



signum  
CLASSICS

2CD SET

# The Organ of Westminster Cathedral

Robert Quinney plays  
Brahms, Wagner & Dupré

# THE ORGAN OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

## CD1

### **Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1. Academic Festival Overture Op 80              | [11.44] |
| Variations on a theme by Haydn Op 56             |         |
| 2. Chorale St Antoni: Andante                    | [2.13]  |
| 3. Variation 1: Andante con moto                 | [1.41]  |
| 4. Variation 2: Vivace                           | [1.19]  |
| 5. Variation 3: Con moto                         | [2.13]  |
| 6. Variation 4: Andante                          | [3.07]  |
| 7. Variation 5: Poco presto                      | [1.06]  |
| 8. Variation 6: Vivace                           | [1.38]  |
| 9. Variation 7: Grazioso                         | [3.09]  |
| 10. Variation 8: Poco presto                     | [1.08]  |
| 11. Finale: Andante                              | [4.16]  |
| 12. Wir wandelten Op 96 no 2                     | [4.08]  |
| 13. Adagio <i>from</i> Violin Sonata No 3 Op 108 | [5.22]  |

### **Richard Wagner (1813-1883)**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 14. Siegfried-Idyll   | [20.48] |
| 15. Prelude to Act I, <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> | [10.35] |
| Total Timings   | [74.30] |

## CD2

### **Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)**

#### Three Preludes and Fugues Op 7

- |                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 1. Prelude in B major | [2.59] |
| 2. Fugue in B major   | [3.59] |
| 3. Prelude in F minor | [4.19] |
| 4. Fugue in F minor   | [5.53] |

5. Prelude in G minor	[4.17]
6. Fugue in G minor	[3.21]
Variations sur un Noël Op 20	
7. Theme	[0.52]
8. Variation 1: Larghetto	[0.53]
9. Variation 2: Poco animato	[0.34]
10. Variation 3: Cantabile	[1.57]
11. Variation 4: Vif	[0.27]
12. Variation 5: Vivace	[0.52]
13. Variation 6: Plus modéré	[0.47]
14. Variation 7: Vivace	[0.42]
15. Variation 8: Cantabile	[2.30]
16. Variation 9: Animé	[0.51]
17. Variation 10 (Fugato): Non troppo vivace	[1.44]
18. Variation 10: Presto	[1.18]
Evocation Op 37	
19. Moderato	[8.58]
20. Adagio con tenerezza	[9.55]
21. Allegro deciso	[7.38]
22. Cortège et Litanie Op 19 no 2	[5.49]
Total Timings	[70.38]

In a programme conceived to show the kaleidoscopic range of the Grand Organ of Westminster Cathedral, transcriptions and arrangements of the music of Brahms and Wagner are superbly performed by one of the UK's younger generation of organists and Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey, Robert Quinney. On this special 2-CD set 19th century repertoire is coupled with the works of one of the world's first international organ virtuosos, Marcel Dupré, who gave the opening recital on the Grand Organ in 1924 and who shines as the leading light of the French school of organist-improviser-composers.

ROBERT QUINNEY  
THE GRAND ORGAN OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

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CD 1: JOHANNES BRAHMS &  
RICHARD WAGNER

The Grand Organ of Westminster Cathedral has, since its inception in the early 1920s, been closely associated with the French school of organist-improviser-composers. The many tonal differences between the Grand Organ and contemporary instruments by the same builder, Henry Willis III, have been taken as further evidence of continental influence. It is true that the Grand Organ remains the best British instrument of its time for the French 'symphonic' repertoire: but it is also a superb medium for the organ transcription – a strange musical hybrid which had reached its apogee at exactly the time of the Grand Organ's construction, in the arrangements and performances of Edwin Lemare. Willis's masterpiece is rich not only in bold principal choruses and bright, powerful reeds: its astonishingly concise stoplist also boasts many subtle 'orchestral' colours, including no fewer than four pairs of undulating *celeste* ranks. While it can be devastating in its power and attack, it can also charm and intrigue the ear. This programme was conceived partly as a demonstration of the kaleidoscopic range of the Grand Organ.

