simplest expression", wrote the critic of the *Monthly Musical Record* after the publication of Op.7, but he greeted the dynamic composition of the nineteen-year-old also as a "welcome surprise". The *Three pieces* were the first organ work provided by Reger with an opera number – the **Organ pieces Op.145** were the last one. In July 1915 the publisher H. Oppenheimer of Hameln asked Reger for two organ pieces which the composer started immediately writing. A seven part collection was created, composed and published at three different times by Simrock for Oppenheimer. *Trauerode, Dankpsalm e Weihnachten* were produced in July 1915, *Passion, Ostern* and *Pfingsten* in October, *Siegesfeier* (title initially reserved to No.2) in February-March. Already the first three pieces were collected under the number of Op.145, number which Reger had initially kept free for the Latin Requiem (WoO V/9), interrupted in December 1914 on Straube's advice; the title *Seven organ pieces* appears only in the posthumous edition. In every piece at last one chorale is quoted: *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* (No.1): *Lobe den Herren* (No.2), *Herzliebster Jesu* (No.4), *Auferstanden, auferstanden* (No.5), *Komm, Heiliger Geist* (No.6) and *Nun danken alle Gott* (No.7); in the piece *Weihnachten* (No.3) four melodies are elaborated and partly twisted: *Es kommt ein Schiff geladen*, *Ach, was will ich Sünder machen*, *Von Himmel hoch* and – in separate recalls which are played almost in the distance - *Stille nachte*. Also for the *Siegesfeier* Reger uses a combination of plainsongs: from the chorale *Nun danket alle Gott* he moves to the apotheosis of

the German national anthem which later goes on in canone. The *Trauerode* was dedicated to the memory of the victims of war in 1914-15 e il Dankpsalm to the “German army”. The Trauerode was presented on 30th May 1916 at the conservatory of Stuttgart: H. Keller played it to commemorate Max Reger, who had died of a heart-attack three weeks before in Leipzig.

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Translation: Rossana Gentilini

CD9&10

In his large organ works, dating from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Reger considered the notion of musical genre to be very important, as well as virtuosity and tradition. On 10 February 1900 – after finishing Opp. 27, 29, 30, 33 and 40, and while working on Op.46 – he explained to the critic Georg Göhler: ‘Honestly, I do not much like the way French and English people deal with the organ nowadays. We Germans can develop our organ style without difficulty, basing it on the spirit of Bach, and without borrowing anything from the English and the French. Simply, we have to utilize the achievements of modern organ design and then apply the way Bach composes to them. I regard this as perhaps the future of our *German* organ style, and I think that the fantasy chorale is a more suitable form for the organ than even the sonata – for deeply aesthetic reasons.’

Reger derived these views from the organist, composer and musical writer Heinrich Reimann, whose Fantasy on the chorale, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* Op.25 had inspired him to write no fewer than seven Chorale Fantasias between 1898 and 1900. In his collection of articles called *Organ Sonatas – Critical Paths*, published in the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* in 1894, Reimann wrote that ‘The guiding principle of a musical education [...] is to familiarize oneself with the only correct musical style for organ, that is, the style of J. S. Bach’, adding: ‘This style offers the only way to salvation!’. His conviction that ‘the organ is and has to remain a church instrument, even in the concert hall,’ led Reimann to this conclusion: ‘This is the reason why

classical sonata form cannot be used for organ compositions. This form, based on the continuous interplay of contrasts, is antithetical to the greatness and dignity of the instrument.’ But he conceded that, ‘True art does not tolerate constraints. Art is free, in the concert hall, on the stage, or inside a church, provided that in every place it does its duty, doing all that is right and proper. Whoever is able to change the form of the chamber sonata in such a way that it can conform to the religious and dignified atmosphere of the church, will have completed a great task.’ In spite of (or maybe thanks to) this rather critical assessment, Reger composed two works called sonatas, even if, mindful of Reimann’s considerations, he tried to solve the problem in different ways. After the *Suite in E minor*, Op.16 (1894/95), which Reger at least began as a sonata, the composition of the *Sonata No.1 in F sharp minor* Op.33 represented Reger’s second attempt at grappling with this problematic form, although the sequence of movements, *Fantasia – Intermezzo – Passacaglia*, does not follow the classical form of the sonata. Op.33 is among the few works from Reger’s Weiden and Munich period in whose manuscripts you can already detect the influence of Karl Straube, the most important and influential interpreter of Reger’s organ works. Unlike what happened with the Chorale Fantasia on *Wie schön leuch’t uns der Morgenstern* Op.40 No.1, this time, before submitting the manuscript to the publisher for engraving in advance of the first performance, he sent the first draft to his friend Straube to seek his opinion. We do not know if the following discussion between the two friends touched on the issue of form, because the correspondence from that period is lost. At any rate, after finishing the composition in early April 1899, Reger wrote to the organist Arthur Egidi: ‘Don’t be afraid of the title “sonata” – it is not a sonata form. The title is only a generic title!’ Straube premiered the piece on 14 June 1899, using the first draft; Reger sent the final version to the publisher for printing in early July. In September, Reger contacted Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg, the eventual dedicatee of the new work – he had favorably reviewed Reger’s Opp. 27 and 29 in the August issue of his magazine *Urania*; the dedication was later added directly to the final version by the publisher. He described his sonata to Gottschalg as ‘the romantic

one [...], completely different from my previous organ works'. Having sent the work to Josef Rheinberger when it was published at the beginning of January 1900, asking him 'kindly to look through my latest crime against harmony and counterpoint', Reger repeated his almost apologetic assertion that 'to my mind the sonata Op.33 is mainly an excursion into the "romantic", but in matters concerning the organ, I always stick to the principles that Bach teaches us.' In addition, he also described the requirements of the performer: 'It is very hard to make this work really enjoyable. You need a truly gifted organist.' The dedicatee's review in *Urania* summed it up as follows: 'It's hard work, but richly rewarding. No need for any scaremongering among colleagues.'

In August 1901, again it was Alexander W. Gottschalg who put Reger in touch with Constantin Sander (owner of the Leipzig publishing house F. E. C. Leuckart), who had shown interest in his organ music. The relationship between Reger and Leuckart began at the end of that year, with the *Second Sonata in D minor* Op.60, in which Reger adopted the same sequence of movements as in Op.33: *Improvisation – Invocation – Introduction and Fugue*; but it ended again the following year with *Monologues* Op.63 followed only by *Two Spiritual Songs* Op.105 in 1908. Probably Sander had disappointed Reger with his 'postcards complaining about declining interest in purchasing copies of Opp. 60 and 63' [letter from Reger to Straube, 8 December 1902]. In order to satisfy Sander's desire for a new organ work, Reger probably revisited an old project. In October 1900 he had been grappling intensively with organ sonatas by Karl Wolfrum and Joseph Renner, and he was greatly taken with Renner's *Sonata No.1 in G minor*: 'What I especially warm to in your work is its real, German attitude [...]. I welcome with particular pleasure every new organ work which embraces pure, unadulterated German-ness, because unfortunately we have to observe that a lot of German composers of organ works mimic French and English styles [...]. 'German-ness' as I understand it, is very far from implying chauvinism – it has nothing to do with politics; for me, the expression German-ness is only a 'generic' concept, just as we say 'Bach-like'. [Letter of 26 November 1900].

On the 30th of December Reger advised Gottschalg that 'a new organ sonata [...] is more or less finished, at least in my head.' But nearly a year elapsed before Reger was able to inform the dedicatee of the work, the critic Martin Krause, of the imminent completion of Op.60, although on 11 December 1901 he had to ask the publisher to be patient: 'I haven't sent my organ sonata so far because I am constantly tinkering with it.' Op.60 was published at last, at the end of February 1902. In his *Urania* review of the premiere, given by Hermann Dettmer on 11 May 1902 in Merseburg Cathedral, Gottschalg described it as 'a masterpiece of design and invention'. In his turn Robert Frenzel, writing in *Worship and Church Art Monthly* (*Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst*), praised the Sonata as a 'magnificent flight of imagination' and expressed appreciation for the fact that 'Reger never loses sight of the organ's relationship with the dignity of the church, even when it is located in a concert hall.'

