

AVE MARIS STELLA

Gerard Gillen plays the music of

Flor PEETERS,
César FRANCK

The Organ of St. Mary's Pro Cathedral Dublin

LCS
HiRes



AVE MARIS STELLA



Flor Peeters 1903 – 1986

1	Wachet auf!	4:56
2	O Gott, Du frommer Gott	2:41
3	Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern	2:58
Toccatà, Fugue et Hymne sur 'Ave Maris Stella'		
4	Toccatà	3:37
5	Fugue	2:26
6	Hymne	1:45
7	Largo	3:38
8	Final	4:38

César Franck 1822 – 1890

Prelude, Fugue & Variation

9	Prelude	3:55
10	Fugue	2:45
11	Variation	3:34
12	Pièce Héroïque	8:28

Grande Pièce Symphonique

13	Andantino serioso	10:27
14	Andante	8:22
15	Allegro non troppo e maestoso	6:54

Gerard Gillen - organ

The Organ of St. Mary's Pro Cathedral Dublin

THE MUSIC

César Franck (1822-1890) and Flor Peeters (1903-1986) share the same Franco-Belgian heritage: it was the former who rescued organ composition from the nadir to which it had sunk in the wake of the musical depredations resulting from the French revolution, and it was the latter who carried the torch, lit so brilliantly by Franck (in turn inspired by the marvellously new and innovative instruments of Aristide Cavallé-Coll) and mediated to Peeters through the common friendship and collegiality of Charles Tournemire, into the latter decades of the twentieth century. Franck excised the musical frivolities of composers such as Lemmens, Lefébre-Wély and Batiste from the French organ œuvre in endowing his organ compositions with a new sense of formal fibre expressed in a harmonic language that was both individual and very much of its time in its advanced explorations of chromaticism; Peeters followed very much in the same aesthetic tradition, bringing to his work the fresh sound of twentieth-century dissonance, arrived at in the German manner through horizontal, contrapuntal application, rather than through vertically conceived harmonic opulence.

Peeters was a prolific composer for the organ, who counts over 300 chorale preludes among his compositions. The chorale prelude is a musical construct peculiar to the organ; it

emerged as a form in seventeenth-century Germany and has remained part of the staple diet of organ composers ever since. In essence it is a composition based on a hymn tune and inspired by its text, which it seeks to explore and encapsulate in musical expression. The three chorale preludes recorded here date from 1948 and appear in the composer's collection of 'Ten Chorale Preludes', Op.68 on German chorale melodies. *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* is based on the hymn tune by Philipp Nicolai, a version of which was made famous by JS Bach in both his Cantata No. 140 and the subsequent transcription by the composer of the opening chorus as the eponymously titled Schübler chorale prelude. It has to be said that the shadow of Bach looms over Peeters' treatment, with the latter giving us a twentieth-century translation, as it were, of Bach's justly famous composition. *O Gott, du frommer Gott*, is a gem of soft and subtle Romantic expression, while *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, based on Philipp Nicolai's Christmas hymn, recalls Bach's *Nun freut euch, BWV 734* in its effervescent *perpetuum mobile* manual figuration accompanying the unfolding of the tune on pedals at 4' pitch.

Toccata, Fugue et Hymne sur 'Ave Maris Stella', Op. 28 was completed in 1931 and is dedicated to Tournemire. It is one of the composer's larger concepts and must be counted as one of his best compositions, marrying mastery of symmetry, variety and freshness of expression,

with a vitality and compositional energy that sustains the work unflinchingly throughout its length. The Toccata, while following the French model with the ancient Gregorian Marian melody announced in pedal tutti against an accompaniment of bustling manual figuration, recalls the Debussy of *La Mer* in its changing rhythmic pulses and harmonic piquancy. The fugue has a splendid sense of shape and energy, while the concluding hymn brings a sense of apotheosis to this finely hewn composition.