Edwin Lemare was born in 1866 on the Isle of Wight. He was already a famous virtuoso by the time he

became Organist of St Margaret's Church, Westminster in 1896: the queue of recital-goers when Lemare was playing was said to stretch right around Parliament Square. In 1902 Lemare left for the United States, where he remained until his death in 1934. A prolific composer in his own right, it is chiefly as an arranger and virtuoso performer that Lemare is remembered today, and with good reason. He arranged music by contemporary composers, seizing on developments in organ design which, by allowing fast manipulation of the stop action, placed a quasi-orchestral tonal palette under the performer's control. Just as the early Romantic orchestra of Mendelssohn could be rendered convincingly on the mid-nineteenth century organs Hill and (later) 'Father' Willis, so the much-increased power and tonal range of Wagner's orchestra could be represented by, for example, Lemare's new organ by Walker at St Margaret's Church.

Of the two orchestral overtures by Johannes Brahms, the *Academic Festival Overture* of 1881 is by far the lighter: it is joyful celebration music, written as a gift for the University of Breslau, from which Brahms had received an honorary doctorate two years previously. It is based on a number of student songs, grouped into three sets of contrasting character – pompous, lyrical and boisterous respectively – and culminates in a triumphal quotation

of the well-known *Gaudeamus igitur*. Lemare took the liberty of excising 48 bars – the recapitulation of the song *Landesvater* (which later found its way into Brahms's song *Ständchen* Op 106 no 1). I have reinstated these bars in an arrangement which closely follows Lemare's treatment of the material earlier in the work.

Lemare's Brahms transcriptions are not confined to the heavyweight orchestral repertoire: they also encompass chamber music, song and lighter orchestral pieces such as the *Hungarian Dances*. With the exception of *Wiegenlied* (the well-known 'Lullaby'), Brahms's best known song is surely *Wir wandelten, wir zwei zusammen* (We wandered, we two together). The act of transcription divorces the music from the text of the song, a potentially disastrous operation: in this case, Brahms's music is so warm and immediate in its appeal that it stands perfectly well without Daumer's elliptical, impressionistic poem. Comfortably within the realm of 'absolute' music is the slow movement of Brahms's third Violin Sonata, a rapt Adagio which uses the lower end of the violin's range to particularly lyrical effect. The transfer of the solo melody to the Choir Open Diapason and Viola is a relatively simple one: the brilliance of Lemare's transcription lies in the re-arrangement of the piano accompaniment; particularly in his

prescription of delicate 16-, 8- & 4-foot stops to suggest the timbre of the piano played *pianissimo* with the sustaining pedal. Here, as in his orchestral transcriptions, Lemare is not straightforwardly mimicking the sound of the original instrumentation: instead, he discovers an alternative that works within the organ's own sound-world.

Lionel Rogg has done much the same thing in his transcription of Brahms's *Variations on a theme by Haydn*, though the organ he writes for is in many ways different from that of Lemare: while Lemare's instrument was rich in colourful stops but probably had only one properly developed principal chorus (on the Great), and that based on an Open Diapason of massive scale, Rogg's arrangement is for the modern pan-European eclectic organ, with strong choruses, an independent pedal division and probably only one enclosed department. It is a measure of the Grand Organ's strength that both approaches work equally well – though I have not been able to resist the addition of a few details from the orchestral score which are absent in Rogg's transcription. The theme turns out not to be by Haydn at all, but an anonymous chorale entitled *St Antoni*. The variations are a tour around Brahms's vast repertoire of compositional devices and styles, from the grave, *cantabile* variation 4, through the hemiola-peppered scherzo variation 5,

to the delicate *siciliano* variation 7. Instead of the fugal finale one might expect from a master of that genre, Brahms opts for steadily intensifying repetitions of the theme: a *passacaglia* like the finale of his Fourth Symphony.

