



A recital of
organ music
from St. Paul's
Cathedral,
Melbourne

PETER
NICHOLSON

works by
Liszt
Brahms
Franck
Tournemire
Langlais
Messiaen

FANTASIA AND FUGUE ON B.A.C.H. Liszt
HYMNE D'ACTION DE GRACE ("Te Deum") Langlais

ELF CHORALVORSPIELE Op. 122 Brahms

- 2 "Herzliebster Jesu"
- 5 "Schmucke dich, o liebe Seele"
- 10 "Herzlich tut mich verlangen"
- 11 "O Welt, ich muss dich lassen"

FANTAISIE SUR LE TE DEUM ET GUIRLANDES

ALLELUIATIQUE Tournemire

CHORAL No. 2 IN B MINOR Franck

**TRANSPORTS DE JOIE D'UNE AME DEVANT LA GLOIRE
DU CHRIST QUI EST LA SIENNE** Messiaen

The works selected for this recording represent a variety of styles in organ music over a period of some eighty years. Three of the works come from the latter half of the nineteenth century, whilst the remaining three were written in the first half of this century.

The earliest of the works presented is Liszt's **Fantasia and Fugue on B.A.C.H.** (German notation for the notes B flat, A, C and B natural). It was written in 1855, during the time that he was Court Musical Director at Weimar, a time when Liszt produced some of his most important works, including the great Sonata in B minor for piano, and the famous Faust Symphony, completed the previous year. As the piano occupied such an important place in Liszt's career, it is not surprising that the *Fantasia and Fugue on B.A.C.H.* is decidedly pianistic in style. The fugue is not consistently contrapuntal, as with a Bach fugue, but is interspersed with rhapsodic episodes. It is a very exciting work, full of the fiery, dynamic display typical of much of his writing.

The *Trois Chorals* of César Franck were written in 1890, the last year of Franck's life. They are not chorales in the traditional sense, as with the Brahms pieces, but rather are works based on chorale-like themes. The **Choral No. 2 in B minor** is a suite of variations based on three such themes. The first is treated in the manner of a passacaglia, and is

heard in four variations before the entry of the second theme, the development of which is more contrapuntal, more highly chromatic, and is very romantic in sentiment. The third element is, by way of contrast, much more gentle and serene in nature, and is in the key of B major. The second half, which begins with a fantasia section, leads eventually to a combining of the first two elements, and there is a gradual build up towards the final triumphant statement of the opening theme on full organ. The work concludes with a return of the B major section, to finish in a mood of calm and serenity.

Like the Franck work, the **11 Chorale Preludes** of Brahms, written in 1896, were the last pieces which the composer produced. Unlike the Franck work however, they are more in keeping with the traditional chorale-based works. They are examples of his writing which perhaps more than any other, earn him the reputation of the great conservative amongst romantic composers, although they are certainly not lacking in innovation. Most especially in the last two settings, "*Herzlich tut mich verlangen*" with its restless accompaniment, and "*O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*" in its cadence sections, is Brahms' individual style much in evidence. They are arguably the finest pieces in this form since Bach.

Charles Tournemire was a pupil of Franck and Widor. He became organist at St. Clotilde, Paris in 1898, and in 1919 was appointed a professor at the Conservatoire. The **Fantaisie** which appears on this recording comes from a collection of organ masses called *L'Orgue Mystique*, which was published between 1927 and 1932. There are a total of fifty-one masses in the collection, one for each of the fifty-one offices of the liturgical year. Each one contains five pieces: *Prélude à l'Introit*; *Offertoire*; *Elévation*; *Communion*; and *Pièce Terminale*. All the pieces use Gregorian plain-chant as the chief source of inspiration. In the case of the work selected for this recording, which is the terminal piece from No. 51 of the set, it is the "*Te Deum*" plain-chant which forms the basis of the work. It is treated with great rhythmic freedom, giving the work an improvisatory air.

The Messiaen piece, which in translation is called “Outbursts of joy from a soul before the Glory of Christ which is its own glory”, comes from his suite *L’Ascension*, written in 1933. It is the third of four pieces which go to make up the suite. Some may be familiar with the orchestral version of *L’Ascension* which Messiaen produced the following year. In this version a completely new movement replaces “**Transports de joie . . .**” as it is very much a keyboard toccata in style, and would not be suitable for orchestral transcription. It is a mixture of staccato chords and broader pedal themes, the elements being later combined as the piece builds in excitement.