Ever since the Weiden years (1898-1901), Reger's contributions to organ collections had simply been occasional jobs, by means of which he could spread the reputation which he had acquired through his first large organ works. Thanks to these undemanding and uncatalogued compositions, Reger was able to cultivate or cement relationships in the organ circles of both the main religious denominations. Reger received a first commission of this kind from Ludwig Sauer of Schönberg (Taunus) in 1899. The organist and choirmaster intended to publish an *Organ-Album*, as a fundraiser for the construction of a new organ in the church of St. Alban. Sauer had recruited 31 composers for the project, including Hans Pfitzner, Alexandre Guilmant and Josef Rheinberger, but the bulk of the space in the collection was to be given over to a movement from a symphony by Charles-Marie Widor, and a contribution from Reger. He generously refused his fee and initially offered a 'substantial prelude and fugue'. But when he presented the manuscript on 19 October 1899, he took Sauer by surprise with the *Introduction and Passacaglia in D minor* WoO IV/6 'on the basis that in all likelihood you will mostly be sent fugues and fughetas. The Passacaglia is written in such a way that any reasonably gifted organist should be able to sight-

read it.’ But considering that the piece is structured as a continuous crescendo, this assessment seems rather ambitious. Subsequently, Reger’s great interpreters such as Karl Straube, Arthur Egidi and Gerard Bunk adopted it as a concert piece, and in 1907 a separate edition was published by Breitkopf & Härtel – this time the composer was paid.

The *Prelude in C minor* WoO VIII/6 was at first included in a private album: Reger submitted the seven-bar miniature, composed in Weiden on 23 August 1900, to a collection of organ manuscripts by his first teacher, Adalbert Lindner, and is said to have limited his notion of a fee to ‘a glass of lemonade’. Lindner had it printed on Reger’s 70th birthday, 19 March 1943, together with this annotation: ‘Maybe it was meant as a prelude to a fugue, which Reger could use to earn himself another lemonade.’ In fact, Reger had written a fugue theme in the manuscript, but didn’t take it any further.

In January 1901 Reger composed two commissioned organ works: first, the *Variations and Fugue on ‘Heil, unserm König Heil!’* WoO IV/7 and then the *Fugue in C minor* WoO IV/8. If Lindner’s account is to be believed, and the variations are connected with the death of Britain’s Queen Victoria, they could be regarded as a musical funeral oration. In point of fact Reger had composed his adaptation of the *Bavarian Royal Hymn* (which shares the same melody as *God Save the Queen*) on 17 January 1901, ie five days before the death of the 82-year-old queen. The publisher Jos. Aibl printed the work very quickly and Reger himself acknowledged the multiple patriotic possibilities of this ‘very short composition which more than anything I meant for use at royal celebrations etc., etc., etc.’ [Letter of 20 March 1901 to Otto Leßmann]. The *Fugue in C minor* WoO IV/8 was first published in the collection *21 Organ Pieces for Church Use* [21 *Orgelstücke für kirchlichen Gebrauch*], edited by the teacher Johann Adam Troppmann, from Tirschenreuth, but remained unknown until 2004 – it receives its recorded premiere on this album. Reger had originally composed a more elaborate contribution for Troppmann’s collection, but his ‘brilliant Bach-style fugue’, as Reger announced in the first edition, ‘was shortened by the composer himself on the advice of the editor.’

Reger penned three other short organ works during his Munich period. Each demonstrates the breadth of techniques which Reger now had at his disposal. The *Prelude and fugue in D minor* WoO IV/10 was published in August 1902 in the Leipzig magazine *Music Week* [Die Muzik-Woche], for which Reger wrote 15 musical inserts including piano and chamber music and Lieder; it was later re-published again in an *Orgelalbum* which anthologised the organ inserts included throughout the year. The *Postlude in D minor* WoO IV/12 was a contribution to the *Organ Album for Bavarian Academic Composers* [Orgelalbum bayrischer Lehrerkomponisten – Augsburg and Vienna, 1904], where Alban Lipp collected no less than 52 pieces by 23 composers from all over the region. In 1907 the *Prelude and fugue in G sharp minor* WoO/15 was first published in a single edition by Otto Junne in Leipzig, and then included in the anthology *New organ works, large and small, for church and concert use* [Neue größere und kleinere Orgelstücke zur Übung sowie zum gottesdienstlichen und Konzergebrauch], edited by Johannes Diebold.

The *Old Dutch Prayer of Thanksgiving* [Altniederländisches Dankgebet] WoO IV/17 was composed in Jena between 21 and 23 September 1915. The publisher Breitkopf & Härtel had entrusted Reger with the task of editing a *Volkslied* with text by Adriaen Valerius, translated by Karl Budde as *Wir treten zum Beten* [We stand and pray]. At first Reger was thinking only of a piano piece, but ‘in order to set to music all four verses’, as Reger had already done in his Chorale Fantasias, he also wrote an organ version. At Christmas 1915 the arrangements were announced in the press and published in an edition ‘illustrated with the remarkable etching by Bruno Heroux, depicting the joyous thanksgiving of the people for the liberation of eastern Prussia after the Battle of the Masurian Lakes.’

The *Romance in A minor* WoO IV/11 is Reger’s only original composition for harmonium, apart from the recently rediscovered *Fughetta in A minor* WoO IV/18. It was published in July 1904, together with the organ version. The piece originated from Reger’s connection with M.J. Schramm’s Royal Bavarian Piano and Harmonium Company, which had made a harmonium for Reger’s mother-in-law, Mrs. Auguste

von Bagenski. Reger's 'easiest organ composition' (according to Alexander W. Gottschalg) became Schramm's first branded music publication; it later appeared in numerous foreign editions, including one by Sigfrid Karg-Elert.

In August 1912, in the holiday resort of Berchtesgaden, Reger produced an organ arrangement of the *Prelude and Fugue in F sharp minor*, from Vol.4 of his piano cycle *Aus meinem Tagebuche* [From my Diary] Op.82, taking the opportunity to make some cuts and structural changes. He dedicated the adaptation to his Hamburg friend, Hans von Ohlendorff and played it himself in November 1914 on the occasion of his 'Musical Devotions' in the Stadtkirche of Meiningen.

'Leuckhardt wants more – and I can deliver', wrote Reger to his teacher Adalbert Lindner in October 1901, after the Leipzig publisher began to show more and more interest in his works. In December Reger was thinking in terms of 'smaller pieces, similar to Opus 59', but by the spring of 1902, in his *Monologues* Op.63 he had put together a miscellaneous collection of twelve quite virtuosic compositions, including: Prelude and Fugue, Canzona, Capriccio, Introduction and Passacaglia, Ave Maria, Fantasie, Toccata and Fugue, Canon, and Scherzo. The collection was published in September 1902, in three volumes, each dedicated to a very prolific Reger interpreter: the first to Hermann Dettmer of Quakenbrück, the second to Robert Frenzel of Schneeberg, and the third to Richard Jung in Greiz. While these Lutheran interpreters and others often performed the *Monologues* both in churches and in concert halls, an anonymous critic of *Musica sacra*, the official organ of the *Allgemeiner-Cäcilien-Verband* [The St.Cecilia Society], felt a duty to make a fundamental pronouncement. He referred to the controversy on 'ugliness' in music which was boiling up generally: 'For today's musical innovators, what counts as the sharpest dissonance? In my view – nothing. Not even putting all the organ keys down at once!' He then declared: 'With regard to the king of instruments which, in church, is ordained to perform, publicly and subjectively, what is beautiful, sublime, holy, shocking, touching, but not what is ugly, and to represent the person vainly struggling to find redemption and peace – we must affirm that this Op.63 has no rightful place in church.' Such 'reflections', which

Reger increasingly had to endure, and which focused on his advanced harmonic language, required a comprehensive answer. So Reger set out his artistic credo in a letter of July 1902 addressed to the publisher Constantin Sander, who had been mulling over Reger's sales figures (q.v.): 'I say this: tonality as defined by Fétis 50 years ago is too narrow for 1902. I take my cue from Liszt: "Each chord can follow any chord", even consequentially. I am protected from doing stupid things by the fact that few musicians really know the old and new masters as well as I do. I am young, very young indeed; I believe strongly in making progress by leaps and bounds, and my time will come; my faith in the ever-growing power of intellect is unshakeable! It would be a terrible pity were I to follow the same old path! That way, I would only be a flash in the pan. But I want to be so much more than that.'

