



Sydney Opera House Concert Hall GRAND ORGAN

move

Recorded in concert during the inaugural recital series, June and July 1979

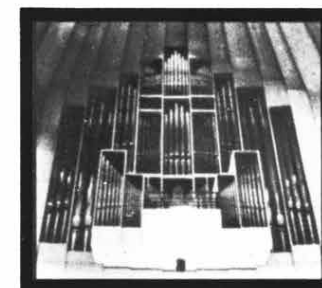
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall Grand Organ

INAUGURAL RECITAL SERIES 1979

Christa Rumsey	1	<i>Grand Choeur</i>	4'14"	Théodore Dubois
Christa Rumsey	2	<i>Passacaglia in D minor</i>	7'04"	Johann Caspar Kerll
William Pierce	3	<i>Canon in B minor</i>	3'22"	Robert Schumann
Douglas Lawrence	4	<i>Noel: This Day</i>	2'16"	Nicholas Le Begue
Christa Rumsey	5	<i>Trumpet Voluntary</i>	5'32"	John Bennett
Robert Ampt	6	<i>Preludes for Christmas Time op. 76, no 6</i>	3'26"	J B Schiedermayr
Robert Ampt		<i>Pieces for mechanical clock</i>		Franz Joseph Haydn
	7	<i>Menuett [V]</i>	0'40"	
	8	<i>Allegro moderato [I]</i>	1'00"	
	9	<i>Menuett: allegretto [XI]</i>	0'51"	
	10	<i>Andante [IV]</i>	1'11"	
	11	<i>Allegretto [VII]</i>	0'53"	
	12	<i>Menuett [VIII]</i>	1'24"	
	13	<i>Vivace [X]</i>	1'05"	
Donald Hollier	14	<i>Prelude and</i>	3'14"	Franz Liszt
Donald Hollier	15	<i>Fugue on B-A-C-H</i>	8'37"	
Christa Rumsey	16	<i>Lamento</i>	3'24"	Jehan Alain
Christa Rumsey	17	<i>Litanies</i>	4'39"	Jehan Alain
William Pierce	18	<i>Epitaphs for Edith Sitwell</i>	4'25"	Malcolm Williamson
Donald Hollier	19	<i>Sistine Chapel Evocation</i>	8'54"	Franz Liszt
Donald Hollier	20	<i>Am Grabe Richard Wagners</i>	2'51"	Franz Liszt
Christa Rumsey	21	<i>Chorale Prelude: Nun danket alle Gott</i>	1'45"	Franz Schmidt



Announcing the inaugural series of performances of the Concert Hall GRAND ORGAN



INAUGURAL RECITAL

with

Douglas Lawrence

Thursday, June 7, at 8.15p.m.

\$8.00, \$5.50. Concessions \$4.00, \$2.50

**Programme includes works by Mozart, Bach,
Vierne, Le Bégue, Daquin, Widor & Penberthy**

Tuesday Dusk Recitals at 6.15p.m.

June 12, 19 and 26:

July 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31

**Tickets \$2 at the Box Office on evening of performance
Recitals finish at 7p.m.**

Free Thursday Lunchtime Recitals

1.10p.m. to 1.50p.m.

June 14, 21 and 28

**The Dusk and Lunchtime recitals will feature popular classical
organ works and theatre organ works.**



The organ

The Sydney Opera House Grand Organ is in many ways a unique instrument.

With 10,500 pipes, of which 2700 can be sounded simultaneously, it is both the largest instrument in the country, and the largest mechanical action organ in the world.

By 'mechanical action', we are to understand that direct mechanical linkage or 'tracker action' connects with console keys and the pallet valves in the chests which admit wind to the pipes. It was of course the tracker action that was used by organ builders before pneumatic and electric techniques were developed. However, many modern organ builders favour the old system because it gives the player 'analog' control over pipe speech, in contrast to the less sensitive on-off, or 'digital' control of pneumatic and electric actions.

The pipes are grouped into 200 ranks, or sets of pitches, and made available to the organist as 127 speaking stops. These stops, as well as being operated individually and manually can also be operated in any combinations through the use of 'combination pistons', which are buttons located between the keyboards. This is where modern digital electronics and microprocessor technology show their value.

Quite apart from its impressive dimensions, it is the system of electronic accessories which makes it unique.

At first glance, the piston system looks just like that of any other large modern pipe organ. It is equipped with 'capture action', which means that the combination of stops called by any piston can be changed by the organist whilst seated at the console. However, Mr Sharp has introduced a rather fascinating innovation.