Largo and *Final* are two of four pieces published as *Four Pieces*, Op. 71 in 1949. They reveal an aspect of Peeters as a composer for secular usage as opposed to the other compositions discussed above whose primary provenance was liturgical. The *Largo* is a lyrical solo for the trumpet stop which is given a wide-ranging melody extending over three octaves, accompanied by sustained inner voices with pizzicato pedal. The language here is remarkably conservative for a mid twentieth-century work, and the entire composition recalls the *Geist* world of Bach's Adagio movement in the Toccata in C, BWV 564. The *Final* is a hard-driven Lydian mode toccata very much in French style, with theme in pedals, and with each reiteration ratcheting the musical temperature upwards to final climax which explodes in a virtuoso eruption in the pedals.

César Franck's Prelude, Fugue and Variation

was published as the third of *Six Pièces* in 1868, a publication that marked a substantial revolution in style within the history of French organ music. In many ways this composition broke new ground in the prelude and fugue type of composition: the prelude presents a lilting lyrical melody in characteristic solo Swell registration of *Bourdon*, *Flûte de 8* and *Hautbois*, complete with canonic imitation so beloved of this composer. A characteristic interlude introducing *Fonds* on all manuals with the Swell *Anches* leads to a sombre hued fugue, though marked *Allegretto, ma non troppo*, before unexpectedly returning to the theme of the prelude for an exquisite variation movement. Truly, a prelude and fugue with a difference.

The *Pièce Héroïque* was the third of *Trois Pièces* which Franck composed expressly for his recital on the new four-manual Cavallé-Coll organ of the Trocadéro Palace on 1 October, 1878. It is a highly orchestrally flavoured composition, the main theme of which is announced in the tenor register to the accompaniment of pulsating chords on full Swell. A colourful composition, sombre and even threatening in character, it uses a wide palette of symphonic organ registration, and proceeds to its organically driven climax with powerful effect.

The *Grande Pièce Symphonique* was published as the second of the six pieces of *Six Pièces* in

1868. It was to be the composer's largest scale work for organ, and a composition in cyclical form that not only foreshadowed Franck's one and only essay in orchestral symphonic writing, his Symphony in D Minor, but it also served as the prototype for later organ symphonies by Guilmant, Widor and Vierne. It was thus a highly innovative and influential composition calling for the full resources of colour provided by the new Cavaillé-Coll instrument of St Clotilde. The work begins not with the expected symphonic 'Allegro', but with an 'Andantino serioso' leading to an 'Allegro non troppo e maestoso' for *Grand Chœur* where the main theme is revealed in all its glory. Two delicious Andante movements are interspersed among the many ruminative digressions, the second of which calls for a delightful dialogue between the *Voix célestes* of the Récit and the Positif. The final 'Allegro non troppo e maestoso', containing fragments heard earlier in the work, lead to the fugal finale with the tempo increasing as the musical excitement mounts to bring this extraordinary essay to a literally blazing conclusion.

THE ORGAN

Dublin's Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin under the title of St Mary, was opened in 1825 and is built in classical Greek style in a copy of the Parisian Basilica of St Philippe de Roule. It is a church, though small for its cathedral function, with a warm and generous acoustic, particularly suited to organ sound and its projection. The present organ's origins date from the 1880s when a contract was entrusted to the Dublin but French-trained organ builder, John White. The present façade of the organ dated from William Hill's rebuild of the instrument c. 1900. Subsequent work was carried out by Henry Willis & Co in the 1930s before J.W. Walker's major rebuilds of 1971, and 1995 when some additional stops were added. This latter work was carried out in the context of an overall redecoration of the Pro-Cathedral.

Over the years the Pro-Cathedral organ has become regarded as one of the finest examples in Ireland of the late nineteenth-century grand Romantic organ, and has since its original installation featured prominently in the many national liturgical occasions, which have graced the cathedral church. More recently many of the finest organ recitalists of our time have performed on this instrument: Daniel Chorzempa, Xavier Darasse, Susan Landale, Olivier Latry, Daniel Roth, Dame Gillian Weir, Arthur Wills etc.

