

ORGAN at the OPERA

Duets performed on the organ
of the Sydney Opera House by
Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen

- Arrival of the Queen of Sheba
- William Tell overture
- Waltzing Matilda

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Organ Duets performed by Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen on the famous Ronald Sharp Organ in the Sydney Opera House



George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)

1 Arrival of the Queen of Sheba 3'32"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

2 Adagio für die Flötenuhr, WoO 33/1 5'02"

Robert Ampt (b. 1949)

Waltzing Matilda - Duet for Four Feet

3 Introduction and Theme 1'08"

4 Variation I – Playful 0'41"

5 Variation II – Waltz fughetta 2'06"

6 Variation III – Bold 0'50"

7 Variation IV – Lament 1'17"

8 Finale – Toccata 2'00"

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

9 Overture for Wind Instruments Op. 24 8'38"

1: Andante con moto 2: Allegro vivace

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)

10 Blithe Bells 4'46"

Naji Hakim (b.1955) **Rhapsody**

11 Allegro molto 2'03"

12 Andante sostenuto 2'17"

13 Vivace 1'33"

14 Andante tranquillo/Allegro giocoso 2'49"

15 Quodlibet 1'24"

Antonio Soler (1729-1783) **Concierto I**

16 Andante 2'51"

17 Minue 3'16"

Louis Godard (1849-1895)

18 Niagara - Grand Galop de Concert 4'37"

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

19 Overture to William Tell 12'27"

1: Opening 2: Pastorale 3: Gallop

1 *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, the celebrated sinfonia for strings and oboes, comes from Handel's oratorio *Solomon*. The oratorio, produced in London in 1749, recounts the biblical story of the king so renowned for his great wisdom.

During the Classical period of music history, there was a decline in interest regarding organ music. The closest that Beethoven and Mozart came to writing music for the organ was a few works for mechanical clock, a pinned barrel system which activated the pipes of an automatic organ.

2 Beethoven's *Adagio für die Flötenuhr* was written on four staves, and can be given an accurate realization only when four hands are used. This performance employs some of the beautiful flute stops of the Opera House organ and features a brief appearance of the high-pitched bell tones of the Zimbelstern.

3–8 *Waltzing Matilda – Duet for Four Feet* (and no hands!) was written in 1995 to commemorate the centenary of Australia's best loved folk song; a combination of "Banjo" Paterson's descriptive lyrics and Marie Cowan's immortal melody. The *Duet for Four Feet* offers a display of virtuosic pedal playing ranging from full chords to rapid semiquavers and glissandi.

9 When Mendelssohn wrote his *Overture for Wind Instruments* he was already an accomplished composer, yet he was only fifteen years old. (His *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written just two years later.) Originally conceived for a small wind ensemble, the *Overture* was inspired by the sound of such a group heard by Mendelssohn while holidaying at a health resort. A singing Andante opens the work, and this is followed by an exhilarating Allegro.

10 Percy Grainger was born in Melbourne, Australia, but became a naturalized American at the age of 36. He described his *Blithe Bells* as: A free ramble on Bach's aria, "Sheep may graze in safety when a goodly shepherd watches o'er them". The ramble is coloured by the thought that Bach, in writing the melody in thirds that opens and closes the number, may have aimed at giving a hint of the sound of sheep bells. Originally written in 1931 for instrumental ensemble, Grainger "dished-up" (his words) the work a few months later for two pianos, the version which was reworked for the present organ duet. Instead of the accepted Italian musical terminology, Grainger used down-to-earth English (slacken slightly, slow off lots, velvety, roughly) for playing indications. The tuned Glocken bells are heard in the last two chords.

Naji Hakim's *Rhapsody* (1992) was the result of a 1991 commission by American duet-organists Raymond and Elizabeth Chenault. Each of the first four movements is based on a different theme:

11 an *Angelus* (from Brittany), **12** *O Dieu de Clemence* (a traditional French noel), **13** a *Danse de Champagne* (by Claude Gervaise), and **14** *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (an American folk hymn). In the **15** *Quodlibet*, all of the melodies are simultaneously combined. Born in Lebanon, Naji Hakim was from 1985 to 1994 organist of the Basilique du Sacre-Coeur, Paris and in 1993 was appointed successor to Olivier Messiaen at the Eglise de la Trinité. His compositions have won world-wide acclaim.

