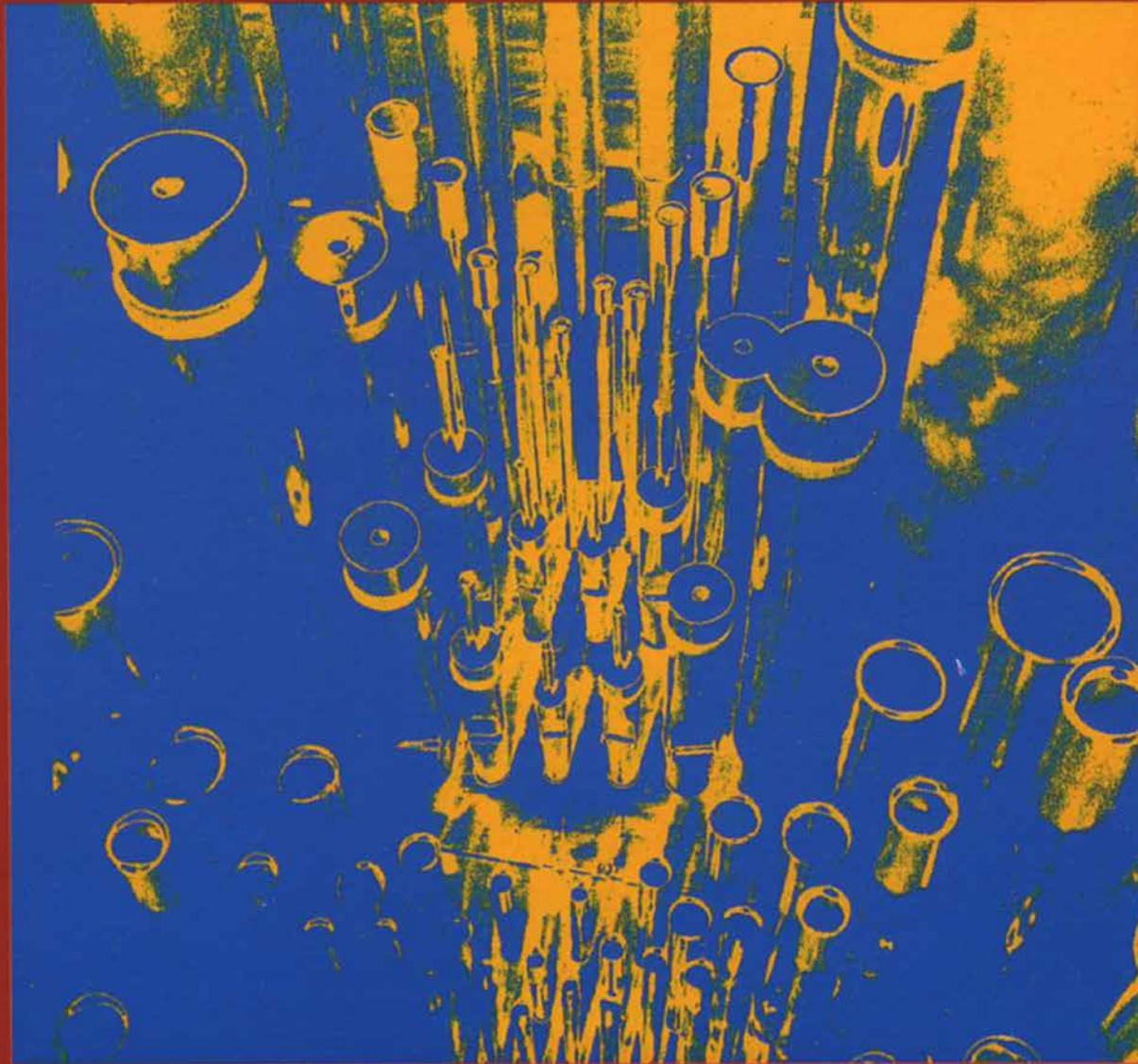


# pachelbel, his canon, and much more



move

Douglas Lawrence plays the  
Ronald Sharp organ at Ormond College

**"This record is in every respect a treasure"**

– John Sinclair from The Herald in 1976 on "The Best of Pachelbel"