Unlike Brahms, whose Eleven Chorale Preludes Op 122 appeared shortly before his death, Richard Wagner published no music for the organ. The instrument does, however, make a memorable appearance at the very beginning of Act 1 of *Der Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, accompanying the chorale *Da zu dir den Heiland kam*. It seems natural, therefore, that Lemare should have extended the organ's role back to the Act 1 *Vorspiel*: perhaps the grandest of all his transcriptions, the *Meistersinger* Prelude seems almost to have been conceived for the organ. Wagner's music is intended to evoke the glorious history of German music, setting the scene for the highly nationalistic tale which is to follow: no wonder, then, that strong echoes of Bachian counterpoint and the muscular Lutheran chorale are heard in the opening theme. With the exception of the 'Love-motif' itself (heard in a voluptuous string orchestration in E major), the thematic material inhabits consciously un-Wagnerian territory, as if poised somewhere between the eighteenth and late-nineteenth centuries – this is in part due to the uncomplicated

C major tonality which dominates the Prelude. Wagner's musical personality is, however, at all times stamped upon the music, in its heady, almost overwhelming potency and extroversion, and, of course, in the dizzying combinations of the various motifs.

Wagner's *Siegfried-Idyll* is no less heroic than the *Meistersinger* Prelude, but, instead of bustling Nuremberg, it is set in idyllic, pastoral surroundings, as might be expected of a work originally scored for only fifteen players. As with the Brahms chamber pieces on this disc, the success of an organ performance of the *Siegfried-Idyll* depends not on brilliant choruses or powerful reeds, but on the quality of individual solo ranks and the colours produced by their combination. Fortunately the Grand Organ is not only well equipped with fine solo voices: its placement allows stops from different divisions to be combined without problems of ensemble or cohesion (as are so often caused by the wide dispersal of divisions in many English cathedral organs).

The orchestral transcription for organ was regarded for a long time as a rather shameful irrelevance, rendered obsolete by the LP and murkily associated with the most decadent period of the organ's history. I hope this rather

puritanical frame of mind – which coincided with high modernism in composition and the most ascetic neo-classicism in organ design – has loosened up a little in today's more playful and fluid musical world. Now that we can have (to quote Richard Taruskin) 'the *St Matthew Passion* in the shower and *Aida* on the patio', why shouldn't Siegfried take his idyll in the cathedral?

## CD 2: MARCEL DUPRÉ

Marcel Dupré was for fifty years the doyen of the French school of organist-improviser-composers, but his fame reached far beyond his homeland. He was arguably the first international organ virtuoso: by 1926 he had undertaken four recital tours in the United States, and throughout his career remained a frequent visitor to the United Kingdom. The Grand Organ of Westminster Cathedral was, from its inception in the early 1920s, closely associated with Dupré, who gave the opening recital and made frequent return visits.

At Dupré's opening recital on Thursday, October 9th, 1924, only the Swell, Great (with reeds borrowed from Liverpool Cathedral), part of the Pedal and the Tuba Magna were in place, but the instrument was as assertive and forthright as it is today: I hope this disc demonstrates how well the Grand Organ and Dupré's music suit each other.

Dupré the composer was a classicist, in the tradition of Saint-Saëns and Franck. Fascinated with Bachian counterpoint and other ingenious compositional instruments, he was a foil to more exploratory figures such as Tournemire and Messiaen. Dupré's work has little of the mystical character of these men's music: it is self-evident and clear-cut, often adopting tried-and-tested forms and consciously honouring past masters. It exudes Dupré's incredible fluency as a keyboardist and improviser, and his intimate knowledge of European music from 1650. In his own words, 'nothing is worthwhile that is not achieved within the context of a strict intellectual discipline, freely embraced'.