Padre Antonio Soler, the most famous pupil of Domenico Scarlatti, produced his *Six Concertos for Two Organs*, as well as other keyboard collections, for the entertainment of the very serene Infante don Gabriel de Borbon, who was a great admirer of the composer. Although intended for two separate organs, this performance uses several keyboards of one organ. The music has little dramatic tension but is delightfully tuneful and gracious. The **16** *Andante* of *Concierto I* is in two sections while the **17** *Minue* consists of a theme and four variations.

18 Benjamin Louis Paul Godard was a French composer and violinist whose compositions include seven operas (among them *Jocelyn*, 1888) and over one hundred songs. *Niagara – Grand Galop de Concert*, enormously energetic and entertaining, is a salon-style piece with fairground overtones. It was unearthed in the Ampt family piano music collection, having already been much-loved and played by various members of that family over the years.

19 *William Tell*, Rossini's last opera (Paris 1829), is based on Schiller's drama about the Swiss national hero. Set in medieval Switzerland, *William Tell* describes the brave and heroic exploits of the local Swiss in outwitting and defeating the Austrian invaders. The *Overture* opens with the serenity of a pastoral scene, (which, with its distant thunder on the Tympanon stop, foreshadows the next section), then depicts the fury of a great storm, the calm after the storm's passing (complete with shepherd's piping and birdsong), and the final triumphant entry of the mounted Swiss Guard.



Husband and wife **organ duettists** Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen have been performing together regularly since 1991. Their repertoire comprises both original organ duets and arrangements/transcriptions, many of the latter being their own.

Robert Ampt is the Sydney City Organist and Organist/Choirmaster of Sydney's German Lutheran Church. An active recitalist and teacher, he composes and arranges music for the organ, has written two children's introductions to the organ, and has written an extensive history of the Sydney Town Hall organ. This is his second CD for Move Records, the first entitled Centenary Plus, featuring the organ at Sydney Town Hall.

Amy Johansen is the Sydney University Organist. A pupil of Naji Hakim, she was the first to release a recording devoted entirely to his music. She has played in many countries, with broadcasts in America, Britain and Australia. Her recent CD with University Carillonneur Jill Forrest, recorded by Move at

Sydney University, features the Great Hall organ and the University carillon, including two tracks with the two instruments combined.

The spectacular, yet deeply spiritual, vision that materialized into the Sydney Opera House could have been created only by an exceptional architect – Jorn Utzon. The main concert hall of that building now possesses a pipe organ which is also spectacular and deeply spiritual. It is the result of the vision of an exceptional organ builder – Ronald Sharp of Sydney.

Sharp was a man of many parts – engineer, inventor, thinker and artist. He built his own telescope and microscope, invented a movie projector which can accommodate four different formats and wrote extensively on the nature of gravity. His organ inventions include a cuckoo that can be played in all keys and an organ play-back mechanism. Sharp was a self-taught organ builder, relying on books, magazines, photographs and recordings. This proved to be no handicap, however, and he pioneered the use of mechanical tracker action in Australia, which allows greater subtlety of touch and more expression. Peter Hurford said about Sharp's first mechanical action organ at Knox Grammar School:

"Here was a man who was a genius. Here you have an instrument that just opens its arms to meet you and says 'Come on, let's make music'." Praise such as this earned Sharp the commission for the organ at the Sydney Opera House.

Sharp's supreme creed was that he was building not organs, but musical instruments.

Ronald Sharp was assisted by his regular staff: Mark Fisher, Myk Fairhurst and Raymond Bridge. During the final months he was also assisted by four additional staff from Gregor Hradetzky of Austria. The largest mechanical action organ in the world, it was inaugurated on 7th June, 1979 in a recital given by Douglas Lawrence of Melbourne.



The organ was a monumental achievement in engineering using techniques dating from hundreds of years ago to what was the latest computer technology. There are 10 500 pipes in 200 ranks which are grouped into 127 stops.

The nine blowers for the wind supply are actually located in the organ's main cabinet, in special silencing cabinets equipped with temperature sensing alarms and automatic fire extinguishers!

Sharp refused to guarantee a completion date for the organ and eventually it took him nine years to build. Because of this the workmanship was

impeccable throughout, unlike in some larger organs, where some details are missed or glossed over. His attention to detail did not allow any squeaks or other undesirable sounds to come from any of the 10 500 pipes.

In addition, each stop was carefully manufactured and voiced to produce a beautiful sound itself, to suit the acoustics of the Concert Hall, to blend with the other stops.

