

OWL NIGHT

music for organ by Carson Cooman : vol. 7

intangible classics



ERIK SIMMONS

OWL NIGHT: organ music by Carson Cooman

	Two Mantras (2017)		10:20
1	I Meditation (In paradisum)	5:17	
2	II Postludium (Deo gratias)	5:04	
3	Owl Night (2016)		8:39
	Concerto piccolo (in memoriam Eberhard Kraus) (2017)		10:14
4	I Capriccio	3:43	
5	II Arietta	3:22	
6	III Chorale (Scholion)	3:10	
7	Cantio mystica (2017)		3 :43
8	Ricercare in epidiatessaron (2016)		3 :03
	Two Fantasias (2016)		10:29
9	I Fantasia solenne	6:03	
10	II Fantasia pro organo pleno	4:27	
11	Preludio maestoso (2016)		3:59
12	Preludio con ostinato (2016)		2:40
13	Preludio staccato (2016)		2:10
14	Preludio quasi eco (2016)		3:03
15	Preludio festive (2016)		3:47
16	Postludium (2017)		3:40
17	Toccata, Aria, and Finale (2017)		12:02
	TOTAL PLAYING TIME:		77:52

ERIK SIMMONS

The organ of the Abbey of Saint-Étienne, Caen, France
Aristide Cavallé-Coll, 1882–85; Model by Jiří Žůrek, 2013

The works collected on this CD date from the second half of 2016 and the first half of 2017 and were written relatively near each other temporally. While I believe that they all live within the world of my musical style, there are various kinds of expression explored, and I think they represent well a diversity of things that I like to do when writing organ music. As always, different pieces begin with different expressive goals and the resulting music reflects that. As Erik Simmons and I assembled this recording, we put them together in a grouping that we felt made for a listening experience that was both connected and diverse.

Two Mantras (2017; op. 1187) are dedicated to German-Sorbian composer and organist Felix Bräuer. A mantra is a repeated word or phrase, often chanted or sung in the manner of a prayer. These two pieces explore the concept musically, each extensively employing repeated patterns: both direct repetition and repetition with small variation. *Meditation (In paradisum)* is very quiet and extremely serene. Floating harmonies in the hands gradually shift while a slow line in the pedal slowly descends. *Postludium (Deo gratias)* sets up a perpetual motion toccata through which the harmonies change and are repeated.

Owl Night (2016; op. 1134) was written for German composer and organist Eva-Maria Houben. It is very quiet, atmospheric music of expandable duration.

Concerto piccolo (in memoriam Eberhard Kraus) (2017; op. 1180) is titled in memory of the prolific German composer Eberhard Kraus (1931–2003). Like his father before him, Kraus was cathedral organist in Regensburg, Germany for many years. He was also a very active composer, teacher, editor of early music editions, recording artist (including the complete keyboard works of Handel), and touring recitalist (on both harpsichord and organ).

As a composer, Kraus developed a personal blend of 12-tone technique with non-functional triadic harmony, resulting in a distinct and individual language that he used in nearly all his compositions. The resulting music possesses an intriguing blend of new and old, always presented with an economy of gesture and sense for maximum potential of the material's development.

This work is dedicated to Kraus's widow (Brigitte) and son (Wolfgang), also an organist. The music is based on the 12-tone row used in Kraus's own *Concerto piccolo für Orgelpositiv* (1988), part of his series *Concerti dodecaptonici*.

Although the source material is the same, my resulting piece is quite different due to a new musical structure, different emotional state, and my own approach to the set material. Kraus's set is used in its prime form (*Capriccio*), inversion (*Arietta*), and retrograde ("Krebs") plus retrograde inversion (*Chorale*).

Cantio mystica (2017; op. 1181) is dedicated to German composer and organist Wolfram Graf. It is an atmospheric and mystical contemplation.