It is therefore unsurprising that Dupré's first major opus was a set of Preludes and Fugues for organ. Opus 7 was composed in 1912 but only published eight years later, perhaps because the technical challenges they pose were for a time considered insuperable by anyone but the composer. But they are much more than historical exercises or virtuoso showpieces: each Prelude and Fugue is a superbly conceived character-piece. The first, in B major, opens with a brilliant carillon-style toccata, whose striding bass melody provides the kernel for the broken-chord fugue subject. There is a strong feeling of itchiness in the B major Fugue, as if the music is looking for an excuse to break out – as it eventually does – into the toccata figuration of the

Prelude. The interrelationship and integration of themes is a preoccupation in Opus 7, as it was to be throughout Dupré's composing career. The second Prelude and Fugue is cast in F minor, as far away tonally from its predecessor as possible; and it is just as far apart in character. Virtuoso bluster is supplanted by a quiet, brooding lyricism, and the *moto perpetuo* B major fugue is set in sharp relief by its hesitant successor. The fugue subject is, again, developed from the main theme of the Prelude: but in this case the Prelude's quaver theme, rhythmically articulated by a pointillistic semiquaver accompaniment, is cut loose from its moorings in the Fugue – it seems to be feeling its way, blurrily, through the formal procedures required of it. In this highly evocative piece, Dupré perfects a rare and exquisite cross-breed: the impressionistic fugue. Impressionistic partly describes the third Prelude in the set, a feather-light *scherzando* in G minor: but the effect belies the music's technical difficulty. Every note counts for the performer, who must maintain composure as the semiquavers pass into the left hand, and as the *voix céleste* chords move from right hand to pedal in four parts. Not for the first time, one has the impression that Opus 7 was a manifesto as much for Dupré's skills as an executant as for his compositional prowess. The G minor Fugue is a thrilling tarantella,

in which the Prelude's long-note theme is gradually revealed, first beneath, then above, then threatening to overwhelm, the jerky crotchet-quaver movement of the fugue subject. The sheer energy is bracing enough, but the strength of Dupré's themes is equally responsible for the thrill of playing or listening to this music.

Though the great Cavaillé-Coll organs of Rouen and Paris remained central to Dupré's sound-world, the modern British and American instruments with which he became acquainted as a touring recitalist were a powerful influence on his music: the Variations 'on an ancient Noël' are the product *par excellence* of this experience. Fully exploiting the possibilities afforded by the new-fangled general pistons, Dupré demands frequent changes of registration: between each variation a number of stops must go in and a number be drawn, a feat possible only with the help of assistants on a Cavaillé-Coll organ, but easily achieved by the player alone on a modern Willis or Skinner console. In each of the ten variations the precisely notated registration combines with Dupré's astonishing invention in an almost painterly way: the coupled *flûtes* of variation 2 are an impressionistic wash of colour; the trio of reeds in the double canon variation 6 conjure a *paysan* dance; the dizzy chromatic thirds on the *clarinette* in variation 9, a



merry-go-round. The fugal finale gradually gathers pace towards a tempestuous final statement of the theme, *fff* in the pedals, before a *carillon* coda in D major brings this astonishing showpiece to a close.

While Dupré's compositional life remained closely tied to his quotidien activity as organist, he did occasionally write music for orchestral forces. The *Cortège et Litanie* was originally conceived as incidental music for a play, and was scored for an eleven-piece ensemble; later versions exist for piano solo, organ and orchestra, and, most popularly, for organ solo. Shimmering string timbres dominate both parts of the piece: the *Litanie* asks for *Gambes* at 16-, 8- and 4-foot pitch from three manuals to be coupled together, draping the obsessively repeating theme in gorgeous colours, as if it were being chanted by a richly-coped priest. A grand recapitulation of the *Cortège* theme, which now embraces the obsessive litany, leads to a coda of toccata-style chords over a long tonic pedal.