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CD11&12

Max Reger composed two organ Suites – works which could not have been more different in conception, ambition and expression, and which have only one thing in common: they were not originally conceived as such. In 1909, the writer and composer Bruno Weigl commented: 'There is virtually no intrinsic connection between the first and second Suites; in hindsight Reger underwent a profound, almost root-and-branch artistic transformation, to the extent that even the most perceptive observer would be hard put to it to recognise the contemporary artist by comparison with his younger self.'

The *Suite in E minor* Op.16 marked an artistic breakthrough for the 21-year-old composer, to the extent that it became something of a 'signature' work. As Reger sat down to begin the piece in late October 1894, the former student of Hugo Riemann had already enjoyed the thoroughgoing approbation of Arthur Smolian of the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, for his already published pieces. As his first major organ work, Reger had composed a three-movement Sonata (Introduction and 4-part Triple Fugue – Adagio – Passacaglia). Reger was able to glean from a series of articles by

Heinrich Reimann in the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, which appeared at the same time as he was starting on the composition, that such a distinctive grouping of individual movements was not at odds with organ tradition. 'Anything can be accomplished in this genre – not just in the accepted meaning of sonata form as practised by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven,' declared Reimann, who was looking at the development of the sonata after Mendelssohn. On the basis of this prescription, Reger had no need to alter his concept, indicating in the course of the work's composition that 'the Sonata has given birth to a Suite' – and that is how it was published. Years later, after completing his Sonata in F sharp minor, Op.33, and in contemplation of its sibling, the later Sonata in D minor, Op.60, with its unusual sequence of movements, Reger stressed the independence of the titles of pieces from their musical content, in a letter of 15 October 1900 to Karl Wolfrum: 'Sonata form no longer applies to the organ – our organ sonatas are Suites now!'

The composition of Op.16 stretched out over many months: Reger signed the work off – with a hearty 'Gott sei Dank!' – on 23 July 1895. The Trio section was assigned to a later part of the work – the third movement. Reger used the first edition of the work, published in 1896 by Augener in London, as a musical calling-card, sending copies – in which he made barely perceptible corrections – to Heinrich Reimann, Richard Strauss and Johannes Brahms. At the same time he offered Brahms the dedication of a putative Symphony in B minor (WoO 1/5), receiving the following reply: 'My heartfelt thanks for your letter and your kind remarks. Also for the offer of the dedication. But there is no need to seek my permission. I smiled at the idea that you might tackle me on this subject at the same time as supplying me with a work with a dedication so very much bolder, that I was left shocked. You may therefore calmly append the name of your devoted and respectful Johannes Brahms to your piece.' The fate of that Symphony – completed in July 1896 and now forgotten, along with a Piano Concerto WoO 1/4) – is unclear.

The 'very much bolder dedication' of the Suite Op.16, which shocked not only Brahms, was 'To the spirit of J S Bach'. To an extent Reger was using the dedication

to set forth his artistic credo. His identification with the legacy of Bach spurred him on to try unusual compositional techniques, as he explained in a note to Hugo Riemann about the Passacaglia: 'Bach treated his theme to 21 variations – I managed 32!'. Notwithstanding such 'competitive' ambitions, Reger's references to Bach were 'filtered through seams of Romanticism' (Susanne Shigihara) in which the chorale played an important part. In the slow movement (*Adagio assai*), three chorale melodies are quoted. The outer sections are coloured by *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her*, and in the middle, an imitative iteration of *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu Dir* is answered – recitative-like – by *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*. In fact the latter chorale – especially the penultimate verse – developed into something of a musical signature for Reger: in a letter of 1913 to Arthur Siedl, he wrote, 'Haven't you noticed how the chorale "Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden" pervades my music?' Among other instances, the Passion chorale itself, which has become so famous since Bach's time, forms the thematic basis of Reger's Piano Concerto in F minor, Op.114, and turns up again as a central theme of the Requiem, Op.144b.

The Suite in E minor was premiered by the organ virtuoso Karl Straube at Berlin's Dreifaltigkeitskirche on 3 March 1897 – in fact it was the first public performance of any work by Reger. On 1 April 1898, Straube performed three movements in the composer's presence at the Paulskirche in Frankfurt – an occasion which cemented the two artists' lifelong friendship. In spite of Straube's commitment to the work, the critical reception ranged from lukewarm to actively hostile. On 11 April 1897, more than a month after the premiere, Reger wrote to his teacher in Weiden, Albert Lindner: 'I have reviews here which could be legally actionable; the gentlemen concerned certainly haven't held back with their abuse. One writes that I am the "social democrat" among today's composers as all I want to do is overthrow every established musical norm. I, the most fervent admirer of J S Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, should therefore preach revolution. But all I want is the development of these styles. Then along comes some fellow intent on decrying my motives. They've even objected to the dedication – on Bach's behalf! My answer to that will be an even

bigger organ work “dedicated to J S Bach – for the second time”!

Reger more than kept this promise in the following years, producing large-scale organ works, including the seven Chorale Fantasies Opp.27, 30, 40 and 52, and the Fantasy and Fugue on B.A.C.H. In 1905 he took a break from composing for the organ in order to concentrate on other music, including chamber and orchestral works. In March 1905 he alerted Karl Straube and Walter Fischer to the prospect of a ‘new, high-calibre organ piece’ [Letter to Fischer dated 28 March 1905], but this ambition was thwarted by the need to finish his Sinfonietta in A minor, Op.90. In July he took a holiday from artistic pursuits, as a multiplicity of commitments had all but exhausted his energies, only finding time for more organ composition in October; abandoning his original, more ambitious plans, he submitted a Prelude and Fugue to the Leipzig publisher Otto Forberg on the 4th of November. The score carries the opus number ‘92a’ – at this time, Reger had considered making further additions, but was held back by overwork: ‘In the winter my life is taken up with railway carriages and concert halls’. It isn’t known when exactly Reger decided to expand Op.92 into a suite. In any event, in a letter of 28 May 1906 he alerted his publishers to the ‘missing pieces’, continuing, ‘You would have received the pieces long ago if I hadn’t been taken ill.’ The Suite, eventually numbering seven movements, was published in September 1906; the accompanying literature contained the sales-boosting advice that the pieces were ‘easy to play’.

Op.92 is conceived as a series of seven individual pieces – Prelude, Fugue, Intemezzo, Basso ostinato, Romanze, Toccata, Fugue – although the opening and concluding pairs are linked. Jürgen Schaarwächter hailed it as ‘a genuine Suite – something quite special in Reger’s output’ for its sheer originality. Otto Burkert, reviewing the work in his 1909 *Guide to Organ Literature*, suggested there were ‘good opportunities for organ students to look for highly individual tone colours in the lyrical 3rd, 4th and 5th movements. But with so many stop changes, it’s difficult to register the music orchestrally while maintaining the ensemble.’ At the same time Burkert numbered the Suite among those pieces which ‘through their simpler

harmonic and melodic structures act as a suitable introduction to Reger’s art.’

The combination of prelude and fugue is a genre which Reger explored throughout his life – from the Seven Preludes and Fugues for Klavier WoO III/1, which according to Reger’s former teacher and later biographer Adalbert Lindner were inspired by the similarly-named Op.53 works of Anton Rubinstein, and were written in preparation for his period of study with Hugo Riemann, to the Six Preludes and Fugues for solo violin Op.131a which he composed in 1914 during a curative stay at the Sanatorium Martinsbrunn in Meran. Reger also consciously positioned himself in the Baroque tradition, as evidenced by the following advice he dispensed to Anton Gloetzer in a letter of 25 January 1900: ‘Turning to organ matters: I advise you to write a fugue to correspond with every prelude; ever since J.S. Bach it’s something we’ve come to expect.’

After the early, forgotten WoO III/1, Reger’s *Five Organ Preludes and Fugues Op.56* were composed in 1905; it was Reger’s first collection of preludes and fugues – there were to be four more: Op.85 for organ, Op.99 for keyboard, and Opp. 117 and 131a for solo violin. At the end of 1902, Reger reported to his future, exclusive publisher, Lauterbach und Kuhn, that he had an outstanding obligation to the Jos. Albi company; later, in a letter of 11 January 1903, Reger explained that this took the form of a ‘small-scale organ work’ even though at this stage it presumably had not been planned in detail. Reger only began work on it after he had completed the Violin Sonata in C major, Op.72, in June 1903.