With most combination piston capture actions, the player must re-set the pistons each time he approaches the organ. (Another player may have used the same button to call different combinations). This process, with the 69 pistons on the Opera House organ can take more than an hour. To avoid the laborious repetition of this task, the piston capture action on the Opera House organ has been provided with a semiconductor memory used to store the combinations data. A microprocessor is connected to the memory, along with a cassette recorder, so that, at the touch of a button, all the data describing recently programmed combinations is recorded onto a tape cassette which the player can keep. Next time the organist plays, the cassette is simply slipped back into the recorder, and the pistons re-set in a mere 12 seconds. The new Opera House organ is the first in the world to offer this facility, and as such, it represents a significant breakthrough.

Impressive, yes; but another of the main electronic facilities is in some ways even more impressive.

A problem with the Opera House organ, as with most large tracker action

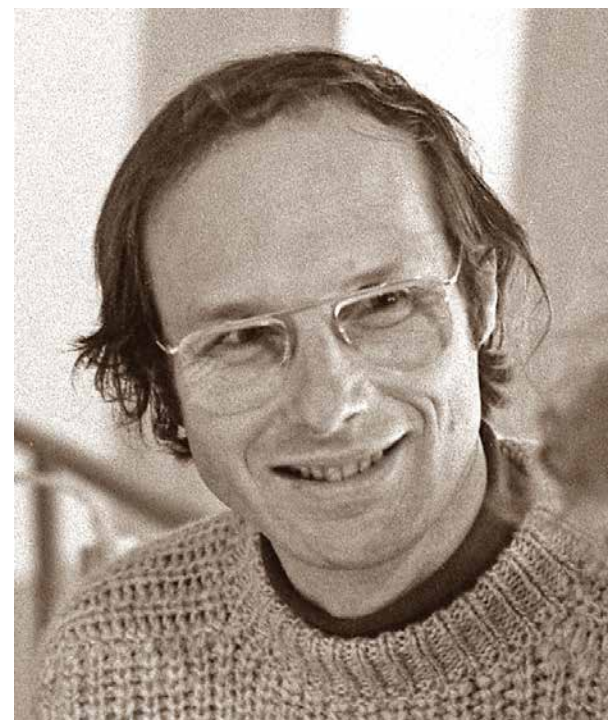
instruments, is that the console is necessarily well below the level of most of the pipes, so that most of the sound passes over the organist's head, making it difficult for him to judge how his selection of tone colours is actually heard by the audience.

The organ is equipped with a parallel electric action, which means that each pipe may be activated electronically or mechanically. It occurred to Ronald Sharp that it might be possible to overcome the organist's judgement problem by arranging for keying and stop information to be recorded by the microprocessor onto another cassette. This could then be played back through the organ via the electric action.

Thus, the 'player' facility became a part of the Opera House organ design. When this is fully operational there will be a suitcase-style remote control unit which will plug into an outlet of the rear of the concert hall. From the control unit, an organist will be able to have the organ replay a piece he has recorded, whilst having full real-time control of all stops and couplers to adjust the registration.

When this function of the organ is completed, the instrument will be the only one in the world to offer the organist this remarkable facility.

— adapted from an article by Jamieson Rowe, which appeared in the magazine Electronics Australia, August 1979.



Ronald Sharp, builder of the organ

The music

Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)
1 Grand Choeur

Dubois, a French organist, held several important positions in Paris: first, as maître de chapelle de St Clothilde, and later as Saint-Saens' successor at the Madeleine Church. This *Grand Choeur* (from "12 Pieces for Grand Organ") was no doubt written with the grandiose organs of the big Parisian churches in mind; here the Sydney Opera House Grand Organ generates a similar feeling of spaciousness.

Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693)
2 *Passacaglia in D minor*

Kerll was born in Saxony, Germany, but held important positions in Munich and Vienna. Very little of his organ music was published during his lifetime, but a Canzona he wrote was reputedly used by Handel in his Oratorio “Israel and Egypt”. This Passacaglia, a series of variations over a simple Ground Bass is an ideal piece to show off a number of the organ’s different tone colours.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
3 *Canon in B minor*

It was probably Schumann’s interest in Bach which prompted him, in 1845, to acquire a pedal board attachment for his piano. During the year, he subsequently produced three sets of pieces for pedal piano, one of which comprised six fugues on the name of Bach. The *Canon in B minor* comes from a set of pedal piano studies (op 56), most of which recall the works of Bach.