As his international eminence grew, Dupré increasingly addressed serious subject matter, as in the large-scale devotional works *Le Chemin de la Croix* (1932) and *Offrande à la Vierge* (1944). Of a more personal, but no less profound character is the 'symphonic poem' *Evocation*. Dupré evokes both his father Albert and the famous Cavallé-Coll organ of St-Ouen,

Rouen, at which Dupré *père* presided for twenty-eight years, and on which Dupré *fils* gave the first performance on 26 October 1941, ten months after his father's death. It has been suggested that the overwhelming climax of the first movement, a pounding *tutti* suggestive of Shostakovich or Prokofiev which subsides into a sinister 'marching' codal motif, and which is recapitulated in triumphant terms at the end of the third movement, actually evokes the violent seizure of France by the German army. Certainly there is little in the outer movements that, without knowing the composer's intentions, one would hear as an affectionate tribute from son to father; and it is perhaps significant that Dupré had been prevented from attending his father's funeral by Nazi-imposed border controls. The central *Adagio con tenerezza* is, unlike the surrounding movements, intimate and fond; but the constant avoidance of cadences is unsettling, as if Dupré is wilfully confusing and obfuscating what should be simple and clear. Only with the blazing peroration of the third movement does *Evocation* firmly achieve a cadence: the final C major chords feel hard-earned, and all the more triumphant for it.

© Robert Quinney

**The Grand Organ of Westminster Cathedral  
Henry Willis III, 1922-32**

**Pedal Organ**

1. Double Open Bass (from 2)	32
2. Open Bass	16
3. Open Diapason	16
4. Contra Bass	16
5. Sub Bass	16
6. Dulciana (from 19)	16
7. Violon (from 50)	16
8. Octave (from 2)	8
9. Principal (from 3)	8
10. Flute (from 5)	8
11. Super Octave (from 3)	4
12. Seventeenth	31/5
13. Nineteenth	22/3
14. Twenty-second	2
15. Contra Bombarde (from 16)	32
16. Bombarde	16
17. Trombone	16
18. Octave Trombone (from 17)	8

**Choir Organ (enclosed)**

19. Contra Dulciana	16
20. Open Diapason	8
21. Viola	8
22. Sylvestrina	8
23. Cor de Nuit	8

24. Cor de Nuit Célestes	8
25. Gemshorn	4
26. Nason Flute	4
27. Nazard	22/3
28. Octavin	2
29. Tierce	13/5
30. Trumpet	8
<i>I. Tremulant</i>	
<i>II. Octave</i>	
<i>III. Sub-Octave</i>	
<i>IV. Unison Off</i>	

**Great Organ**

*First Division*

31. Double Diapason	16
32. Open Diapason No 1	8
33. Open Diapason No 2	8
34. Octave	4
35. Octave Quint	22/3
36. Super Octave	2
37. Grand Chorus 15 19 22 26 29	V
38. Double Trumpet	16
39. Trumpet	8
40. Clarion	4

*Second Division*

41. Bourdon	16
42. Open Diapason No 3	8
43. Flute Harmonique	8
44. Quint	51/3

45. Principal	4	66. Violoncello	8
46. Flute Couverte	4	67. Violoncello Célestes	8
47. Tenth	31/5	68. Salicional	8
48. Twelfth	22/3	69. Unda Maris	8
49. Fifteenth	2	70. Tibia	8
<b>Swell Organ</b>		71. Concert Flute	4
50. Violon	16	72. Piccolo Harmonique	2
51. Geigen Diapason	8	73. Cor Anglais	16
52. Rohrflöte	8	74. Orchestral Oboe	8
53. Echo Viole	8	75. Corno di Bassetto	8
54. Violes Célestes	8	<i>IX. Tremulant</i>	
55. Octave Geigen	4	76. French Horn	8
56. Suabe Flute	4	77. Orchestral Trumpet	8
57. Twelfth	22/3	78. Tuba Magna	8
58. Fifteenth	2	<i>X. Octave</i>	
59. Harmonics 17 19 22	III	<i>XI. Sub-Octave</i>	
60. Oboe	8	<i>XII. Unison Off</i>	
61. Vox Humana	8	<b>Couplers</b>	
<i>V. Tremulant</i>		XIII. Choir to Pedal	
62. Waldhorn	16	XIV. Great to Pedal	
63. Trompette	8	XV. Swell to Pedal	
64. Clarion	4	XVI. Solo to Pedal	
<i>VI. Octave</i>		XVII. Swell to Choir	
<i>VII. Sub-Octave</i>		XVIII. Solo to Choir	
<i>VIII. Unison Off</i>		XIX. Choir to Great	
<b>Solo Organ (65-77 Enclosed)</b>		XX. Swell to Great	
65. Quintaton	16	XXI. Solo to Great	
		XXII. Solo to Swell	