Hitherto, the chronology of Reger’s output and opus numbers had been proceeding normally; but now it became rather confused because the opus number ‘56’ was intended for the Piano Quintet in C minor, which was due to be published in 1901 by Albi; but because of a mix-up it did not appear until the end of 1902, with C F Peters, and as Op.64. Moreover, publication of the organ work was delayed, with Reger only receiving the page proofs at the beginning of 1904; so the five ‘easy’ Preludes and Fugues, Op.56 only saw the light of day in April, after the February publication of his Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme, in F sharp minor, Op.73.

The dedication is to the writer Richard Braungart, whom Elsa Reger described as having been a 'true friend' during the 'years of struggle' in Munich; by the time of Op.56's composition, Reger had already set four of his poems to music, but no conceptual meaning may be imputed to the dedication.

According to Reger, the 'little work' which originated immediately before the highly demanding Op.73 Variations was to be understood as 'a bridge, easing the path of many organists to the "real" Reger.' [Letter to Karl Straube, 1 April 1904]. It is not known whether this noble ambition was fulfilled. By and large, the few extant reviews are full of praise: Robert Frenzel saw the Op.56 collection as 'especially suitable for church use', hailing the Preludes and Fugues as 'among the most poetic of new additions to organ literature. Let us rejoice that we have in our midst a composer who is dedicating the best of his art so selflessly to the organ, forgoing all applause, as did Buxtehude and Bach before him.' [*Sächsische Schulzeitung*, 26 August 1904]. And Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg – he of the prescription that 'only the greatest talents and geniuses can truly innovate' – warned that 'If our beloved Munich organ matador thinks the latest offspring of his bountiful Muse is "easy to play" we should not take him at his word, as these latest flowers of a burgeoning creative imagination are anything but'; Gottschalg recommended 'perhaps a brightly responsive modern organ' for No.2 of the collection. 'The spirited, scherzo-like piece cannot be performed on a wheezy old organ.' [*Urania* Vol.61, No.8 (1904)] The Prelude and Fugue in G major (No.3 in the collection) which Gottschalg described as 'in the classical style, therefore suitable for liturgical use) was one of a number of pieces which Reger himself recorded on rolls with the Welte-Philharmonic organ.

Nothing is known of the provenance of the *Four Preludes and Fugues Op.85*. It's possible that Reger composed them while completing the remaining nine pieces of the dozen which make up the Op.80 collection, which he promised – in a letter of 15 February 1904 to the publisher Henri Hinrichsen (C.F. Peters) – for 'May at the very latest'. In any event, in a postcard of 8 June in which he pledged to deliver the missing pieces by the following week, Reger suggested a timetable for publication: 'It

would be best to publish the Four Preludes and Fugues at the end of this year or the beginning of next year!' Reger's choices of words suggests that Hinrichsen already knew of the existence of these works.

The engraving – together with that of the Twelve Pieces Op.80 – was begun on the 15th of June, but at this point the dedication to the Berlin organist Bernhard Irrgang was missing, presumably to be added in November when Reger returned the page proofs to the publisher. In August, Reger had asked Karl Straube, 'Has Hinrichsen shown you my Op.85 Preludes and Fugues? I'm sure you'll like them!' In the end, the collection was not published until September 1905, with an initial print run of 500 copies; a reprint of another 250 was ordered in 1911. The pieces do not seem to have been the subject of a complete premiere; Reger recorded the F major Prelude (No.3) on the Welte-Philharmonic organ in May 1913.

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CD13&14

'No church musician since Bach has loved the Lutheran chorale as much as Max Reger,' wrote Walter Fischer, organist of the Neuen Garnisonkirche in Berlin, and an early, enthusiastic exponent of Reger's music, in a 1903 edition of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*. Reger's passion extended as much to Bach as to the chorale – the two went hand-in-hand, for the creative potential of chorale melodies, especially from the time of Luther, and Bach's compositional style, were the twin pillars of Reger's thinking and writing.

Between 1898 and 1901, Reger produced seven Chorale Fantasies for organ, and in so doing he made a lasting impact on the development of organ style in church music. Furthermore, he also composed secular works using quotations from chorales, almost as a personal signature, to the extent that the melody of *Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden* can be found throughout his entire *oeuvre*.

In the preface to his piano transcriptions of *13 Bach Chorale Preludes*, published in 1900, Reger alluded to this, labelling them 'symphonic poems in miniature',

and ‘distillations of Bach’s art’. ‘Bach,’ he continued, ‘displays such a profoundly innovative approach to the text as to foreshadow Richard Wagner’s grandiose style.’ Not only does Reger therefore nail his colours to the mast as a representative of the ‘historical avant-garde’ – driven by the imperative to innovate – but he also stakes his own claim on musical history on the basis of his chorale preludes. Between 1899 and 1902 he composed a total of 101 chorale preludes, with a particular concentration appearing between 1899 and 1902.

Following the publication of a discussion of Reger’s early works by Heinrich Riemann in the July 1893 edition of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, the editor, Otto Leßmann, offered Reger the welcome opportunity to contribute both criticism and music supplements to the publication. His first – and as it turned out, his last – contribution (his involvement came to an end in October 1894) was the chorale prelude, *O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid*, probably written in October 1893, and published in February 1894. It’s possible that, in order to ‘compensate’ his London publishers, Augener, for this ‘giveaway’, Reger composed the highly ambitious chorale prelude, ‘Komm Süßer Tod!’ – in it, the chorale melody is so highly decorated as to be almost unrecognisable. The Prelude appeared in the April issue of Augener’s house journal, *The Monthly Musical Record*, but once again Reger made no further contributions to it.

In the period after Reger’s more-or-less voluntary retreat from Wiesbaden to his home town of Weiden in June 1898 (a combination of military service between 1896 and 1897 and thorough demoralisation brought on by his lack of acceptance into musical circles, had driven the socially isolated composer completely off the rails ...), he was preoccupied with regaining his musical confidence by trying out various genres and styles, and an ambition to provide his new, principal publisher, Jos. Aibl in Munich, with major works.

His emerging success was due to a growing number of reviews in journals which not only drew attention to his music, but which presented their readers with examples of it. From the end of 1899, Reger targeted music journals with smaller pieces, in order to make a name for himself in circles which up until now had not been open to

him. Among the publications which accepted examples of his music were the Stuttgart *Neuen Musik-Zeitung*, the Leipzig *Musik-Woche* (Lieder, piano and chamber music), Langensalza’s *Blätter für Haus- und Kirchenmusik* (mixed genres) and Göttingen’s *Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst*. Between February and August, Reger published no fewer than 17 chorale preludes by this method.

At the end of October 1900, Ernst Rabich, editor of the *Blätter*, published by Verlag Hermann Beyer & Söhne, approached Reger with a request for contributions; in a letter of 29 December, Reger promised to send him, in short order, ‘an easy organ chorale prelude.’ Reger planned to publish three of the four pieces he delivered on 10 February 1901 simultaneously in the *Monatschrift*, but Verlag Beyer rejected this proposal; instead, Reger composed three further preludes on the same chorales and asked Friedrich Spitta, one of the editors at the *Monatschrift*, to print these along with three more which he had already supplied.

With the exception of the chorale prelude on *Christ ist erstanden von dem Tod* (WoO IV/9), one of the ‘duplicate’ works, all of these pieces were later published in the Op.67 and Op.79b collections. On the 12th of July and the 17th of August of the same year, Rabich and Julius Smend – who alternated with Friedrich Spitta as editor of the *Monatschrift* – respectively received four further chorale preludes, of which one (*Es kommt ein Schiff geladen* WoO IV/14) whose publication in the *Monatschrift* had been postponed till 1905, did not appear in either collection. On the 9th of October, 1903, Reger finally sent five of the chorale preludes which had appeared in the *Monatschrift* to Verlag Beyer & Söhne, of which one – *Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit* – was also published as a music appendix in the *Blättern*.

Previously, in 1901, even before a single one of the chorale preludes had been published in the *Blättern*, Reger had suggested to the publisher, in a postcard of 19 August, that these pieces should be made into a collection and distributed to music shops. But in spite of such occasional requests on Reger’s part, it wasn’t until 1904 that all of the chorale preludes in Beyer’s possession were published in a single volume, as Op. 79b. The copyright in the chorale prelude, *Wer weiß, wie nahe mir*

mein Ende, which had appeared in both the *Monatschrift* and the *Blättern* lay with Verlag Lauterbach & Kuhn, so Reger composed a further prelude on the same chorale on the occasion of the publication of the volume.

