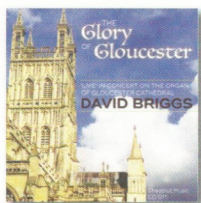


THE GLORY OF GLOUCESTER

David Briggs Live in Concert

Bach *Sinfonia from Cantata 29; Fugue à la Gigue; Chorale Prelude 'O Mensch bewein, deine Sünde groß'*; Dupré *Prelude & Fugue in F min; Cocherneau Cantem toto la Gloria*; Reger *Chorale Fantasia 'Straf' mich nicht in deinem Zorn*; Mahler trans Briggs *Adagietto from Symphony No. 5*; Briggs *Disneyrama*; Alain *Litanies*; Ravel arr Seutin *Pavane pour une enfante défunte*; Widor *Allegro from Symphony No. 6; Improvisations on 'Darwell's 148', 'BACH' and 'Hereford'*.

CHESTNUT MUSIC CD 011 (2CDs) TT 111:05



David Briggs and Gloucester are still synonymous some years after his departure, and the organ bears to this day the imprint of the tonal alterations which he supervised in 1999. After the rebuild by Hill, Norman & Beard in 1971 it had spoken with a distinctly French accent, and the 1999 work by Nicholson's added pedal stops of a distinctly French character, making the organ especially suitable for the Continental repertoire and French-style improvisation of which Mr Briggs is such a renowned exponent. These two CDs were recorded in April 2016 at a public concert and at a private recital for the local organists' association, so there is a certain amount of rather desultory applause. The recorded sound is somewhat distant and over-reverberant, but it certainly conveys the special atmosphere of this magnificent cathedral. Perhaps the work of greatest interest to collectors will be Reger's mighty set of variations on the tune known to us as *Wurttemberg*, commonly sung to 'Christ the Lord is risen again'. Player and organ do not seem quite comfortable with this music, and at times the chorale melody disappears without trace. Otherwise one might observe that Mr Briggs likes his music fast, furious and noisy; in music of a more reflective nature he does not always succeed in imparting a sense of forward movement to a slow-paced melody. One should not be over-critical, for he is a very fine player, and there is much to enjoy here.

Timothy Storey

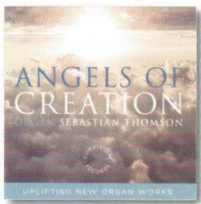
ANGELS OF CREATION

Sebastian Thomson plays

the organ of Keble College, Oxford

Hewitt Jones *Angels of Creation*; Briggs *Berceuse; Toccata for St Matthew's Day*; Simon Whalley *Festal Paeon*; Bednall *Rhapsody*; Moore *Variations: Noël Nouvelet*; Neil Cox *Laudate*; John Hosking *The Fourteen Stations of the Cross*.

CONVIVIUM RECORDS LC 30867 TT 76:00



Promoting contemporary organ music both 'live' and on disc is far from easy. Sebastian Thomson is to be congratulated in commissioning works for this CD, a collection of new works for organ. The first is David Bednall's *Rhapsody*, premiered at St Paul's Cathedral in 2010. The subsequent commissions were premiered on the organ at Keble College, also the venue of this recording. The additional works by David Briggs and Philip Moore effectively complement the commissioned compositions. I enjoyed many of the pieces, especially Thomas Hewitt Jones's jubilant and exciting writing conceived both harmonically and melodically in a style reflecting neo-English roots. Simon Whalley's *Festal Paeon* and Neil Cox's *Laudate* are full of character and do not make particularly taxing listening or likewise, the pieces by Philip Moore and David Briggs. David Bednall's output is usually most accessible, but the *Rhapsody* is deliberately uncompromising especially in

its use of the tritone when combined with dense harmonic writing. Bearing in mind the size of St Paul's, the inaugural performance might well have created a different impression. The improvisatory quality in John Hosking's *Fourteen Stations of the Cross* effectively explores the conflicting moods and emotions within the Stations and demonstrates the superb wealth of colours on the Tickell instrument in Keble. Thomson's performances are exemplary, and the recording balance captures the space of the chapel admirably.

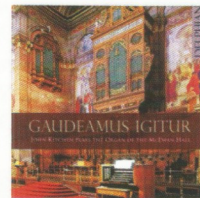
David Thorne

GAUDEAMUS IGITUR

John Kitchen plays the organ of the McEwan Hall, University of Edinburgh

Anon *Gaudeamus igitur*; Cecilia McDowall *Celebration*; Johan Helmich Roman *Sinfonia di chiesa*; Purcell *3 Trumpet Tunes*; André Campra *Rigaudon*; Leighton *Et resurrexit*; Hollins *Concert Overture in C*; Widor *Marcia from Symphony No. 3*; Salomé *Grand Choeur in G*; Guilmant *Marche religieuse*; Handel *Overture & March*.

DELPHIAN DCD 34163 TT 72:00



John Kitchen is Organist to the University of Edinburgh, and this recording is the first to be made on the restored organ in the McEwan Hall, and very fine it sounds. The title of the CD reflects the ceremonial rôle that Kitchen and the organ play in the life of the university. His programme further stresses the link with pieces that would feature at graduation ceremonies covering processions of the academic body into and out of the hall. Three composers are featured who have especial significance, being closely connected to music life in Edinburgh.

Alfred Hollins's *Concert Overture in C major* is a classic of the genre, guaranteed to get the toes tapping. Kenneth Leighton was for many years the Professor of Music at the university, and it is really good to have this excellent performance of *Et resurrexit*. This is a major contribution to the corpus of organ music written in these isles during the 20th century. One of Leighton's students was Cecilia McDowall, and *Celebration* was written for a graduation ceremony at the University of Portsmouth in 2014, thus neatly tying together the main strands of this recital.

John Kitchen delivers all with his usual brand of panache and sensitivity, and the organ's voice is splendidly captured in this vivid recording.

Roger Judd

**Brian Mills is studying
the work involved in bringing
Bernstein's Chichester Psalms
to Chichester Cathedral
(2018 is Bernstein's centennial).
If any reader has recollections of this
event in 1960, please do be in touch
with him – chi.psalms.65@gmail.com
or 01243 513503.**