Ricercare in epidiatessaron (2016; op. 1176) is a ricercare employing the Restarting Pitch Space modal harmony system (originally developed by Carson Cooman in 2005). It is dedicated to Italian organist Luca Massaglia. "Epidiatessaron" refers to the entrance of the second voice at the interval of a fourth above the first voice.

Two Fantasias (2016; op. 1170) are contrasting pieces that develop some of the same musical material in different guises. They are dedicated to German organist and composer Raimund Schächer. *Fantasia solenne* explores an atmosphere throughout that is bittersweet: warm and sad. *Fantasia pro organo pleno* is majestic and energetic music for the organ's full chorus.

Preludio maestoso (2016; op. 1173) is dedicated to German composer and organist Reiner Gaar. As the title suggests, the music is largely majestic in character, although with quiet echoes that follow the main statements.

Preludio con ostinato (2016; op. 1172) is dedicated to German composer and organist Dietrich Höpfner. An an ostinato (a continually repeated musical phrase) runs throughout.

Preludio staccato (2016; op. 1171) is dedicated to German composer and organist Markus Nickel. It is a short prelude in which most all of the notes are played staccato ("detached.")

Preludio quasi eco (2016; op. 1174) is dedicated to Burkhard and Petra Mohr. The music is animated by a contrast between fuller and quieter ("echo") sounds.

Preludio festivo (2016; op. 1175) is dedicated to German composer and organist Erich Koch. It is a grand and majestic festive prelude.

Postludium (2017; op. 1182) is dedicated to Danish organist and composer Flemming Chr. Hansen. Repeating patterns run throughout.

Toccata, Aria, and Finale (2017; op. 1181) was commissioned in memory of Dorothy Virginia Garman Blankenship Laurie for the ongoing dedication events and recitals for the “Jennie Laurie Memorial Organ” at St. Andrew’s Catholic Church in Roanoke, Virginia. The three parts of the piece combine to form a whole, in which two very extroverted outer parts surround the quieter aria.

Carson Cooman © 2017

THE COMPOSER

Carson Cooman (b. 1982) is an American composer with a catalog of hundreds of works in many forms—ranging from solo instrumental pieces to operas, and from orchestral works to hymn tunes. His music has been performed on all six inhabited continents in venues that range from the stage of Carnegie Hall to the basket of a hot air balloon. Cooman’s work appears on over forty recordings, including more than twenty complete CDs on the Naxos, Albany, Artek, Gothic, Divine Art, Métier, Diversions Altarus, Convivium, MSR Classics, Raven, and Zimbel labels. Cooman’s primary composition studies were with Bernard Rands, Judith Weir, Alan Fletcher, and James Willey.

As an active concert organist, Cooman specializes in the performance of contemporary music. Over 300 new compositions by more than 100 international composers have been written for him, and his organ performances can be heard on a number of CD releases and more than 1,200 recordings available online. Cooman is also a writer on musical subjects, producing articles and reviews frequently for a number of international publications. He serves as an active consultant on music business matters to composers and performing organizations, specializing particularly in the area of composer estates and archives. For more information, visit www.carsoncooman.com



Carson
Cooman

THE PERFORMER

Erik Simmons started playing the organ at age 10 when he was a chorister at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Glendale, California. His primary organ teacher was Richard Slater. Erik has furthered his studies by working with Lanny Collins, Barbara Baird, and Lee Garrett, and through master classes with various clinicians, including Harald Vogel. Erik is a Founder and Principal of nuCognitive LLC, and has worked for nearly 30 years in the field of new product development for various firms.

Erik holds a BA in applied mathematics and MS in mathematical modeling from Humboldt State University. As an organist, he has recorded several CDs of music, including "Or Nous Dites Marie: A French Romantic Christmas," "Reflection and Praise," "Organ Music by James Woodman" (Soundspells), and nine CDs of the music of American composer Carson Cooman, including "Litany", "Masque", "Preludio", "Hymnus", "Exordium", and "The Cloak with the Stars" for Divine Art.