Nicholas Le Begue (1630-1702)
4 *Noel: This Day*

Parisian organists of the eighteenth century vied with each other to produce the most inventive and entertaining pieces for Christmas. This one, however, reflects in a quiet manner, on the joy and peace of Christmas day.



The organ has 10,500 pipes, of which 2700 can be sounded simultaneously. ‘If everyone in the hall sang softly at once, the effect would be of power, but also richness,’ said Ronald Sharp, ‘whereas, if only 50 people tried to get the same volume, the sound would be strident.’ He wanted many pipes singing, rather than a few screaming, so the audience would not be assailed by sheer force.

John Bennett (1735-1784)
5 *Trumpet Voluntary*

Here, Bennett employs the typical form of the 18th century English voluntary, which was derived from the church sonata. A slow introductory movement is followed by a fast movement, which uses the trumpet stops like solo instruments in a concerto.

J. B. Schiedermayr (1779-1840)
6 *Preludes for Christmas Time*
op. 76 (1827), no 6

Schiedermayr was Cathedral Organist and Director of School Music in Linz, Austria, during the early decades of the nineteenth century. This *Prelude*, with its light and tuneful character and its obvious allusions to the bagpipes, is typical of the then very popular style of Pastorale written, but more frequently improvised, by Austrian organists after the Christmas Matins.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) *Pieces for mechanical clock*
7 *Menuett [V]*
8 *Allegro moderato [I]*
9 *Menuett: allegretto [XI]*
10 *Andante [IV]*
11 *Allegretto [VII]*
12 *Menuett [VIII]*
13 *Vivace [X]*

These were written for the *Spieluhr*, a mechanical miniature flute organ in a

clock. This set, along with similar ones by Mozart and Beethoven forms part of the very limited organ repertoire of the period post-dating Bach. The pieces are all quite short, and have a delicacy reminiscent of the instrument for which they were composed.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
14-15 Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H

Liszt was one of the first composers to write significant music for the organ after the metaphorical drought following the death of JS Bach. This, one of his large-scale organ works, marks a revival of interest in the 17th century master. The Fugue is based on the notes B - A - C - H, or B $\flat$ - A - C - B $\sharp$. The work which is extremely chromatic is symphonic in conception, and the technique is essentially pianistic.

Jehan Alain (1911-1940)
16 Lamento

Alain's promising career as organist and composer was cut short when he died resisting the German invasion of France in 1940. *Lamento* was composed at the age



of 19 and is similar in style to Messiaen's *Le banquet céleste* (Messiaen being only three years older and also studying at the Paris Conservatoire).

17 Litanies

This is perhaps Alain's best loved organ work. It was written after the tragic death of Alain's sister Odile in a mountaineering accident. Like a liturgical Litany prayer it uses repetition of a short musical motif to create the impression of an urgent, desperate prayer. Alain reputedly said: "This prayer is not a lament, but an irresistible storm which overthrows everything in its way. It is also an obsession; it must fill the ears of men...

and of the good Lord". Alain prefaced the work with these words: "When the Christian soul in distress can no longer find words with which to implore the mercy of God, it repeats the same invocation over and over again, in a blind faith. The limits of reason are reached. Faith alone continues upwards."

Malcolm Williamson (1931-2003)
18 Epitaphs for Edith Sitwell 1

The English poet and critic Edith Sitwell died in 1964, Malcolm Williamson dedicated his Violin Concerto to her memory. Two years later he produced his *Epitaphs for Edith Sitwell* for organ or string orchestra. The strident noises played over a calmer quiet background may reflect Sitwell's penetrating wit.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)
19 Sistine Chapel Evocation

This piece was inspired by Liszt's 3-year stay in Rome. It has a number of moods, beginning with rich low chords, a more conventional louder section,

then a free transcription of Mozart's motet *Ave verum*. In contrast with the earthy opening chords, the ending soars heavenward, with "human anguish being answered by the infinite mercy of the Almighty".

20 Am Grabe Richard Wagners (At the grave of Richard Wagner)

Liszt wrote this piece on the 70th anniversary of Wagner's birth, soon after Wagner's death. It has the mystical quality of much of Liszt's late music, and shows that Liszt had come to terms with Wagner's scandalous affair with Liszt's daughter Cosima twenty years earlier.

