

WEINGARTEN — Works by Johann Sebastian Bach also opened the second concert in the International Organ Concert series on the Gabler organ, which once again attracted a good audience. Taking into account the instrument's tonal colours and its disposition for Baroque music, Martin Setchell chose a programme consisting mainly of eighteenth-century music by Bach, Giovanni Battista Pescetti and Ludwig Krebs, together with seventeenth-century works by Johann Pachelbel and Samuel Wesley. By way of contrast, the concert concluded with two modern compositions.

Martin Setchell, organist in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Professor of Music at the University of Canterbury, is spending a month touring Europe and giving fifteen concerts. Born in Blackpool, England, the musician was visiting Weingarten with his wife Jenny for the third time, but this was the first occasion on which he had played the Gabler organ.

Above all, Martin Setchell said in conversation, he wanted his listeners to have “fun” with his musical programme. Through his studies in Paris with the Notre-Dame organists Pierre Cochereau and Marie-Claire Alain, he developed a particular passion for nineteenth-century French organ music—for composers such as Camille Saint-Saëns, Charles-Marie Widor and Louis Vierne. Their music, however, can scarcely be played on the Gabler organ.

Simply arranged

His selection of three short pieces by Bach was therefore very well suited to the beginning of a journey through Europe's Baroque musical world. Calm and beautifully sustained, the *Allabreve in D major*, BWV 589, established a sense of Baroque “order” and structure. The following Sinfonia from Cantata 156 has a theme almost as familiar as Bach's *Air* and is played by the oboe in its orchestral version. Setchell arranged it simply and lyrically, using a trumpet stop. The chorale prelude *Valet will ich dir geben*, BWV 736, had a powerful organ sound.

How different was the Venetian composer Giovanni Battista Pescetti (1704–1766), whose Sonata in C minor opened with a movement possessing all the ingredients of an earworm—not breathtakingly grand music, but cheerful, lilting and twittering, filled with tiny echoes, delicate and bright like a musical box. In the second movement, Setchell used the *unda maris*, or “waves of the sea,” a stop whose sound always seems gently to linger and sometimes almost to bubble. It is rarely used in the upper register. This lent the music a highly distinctive colour, as did the Hollow Flute in the concluding Presto.

A simple melody

For Johann Ludwig Krebs's (1713–1780) *Fantasia a gusto italiano in F*, a very songlike composition unfolding in broad arcs, the organist chose the trumpet stop. Johann Pachelbel's (1653–1706) *Toccata in E minor*, by contrast, was virtuosic, with numerous

runs above a pedal point, while the chorale prelude *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* (*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*) appeared as a paraphrase above a strong bass line. The Baroque portion of the programme concluded with the *Air* and *Gavotte* by Samuel Wesley, who worked in Bristol: a simple melody followed by a dance shaped by the *vox humana*.

The concluding music was rather like something one might hear at a church festival: *The Heart of Peace* by the 75-year-old Norwegian organist, pianist and composer Mons Leidvin Takle, a friendly and slightly sentimental composition. It was followed by a virtuosic work by the Belgian-American composer Noël Goemanne (1926–2010), who worked mainly in the United States. He is regarded as one of the first composers to engage with modern church music following the Second Vatican Council.

From Goemanne's 1991 *San Antonio Suite*, Martin Setchell played *El día de fiesta*, a piece frequently covered by popular musicians: full of verve and drive, powerful bass passages and a voluminous sound. Gabler himself would probably have enjoyed it.