The installation of an organ in the Ormond College Chapel built by the brilliant, eccentric Sydney organ builder Ronald Sharp in 1973-4 caused much excitement in Melbourne organ circles. His first mechanical-action organ at Knox Grammar School in Sydney was so highly praised that he was commissioned to build the organ at the Sydney Opera House. The Ormond College Chapel organ, while on a much smaller scale, demonstrated Sharp's talents and meticulous attention to detail. He spent more than 20 minutes voicing each of the 900 pipes. This digitally re-mixed and remastered CD is a reissue of the acclaimed **The Best of Pachelbel** LP, and highlights from its sequel **Buxtehude**, plus some previously un-released recordings made in 1976, featuring organist Douglas Lawrence. These are now the only recordings of the Sharp organ before it was rebuilt and enlarged in 1993. The final track on this CD is Pachelbel's much-loved Canon in D, on the newly refurbished organ.



**douglas lawrence**  
plays the  
**ronald sharp**  
organ at Ormond College

**1** Ormond College bell 0'29"

**Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)**

**2** Toccata in E minor 1'38"

**3** Fantasia in G minor 3'15"

**4** Toccata in C major 1'58"

**5** Chorale Prelude:  
*Komm Heiliger Geist* 1'17"

**6** Ricercar in C minor 4'46"

**7** Ciacona in F minor 7'30"

**8** Chorale Prelude:  
*Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* 1'41"

**9** Chorale Prelude:  
*Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund* 2'43"

**10** Chorale Prelude: *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (a)* 1'33"

**11** Chorale Prelude: *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (b)* 3'04"

**Maurice Greene (1695-1755)**

**12** Diapason 1'53"

**Matthew Camidge (1758-1844)**

**13** Gavotte 1'59"

**Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)**

**14** Echo: ad manuale duplex, forte e piano 1'49"

**15** Air and 4 variations on the old Dutch song "Ah, you fine young horseman" 5'55"

**Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)**

**16** Ciacona in E minor 5'26"

**17** *Ach Herr, mich armen Sunder (Ah, Lord, in wrath chastise not)* 2'53"

**18** *Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist (We now implore the Holy Ghost)* 2'13"

**19** Prelude and Fugue in D minor 5'24"

**20** *Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ (Praise be to thee Lord Jesus Christ)* 1'49"

**21** *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen (From God shall naught drive me)* 1'50"

**22** Passacaglia in D minor 5'49"

**23** *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland (Come, saviour of the heathen)* 1'53"

**24** *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland (Jesus Christ, our Lord Redeemer)* 1'56"

**Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)**

**25** Canon in D major 5'33"

**J**ohann Pachelbel (1653-1706) was born in Nuremberg where his father was a wine merchant. He studied music as a youth and while at University he was organist at Altdorf and Vienna and became assistant organist, continuing his studies under Johann Kaspar Kerll. Pachelbel spent the year 1677 as court organist at Eisenach, seat of the Esterhazy family. He then found a position at the Theological Hall Church in Erfurt and there laid the foundation of work which was to make him famous as an outstanding organist, composer and teacher. He became known in England and was offered a position at Oxford. However, from Erfurt he moved back to Nuremberg and remained there at St. Sebaldus' church until his death.

Pachelbel was at his best when writing keyboard music. Most of his works survived only in manuscript and were first printed late in the eighteenth century. His music is distinguished by its thorough workmanship, quiet beauty and frequent touches of inventive brilliance which take it quite out of the realm of the ordinary. He is a link in the chain running from Frescobaldi through Froberger, Kerll and Muffat.

The works on this recording show most of Pachelbel's compositional styles. The **Toccata in E minor** and **Toccata in C major** are brilliant lively finger teasing pieces; rays of sunlight. The **Fantasia in G minor**, slower moving, more

considered perhaps, gradually works through a series of chromaticisms almost like a good player improvising. The **Ciacona in F minor**, arguably Pachelbel's finest organ piece, has long been held in high esteem. Over a simple falling theme there are 21 exquisite variations. This piece allows a player to explore the registrational possibilities of a fine pipe organ.

*Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ* is a simple canonic working out of the chorale theme, whilst *Da Jesu an dem Kreuze Stund* presents us with a poignant picture of the Lord Jesus hanging on the cross, the notes seemingly reluctant to sound, themselves hanging in the air.