SPECIFICATION

SWELL		GREAT		PEDAL		POSITIVE	
Gedeckt	8	Lieblich Bourdon	16	Double Open Diapason	32	Rohr Flute	8
Salicional	8	Open Diapason 1	8	Principal	16	Spitz Flute	4
Celeste	8	Open Diapason 11	8	Bourdon	16	Principal *	4
Flute *	4	Stopped Diapason	8	Bass Flute	8	Octave	2
Principal	4	Principal	4	Octave	8	Nazard +	2 ² / ₃
Fifteenth	2	Fifteenth	2	Fifteenth +	4	Tierce+	1 ³ / ₅
Scharf +	III	Mixture +	III	Flute +	4	Larigot +	1 ¹ / ₃
Oboe	8	Sesquialtera +	II	Mixture +	III	Cymbal +	III
Fagotto +	16	Trumpet	8	Fagot	16	Cromorne +	8
Trumpet	8	Clarion	4	Schalmei +	4	Cor Anglais *	8
Clarion *	4						
Tremulant						Tremulant	
Octave							
Sub Octave							
Unison Off							
		Swell/Great		Swell/Pedal		Swell/Positive	
		Positive/Great		Great/Pedal			
				Positive/Pedal			

Usual accessories with multiple channels + Sequencer.

* Stops added in 1995

+ Stops added or altered in 1971



THE ORGANIST

Gerard Gillen has been Titular Organist of Dublin's Pro-Cathedral since 1976 and is Professor Emeritus of Music at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, where he was head of Department from 1985 to 2007. He is widely regarded as one of Ireland's leading church and concert organists. A First Class Honours graduate University College, Dublin, Oxford University, and the Royal Flemish Conservatoire of Music, Antwerp (where he gained the *Prix d'Excellence*, the highest award for instrumental performance, in the class of Flor Peeters), Professor Gillen has given over 900 recitals throughout Europe, Israel, and America, performing in such prestigious venues as the Royal Festival Hall, London, King's College, Cambridge, St Thomas', New York, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, Notre-Dame and La Madeleine, Paris, St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, St Thomas', Leipzig, St Bavo, Haarlem, cathedrals of Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Pittsburgh, and major recital venues in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Italy etc. He has also been a member of international competition juries in Oxford, Ann Arbor, London and Dublin.

Gerard Gillen was founder-chairman of the Dublin International Organ & Choral Festival (now the Pipeworks Festival) of which he was artistic director from 1990 to 2000. In 1984 he was conferred with Knighthood of St Gregory

(KCSG) by the Vatican, and in 2006 he was created a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Government. He is currently chair of the National Advisory Committee on Church Music to the Irish Episcopal Conference. Other honours include the John Betts Visiting Fellowship at Oxford (1992); in December 1996 he was nominated the classical winner in Ireland's annual TV National Entertainment Awards, the first organist to be so honoured. In 2007 he was awarded a doctorate *honoris causa* by the Pontifical University of Maynooth.



Credits:

Executive Producer: L. Carrick-Smith

Produced by Jonathan R.Wearn

Recorded in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin 2008

Design: Hugh O'Donnell

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to The Very Reverend Canon John Flaherty Administrator and the staff at St. Mary's Pro Cathedral.

The recording was made using just 2 B & K 4006 microphones, Mongami Oxygen free cables, Millenia Pre-Amplifier, Prism ADA. 8 Converters originally recorded and edited at 88.2kHz using Pyramix & Nuendo 4 Software. Monitored using Classe Amplifiers and B & W 801 speakers. No equalisation or other digital intervention has been made in this recording until carefully down-sampling to 44.1kHz for the production of this CD.

www.lcshires.com

enquiries@lcshires.com