The provenance of the two chorale preludes, *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* WoO IV/13 and *Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern* WoO IV/16 is shrouded in mystery, but seems to revolve around commissions for collections. WoO IV/13 appeared in the early Autumn of 1905 in the second volume of *Orgel-Kompositionen zum Konzert- und gottesdienstlichen Gebrauche* edited by Willy Hermann; and WoO IV/16 turned up in October 1909 in the *Präludienbuch zunächst zu den Chorälen der vereinigten protestantisch-evangelischen christlichen Kirche der Pfalz*, a collection edited by Heinrich Trautner.

With his Op.67 collection, *28 Easy Chorale Preludes on the most common Lutheran chorales*, Reger realised a long-held ambition to publish his chorale preludes in a major compendium. The plan crystallised in May 1901 when he alerted his friend and principal interpreter Karl Straube to an imminent collection of '30 preludes on the best-known chorales'. But Reger didn't begin composing the music until September of that year, revealing in a letter to Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg, written on 30 September, that he had raised his self-imposed target to 50 pieces. The creative process was leading him in different directions and a year later, on 1 September 1902, Reger informed Carl Lauterbach and Max Kuhn, who had started a music publishing concern in Leipzig, that 'apart from an edition of Bach's cantata *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten* BWV 93, at the moment I am preoccupied with writing choral preludes for organ'; in October he presented the manuscript for engraving.

But it was the ambition to publish the collection in three volumes, with a planned total of 50 preludes appearing in alphabetical order, which caused a further hiatus in the quest for the most favourable publishing conditions. Notwithstanding his ongoing business relationship with Lauterbach & Kuhn, which in 1903 resulted in a 'life-long' exclusive publishing agreement, Reger eventually opted to assign the collection to F.E.C. Leuckart Verlag, not least because they had printed his previous

two organ works, the Sonata No.2 in D minor Op.60, and the *Monologe* Op.63. But the manuscript must have been rejected, because on the 22nd of October, Reger forwarded it to Lauterbach & Kuhn, taking the opportunity to make the case for the collection in the following terms: 'Not all of the chorale preludes are difficult, technically; they have been composed in association with an organist of 30 years' experience and I can say in all modesty that such a collection as mine has not been seen since the time of J.S. Bach. These chorale preludes will guarantee you a handsome return, especially when you consider that I have been hailed in nearly all of the specialist journals as the greatest organ composer of our time.'

Two chorale preludes in the collection had appeared as magazine supplements: *Jauchz, Erd, und Himmel, jubel!* (No.15) und *Wer weiß, wie nahe mir mein Ende* (No.48). The first volume was graced with a dedication to the elderly Bavarian church musician Johann Georg Herzog (1822–1909), widely recognised, through countless publications, as the doyen among experts on the Lutheran chorale. Reger dedicated the second volume to Robert Frenzel (1850–1928), who had been organist of the Church of St. Wolfgang in Schneeberg, Saxony, since 1876, and was possibly the 'organist of 30 years' standing' whom Reger had referenced as collaborator in the choice of chorales, in his note to Lauterbach & Kuhn. He had probably obtained a copy of the 'Four-Part Chorales' from the *Gesangbuch für die evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche Sachsens* from Frenzel – this would have provided the templates for most of the chorales in the Op.67 collection. Volume 3 was again dedicated to another committed interpreter of his music, Hermann Gruner (1862–1938), an organist from Falkenstein in Vogtland. While the publishing process was under way, Reger added two more chorale preludes: *Jesus ist kommen* (No.51) und *O wie selig!* (No.52); these had recently appeared as magazine supplements and were added at the end of the collection, bringing the total to a remarkable fifty-two.

In contrast to the impact of the Chorale Fantasies, with his Op.67 collection Reger was not so much breaking new ground as plunging into an already crowded pool with what Roderich von Mojsisovics described as a 'deluge of organ preludes.' This

substantial market – fed by organist-composers of greater or lesser ambition – fulfilled its aim of serving everyday worship; but Reger was planning a wider currency for his music: as Georg Stolz commented in an April 1903 edition of the *Allgemeinen Zeitung Chemnitz*, ‘These chorale preludes are ideally suited for liturgical use, but will work just as well as concert pieces.’ Karl Straube constantly added individual chorale preludes to his repertoire, and in May 1913, Reger laid down seven of them on rolls for the Welte-Philharmonie reproducing organ.

Seldom was a Reger work welcomed as unanimously as Op.67, which did not suffer by comparison with Johannes Brahms’s *Eleven Chorale Preludes* Op.posth.122, published a year before. In Reger’s preludes, Alfred Schering of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* could hear ‘votive paintings’, while Rudolf Louis of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, whose head-on attacks had already provoked the composer’s wrath, declared himself to be impressed by ‘so much poetry, and an arresting power of expression.’ Walter Fischer (*Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*) even went so far as to write that, ‘The chorale prelude is utterly fundamental for composers and improvising organists. The jewel which is the original choral is not always wrapped in gold – but Reger’s are 22-carat quality!’ This must have been music to the ears of the publishers, Lauterbach & Kuhn.

As was the case with Op.67, while preparing the Op.135a collection of 30 *Short Chorale Preludes* some years later, Reger took advice from church music directors in order to produce music which was closely attuned to the requirements of everyday liturgical use. He also took into account the limitations of the mechanical organs found in many churches. Excluding Op.135b – the complementary Fantasy and Fugue in D minor – Reger confidently declared, in a letter of 24 November 1914 to Simrock Verlag, that ‘This collection can be performed by any organist!’ Op.135a was published in May 1915.

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CD15&16

In October 1905, the periodical *Music* published a special edition in which leading composers of the day were invited to respond to the question, ‘What does Johann Sebastian Bach mean to me, and what is his significance in our time?’ Reger responded, ‘For me, Bach is the beginning and end of all music; any real progress depends on him. Bach’s relevance for our time isn’t, but should be, this: a cure not just for those poor composers and performers grown sick by misunderstanding Wagner, but also for any of our contemporaries suffering the effects of tertiary syphilis! To be “Bach-ian” means to be authentically Germanic and inflexible. That Bach should have remained unrecognised for so long is the greatest possible condemnation of the critical consensus of the 18th and 19th centuries.’

During his period of study with Hugo Riemann, Reger was both an enthusiastic and inspiring Bach interpreter. In 1893, Kurt von Seckendorf reported to his sister Augusta of Bagenski (whose daughter Elsa was later to become Reger’s wife), that he had had just such an experience: ‘Today I felt something which, musically, was truly beautiful. A young man was asked to play; he sat down at the piano and said, strangely enough, that he was playing “Bach”, but the strangest thing was that he really “could” play Bach. If our niece Bethel [a cousin of Elsa’s] should contemplate a change of teacher, please turn to this accomplished young man – his name is Max Reger.’ And Reger’s long-standing student Karl Hasse wrote that his teacher’s Bach interpretations had ‘brought sudden illumination, profound insights and an inspiring sense of gratitude, not least because the effect was unintended, and Reger played “intimate” Bach as if he was completely at home in it.

‘Bach’s polyphonic voice-leading has rarely been as clearly articulated on the piano than by Reger. Among the circle of his students Reger pointed approvingly to the backward-looking aspects of many of Bach’s klavier works; there was also an unearthly quality about his playing which the public found so moving. Here, of course, he moved far away from any philological style of interpretation, and far away also from so-called “classical severity”, “objectivity” and “impersonality” – terms

which are still much used as an excuse by people to whom Bach's emotional landscape remains inaccessible, in their haste to condemn his music as overwhelmingly dry and organistic.'

As a composer, Reger's lifelong engagement with Bach did not exhaust itself in original works such as the Fantasy and Fugue on BACH Op.46 for organ, or the Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Johann Sebastian Bach, Op.81 for piano – to which should be added the Suite in E minor Op.16 for organ, composed 'in the spirit of JSB' – but also manifested itself in numerous arrangements and editions. In the spirit of 'transformation through exploration', Reger set to work at the beginning of 1893, towards the end of his studies in Wiesbaden. First of all, he transcribed some of the organ works for piano (two- or four-hands), and in March 1895, for the first time made some arrangements of Bach's keyboard works for the organ.