There are two variations on *Vom Himmel Hoch*, one a rather cheeky little number played here on three 4 foot stops and the second a boisterous treatment of this Christmas chorale starting in a dignified matter but soon exploding in a cascade of semiquavers.

The **Canon** by Pachelbel has been one of the worlds favourite works during the 1990s. Again, essentially a simple but beautiful musical structure, the piece allows the flutes of the organ to be heard to great effect.

**O**rganist of both St Paul's Cathedral and of the Chapel Royal, Maurice Green (1695-1755) belongs to the great Bach-Handel era. He also held the position of master of

the King's Band and Professor of Music at Cambridge University. With all this he composed a fine body of music: songs, theatre music and much church music. Handel much admired his organ music.

**M**atthew Camidge — This remarkable family supplied the organists of York Minster for a century. They were John I 1735-1803, who had been a pupil of Maurice Green and of Handel, John's son Matthew, organist from 1799-1842 and Matthew's son John, organist from 1842-59. The delightful **Gavotte** on this disc is typical of Matthew Camidge's ebullient style, an elegant, bubbling, effervescent piece of writing.

**S**amuel Scheidt (1587-1654) was a pupil of Sweelinck and renowned as organist and composer in his day. In 1624 he published his *Tabulatura Nova*, opening new possibilities for organ playing with his methodical yet inspired compositions. Another important collection was the *Tablaturbuch*, a series of harmonized chorales.

**D**ietrich Buxtehude was born in Denmark in 1637. As a young man he moved to Germany and spent the greater part of his life as organist at the Marienkirche in Lubeck. It was to this church that J.S. Bach made his now famous pilgrimage to listen to

the music of his older contemporary. Bach stayed in Lubeck for longer than he had intended and it is certain that he found much to learn in the masterly and infinitely varied music coming from the organ loft of the Marienkirche.

Buxtehude wrote much ensemble music but it is his organ works which place him in such a pre-eminent position. He is indisputably the finest composer for the organ to precede Bach. Buxtehude composed in a manner which fully exploited the wonderful organs of his time both in their gentle beauty and their overwhelming majesty. When he died in 1707, he left a unique legacy of some of the finest and most musically convincing works ever composed.

The **Ciacona in E minor** is based on a seven note figure spread over an octave. After ten variations the bass is changed and then fragmented. After various permutations the theme returns to the pedals, rhythmically altered. The manuals again take over and the music becomes more complex harmonically. The pedals then play a figure which the manuals copy and the work draws to a close with the original theme pushed on by a new dotted rhythm in the pedals, the manuals playing sequential thirds and sixths until the final three bar cadential section.

The **Prelude and Fugue in D minor** is a typical multiple sectioned work of the German high baroque. It is divided

## Sharp organ 1973-1993

### HAUPTWERK

Rohrflöte	8
Prestant	4
Nazard	2-2/3
Flachflöte	2
Terz	1 3/5
Mixtur	III

### RÜCKPOSITIV

Gedakt	8
Rohrflöte	4
Prinzipal	2
Quinte	1 1/3
Zimbel	I-II
Krummhorn	8

### PEDAL

Subbass	16
Gedackt	8
Bassflöte	4
Fagott	16

### COUPLERS

Hauptwerk to Rückpositiv
Hauptwerk to Pedal
Rückpositiv to Pedal
Zymbelstern
Tremulant (both keyboards)

into a prelude (toccata), fugue, interlude (recitative), interlude (fugato), and toccata.

The **Passacaglia** is a beautifully constructed work consisting of twenty eight variations over a ground bass – not dissimilar to that of the Bach Passacaglia. The variations divide into four equal sections, each of which is separated by a two bar interlude.

Buxtehude brought the chorale prelude to perfection with his personal and masterly treatment. He displayed in these compositions a perfect amalgam of the needs of an advanced organ technique and a sympathetic, subjective treatment of the chorale texts. Most of his preludes present the theme in a highly ornamented fashion, adding much expressive power. An exception is the prelude *Jesus Christus unser Heiland*, which has the unornamented melody written in the upper part, but played here using a four foot stop in the pedal. *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* has much more complexity than a normal prelude, and is really a chorale fantasia.