Langlais’ “**Hymne d’Action de Grâce**” was composed in 1935. It is a very different treatment of the *Te Deum* plain-chant to that of Tournemire. Unlike the free improvisatory nature of Tournemire’s setting, this work falls into three clearly defined sections. In the first section, the plain-chant is broken into short phrases and interspersed with loud chordal passages. The second section is built on the words “*In te Domini speravi, non confundar in aeternum*” (“In thee, O Lord have I trusted, let me never be confounded”), which Langlais describes as “. . . a great crescendo symbolizing hope”. The final section is the climax of the piece “. . . like an affirmation of that hope”.



THE ORGANIST

Peter Nicholson studied organ at St. Paul’s Cathedral with June Nixon, the Cathedral Organist. In 1976 he was awarded the Herbert Davis Memorial Prize, and two years later, obtained first-class honours in fourth year practical studies in organ at the University of Melbourne. In 1979 he gained a Fellowship from Trinity College, London in organ performing, and also spent some time studying the works of Bach and Messiaen with Gillian Weir. He later went to Paris, and there studied with Jean Langlais, covering the interpretation of the works of César Franck, Charles Tournemire, and of course, Langlais’ own works. In 1981 he obtained a Licentiate from the Royal Academy of Music. He currently teaches organ, piano and musicianship at Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College, and is Assistant Organist at St. Paul’s Cathedral.



THE ORGAN

The organ of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne was built in 1890 by T.C. Lewis of London. It was dismantled in 1929, at the time the central tower was being constructed, and was then rebuilt by Hill, Norman & Beard. The organ was given a new console, new electro-pneumatic action, and an orchestral organ was added, but all of the original Lewis tonal scheme was preserved. It is a most splendid example of 19th century organ building at its finest, and is one of the few large 19th century organs which has not suffered from drastic tonal alterations.

This digital recording was made using Sony equipment. Each work was recorded in one complete take, without any editing.

Front cover illustration: Robert Marsden
Photo: Peter Bainbridge
Produced by Martin Wright

SOLO

Tuba	8'
Clarinet	8'
Vox Humana	8'
Orchestral Oboe	8'
Harmonic Flute	4'
Harmonic Flute	8'
Tremulant	

SWELL

Clarion	4'
Oboe	8'
Horn	8'
Contra Fagotto	16'
Mixture	III
Flautina	2'
Rohr Flute	4'
Principal	4'
Voix Celestes	8'
Vox Angelica	8'
Viol da Gamba	8'
Rohr Flute	8'
Open Diapason	8'
Bourdon	16'
Tremulant	

COUPLERS

Solo Octave
Solo Suboctave
Solo to Great
Swell Octave
Swell Suboctave
Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Choir to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Choir to Pedal
Solo to Pedal
Pedal Comp. to Solo Pistons
Pedal Comp. to Swell Pistons
Pedal Comp. to Great Pistons
Pedal Comp. to Choir Pistons
Doubles Off

*ORCHESTRAL

Tuba Mirabilis	4'
Tuba Mirabilis	8'
Tuba Mirabilis	16'
Tibia Clausa	4'
Tibia Clausa	8'
Viol d'Orchestre	4'
Viol d'Orchestre	8'
Viol d'Orchestre	16'
Orchestral to Pedal	

GREAT

Clarion	4'
Trumpet	8'
Double Trumpet	16'
Mixture	IV
Fifteenth	2'
Twelfth	2 2/3'
Gemshorn	4'
Principal	4'
Gamba	8'
Flute Harmonique	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Open Diapason II	8'
Open Diapason I	8'
Bourdon	16'

CHOIR

Corno di Bassetto	8'
Piccolo Harmonic	2'
Flauto Traverso	4'
Lieblich Flute	4'
Dulciana	8'
Salicional	8'
Lieblich Gedeckt	8'
Lieblich Gedeckt	16'

PEDAL

Posaune	16'
Bass Flute	8'
Violoncello	8'
Quint	10 2/3'
Violone	16'
Bourdon	16'
Open Diapason	16'
Double Open Diapason	32'

*The Orchestral division does not have a separate manual, but may be coupled to any of the four manuals or to the pedal.