Franz Schmidt (1874-1939) 21 Chorale Prelude: Nun danket alle Gott

Franz Schmidt is sometimes considered to have been a conservative composer, carrying on the monumental forms and tonal writing of fellow-Austrians Schubert and Bruckner as well as Brahms who also lived and worked in Vienna. Schmidt's complex harmonies and subtle rhythms belie this apparent conservatism. He conceived his organ music for smaller, clear classical-style organs in the heyday of gigantic romantic organs. This short chorale prelude (one of a set of four) is reminiscent of the chorale preludes of his German contemporary, Sigfrid Karg-Elert.



The organists

DOUGLAS LAWRENCE gave the inaugural recital on the Sydney Opera House Grand Organ. He was for many years artistic director of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, and was director of the Choir of Ormond College until 2006. He travels extensively on concert engagements in many countries around the world.

*Ronald Sharp, builder of the organ with
organist Douglas Lawrence*

ROBERT AMPT, a student of David Rumsey and Anton Heiller, has been the Sydney City Organist since 1978 and Organist/Choirmaster of Sydney's German Lutheran Church since 1985. His organ and choral music is distributed by Birrlee Publishing. He is married to Sydney University Organist Amy Johansen.

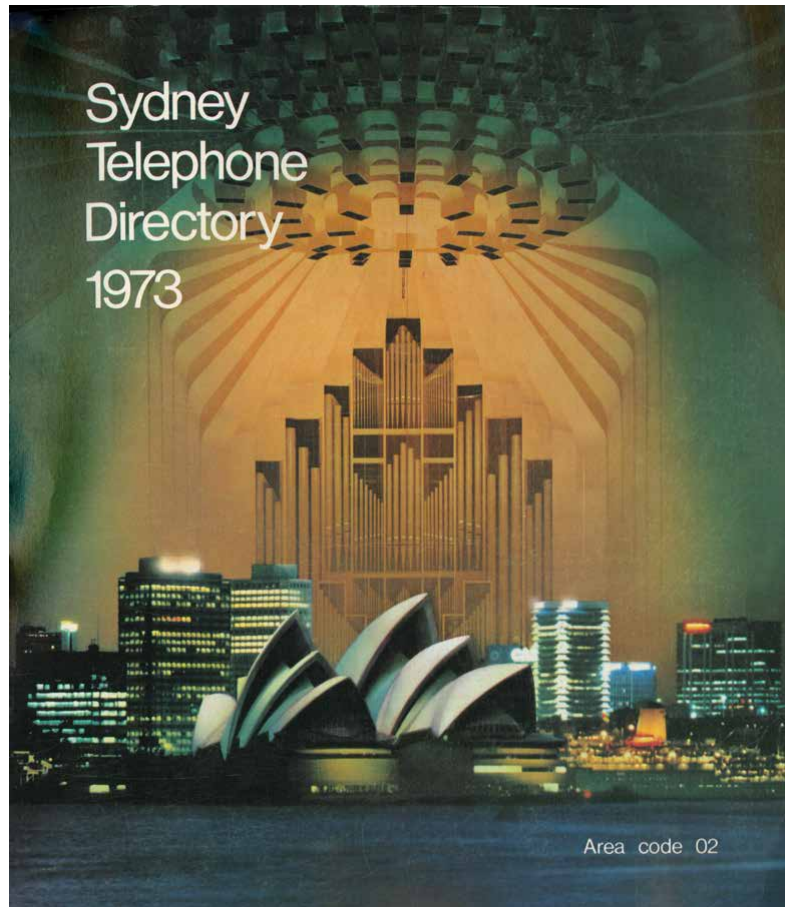
CHRISTA RUMSEY, who also studied with Heiller, taught, up unto the late 1970s, at the Sydney Conservatorium, and then moved to Adelaide to take up a teaching position there.

DONALD HOLLIER, organist and composer, was director of the Canberra Opera Company at the time of this recording.

A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, WILLIAM PIERCE was organist at a number of churches around Australia, Director of Music at various schools and Launceston City Organist for many years. He was a well-known recitalist and composer of liturgical music. He died in 1996.

The organ builder

Sydney organ builder Ronald Sharp (b.1929) specialises in mechanical, tracker action instruments, and he led the way in re-introducing mechanical action to Australia. Beauty of tone is his preoccupation. His first organ was at St Mary's Cathedral. Others include Knox Grammar School, Ormond College Organ (which has since been altered), Perth Concert Hall and Wollongong Town Hall.



