

Dieterich Buxtehude

(?1637 - 1707)

Praeludium in C BuxWV 137

for organ or pedal keyboard

*arranged for Wind Quintet (contrabassoon
replacing bassoon) by Toby Miller (2011, rev. 2018)*



*Johannes Voorhout: "Domestic Music Scene (1674)": Allegory of the friendship between Buxtehude (on viola da gamba) and Hamburg colleagues including Johann Adam Reincken (on harpsichord).
The only known picture of Buxtehude - however the individual identifications are uncertain.*

Diderich Buxtehude was born at Helsingborg, now in Sweden but then part of Denmark, probably in 1637. His father was an organist in Helsingør (Shakespeare's Elsinore), and Diderich followed in the profession, first at Helsingborg and then succeeding his father in Helsingør. In 1668 he moved to his final job at the Marienkirche in Lübeck, where he remained until his death in 1707, eventually Germanizing his name. As well as organist, Buxtehude was church treasurer, and he also developed his predecessor's tradition of promoting regular 'Abendmusik' concerts of both secular and religious music.

When Buxtehude wrote down his music it was in 'tablature' (alphabetic note names in long strings, one for each part in the counterpoint), a style that had some ambiguities and was perhaps more an aide-memoire to the composer or rough guide to the performer, and one which was already becoming old-fashioned. Everything that survives now (a fraction of his total output) was either copied by other composers, written out as training material for pupils or sent to be copied by Buxtehude's friend Gustav Düben in Sweden. Famously, the young JS Bach walked 240 miles to Lübeck to hear the master performer / composer, to copy his music and learn all he could about the practicalities of the job: Bach's one month's approved leave of absence extended to three, to the annoyance of his employer.

Buxtehude's *Praeludia* are divided into those with pedal parts, which were written for organ but probably practised at home on a pedal clavichord, and those written for hands only (e.g. harpsichord). The more complex pedal pieces alternate contrasting episodes: free improvisatory or recitative-like passages, and formal fugues. The influence of this 'fantasia' style on Bach's early organ music is very clear. Buxtehude lived at a time when new systems of compromise tuning were being developed (the organist Andreas Werckmeister issued some proposals in 1691). Some of the Schnitger organs Buxtehude played on had ingenious 'alternative' semitones for the different sounds of G[#] and A^b (for example), and like Bach he pushed the boundaries of the less flexible mean-tone tuning of his organs with frequent modulations and pieces in unusual keys (one famous Prelude is in F[#] minor).

The 'home' key of C major used in this Prelude was considered extrovert and bright, appropriate for celebratory and perhaps also martial music. The section marked 'Fughetta' may be a musical quotation from a biblical cantata on the battle of David & Goliath by Buxtehude's younger contemporary Kuhnau, which prompted the scholar-organist Hans Davidsson to suggest that Buxtehude may have had this battle in mind in his own piece. Certainly the weighty pedal line with which the piece begins was a novelty, plunging immediately to the deepest note available on his organ, and it's difficult to imagine a more uplifting celebration than the closing Chaconne. This reminds us at times of Pachelbel's Canon (more correctly also Chaconne): neither piece can be dated accurately, but the two were contemporaries and Pachelbel dedicated one of his major works jointly to Buxtehude. All tempo and dynamic markings in this arrangement should be treated as suggestions (the only original marking is 'Presto' for the Chaconne). In the free sections especially, performers should aim for drama and avoid a rigid tempo, in the spirit of the fantasia style.

Praeludium in C_{BuxWV 137}

Score (instrumental pitch)

arranged for Wind Quintet (Contrabassoon) by Toby Miller

Buxtehude

Praeludium

[Moderato energico, quasi recitativo]

(flexible tempo [$\sim \text{♩}=88$])

[♩ = 96]

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Horn in F

Contrabassoon

ff solo, ad lib *rf* *rf*

4

[♩ = 88]

G P

Fl

f *rf* *rf* *rf* *rf*

8

Fl I

ff

(Cl)

G P

Fl II

rf

rf

rf

rf

(Fl)

Cl

ff

ff

rf

rf

rf

rf

G P

G P

G P

[strict tempo, ~ ♩ = 120]

12

Allegretto

f *mf* *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

17

Poco rit.

Fl 1

Measures 1-5 of the musical score for Flute 1 (Fl 1) in G major. The score is in 4/4 time. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a dotted quarter note B4. In measure 2, it continues with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a dotted quarter note B4. In measure 3, it features a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a dotted quarter note B4. In measure 4, it has a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a dotted quarter note B4. In measure 5, it has a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a dotted quarter note B4. The dynamics are marked *f* (forte) in measures 1-3 and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measures 4-5. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Quasi recitativo
(Tempo 2: come prima,
ma poco più mosso)

22

22 ma poco piu mosso)

Fl

G P

rf rf ff

(Cl)

Fl

rf rf

mp

rf rf

(Fl)

Cl

ff

Bn

rf rf

rf rf

rf rf

ff

f

rf rf

rf rf

rf rf

ff

27

Fl

(Cl)

mp

(Fl)

Cl

mp

leggiere (!)

f

30

Fl

rf

mp

mf

mf

rf

mp

mf

33

Rit.....

Fl

mf

f

ff

mf

f

mf

f

Ob

Fuga**Con moto, marcato***(strict tempo ~[♩ = 88-96])*

36

Fl

f (lead: Cbn holds) *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*

(Ob) (Fl)

(hold till Fl restarts)

40

Fl

mf *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*

43

Fl

mp *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff*

47

Fl

f

mp

f

ff *rf* *rf*

51

Fl

[opt. 8va]

f

f

mf

mp

f

[opt. 8va]

55

Fl

[opt. 8va]

mp

mp

f

f

mf

[opt. 8va]

59

Fl

f *mp* *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *ff* [opt. 8va]

63

Fl

f *mp* *mf* *p* [opt. 8va]

66

Fl

rit. poco a poco Lento Quasi recitativo (tempo secondo)

ff *p legato* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *p legato* *ff*

70 *(slightly slower)*

Fl

8 *mf* *rf* *mfz*

Rit..... **Chaconne** **Presto [Allegro, strict tempo ~ ♩=80]**

73

Fl

mf *mp* *f* *rf* *mf* *ff* *fff*

(Ob) (Cl) (Fl) (wait for CBn 2nd ♩)

solo (1) Marcato fff

76

Fl

mf *mp* *mp* *p* *rf* *rf* *rf* *rf*

(2)

81

Fl

mf

fp *p*

fp *mp*

(3) (4)

8

86

Fl

(Cl)

(Fl)

mp

f (5) *mp* (6) *f*

8

91

Fl

(7)

ff

8

96

rit.....

Fl

mf

(Ob)

(Cl)

(Fl)

(8)

99 **Maestoso** [♩ = 66]

Fl

ff

ff

ff

fff

fff

fff

fff

(Cl)

101

Fl

mf

fff

ff

mf

ff

mf

ff

fff

(Hn)

(Ob)

(Cl)