

Blurb for 9-23-18

News & Notes

Have a fantastic fall! Today's organ music by Nikolaus Bruhns will be the first in a mini-series of baroque North German organ works over the next few fall months. We the people will sing "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven," "God is love," and "I want to walk as a child of the light." The choir presents "O for a closer walk with thee," arranged by the consummate English cathedral musician Charles Villiers Stanford.

Sunday Bulletins

Today's organ prelude and postlude by Nikolaus Bruhns (1665-1697) are actually one extended piece that would normally be played from start to finish. I divided it because of time constraints. The *Praeludium in E Minor* (The Great) is considered the composer's finest work. (Here, "Great" refers to largeness of scale.) Bruhns was born into a musical family in what is now Denmark. When he was 16, he and his brother were sent to Lübeck to further their musical studies. Nikolaus learned to play violin and viol da gamba as well as studying organ with the famous Dietrich Buxtehude. Buxtehude considered him one of his best students. He is said to have played violin while sitting at the organ, accompanying himself on the pedals. Unfortunately he died at the age of 31 and very few of his works survive. There are only twelve choral and five organ pieces. The *Praeludium in E Minor* clearly falls into the category of North German organ style known as *stilus fantasticus*. The style was rooted in improvisation. Preludes were multi-sectional, contrasting free virtuosic flourishes with fugal sections. They tended to have a five section structure: free-fugal-free-fugal-free and were intended for use before services. In my humble opinion, this work demonstrates that the student far outshone his teacher, especially in the improvisatory sections.