XXIII. Great Reeds on Solo  
XXIV. Great second division on Choir  
XXV. Great and Pedal combinations coupled  
XXVI. Generals on Swell foot pistons  
(XXII, XXIV and XXVI were added in 1984)

### **Accessories**

Eight foot pistons to the Pedal Organ  
Eight pistons to the Choir Organ  
Eight pistons to the Great Organ  
Eight pistons to the Swell Organ  
(duplicated by foot pistons)  
Eight pistons to Solo Organ  
Eight general pistons and general cancel  
256 levels of memory for general pistons and  
eight levels for divisional pistons  
Reversible foot pistons: XIV, XV, XX  
Reversible pistons: XIII-XXII  
FF and FFF blind reversible pistons  
Apse console general cancel  
Balanced expression pedals to the Choir,  
Swell and Solo Organs

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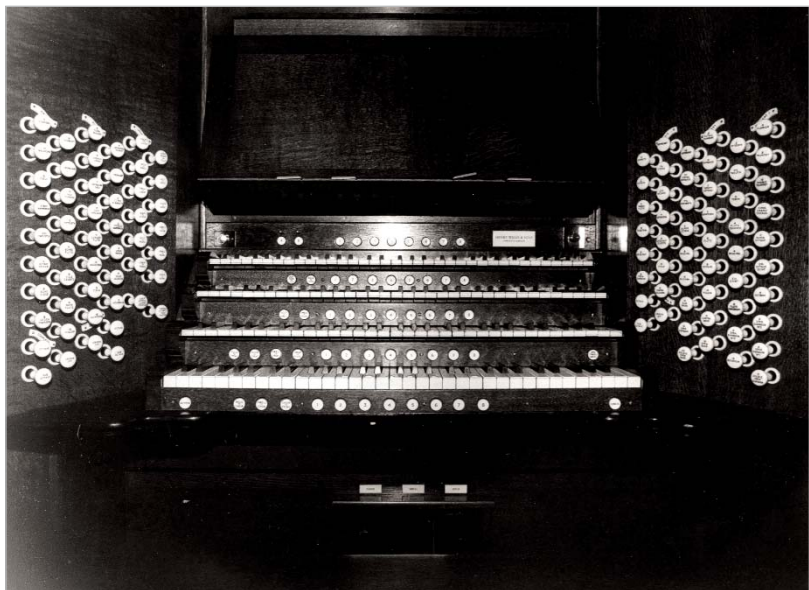
## BIOGRAPHY

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### ROBERT QUINNEY

Robert Quinney enjoys a growing reputation as a dynamic performer, whose repertoire stretches from the sixteenth century to the present day. Having studied at King's College, Cambridge, he served as Assistant Master of Music of Westminster Cathedral from 2000 to 2004. He is currently Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey. In 2002 he was named RCO Performer of the Year, and has since been heard frequently as a solo recitalist, both at home and abroad. His playing – as a soloist and in ensemble – has received critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to his work as a performing musician, Robert Quinney is also known as an authority on the music of J S Bach. This is his first solo recording.







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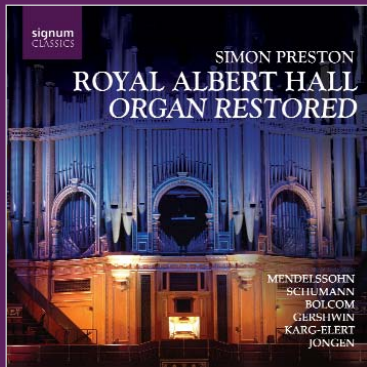
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