However, this selection from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* remained a fragment, as the fruits of Reger's continuing work on the project went missing on his return to his parental home in Weiden three years later. Early in 1901, towards the end of his stint in Weiden, he revisited the project, ordering 15 scores of Bach's keyboard music from Breitkopf & Härtel and immediately embarked on an arrangement of the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor BWV903, followed by the first two sections of the Toccata in D minor BWV913. Here, Reger was apparently turning against the prevailing academicism in the interpretation of the music of his great idol, as he wrote to the critic, musicologist and early music specialist Theodor Kroyer: '[...] I anticipate that many of our organists will disapprove of my "impetuous" approach to Bach's Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue. But consider this – when was Bach ever a "wet blanket" when it came to his big keyboard and organ pieces, as I've often had to hear from pianists and organists?'

On the 20 June, 1901, Reger delivered the arrangements, together with Opp. 54-58, to his principal publisher at the time, Jos. Aibl Verlag of Munich. But because of the challenges facing the engravers on account of the overwhelming quantities of notes (the engraving of the Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue, Op.57 was no picnic), the

two works were not published until the middle of April, 1902. By this time Reger, who had now moved to Munich, had already sketched out nearly 20 transcriptions, of which ultimately only 13 were completed in final score. A sizeable proportion of them were Preludes and Fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, with the addition of more Toccatas, and the Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, BWV904. For publication, albeit as single entities, the two previously published works were listed on the title page as the first (BWV913) and last (BWV903) to be completed, so that the publisher could launch an impressive collection of 'Fifteen selected keyboard works arranged for the organ by Max Reger' on to the market.

The story of the *Manual of Trio-Playing* – an organ arrangement of Bach's two-part Inventions BWV 772-786, with the addition of a third part – goes back not only to 1900, but also reflects the not always unproblematic relationship Reger had with his friend and principal interpreter, Karl Straube.

In parallel with the composition of the Fantasy and Fugue on BACH, Op.46, and the rather easier Six Trios Op.47 Reger was planning a didactic work, as he informed the Essen organist, and later dedicatee of Op.57, Gustav Beckmann, on 15 January, 1900: 'You know what's missing! A pedal technique tutor! (Organ of course.) If you could cover the various technical aspects etc. etc, I would write some pedal studies; a publisher is already lined up! Then the studies, all in trio form etc, that would be tremendously useful! Do we want two volumes, so as to make a big thing of it? Count me in!' This plan, however, came to nothing; two years later, when Reger was asked for an organ pedal technique tutor by the Leipzig and Zürich-based publisher Hug, he turned to Karl Straube again and implored him, in a letter of 12 September 1902, to 'send me your methodically well-sifted materials on pedal technique no later than the end of October. I shall then compose the studies and send them to you!'

Since Straube, despite reminders, did not deliver, at the beginning of 1903, Reger embarked on a new and similar project, telling Theodor Kroyer in a letter of 6 February, 'Just now I'm engaged on something of an oddity: *A Manual of Trio-Playing for organ!* That is, I am composing a third part for Bach's Two-Part

Inventions; I'm assigning the original upper part to the right hand on Manual I, the original lower part to the pedal, and adding the newly-composed part for the left hand on Manual III!

Reger probably sent the manuscript to Lauterbach & Kuhn at the end of April. Following a recommendation from Straube, who acted as an advisor to the fledgling publishing house, and who ironically had not even seen the music, further work on the text was dropped; Reger had to 'get used to the idea of having done a lot of work for nothing and consigning a piece to the flames' (according to a letter of 5 October 1903 which Reger sent to the publishing house).

After Straube then condescended to study the work, both he and the publishers changed their minds, as Reger recounted, with a certain satisfaction, in a letter dated 9 June: 'I am obliged to you for your alacrity. I am cock-a-hoop, in fact, that our friend Straube, who didn't seem to want to have anything to do with my *Manual of Trio-Playing*, has now given it a ringing endorsement as an excellent tool for study. I have a stipulation which is in your best interests: the name of Karl Straube must appear on the title page along with my own. You will profit greatly if the *Manual of Trio-Playing* is published under our joint editorship. You must be prepared to make Herr Straube's life a misery until he agrees to his name having equal billing with mine on the title page and foreword. He must then fill in the pedal markings and amend the foreword accordingly.' But yet again, Straube's pace of work failed to match Reger's expectations, holding up publication of the *Manual of Trio-Playing* until December 1903.

Unlike his previous work, this publication was pedagogical in nature; its advertised intent was 'to draw the attention of both aspiring and already more experienced organists to the importance of the often neglected genre of trio playing on the organ. Pedal studies in trio style – an absolute requirement to achieve a thoroughgoing virtuoso technique – should also provide the necessary means to awaken and strengthen that sense of polyphony which is the nerve-centre of true organ style. The 15 Inventions have been chosen for this manual, because every aspiring organist (a reasonable keyboard technique is assumed) must be familiar with them. Musically

speaking, engaging with these pieces should not present any new challenges, so that students can devote all of their attention to performing the studies as accurately as possible.'

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CD17

'You must have performed Liszt, before you can approach one of my "elephants",' Reger wrote to Otto Leßmann, editor of Berlin's *Allgemeinen Musik-Zeitung* in January 1901. Soon after, Reger's preoccupation with the music of Franz Liszt resulted in his organ arrangement of *The legend of St Francis of Paola Walking on the Water*. which was due to receive its premiere in Berlin, in May. The chosen performer for what was to remain Reger's only arrangement of a Liszt piano piece was Karl Straube, who, as the 'outstanding organist of our time' (as Reger hailed him in a letter of 20 March 1901 to Leßmann) had often demonstrated his qualifications to be Reger's musical and technical 'elephant-lamer'.

However, a number of copyright problems stood in the way of the premiere, as the composer reported to Theodor Kroyer in a letter of 15 May 1901: 'The original publisher is opposing the printing because he thinks it will be too difficult (he's looking for some kind of moral victory), but goes on to say he believes it will become a "pearl of the organ repertoire". How very splendid! When I asked him if he would allow me to take my arrangement elsewhere, he said, no, that would be against his principles. So I will leave things be until the piece comes out of copyright'. That would have been on 1 June, 1917. The manuscript formed part of Reger's musical estate and, through the Max Reger-Gesellschaft, came into the possession of the Leipzig publisher Breitkopf & Härtel -who were planning a complete Reger edition- towards the end of the 1920s. It was known to be in Breitkopf's archives in 1942; but the postwar partition of Germany prevented the piece becoming available for first publication in the complete edition of 1978, and the manuscript was thought to have been lost; only a microfilm was preserved.

On the surface, Reger was not initially very enthusiastic about the task of arranging Richard Strauss's *Feierlichen Einzug der Ritter des Johanniterordens op.103 Tr 224*. When he got down to the job during his summer holiday in Kolberg in 1909, on 21 August Reger wrote confidentially to Henri Hinrichsen of the publishers C.F. Peters: 'A couple of days ago Schlesinger sent me a copy of the *Festival Procession for the Knights of the Order of St John* to turn into an arrangement for organ. He proposed a fee which left me speechless (it's no more than six pages). This march is by ... Richard Strauss! He really shouldn't prostitute his art in this way; on the other hand I can't condemn such a piece of hack work, because every composer has to do it from time to time - but a Strauss really shouldn't stoop so low'. In the course of making the arrangement, Reger encountered two places in Strauss's recently completed score which 'notwithstanding my recognised knowledge of harmony, seem to me to be impossible'. Within a short time of its appearance in 1909, Strauss's work found itself published in a variety of arrangements - for military band, for salon orchestra, and for piano and harmonium.

On the other hand, Reger accepted a commission to arrange the *Andante* from *Christian Sinding's Piano Quintet in E minor Op.5* with enthusiasm, because, as he explained in a letter of 1 May 1912 to the Copenhagen publishers Wilhelm Hansen Verlag, 'The piece is highly suitable for making into an organ arrangement.' It was intended as the final piece in a two-volume Album of *Nordic Music for Organ*, to include pieces by Christian Cappelen, Carl Nielsen, Emil Sjögren and others, for which Reger and the Zwickau organist Paul Gerhardt were jointly responsible. The two fell out over the order in which their names appeared as editors of the Album, but seemingly this did not deter Gerhardt from including Reger's music in his concert programmes subsequently. As Gerhardt had asked for an additional fee for correcting the proofs, Reger immediately took over this task. But, possibly because of disputes with Gerhardt over copyright, publication was much delayed until 1921, five years after Reger's death.

