

PROGRAM NOTES

Buxtehude's *Prelude in A Minor* is one of the most arresting examples of the north German praeludium--a genre developed formally from the organ toccatas of such Italian composers as Andrea Gabrieli and Claudio Merulo in which free passages with highly interesting figurations alternate with stricter, fugal sections. Buxtehude's work is cast in a common five-part form (free-strict-free-strict-free), but is unusual in that its central free section is extremely short--nothing more than a quick flourish.

Robert Schumann composed his four Sketches in 1845 as light character pieces which would demonstrate some of the possibilities of a fairly new musical instrument, the pedal piano--simply a regular piano equipped with a pedal keyboard like that of the organ. The pedal piano never became as accepted as Schumann (and many others) had envisioned; one rarely encounters it nowadays. The works are, however, very effective as organ pieces and are a valuable and unusual addition to the repertory.

Composer **Arvo Pärt** was born in Estonia. In 1980, he moved to Vienna and presently lives in Berlin. After an exhaustive study of Medieval theology and music, he arrived at a compositional style which he calls "tintinnabuli" (bell-like). Using almost purely diatonic materials, Pärt has created a style which is mystical and deceptively simple. As in most Medieval music, Pärt's metrical subdivision is by three (with accompanying Trinitarian connotations). *Annum per annum* ("Year by Year") was composed for the 900th anniversary of the cathedral in Speyer, Germany in 1980. The piece consists of five variations (plus an introduction and coda), each named after a section of the Mass--celebrated *Annum per annum* in the cathedral for more than nine centuries.

Between the years 1835 and 1837, **Mendelssohn's** study of the organ works of Bach led him to compose three preludes and fugues for organ. The *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* is the first and arguably, the most impressive of the three works. Modeled after the later preludes and fugues of Bach, the work is a literal prelude/fugue pair, with no trace of the sectional North German style (of, for example, Buxtehude) which influenced so many of Bach's earlier efforts. Mendelssohn's counterpoint, like Bach's is harmonic, but his harmony is the warm chromaticism of the German Romantics.