

# BUXTEHUDE

Suites in C major and D minor  
Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Harpsichord



## Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637–1707): Harpsichord Music, Vol. 1

<b>1</b>	<b>Toccatà in G major, BuxWV 165</b>	<b>5:15</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, in G major, BuxWV 223</b>	<b>8:06</b>
	<b>Suite in D minor, BuxWV 233</b>	<b>9:28</b>
<b>3</b>	Allemande d'Amour	3:07
<b>4</b>	Courante	1:31
<b>5</b>	Sarabande d'Amour – Sarabande	3:15
<b>6</b>	Gigue	1:35
<b>7</b>	<b>Fuga in B flat major, BuxWV 176</b>	<b>4:10</b>
	<b>Suite in C major, BuxWV 226</b>	<b>9:02</b>
<b>8</b>	Allemande	2:49
<b>9</b>	Courante	1:47
<b>10</b>	Sarabande [I] – Sarabande II	2:54
<b>11</b>	Gigue	1:32
	<b>Aria in A minor, BuxWV 249</b>	<b>5:37</b>
<b>12</b>	Variatio I	2:15
<b>13</b>	Variatio II	2:08
<b>14</b>	Variatio III	1:14
<b>15</b>	<b>Canzona in C major, BuxWV 166</b>	<b>4:09</b>
	<b>Partita: Auf meinen lieben Gott, in E minor, BuxWV 179</b>	<b>4:36</b>
<b>16</b>	[Allemande] – Double	2:08
<b>17</b>	Courante	0:37
<b>18</b>	Sarabande	1:08
<b>19</b>	Gigue	0:43
<b>20</b>	<b>Canzonetta in A minor, BuxWV 225</b>	<b>1:35</b>

## Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637–1707): Harpsichord Music, Vol. 1

### Suites in C major and D minor • Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Dietrich Buxtehude was most likely born in 1637 in the Danish town of Helsingborg, now part of Sweden. His father Johannes (Hans), also an organist, had immigrated to Denmark at an unknown time from Oldesloe in Holstein. In the year 1641 Johannes Buxtehude was employed as the organist at St Mary's Church, Helsingborg, and soon after that he moved across the Øresund to become organist of St Olai Church in Helsingør. The exact date of Dietrich's birth is unknown, but at the time of his death on 9th May, 1707, he was said to be about seventy years old.

The knowledge of Latin that Buxtehude displayed in later life indicates that he must have attended a Latin school as a boy. Although he undoubtedly began his organ studies with his father, further information concerning his teachers is totally lacking. Other possible teachers in Denmark include Claus Dengel, organist at St Mary's, Helsingør, from 1650 to 1660, and the younger Johann Lorentz, the famous organist at St Nicholas's Church in Copenhagen from 1634 until his death in 1689. Lorentz was a pupil and son-in-law of Jacob Praetorius in Hamburg, and the Buxtehude family made his acquaintance in 1650 upon the death of his father, an organ builder. Buxtehude might later have studied with Heinrich Scheidemann in Hamburg or Franz Tunder in Lübeck.

In late 1657 or early 1658, Buxtehude took up the same position as organist of St Mary's Church, Helsingborg, that his father had occupied before coming to Helsingør. He worked there until October 1660, when he became organist of St Mary's, Helsingør, called the German church because it served foreigners of the community and the military garrison of Kronborg. In Helsingør Buxtehude was expected to

play at the beginning of the service while the pastor was robing himself; he and the cantor were to provide instrumental and vocal music for the church on feast days and at other times at the pastor's request.

The position of organist and *Werkmeister* at St Mary's, Lübeck, became vacant upon the death of Franz Tunder on 5th November 1667, and Dietrich Buxtehude was formally appointed the following April. This was a much more prestigious and well paid position than the one he had held in Helsingør; Buxtehude was the most highly paid musician in Lübeck, and he earned nearly as much as the pastor of St Mary's.