The extent of Karl Straube's influence on Reger's music is a subject of continuing

debate. It is impossible to say with certainty that in every case from Op.27 to Op.52 Reger prepared a separate manuscript for his friend (although in any event he would abandon this time-consuming practice from the Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue in Op.57 onwards). But Straube definitely had copies of the *Sonata No.1 in F minor Op.33*, and the *Chorale Fantasy Wie schön leucht't uns der Morgenstern Op.40 No.1*, before Reger sent the manuscripts off to the publisher.

In the case of *Op.33*, Reger sought his friend's advice on his first actual Sonata (Op.16 was begun as a sonata but later became part of a suite). Straube responded to the manuscript with numerous comments and suggestions which Reger absorbed to a large extent, although, interestingly, technical questions hardly played a role in this - the only case was the change of name for the third movement from 'Ciaccona' to 'Passacaglia'. After the premiere and publication of the Sonata, Reger composed a further five passacaglia-variations for Straube; in the version recorded here - from the first edition - they are therefore not included.

At Straube's prompting, Reger completely re-wrote the third movement of the Chorale Fantasy. According to his pupil Hans Klotz - later one of the editors of the Complete Reger Edition - in a letter of 28 June 1944, Straube described the chain of events as follows: 'In the first version of the Fantasy... Reger had put the melody into the pedal in the second verse of the chorale, and in doing so had created an extremely banal three-part harmonisation. I told him what I thought in a letter which I sent from Wesel, and at the same time suggested that he should insert a melisma-based variation.'

The most complicated instance of the Reger-Straube relationship concerns the *Fantasy and Fugue in D minor Op.135b*, Reger's last major organ work, in which the composer made substantial cuts in three places, at first proof stage: in the Fantasy, ten bars were excised before the reprise of the quasi-vivace section; in the Fugue - a typically complex Regerian double fugue - the last 20 bars before the arrival of the second theme were scissored; and this necessitated the loss of a further eight bars. Newly composed bars and bridge passages were added by sticking down new

pieces of manuscript on top of the old. On 13 April 1916, when Reger returned the corrected proofs to the publisher N. Simrock in Berlin from his home in Jena, complete with detailed instructions for the engravers, the piece was only 133 bars long instead of 171, and the original 20 pages of proofs had been reduced to 16.

Two days beforehand, Reger had arranged to meet his friend and collaborator for an evening meal after completing his teaching commitment at the Conservatoire in Leipzig, where Straube lived. The two used this occasion to go through the galley-proofs of Opus 135b, as attested by a terse postal communication from Jena the next day; when published in 1986 by Susanne Popp, it was made the subject of a number of interpretations: 'I have made almost all of the changes to the piece myself! Tomorrow I shall send it to Berlin and if possible I'll make you a rough copy. It was wonderful to be able to meet up last night'.

It seems fairly obvious that the 'changes' refer to the three sets of cuts outlined above. But the philological view of the galley-proofs, including the four pages which were ultimately discarded (though preserved) suggests alternative possibilities: analysis of the writing materials suggests that the changes were made in two stages, and that both of these stages could hardly have been arranged and completed in a single evening. Moreover, to say the least, the cut between the two fugue themes was carried out as though the two friends had met, with the second cut already in place. Reger himself had no more to say on the revisions - he died on the night of 11 May 1916 without enjoying the opportunity to hear his sometime pupil Hermann Keiler give the premiere in the Markuskirche, Stuttgart. By revising and shortening the piece, Reger fundamentally altered the aesthetic core of Op. 135b - comparison of the bridge passages leading to the second fugue theme makes this clear: in the ultimately rejected first version, presented here in CD17, an expansively sonorous *Steigerungspassage* [passage of intensification] unfolds - the two-step reduction of note values in counterpoint to the first theme, first to eighth note (quaver) triplets, then sixteenth note (semiquaver) binaries, exerts an irresistible pull.

In the revised Version (see CD1-2) the *Steigerungspassage* crescendos to fortissimo

then drops down to pianissimo for the internally moving second fugue subject which follows on immediately; by eliminating the previous 20 bars, the dynamic proportions are altered and the contrast is heightened; Roberto Marini speaks of a typically Regerian 'sonic crevasse' and points to the many-sided antithetical structures of the musical Baroque, which Reger revered. In May 1913 Reger confided to his patron, Duke George the Second of Saxe-Meiningen that. 'I freely admit that, for years, it has been my ambition to express myself, musically, with as much clarity and flexibility as possible; this has not been easy, because I suffer from an overabundance of ideas. If anyone were to compare the drafts I produce with my published output, they would be astounded at the amount of material I discard without giving it a second thought'.

Reger's desire to give his works a tangible and comprehensible structure, an ambition which was expressed ever more uncompromisingly towards the end of his short life, has often been associated with his admiration for Mozart: 'Every day I pray to God Almighty: send us a Mozart, in our hour of need!', as he wrote to Karl Straube in 1904.

Few works are as potent as the *Fantasy and Fugue in D minor Op.135b* - with all the documented history of its provenance - in demonstrating the uncompromising way in which Reger could realise his ideals through the musical fruits of his imagination - his 'spiritual off spring'. And so the uncut original version can take its place in the interpretative history of one of the best-loved works in the organ repertoire.

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ABOUT THE ORGANS USED

Bruckner Organ of the Stiftsbasilika St. Florian bei Linz, Austria

The pipe organ in the beautiful Monastery of Sankt Florian in Austria is also called Bruckner organ which shows the connection Bruckner had to this instrument. In fact, A. Bruckner (1824-1896) was a choirboy there during his childhood, later on teacher and from 1850 to 1855 organist in Sankt Florian. According to his last wish, he was buried in the crypt beneath the main organ. In 1770, the provost M. Gogl (1766-1777) had charged the famous Slovene organ builder F.X. Krismann to build the new pipe organ that had 74 stops and 5.230 pipes and thus represented the biggest instrument in the Danube Monarchy until 1886. The wonderful organ case was constructed by C. Jegge and a certain J.J.B. Sattler” In 1873, the organ builder M. Mauracher modified the instrument for the first time. In 1931/32, the organ was restored again by the brothers Mauracher who enlarged the instrument to 92 stops and 6.159 pipes. From 1945 to 1951, the workshop Zika modified the organ once again and added a fourth manual with 11 stops. Upon the recent church restoration, also the pipe organ was restored (1994- 1996) by the company Kögler, pipe organ builder in Upper Austria. At present, the organ has 7.386 pipes and 103 stops, divided on four manuals and Pedal. Its beautiful sound and its connection to A. Bruckner have made her world-famous.

Rieger Organ of the Fulda Cathedral, Germany

The existing organ case dates back to the time when the Cathedral was rebuilt in its Baroque style. During the years 1708 through 1713 Adam Öhninger built an organ for the cathedral comprising 41 stops on three manuals and pedals. The decorative fretwork has been carved by Andreas Boldhasar Weber and the carpenter Georg Blank. This organ case has been restored while the cathedral underwent general restoration work from 1992 through 1996. The original colouring was recovered and restored. In the course of this restoration also the technical part of the instrument was replaced. The organ today features 70 (72) stops on four manuals and pedals. The specification was based on the remaining pipes of the instrument built by Sauer (Frankfurt/Oder) in 1876/77. 24 stops of this organ were retained as far as the original pipework was still extant. More details may be found in the specification. The added pipes, the new stops and the entire technical part were built by the workshop Rieger from Schwarzach/Vorarlberg, Austria. They also executed the carpentry on the case. The back part of the Rückpositiv had to be added. Furthermore roofs, side panels, bearers and girders of the case had to be reconstructed.

Restoration of casework, carved pipeshades, figurines and colouring was carried out by Jean Kramer, Fulda. In the course also the gallery floor and parts of the supporting beams had to be replaced.

Steinmeyer Organ of Ottobeuren Basilika, Germany

The Marienorgel of the abbey church of Ottobeuren (Germany)

This instrument was built by the company Steinmeyer & Co. in 1957 and is one of the most important achievements of this famous organ building factory. It is formed by two separated bodies, referred to as “Hauptorgel” and “Balkonorgel” and form the so-called “Marienorgel”. The two bodies are activated by a single organ console, five manuals and pedals, recently renewed. The sound character is differentiated: while the body relative to “Hauptorgel” includes registers purely Germanic type in “Balkonorgel” there are registers by different character, specially French and Italian. This arrangement makes it, in the intentions of the builders, this body can perform a repertoire of international music. The organ was in the 2001/2002 was renovated and extended by the company Klais always respecting the existing qualities of the instrument.