Great excitement heralded the inauguration of the new Ormond College Organ when installation was completed early in 1974. Built by Ronald Sharp of Sydney, it was a recreation in modern materials of a small 18th century organ. Although the specification reads as that of a classical

organ, the builder's intention was that the organ should be capable of being used in the performance of a wide range of music.

During the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries, the action of organs underwent changes – from mechanical to pneumatic, electro-pneumatic and finally direct electric. None of the latter three has offered the responsiveness and control of attack which mechanical action provides. Sharp's Ormond College organ and his other mechanical organs restored the purely mechanical connection between the key and the pipe, allowing the player greater powers of expression and subtlety.

Ronald Sharp first came to prominence in 1965 with the installation of a mechanical organ at Knox Grammar School in Sydney. He was the first Australian organ builder to re-evaluate his work in light of the Organ Reform movement which advocated a return to the old principles of construction in Europe. Sharp amazed organ builders and musicians alike by building instruments comparable with those built by the very large and long-established European firms. In 1979 his new instrument for the Sydney Opera House was opened. It has five manuals and 127 stops, and was then the largest mechanical organ in the world.

For a world renowned organ builder,

Sharp had the somewhat unusual job as a filing clerk in the public service until the age of 29, when he was so impressed at a choral concert by the acoustic of St. Mary's Cathedral that he offered to build the cathedral an organ if they were to need one. Sharp had made some pipes in imitation of the famous organ in Capel, Southern Germany, and when the choirmaster at St. Mary's heard them he was so impressed by their sound that Sharp was commissioned to build his first organ there.

Instead of taking up an apprenticeship like most aspiring organ builders, Sharp taught himself, obtaining his knowledge second-hand from magazine articles, books, recordings and photographs. Nevertheless he had enough genius and dedication for Peter Hurford to wax lyrical about Sharp and the Knox Grammar School organ, his first mechanical organ, completed in 1965:

"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'. Now this is so rare that it was a sign to me that the man who built this has put his soul into it, not just work but the very essence of his being has gone into it."

Such praise earned Sharp a commission for the Sydney Opera House organ, on which he worked between 1970 and 1979.

Meanwhile the 900-pipe Ormond

College organ was manufactured in Sharp's Sydney workshops and freighted to Melbourne in thousands of pieces in December 1973. Within ten days it was assembled, then each of the 900 pipes had to be carefully 'voiced' – checking its sound in relation to the rest of the organ and the chapel's acoustic, a long, slow process that progressed at the rate of about 100 pipes per week. Sharp likened the process of voicing to that of Michelangelo carving a sculpture he could already see from a plain block of marble. The unvoiced organ was like the block of marble, and he had to "... [cut] away the rubbish to reveal the organ's true qualities." The result was a superlative instrument.

By 1993 the mechanism of the organ had deteriorated because of constant playing. Also the ever increasing role of the college choir in the life of the chapel had led to a re-evaluation of the demands made upon the organ. It was decided to rebuild the organ and Melbourne builder Knud Smenge was entrusted with the work. Whilst respecting Ronald Sharp's original intentions, Smenge has created a virile, beautiful and altogether useful instrument. The only piece on this disc recorded after the rebuild is the **Canon**.