Buxtehude swore the oath of citizenship on 23rd July 1668, enabling him to marry Anna Margarethe Tunder, a daughter of his predecessor, on 3rd August, 1668. Of seven daughters born to the couple three died in infancy, a fourth survived to early adulthood, and three remained in the household at the time of Buxtehude's death. Godparents to the Buxtehude children came from the higher strata of Lübeck society. Buxtehude himself belonged to the fourth social class, however, together with lesser wholesalers, retailers and brewers. In inviting his social superiors to serve as godparents, and in some cases naming his children after them, Buxtehude was also cultivating their patronage for his musical enterprises.

As organist of St Mary's, Buxtehude's chief responsibility lay in playing the organ for the main morning and afternoon services on Sundays and feast days. He also held the position of *Werkmeister* of St Mary's, the administrator and treasurer of the church, a position of considerable responsibility and prestige. The account books that he kept in this capacity

document the life of the church and its music in considerable detail. The cantor of St Mary's, also a teacher at the Catharineum, held the responsibility for providing the liturgical music, using his school choir of men and boys. They performed together with most of the Lübeck municipal musicians from a large choir-loft in the front of the church, over the rood screen. Two municipal musicians, a violinist and a lutenist, regularly performed with Buxtehude from the large organ.

Buxtehude inherited a tradition established by Franz Tunder of performing concerts from the large organ of St Mary's at the request of the business community. Tunder had gradually added vocalists and instrumentalists to his organ performances, which are said to have taken place on Thursdays prior to the opening of the stock exchange. Within a year of his arrival in Lübeck, Buxtehude had greatly expanded the possibilities for the performance of concerted music from the large organ by having two new balconies installed at the west end of the church, each paid for by a single donor. These new balconies, together with the four that were already there, could accommodate about forty singers and instrumentalists. Buxtehude called his concerts *Abendmusiken* and changed the time of their presentation to Sundays after vespers. In time these concerts took place regularly on the last two Sundays after Trinity and the second, third and fourth Sundays of Advent each year. By 1678 he had introduced the practice of presenting oratorios of his own composition in serial fashion on these Sundays. He also directed performances of concerted music from the large organ during the regular church services, although this activity, like the presentation of the *Abendmusiken*, lay outside his official duties to the church.

By 1703 Buxtehude had served for 35 years as organist of St Mary's; he was about 66 years old and he was no doubt concerned about the future of his three

unmarried daughters, so he began to look for a successor who would marry the eldest, now 28. The first prospective candidates of whom we know were Johann Mattheson and Georg Frideric Handel, both of whom were employed at the Hamburg opera at the time. They travelled to Lübeck together on 17th August 1703 and listened to Buxtehude "with dignified attention", but since neither of them was at all interested in the marriage condition, they returned to Hamburg the following day. Johann Sebastian Bach made his famous trip to visit Buxtehude in the autumn of 1705, coinciding with the *Abendmusik* season, and he remained in Lübeck for nearly three months. Bach, too, may have been interested in obtaining the succession to Buxtehude's position, but there is no evidence that this was the case. The account of the trip in Bach's obituary states unambiguously that its purpose was to hear Buxtehude play the organ, and in his report to the Arnstadt consistory upon his return the following February, Bach stated that he had made the trip "in order to comprehend one thing and another about his art". Buxtehude died on 9th May 1707 and was succeeded by Johann Christian Schieferdecker, who married Buxtehude's eldest daughter on 5th September 1707.

Keyboard music of the seventeenth century was not usually designated for particular instruments, and most of it could be played on organ, harpsichord, or clavichord. The manuscripts that transmit Buxtehude's keyboard music, however, generally restrict themselves to one of three types of music that can indeed be associated with particular instruments: free works such as *praeludia* and *toccatas*, many of them designated "*pedaliter*", and thus for organ; settings of German chorales, most of them also requiring the pedal; and a distinctly secular repertoire consisting of dance suites and variations, presumably for harpsichord. These

boundaries are by no means rigid, however, and these recordings exploit such fluidity by drawing from all three genres for their programmes.