Sharp's attention to detail was rewarded when Robert Ampt and other organists presented the organ's inaugural recital series, and Sydney's musical community and the general public were able to hear what a magnificent instrument they had bought.

PEDAL

C1 - g32

29	Prinzipal	32
28	Holzprinzipal	16
27	Oktav	16
26	Violonbass	16
15	Subbass	16
14	Rohrquint	10 2/3
25	Oktav	8
24	Violon	8
13	Gedackt	8
12	Grossterz	6 2/5
23	Quint	5 1/3
22	Oktav	4
11	Blockflöte	4
21	Terz	3 1/5
20	Quint	2 2/3
19	Septime	2 2/7
10	Nachthorn	2
9	Bauernflöte	1
18	Rauschpfeife	III
17	Mixtur	V
16	Scharff	VII
8	Posaune	32
7	Posaune	16
6	Fagott	16
5	Trompete	8
4	Dulzian	8
3	Trompete	4
2	Singend Kornett	2
1	Glocken	4+2
30	Tremulant	

RÜCKPOSITIV

C1 - c61

135	Prinzipal	8
136	Fiffaro	8
149	Gedackt	8
150	Quintadena	8
134	Oktav	4
148	Nachthorn	4
147	Rohrflöte	4
146	Nasat	2 2/3
133	Oktav	2
145	Spitzflöte	2
144	Terz	1 3/5
132	Quint	1 1/3
143	Sifflöte	1 1/3
131	Oktav	1
130	Quint	2/3
129	Oktav	1/2
128	Quint	1/3
127	Oktav	1/4
126	Quint	1/6
125	Oktav	1/8
142	Sesquialtera	II
141	Rankett	16
140	Trompete	8
139	Dulzian	8
138	Glocken	1
137	Tremulant	

HAUPTWERK

C1 - c61

59	Prinzipal	16
45	Gedackt	16
58	Oktav	8
57	Gamba	8
44	Querflöte	8
43	Holzflöte	8
42	Rohrflöte	8
56	Quint	5 1/3
41	Grossnasat	5 1/3
55	Oktav	4
54	Gamba	4
40	Spitzflöte	4
39	Grossterz	3 1/5
53	Quint	2 2/3
38	Nasat	2 2/3
52	Oktav	2
37	Hohlflöte	2
36	Terz	1 3/5
51	Piffaro	IV-VI
50	Terzian	II
49	Kornett Mixtur	III-VI
48	Mixtur	VI
47	Scharff	V
46	Zimbel	IV
35	Kornett	VI
34	Trompete	16
33	Trompete	8
32	Trompete	4
31	Glocken	2
60	Tremulant	

OBERWERK

C1 - c61

112	Holzprinzipal	16
111	Quintaton	16
110	Prinzipal	8
123	Salizional	8
124	Schwebung	8
122	Spillflöte	8
109	Oktav	4
121	Salizional	4
120	Waldflöte	4
119	Querflöte	2
108	Rauschpfeife	II
107	Terzian	II
106	Mixtur	V-VII
105	Scharff	IV
104	Terz Zimbel	III
118	Septimen Kornett	C13 V
117	Kopftrompete	16
116	Trompete	8
115	Oboe	8
103	Vox Humana	8
114	Schalmei	4
113	Tremulant	

SUMMARY OF PIPES

Front pipes 95% tin

Total number of stops	127
Total number of ranks	205
Approximate number of pipes	10,000

BRUSTWERK

C1 - c61

89	Gemshorn	8
90	Unda Maris	8
102	Offenflöte	8
101	Gedackt	8
88	Prinzipal	4
100	Quintadena	4
99	Nasat	2 2/3
87	Flachflöte	2
98	Terz	1 3/5
86	Quint	1 1/3
97	Septime	1 1/7
85	Schwiegel	1
96	None	8/9
84	Glöckleinton	II
83	Scharff	II
82	Zimbel	1
95	Musette	16
94	Krummhorn	8
81	Regal	8
93	Trompetenregal	4
92	Glocken	1/2
91	Tremulant	

KRONWERK

C1 - c61

72	Kornett	VIII-XII
64	Trompete	16
63	Feldtrompete	8
73	Vox Humana	8
62	Helltrompete	4
71	Ophecleide	8
61	Glocken	2
74	Tremulant	