Erik
Simmons

THE ORGAN

Organ of the Abbey of Saint-Étienne, Caen, France

Aristide Cavallé-Coll, 1882–85

Model by Jiří Žůrek (Institute for Classical Studies,
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague), 2013

The Abbey of Saint-Étienne (Abbey aux Hommes) was founded by William the Conqueror in 1066 and since that time has served as a center of education and musical life for its entire region. There were several varied organs in the church over the centuries, but in 1882, the greatest French organ builder of the era, Aristide Cavallé-Coll was asked to submit a proposal for a new instrument. In 1885 he and his firm completed the organ, which remains to this day as a magnificent, unaltered example of his late work. (*Adapted from notes by Jan Skaváril*)

This recording was produced in live performance via the Hauptwerk system.

The virtual model was created as part of the Sonus Paradisi project: www.sonusparadisi.cz

ORGAN SPECIFICATION

Grand Orgue (Man. I)

Montre 16
Bourdon 16
Montre 8
Gambe 8
Bourdon 8
Flûte harmonique 8
Prestant 4
Flûte octaviane 4
Doublette 2
Quinte 2 2/3
Cornet V
Plein-Jeu VII
Bombarde 16
Trompette 8
Clairon 4

Positif (Man. II)

Bourdon 16
Montre 8
Salicional 8
Unda maris 8
Cor de nuit 8
Prestant 4
Flûte douce 4
Carillon III
Basson 16
Cromorne 8
Trompette 8

Récit (Man. III; enclosed)

Quintaton 16
Diapason 8
Viole de gambe 8
Voix céleste 8
Flûte traversière 8
Flûte octaviane 4
Octavin 2
Cornet II–V
Basson-hautbois 8
Clarinette 8
Voix humaine 8
Bombarde 16
Trompette 8
Clairon 4

Pedal

Bourdon 32
Soubasse 16
Contrebasse 16
Grosse Flûte 8
Violoncelle 8
Bourdon doux 8
Flûte 4
Bombarde 16
Trompette 8
Clairon 4

Tirasses: G.O.; Positif; Récit
Accouplements: Positif–G.O.; Récit–G.O.; Récit–
Positif; Octaves graves G.O.; Octaves graves Récit
Appels: Pédal; G.O.; Positif; Récit
Trémolo (Récit)

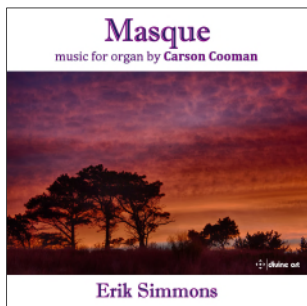


I Litany

DIVINE ART DDA 25116

Erik Simmons (Laurenskerk, Rotterdam, Netherlands)

“Great music, performed on a magnificent pipe organ, by an organist at the top of his game, all captured in vividly realistic sound. A benchmark recording.” – Jean-Yves Duperron (Classical Music Sentinel)

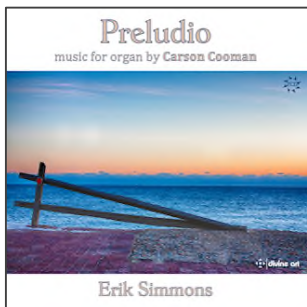


II Masque

DIVINE ART DDA 25127

Erik Simmons (Laurenskerk, Rotterdam, Netherlands)

“Beautifully crafted Preludes and Fugues ... This is an organ symphony to rival any, spectacularly played by Erik Simmons. He receives an excellent recording. Surely all organ enthusiasts will want this fine new disc.” – Bruce Reader (The Classical Reviewer)

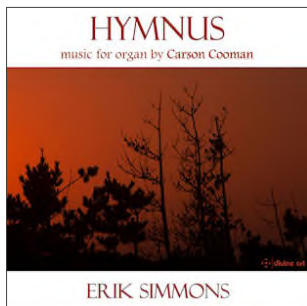


III Preludio

DIVINE ART DDA 21229 (2CD)