Stahlhuth/Jann Organ of the St Martin Church, Dudelange, Luxembourg

The organ in St. Martin’s church was built in 1912 by the organ builder G. Stahlhuth (1830-1913) and his son Eduard (1862-1916). They were among the rare organ builders able to incorporate both French and English characteristics into German romantic organ building. The three-manual organ of 1912 had 45 stops. In 1962, in accordance with the then predominant neo baroque tonal aesthetic, the organ suffered far reaching modifications: were removed the characteristic Stahlhuth stops and added a fourth manual. From 2001 to 2002, the organ builder T. Jann restored and reconstructed the Stahlhuth pipes and windchests from 1912, removed the additional stops from 1962 and harmonious extension of the organ up to 78 speaking stops with both German romantic and French symphonic tone colors. Thus, since 2002, the most significant trait of the organ is the stylistically authentic performance not only of German but also of French and English repertoire from the romantic-symphonic era.

Sauer Organ of the Erlöserkirche, Bad Homburg, Germany

The Sauer Organ of the Church of Christ the Redeemer [Erlöserkirche] is the largest organ in Bad Homburg. Inaugurated on 17 May 1908, this colossal instrument reflects the tonal concepts of its time. With 4000 pipes ranged over three manuals and pedals, it is one of the largest surviving Sauer instruments of the period. In accordance with contemporary fashions, it was fitted with a General Crescendo, swell boxes for the second and third manuals, and an Echo organ located in the church's roof-vault. In 1938 the organ was renovated in the Organ Reform Movement [Orgelbewegung] style which was supported by Albert Schweitzer, who re-discovered Baroque tone-colors - some of the stops were replaced by the more brilliant sounds deemed suitable for performing the music of the Baroque period. In 1993 the historic Sauer organ was restored to its original state by Förster & Nicolaus Orgelbau. A fourth manual was added with 16 stops in the style of Sauer, and a new console was fitted, with a comprehensive set of electronic playing aids. Nowadays it is possible to play the organ using both the original Sauer console, and the modern one.

Link Organ of the Evangelische Stadtkirche, Giengen an der Brenz, Germany

The Link organ of the Evangelische Stadtkirche in Giengen an der Brenz - the firm's Op. 450 - is one of the best preserved instruments of the Reger period; as such, it is ideally suited to the realisation of the Bavarian composers music. Its 51-stop, 3-manual and pedal specification offers a wide-ranging tonal palette, from the most delicate to the loudest, most powerful sounds. Gebrüder Link established themselves in Giengen in 1851; the organ in the Ev. Stadtkirche - their largest at the time - was built in 1906 to the highest standards of construction, and was fitted with the latest technological innovations; it underwent further, major restorations in 1974 and 2007.

Sauer Organ of the Moritzkirche, Halle, Germany

The organ of Halle's Moritzkirche was the Frankfurt-an-der-Oder firm of Wilhem Sauer's Op.1307; it was built in 1925 and forms an important part of the heritage of late Romantic organ building. At the time of its inauguration by the then Kantor of the Leipzig Thomaskirche, Günther Ramin, the organ was seen as forming a cornerstone of organ culture in Central Germany, immediately establishing itself as a significant recital instrument in addition to its role in the liturgy of the church. The lavish provision of stops, with 5-octave manuals, and a plethora of playing aids, was regarded as revolutionary. The organ's reputation spread well beyond the city limits, attracting top-class organists to Halle. Major changes were made to the instrument in 1945: the existing pipework was modified and changes to individual stops altered the original sound of the Sauer organ. After that, the instrument suffered increasing neglect, as late romantic organ music fell out of favor with contemporary taste; notwithstanding, people always came forward to champion the organ. Today, once again its incalculable value and distinctiveness have been fully recognized. After falling silent for 20 years, in 1999 the organ began a stage-by-stage programme of restoration. In 2005, the Halle Moritzkirche Sauer Organ Development Association was founded; in collaboration with the Parish of St. Mauritius and St. Elisabeth, immense efforts were made to raise the necessary funds for a full-scale restoration, and to alert the public to the importance of the extraordinary organ in their midst. After many years of dedicated work, and with the help of countless donors and sponsors, the contract to restore the instrument was awarded to the firm of Reinhard Hufken of Halberstadt. Since the 600th Anniversary of the Moritzkirche -in September 2011- the Sauer organ has once again blazed forth in all its former glory, and been greeted with acclaim by organists and listeners alike.

Kuhn Organ of the Ref. Stadtkirche St Johann, Schaffhausen, Switzerland

The first organ in the 15th century protestant church of St Johann was set on a swallows nest on the upper north wall of the nave. In 1529 it was broken up in the throes of the Reformation, and clergy resistance meant a gap of 350 years before Johann Nepomuk Kuhn was invited to build a new III/52 mechanical west gallery organ in 1879, with a neo-Gothic case design by the then well-known architects and altar builders Franz and August Müller from Wil, Canton St Gallen. Some alterations by Kuhn followed in 1929, in part acting on the (somewhat unwelcome) advice of Albert Schweizer. In 1979 the church was under restoration and a new organ was mooted, to be based on the ideas of the Parisian organist Gaston Litaize, however a stronger call was made for the preservation of the old organ. In the meantime, the reconfiguration of the church for concert use led to the west gallery being set back. The builder's solution to preserving the organ as a historic monument, as closely as possible to its current form, meant restoring Manual I and II and moving the Manual III (Swell) pipework, originally the furthest back, a storey lower, placing this division in the lower part of the case. The Pedal organ, situated at the side, was also altered by stacking the ranks two rows high. The instrument was once again given mechanical cone chests with modern Barker levers fitted for all three manuals. Out of the current 66 stops, 51 are completely or partly original, four were reconstructed, and 11 were newly added, mainly in the Swell.



The Italian organist **Roberto Marini**, internationally acclaimed, is regarded as a great musical virtuoso, deeply versed in Romantic, late-Romantic and modern repertoire. He is considered by critics “one of the greatest organists of the present era” (Amadeus 2020).

Critics have defined him as: interpreter charismatic with formidable technical

skills, supreme musical taste, romantic and passionate musician, master in the use of organ stops, a real natural talent, one of the most important interpreters of Max Reger.

Roberto Marini debuts very young playing the most famous compositions by J.S. Bach, becoming pupil in Rome of the world-famous Italian organist Fernando Germani. He scored full marks in his Diploma in Organ and Organ Composition, performing Reger's Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme, Op.73. In 1994 he received the prestigious 'Premier prix de virtuosité d'orgue' under Lionel Rogg at the Geneva Conservatory, Switzerland. In addition to his musical studies, Marini also has a degree in Law.

Winner of competitions, he characterizes his artistic career with the execution of the complete works of Reger and J.S. Bach. For years he has carried out an intense concert activity, with great success with critics and the public, which leads him to perform in the most important festivals in Italy and abroad.

His discography includes, in addition to that of R. Schumann, J. Brahms, the

complete organ works of Max Reger, a musical event that has no precedents in the world panorama and which has earned him unanimous recognition from the press international. He has recorded a DVD with the most important works of Liszt and Reubke, made recordings for Vatican Radio, for RAI-Italian Radio Television, German ARD, Spanish RTVE and his concerts and recordings are regularly broadcast by Italian and foreign radios.

He has also recorded a double album for Brilliant Classics, dedicated to the Belgian composer Flor Peeters and an album (Fugatto records) containing his organ transcription of Liszt's Sonata in B min.

Many important composers have dedicated works to him Roberto Marini is professor of organ at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, and professor of organ at the Conservatory of Music in Pescara, where he served for many years as vice-director. He is artistic director of the International Organ Festivals and he is member of the board of directors of the Italian Association Santa Cecilia; he is titular organist of Teramo Cathedral.

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Finally, I want to thank my wife Maria-Luisa for having always believed in me, for her collaboration, patience, and her precious advice.

I want to dedicate this complete work to my beloved Maestro Fernando Germani, a great organist of the 1900s, for his invaluable teaching, his affection and for having passed on to me his passion for Max Reger. He always said to me "do me honor!". I hope I have honored this commitment.