ANCILLARIES

Kuckuck
Nachtigall
Zymbelstern
Tympanon

COUPLERS

drawstops

70	Oberwerk	to	Rückpositiv
69	Rückpositiv	to	Hauptwerk
68	Oberwerk	to	Hauptwerk
67	Brustwerk	to	Hauptwerk
66	Kronwerk	to	Hauptwerk
65	Brustwerk	to	Oberwerk
80	Rückpositiv	to	Pedal
79	Hauptwerk	to	Pedal
78	Oberwerk	to	Pedal
77	Brustwerk	to	Pedal
76	Kronwerk	to	Pedal 4
75	Kronwerk	to	Pedal 2

COUPLERS

rocking tablets

151	Rückpositiv	to	Rückpositiv	16
152	Rückpositiv	to	Rückpositiv	4
153	Oberwerk	to	Oberwerk	16
154	Oberwerk	to	Oberwerk	4
155	Brustwerk	to	Brustwerk	16
156	Brustwerk	to	Brustwerk	4
157	Kronwerk	to	Kronwerk	16
158	Kronwerk	to	Kronwerk	4
159	Rückpositiv	to	Hauptwerk	16
160	Rückpositiv	to	Hauptwerk	4
161	Oberwerk	to	Hauptwerk	16
162	Oberwerk	to	Hauptwerk	4
163	Kronwerk	to	Hauptwerk	16
164	Kronwerk	to	Hauptwerk	4
165	Hauptwerk and Pedal Pistons			
166	Oberwerk and Pedal Pistons			

ADJUSTABLE PISTONS

General Pistons

15 Generals duplicated by Toe Studs
Departmental Pistons

9	Rückpositiv
9	Hauptwerk
9	Oberwerk
9	Brustwerk
9	Kronwerk
9	Pedal duplicated by Toe Studs

Reversible Pistons

Duplicated by Toe Studs

1	Oberwerk	to	Rückpositiv
1	Rückpositiv	to	Hauptwerk
1	Oberwerk	to	Hauptwerk
1	Brustwerk	to	Hauptwerk
1	Kronwerk	to	Hauptwerk
1	Brustwerk	to	Oberwerk
1	Rückpositiv	to	Pedal
1	Hauptwerk	to	Pedal
1	Oberwerk	to	Pedal
1	Brustwerk	to	Pedal
1	Kronwerk	to	Pedal 4
1	Kronwerk	to	Pedal 2

ACCESSORIES

Crescendo pedal with 4 pistons to operate
Normal and 3 preset levels
Oberwerk main and echo swell pedals
Brustwerk swell pedal

ACTION

Key Action	Mechanical
Stop Action	Electric
Couplers 77-80, 65	Mechanical
Couplers 66-70, 75-76	
151-164	Electric
Percussions	Electric
Pistons	Electronic Capture
Wind Supply	9 Blowers

Recorded in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall between 25 and 30 August 1995

Recording engineer: Lana Lazareff (Sydney Opera House Sound Department)

Produced by Martin Wright (Move Records)

Digital editing / sound balance: Martin Wright and Vaughan McAlley

Thanks to Mark Fisher, who has care of tuning and on-going maintenance of the organ since 1994. From 1964 to 1981 he was employed by Ronald Sharp and shared in the design and construction of the instrument.

Photography: Paul Wright

Notes by Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen

I started building organs in 1960, the first being the new choir organ for St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. My quest was to bring the organ back into the family of musical instruments, into the world of appreciation of music lovers, from the mechanistic, isolated realm of enthusiasts and commercial manufacture.

Beauty of tone was my major preoccupation along with lack of associated wind and mechanism noise and a new approach to player posture and operating convenience.

Pipes were voiced to give an impression in the mind of the listener rather than technically reproducing the actual pipe sounds of traditional instruments.

The Opera House Organ, like any instrument was to have a cohesion and unity within itself, but each of five Manual keyboards and Pedals was to contain elements of traditional national schools, where these were appropriate within the makeup and intended use of this Australian Concert Hall instrument, to bring our isolated country the nature of those other sounds.

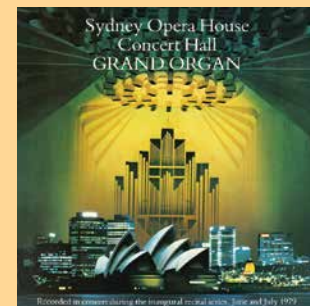
Ronald Sharp

SELF PORTRAIT BY RONALD SHARP (1992)



Move Records wishes to thank the Trust in making the Concert Hall Organ available for this project.

An historic recording of the 1979 inaugural recital series of the Sydney Opera House Organ is also available. Details are on our website.



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