Erik Simmons (Basilica Mariä-Himmelfahrt, Krzesnów, Poland)

“This impressive music was inspired by the style of the Renaissance and the early Baroque and will appeal to both early music lovers and followers of the modern organ repertoire. The brilliant Simmons gives assured performances throughout.” – John Pitt (New Classics)

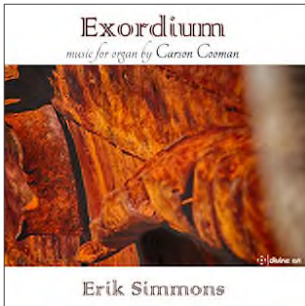


IV Hymnus

DIVINE ART DDA 25147

Erik Simmons (St. Peter & Paul, Weissenau, Germany)

“Nothing beats the sound of a pipe organ displaying its “quiet” side. Simmons instinctively knows which combination of stops is best suited to each individual piece... anima to create an image of lasting impression.” – Jean-Yves Duperron (Classical Music Sentinel)

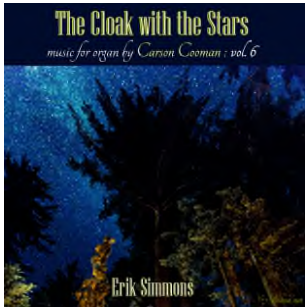


V Exordium

DIVINE ART DDA 25154

Erik Simmons (Notre-Dame de Saint-Omer, France)

“He uniformly puts his best foot forward, with felicitous results; unreservedly recommended.” - James A. Altena (Fanfare)



VI The Cloak with the Stars

DIVINE ART DDA 25159

Erik Simmons (Saint-Etienne, Caen, France)

“All the pieces on this CD are new compositions from this year, but organist Erik Simmons plays them as confidently as if he'd known them for years... they are all distinctively different and varied in style, expression and technique. Quite fascinating!” - Jean-Yves Duperron (Classical Music Sentinel)

Volumes 8-10 of this series to be released in 2018

Carson Cooman plays the music of Andreas Willscher:



Willscher: Organ Symphony No. 5

DIVINE ART DDA 25150

Subtitled “Of Francis’s Preaching on Holy Poverty”

“Brilliant and thrilling, with bold pedal lines that need durable speakers to deliver them without distortion. The quietest movements are equally impressive.” - Alex Baran (The Whole Note)



Willscher: Organ Symphonies No. 19 & 20 and 'Die Seligpreisungen' (The Beatitudes)

DIVINE ART DDA 25162

“The organ works are especially fine and varied - involving often a mélange of post-tonal modernism, minimalism, and jazz and rock elements. They are lively, thrilling works with great rhythmic vitality.” - John Pitt (New Classics)

ORCHESTRAL AND CHAMBER MUSIC



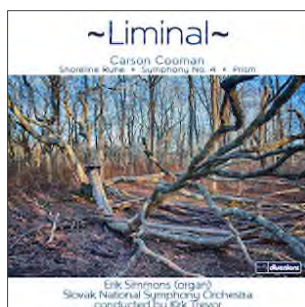
Rising at Dawn **METIER MSV 28538** **Chamber music with brass**

“Chasing the Moon Down is a genuine masterpiece... Cooman is clearly not just a talented composer but a genuinely gifted one.” – James A. Altena (Fanfare)



In Beauty Walking **DIVINE ART DDA 25117** **Pastoral orchestral music**

“There is something very appealing and distinct in the pieces we can hear in this well played and superbly recorded program.” – Remy Franck (Pizzicato)



Liminal **DIVERSIONS DDV 24161** **Dramatic orchestral and organ music** **including Symphony No. 4**

“The sound quality of the recording is notable, the playing superb. Carson Cooman’s music is beautiful, inspiring and seductive in equal measure.” – John France (MusicWeb)



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The organ of the Abbey of Saint-Etienne, Caen

This album was recorded in March and April 2017

Program notes: Carson Cooman

Producers: Carson Cooman and Erik Simmons

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