Cover photo

The front cover photograph for this record comes from the cover of the 1973 Sydney Telephone Directory.

Produced by Australia Post at the request of the Opera House Trust, it was intended both to commemorate the opening of the Sydney Opera House, and to symbolize Sydney's cultural development.

The picture, designed by Mr Len Ives, is a combination of three photographs by Mr Gordon Smyth. A day shot of the Opera House shells was superimposed on a night shot of the Opera House and city skyline, and this in turn was combined with an interior photograph of the concert hall featuring the Grand Organ.

Move Records is grateful to Telecom (now Telstra) for providing the front cover photograph.

Other photographs were taken by Martin Wright.

Specification

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	Dulcian	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	Dulcian	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	Quintatön	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	Schalmel	4
113	Tremulant	

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	I
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

167	Glocken Reiterate
168	Kuckuck
169	Nachtigall
170	Zymbelstern
171	Tympanon

Glocken-Zymbelstern
Bronze Hand Bells

Tympanon
Soft Bass Drum Roll

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 tables

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	Positiv
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

Tremulant speed and depth controls
Glocken reiterate speed control
Zymbelstern speed and key controls
plus sequence adjusting
Crescendo pedal with 4 pistons to operate
Normal and 3 preset levels
Oberwerk main and echo swell pedals
Brustwerk swell pedal

CONSOLE AIDS

Direction reverse switches for swell and
crescendo pedals

ACTION

Key Action	Mechanical
Stop Action	Electro-Pneumatic
Couplers 77-80, 65	Mechanical
Couplers 66-70, 75-76	Electric
151-164	Electric

Percussions	Electric
Pistons	Electronic Capture
Automatic Playback	Electric
Wind Supply	9 Blowers

SUMMARY OF PIPES

Front pipes 95% tin

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

RECORDING FACILITIES

Piston recording tape deck on console

Complete piston settings recorded or reset
in 12 seconds.

100 complete settings may be stored on
one tape.

Duplicate tapes may be recorded.

Organ recording tape deck on console

The organ may be recorded on computer
tape and replayed as performed (but with
electric key action).

Replay controls are located in the Concert
Hall seating area and at the stage manager's
desk.

Uses in order of importance:

- 1 Organist records rehearsal and checks
registration and balance from audience
position and may use recorded
accompaniment during concerto
rehearsals.
- 2 Experimental music.
- 3 It is also possible, subject to union and
copyright requirements, for the organ
to be played from tapes.

COMMUNICATION AIDS

C.C.T.V.	— 2 screens on console
	Conductor
	General Stage
Speaker	— Organist from Stage
Telephone	— Organist to conductor/stage manager
Microphone	— Organist to P.A. system



Sydney's musical monster

IN the Weingarten Abbey in West Germany is the only organ that has ever made Ronald Sharp cry.

But no one will be surprised if Mr. Sharp is a little moist-eyed tonight at the inaugural public recital of the organ he has built for the Sydney Opera House. Any emotion shown by him will be attributed to ecstasy as the 10,500 pipes sing for the first time, and perhaps simple relief that the 10-year project has at last been finished.

The story of the Opera House organ parallels the eventful history of the building itself.

The organ, commissioned by the New South Wales Department of Public Works on May 16, 1969 with a projected completion time of six years and cost of \$400,000, was officially handed over to the Opera House management only last week at a cost three times the original estimate.

In the long, uneasy gestation, the organ has been described as "an absolute public scandal", "a ridiculous wastage of public funds".

There were calls for a full investigation, complaints that the contract for the organ had been let to Mr. Sharp without any tenders being called, claims that the organ represented profligate spending while other areas of the arts languished, and suggestions even that the instrument was out of touch with modern musical thought.

In April last year the NSW Deputy Premier, Mr. Jack Ferguson, announced with some understatement that "the Government has been concerned for some time that, notwithstanding the complexity of the organ building project, progress has been relatively slow".

Three workmen from the Austrian organ-building company Gregor Hradetzky were appointed to help to finish the organ.

So, when the general manager of the Opera House, Mr. Lloyd Martin, said on Tuesday: "It's hard to believe the day has actually arrived," no one doubted his sincerity.

The calm centre of the storm

From ALAN
ATTWOOD
in Sydney

has been Ronald Sharp himself.

Occasionally he would reply to criticism of himself and the project with pleas for patience and a refusal to make promises on a completion date. The organ would be finished when he was satisfied it was ready, not before.