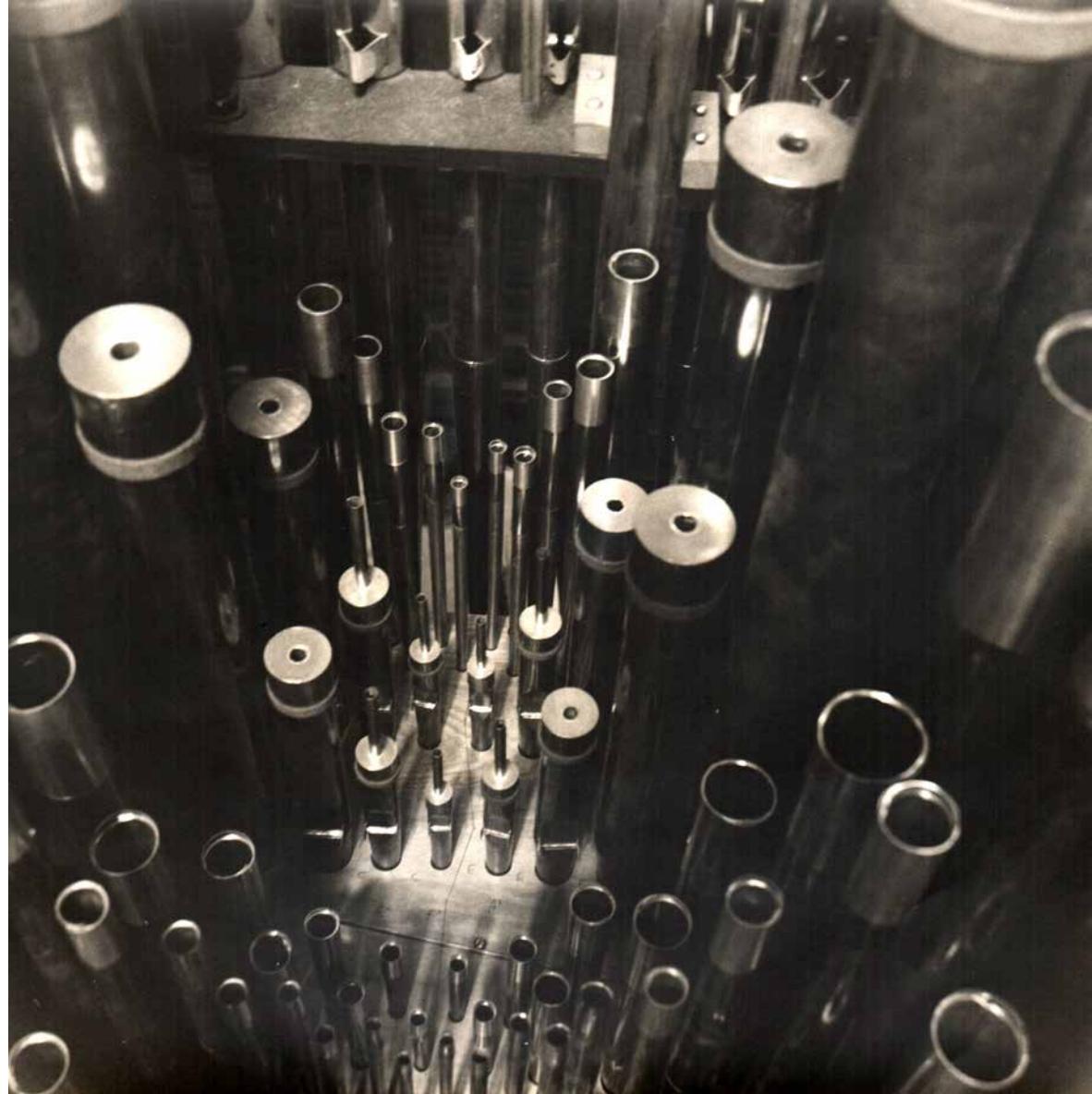
**D**ouglas Lawrence completed a Masters Degree in Music at Melbourne University in 1969. He then spent two years in the Concert Class of the Vienna Academy and during that time began a concert career which has since taken him throughout most of the Western world.

Lawrence performs each year in Europe and has played at many of the most prestigious venues, earning the enthusiastic praise of critics. The international press has given the highest praise to Lawrence for his work with the Choir of Ormond College, frequently describing it as one of the world's finest choirs.

In Melbourne, Douglas Lawrence is Master of the Chapel Music at Ormond College, Teacher of Organ at the University of Melbourne, Director of Music to the Scots Church and conductor of the Melbourne Bach Orchestra. He has released a series of recordings covering organ music from earliest times until the present day, including new works especially composed for him.

He has appeared as soloist for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in the major subscription series, youth concerts, contemporary series and on television and radio. In 1991, Lawrence was honoured with the medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his services to music.





- Original recordings made 1975 and 1977 produced by Nicholas Alexander and Martin Wright
  - "Canon" recording (March 1995): Martin Wright ■ Registration assistants: Rod Junor and Elizabeth Anderson
  - Digital remixing and remastering from original 4-track tapes: Martin Wright ■ Editing of previously unreleased tracks: Vaughan McAlley ■ Photograph of the organ: Campbell McAdam ■ Photographs of Douglas Lawrence and the console: Paul Wright ■ Program notes: Douglas Lawrence and Vaughan McAlley (with thanks to John Maidment, John Sinclair of The Herald)
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