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Mystery Sonatas to be Featured in Meditative Musical Event at UD

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DAYTON, Ohio — Heinrich Biber (1644 - 1704) is not one of the most well known Catholic composers, but his music has earned a prominent place among the musical treasures of the Catholic Church.

Biber’s mystery sonatas will be featured in “Music for Meditation: A Sesquicentennial Performance of Catholic Church Music on Rosary Themes,” to be held at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 3, in the Immaculate Conception Chapel at the University of Dayton.

Created in honor of the UD’s 150th anniversary, the program will include the “Rosary Sonatas” for violin and harpsichord and a pre-concert lecture by the Rev. Thomas Buffer, the Jessing Scholar for Doctoral Studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus. Buffer’s talk will begin at 7:30 p.m.

The program will also include a display of projected images of engravings, inspired by the rosary and designed to illustrate the theme of each sonata. The images were published with the original edition of the sonatas.

Respected as some of the greatest achievements of Catholic musical heritage, the sonatas were composed for meditation rather than to beautify the Mass, said Richard Benedum, professor of music at UD. “They are also unique in music literature and in violin literature for their use of scordatura, or non-standard tuning, for musical effect,” Benedum said.

“The repertoire of this concert is devoted to recreating and breathing new life into some of the greatest musical treasures of the Catholic Church, thus linking those treasures of the past

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to the musical and spiritual present. By projecting images of the beautiful engravings created for the publication of these sonatas, the performance will also become an occasion for devotion and spiritual reflection," he said.

The performance will feature artists Julane Rodgers of Kettering, a part-time UD faculty member and harpsichordist for the Dayton Bach Society and Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra; David Wilson, a baroque violin specialist and Dayton native now living in Oakland, Calif.; Sara Colburn, also of Oakland, a soprano with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra Chorale in San Francisco; and Elisabeth Reed of Seattle, principal cellist for the California Bach Society, the Dayton Bach Society and Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra.

Buffer, who will introduce the performance by speaking on Biber's music and how it relates to the mysteries of the rosary, received his licentiate in sacred theology at UD. Currently on sabbatical to continue theological studies at the Gregorian University in Rome, Buffer will fly to Dayton specifically for this event.

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For media interviews, call Richard Benedum at (937) 229-3936.