SIOUX TRAILS
CHAPTER
American Guild of Organists

# STAGO Noontime Organ Recitals

Thomas Andrews, DMA

8 June, 2021 – 12:10 P.M.

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| Prelude in e minor | Nicolaus Bruhns (1665 – 1697) |
| *Fantasie über "Christus ist erstanden,"* op. 6 | Moritz Brosig (1815 – 1887) |
| *Pièce d'Orgue*, BWV 572 | J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750) |

# Program Notes

**Nicolaus Bruhns** was a Danish-German organist born into a musical family. A child prodigy, he was unanimously elected to the organist position at the Stadtkirche in Husum, Germany at the age of sixteen. Unfortunately he died young, and the surviving *oeuvre* of Bruhns is small: 12 vocal and 5 organ pieces are extant.

The "great" e minor prelude is an example of the North German *stylus phantasticus*, a style related to improvisation that alternates short episodes in free form and strict counterpoint. These contrasting episodes provide opportunities to showcase different registrations and timbres on the organ.

**Moritz Brosig** was organist and *Domkapellmeister* at the Breslau Cathedral (now the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Wrocław, Poland). He grew up in Breslau during a time of intense Bach cultivation, and was a student of Joseph Franz Wolf, a zealous admirer of Bach. Brosig was a master improviser, and a Catholic contemporary to the Protestant organist Adolph Hesse. Brosig was a member of the 19th-century Cecilian movement in Germany, which sought to reform and improve church music in German Catholic Churches. Brosig's organ output is unique given his chorale-based works, including 31 short chorale preludes on Lutheran and Catholic chorales, a style that had largely fallen out of fashion following the death of Bach.

The Fantasie on *Christ ist erstanden* is Brosig's largest chorale-based work, and his only chorale-based work in multisectional form. The piece opens with imitative entrances of the chorale tune among 5 voices, concluding with the *Kyrieleis*. The second movement is a fugue loosely based on the opening passage of the chorale. The third movement is a simple statement of the chorale in 5-part harmony. The Fantasie closes with the Alleluia portion of the chorale stated boldly in the right hand, concluding again with the *Kyrieleis*.

The organ works of Moritz Brosig were the subject of my DMA research while at the University of Kansas. Moritz Brosig is actually a great-great-great-great grandfather of mine, so it is nice to revive the family tradition of organ playing! At the behest of my DMA committee I am currently recording the complete chorale-based works of Brosig - all 31 chorale preludes and the chorale Fantasie you're hearing today. I hope to release a CD later this year upon completion.

**J. S. Bach** was born in Eisenach, and held multiple musical roles during his lifetime, including positions at Weimar, Cöthen, and Leipzig. Bach's organ and choral output is immense, and his synthesis of German, French, and Italian styles gave him a musical language entirely his own.

The *Pièce d'Orgue* is a result of Bach's intense study and copying of the organ works of French classical organist Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703) in 1700. While clearly an exercise in French classical style, it may also have connections with a competition between the young Bach and French virtuoso Louis Marchand that never came to fruition. Legend has it that Marchand heard Bach performing the *Pièce d'Orgue* while preparing for the competition, and turned his heels and ran away before the competition could begin!