Nearly all of Buxtehude's suites and variations on secular tunes are preserved in a single Danish manuscript, now at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, which contains the history of the Ryge family reading in one direction and a collection of keyboard music, mainly by Buxtehude, in the other. The musical portion was probably copied early in the eighteenth century. The fact that two of the suites attributed to Buxtehude in this manuscript were actually composed by Nicolas-Antoine Lebègue underlines the stylistic similarity of the German keyboard suite to French models, particularly in the use of *stile brisé*, which the French clavecinistes had adapted from lute music. The standardisation of the movements to *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*, however, can be credited to German composers.

The suites offered here present the intimate, domestic aspect of Buxtehude's keyboard art. In each case, the *allemande* is the weightiest element, "the proposition in a musical suite, from which the corrente, sarabande and gigue [sic] flow as parts", in the words of Buxtehude's grandstudent Martin Heinrich Fuhrmann. Indeed, the openings of Buxtehude's *correnti* often follow the melodic contour of the *allemande*, and in the case of the *Suite in F major*, BuxWV 238, the *corrente* approaches an actual variation of it. The Ryge manuscript usually spells this movement "*Courent*" in a curious mixture of French and Italian; in fact Buxtehude usually follows the Italian *corrente*, with its lightly running quaver motion, rather than the more subtle French *courante*. Fuhrmann characterizes the *sarabande* as an "instrumental aria, usually eight measures, going slowly in triple", and this is the shortest and simplest movement of a Buxtehude

suite. Two of the present suites (BuxWV 226 and 233) offer a second *sarabande* that is not a double, or variation, of the first. The second *sarabande* of BuxWV 233 has a distinctly vocal quality, as opposed to the more instrumental *stile brisé* of the first. The *giges* in Buxtehude's suites have a more contrapuntal texture than the other movements, but they are not strictly fugal, usually dissolving into homophony after a few entrances. It is through the *gigue*, however, that the dance makes itself most strongly felt in the other genres of Buxtehude's keyboard music.

The set of three variations named simply *Aria*, BuxWV 249, are based on the *sarabande*. Its second and third variations contain written-out varied repetitions of each of the sections of the binary form, demonstrating how Buxtehude might actually have performed those repetitions that he normally indicated only with repeat marks.

Buxtehude's chorale settings for keyboard are preserved mainly in manuscripts compiled by Johann Gottfried Walther, organist in Weimar and cousin of J. S. Bach. Although most of them require two manuals and pedal, a few do not, and there is no reason why they should be confined to the church organ. One in particular seems appropriate for performance on the harpsichord: the *Partita: Auf meinen lieben Gott*, BuxWV 179. Here Buxtehude combines three genres, the dance suite, the variation set, and the chorale setting, to produce an unusual hybrid form, consisting of *Allemande* (unnamed), *Double*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue*. *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, BuxWV 223, belongs to the genre of the chorale fantasy, in which each phrase of a chorale melody is developed rather extensively in a different manner. Here too the *gigue* makes a prominent appearance, concluding the work in a fugal treatment of the entire melody.

Buxtehude's free keyboard works - those independent of a preexisting melody or dance pattern - are mainly transmitted in manuscripts that include both *pedaliter* and *manualiter* works. Among these, his most original and justly famous works are *praeludia* and *toccatas* in the *stylus phantasticus*, which intermingles highly unpredictable free sections in virtuosic and idiomatic keyboard styles with more structured fugal sections. Since organists naturally prefer the *pedaliter* works, those for manuals alone are much less frequently performed, thus offering rich opportunities to adventurous harpsichordists. Even in these free works one can find elements of dance and variation. In place of a second fugue, the *Toccatà in G*

*major, BuxWV 165*, contains a brief passage of ostinato variations that are faintly reminiscent of Pachelbel's famous canon. Buxtehude may have conceived his canzonas as teaching pieces; they are all *manualiter* works, and students most often practised on the clavichord or harpsichord. They are variously titled *canzon*, *canzonet*, or *fuga* and consist either of a single fugue (*BuxWV 225*) or of three related fugues (*BuxWV 166* and *176*) in the manner of the variation *canzona* inherited from Frescobaldi and Froberger. The gigue makes an appearance yet again as the second fugue of *BuxWV 166*.