But really, he said little. He was content to be left alone in a rather tatty skivvy, climbing the ladders behind the massive pipes, tinkering and tuning.

Ronald Sharp, born in Sydney in 1929, studied piano, violin and flute. His interest in organs began at 25. With a background in engineering and designing (and some experience as a fitter and turner, fruit packer and glider designer) he built his first organ, for St. Mary's Cathedral, in Sydney, in 1960.

He regards his lack of formal organ-design training as an asset. "With no experience, I could approach the projects with an open mind, not bound by orthodox rules," he said.

The Opera House organ, his eighteenth project, is the largest mechanical action organ in the world; it weighs 37 tonnes, with five keyboards and sound frequency range from 16 Hz to 16,000 Hz.

Mr. Sharp, tall and quietly spoken, appeared for a Press preview of the organ, but seemed enthusiastic only on technical topics — blowers, tuning, balancing the sound.

Yes, he is somewhat in love with the organ. "I always feel responsible for the organ's well-being, and feel a kind of part-ownership".

What about the criticisms? Well, wages of employees had gone up all the time, and initially he had had to work in an unfinished building.

"But I set out to build a musical instrument, not a piece of

machinery. Just as a great violin is more than catgut and wood, this is more than a piece of engineering, it's something creative and inspiring."

After being immersed in the project for so long, he is not sure how he feels now it is finished. It usually takes him about six months away from an organ he has built before he can sit back and listen detachedly.

Behind him as he spoke was the result of his work: metal pipes (95 per cent tin, 5 per cent lead) grouped symmetrically beside and above the main console like an enormous yawning mouth.

Almost apologetically, he conceded that a few of the front pipes were "dummies", non-sounding. "Sometimes you have to sacrifice musically for the sake of aesthetics". Sometimes, but not often.

Douglas Lawrence, the Melbourne organist who will play at tonight's recital, played snippets of Bach and Mozart. Mr. Sharp stood to one side, almost out through a door, listening with eyes half closed.

He says it will be three months before the pipes settle, and two years before the instrument has achieved the final stability necessary to judge its capacity and characteristics.

As Press people prepared to move up into the entrails of the organ, Mr. Sharp pleaded: "After all that loving care, please don't bump anything with your cameras, or touch the pipes".

At the top of a spiral staircase, among pipes extending back seven metres like a skeletal forest, were remnants of his 10-year labor: a table, on which lay tape and cushioning felt, screw-drivers atop wooden pipes, a dirty washbasin.

The playing console is an eagle's eyrie, 10 metres above the stage. Critics have claimed this is too remote, that the organ is too far from the orchestra and audience.

No, Ronald Sharp says, that is how it should be. The sound should come from above and around — from heaven, as it were.

More from the Sydney Opera House organ

Organ duets performed by Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen recorded in 1996:

Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel)

Adagio fur die Flutenohr (Beethoven)

Waltzing Matilda: Duet for Four Feet (Ampt)

Overture for Wind (Mendelssohn)

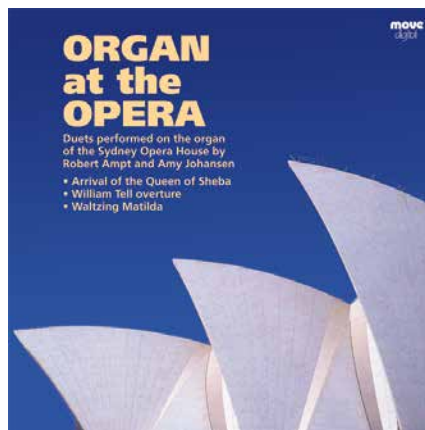
Blithe Bells (Grainger)

Rhapsody (Hakim)

Concierto I (Soler)

Niagara: Grand Galop de Concert (Godard)

Overture to William Tell (Rossini)



“This is an exceptional CD of both the Opera House instrument and the artistry of Robert Ampt and Amy Johansen ... the best organ duet recording I have encountered.”
Sydney Organ Journal



Thanks

The article from the *Melbourne Age* is reproduced by permission.

The organ specification comes from a booklet about the Grand Organ produced by the Publicity Department of the Sydney Opera House. It reflects the organ as it was in 1979.

Move Records would like to thank all the organists who took part in the historic Inaugural Series of recitals, and especially those whose performances are included here.

Thanks to Ann Blore and Elizabeth Anderson for their valuable assistance in auditioning tapes and compiling the original LP program notes.

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