**Abridged from a Note by Kerala Snyder, 1998**

## Lars Ulrik Mortensen

Lars Ulrik Mortensen studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen and with Trevor Pinnock in London. From 1988 to 1990 he was harpsichordist with London Baroque and until 1993 with Collegium Musicum 90. He now works extensively as a soloist and chamber-musician in Europe, the United States, Mexico, South America, and Japan, performing regularly with distinguished colleagues such as Emma Kirkby, John Holloway and Jaap ter Linden. Between 1996 and 1999 he was professor for harpsichord and performance practice at the Munich Musikhochschule, and he now teaches at numerous early music courses throughout the world. Until recently Lars Ulrik Mortensen was also active as a conductor in Sweden and Denmark, where his activities at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen met with great critical acclaim, although he has now returned to work primarily with period instrument ensembles. Since 1999 he has been artistic director of the Danish Baroque Orchestra, Concerto Copenhagen, and in 2004 he succeeded Roy Goodman as musical director of the European Union Baroque Orchestra. He has recorded extensively for numerous labels, and his recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* was awarded a French Diapason d'Or. The series of Buxtehude recordings from the 1990s for the Danish Dacapo label met with universal acclaim, and recordings of chamber music and cantatas by Buxtehude have won Danish Grammy awards, among other honours. In 2000 he was named Danish Musician of the Year for his recordings of harpsichord music by Buxtehude, which also received the Cannes Classical Award 2001. As a conductor his recordings include releases of harpsichord concertos by Bach and piano concertos by Haydn, in addition to symphonies by the Danish composers J.E. Hartmann, F.L.A.E. Kunzen and G. Gerson. Lars Ulrik Mortensen has received a number of prizes and distinctions, among them the Danish Music Critics' Award in 1984 and in 2007 Denmark's most prestigious music award, the Léonie Sonning Music Prize.

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BUXTEHUDE: Suites in C major and D minor

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Having been born half a century after Heinrich Schütz, the 'father of German musicians', and a little less than half a century before J. S. Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude was a living link between the founder of Protestant Baroque music and its greatest master. While Buxtehude's organ music is comparatively well known, his harpsichord music has not yet found the reputation it deserves. This first volume of the series covers the full range of Buxtehude's compositional styles for the keyboard, from the brilliant and virtuosic opening *Tocatta in G major*, to the more subtle and melodic *Suites in C major and D minor* in the French style, and finishing with the flamboyant and highly virtuosic *Canzonetta in A minor*.

Dietrich  
**BUXTEHUDE**

(c.1637–1707)

**Harpsichord Music • 1**

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|-------|--|-------------|
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| 20    | <b>Canzonetta in A minor, BuxWV 225</b>                          | <b>1:35</b> |

**Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Harpsichord**

Recorded at St Matthew's Church, Copenhagen, from 22nd to 28th September, 1998

Producer and Engineer: Michael Petersen • **This recording was previously released on Dacapo 8.224116**

Booklet Notes: Kerala Snyder • Harpsichord by Thomas Mandrup-Poulsen after Ruckers (mean-tone tuning)

Please see the booklet for a detailed track list • This recording was sponsored by Gangstedfonden

Cover Picture: *Allegory of the friendship between Buxtehude (with sheet of music) and Hamburg colleagues**Johann Adam Reincken (on cembalo) and Johann Theile* by Johannes Voorhout (1647–1723)

(Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, Hamburg / AKG London)

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BUXTEHUDE: Suites in C major and D minor

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