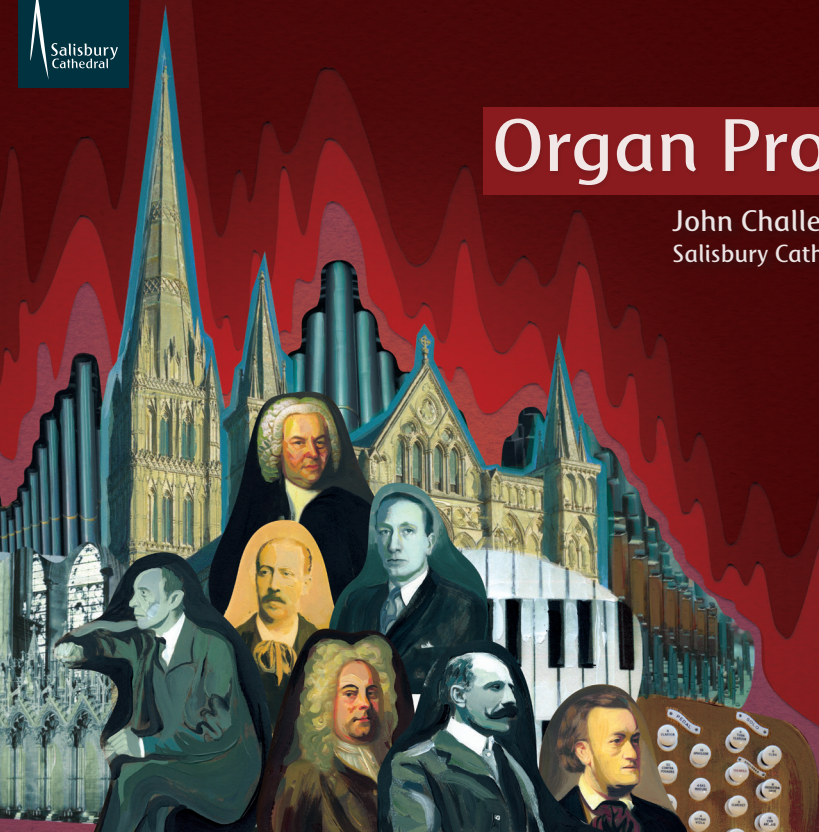


# Organ Prom

John Challenger  
Salisbury Cathedral



1	<b>Orb and Sceptre March</b> William Walton (1902–83) <i>transcribed</i> John Challenger (b. 1988)	8:48
2	<b>Largo ('Ombra mai fu', Xerxes, HWV 40)</b> George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) <i>transcribed</i> Edwin Lemare (1865–1934)	4:06
3	<b>Toccatà and Fugue (BWV 565)</b> Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)	10:59
4	<b>Prelude (Morceaux de fantaisie, Op. 3, No 2)</b> Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) <i>transcribed</i> Louis Vierne (1870–1937)	5:26
5	<b>Andantino ('Moonlight and Roses', Op. 83, No 2)</b> Edwin Lemare (1865–1934)	5:30
6	<b>Marche Triomphale</b> Walter Alcock (1861–1947)	8:51
7	<b>Nimrod (Enigma Variations, Op. 36)</b> Edward Elgar (1857–1934) <i>transcribed</i> John Challenger (b. 1988)	5:33
8	<b>Prelude to Act III and Bridal Chorus (Lohengrin, WWV 75)</b> Richard Wagner (1813–83) <i>transcribed</i> Edwin Lemare (1865–1934)	10:29
9	<b>Toccatà (Symphonie V, Op. 42, No 1)</b> Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)	5:53
10	<b>Elegy</b> George Thalben-Ball (1896–1987)	5:12
11	<b>Pomp and Circumstance March (Op. 39, No 1)</b> Edward Elgar (1857–1934) <i>transcribed</i> Edwin Lemare (1865–1934)	7:25

Total timings: 78:09

**JOHN CHALLENGER** organ



## ORGAN PROM

This is the first recording to be released on the 'Father' Willis organ of Salisbury Cathedral after major restoration in 2019. Many of the organ works and transcriptions included in this album were performed at the Cathedral's first Organ Prom in the summer of 2018, an event which brought some 800 concertgoers together in aid of the restoration fund.

The promenade concert has roots in the nineteenth century, becoming popular through a public desire for high-quality, affordable orchestral performances in an informal atmosphere. In 1895, the concert series now known as the BBC Proms began life at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, with the young organist Henry Wood as conductor. The BBC took over the series from the original founder Robert Newman in 1927, and after the Queen's Hall was bombed in 1941, the Proms decamped to the Royal Albert Hall, now their permanent home.

Of course, Salisbury Cathedral is not a concert hall, but music is an indispensable

medium through which its mission is expressed, and a unifying force in times of uncertainty. This year's Organ Prom takes the form of a recorded album owing to the current restrictions on massed gathering. Indeed, this is the organ's first concert performance since 2018.

Our celebrated organ was completed by Henry Willis in 1877. Described by former Organist Sir Walter Alcock as possessing 'a nobility of tone worthy of majestic surroundings', it offers a golden opportunity for grand architecture and great music to combine. The Cathedral's awesome interior is inseparable from association with the highest of liturgical festivals, yet the mood of the building is severe, intensified by nineteenth-century restoration. Its dark Purbeck columns might befit the opera set, or the worlds of Victor Hugo, Bram Stoker or Emily Brontë. Of course, the notion that operatic themes should find their way into a cathedral via the organ is ridiculous, but such is the nature of opera. Though supposedly progressive, the Victorians betrayed a regressive curiosity in the ancient and nocturnal, the majestic and mythical. Through music and literature, art and architecture, they were transported willingly.



Typically, a nineteenth-century organ concert might well have included transcriptions of choral, orchestral and operatic works, often otherwise inaccessible to the general public. Willis himself played Handel choruses to demonstrate the capabilities of his instruments, evidence of a clear belief that his organs could act as an exciting alternative to the orchestra.

The beloved world-class orchestras of our own time might bring the enduring purpose of transcription into question.

And yet we must remember that the organ, primarily, should not be seeking to mimic other instruments. Never one to undersell himself, Willis believed that the King of Instruments, especially one of his own, was capable of expressing its own ravishing personality. Today the legacy of organ transcribers is recognised rather more favourably, just as the restoration work of George Gilbert Scott, once abhorred by many, is now accepted and celebrated.

Scott oversaw the restoration of Salisbury



Cathedral in the nineteenth century, a task he completed shortly before his death in 1878. This comprehensive labour of two decades culminated in the restoration of the quire and the removal of the James Wyatt stone screen, making way for a new ironwork screen (by the renowned metalworker Francis Skidmore) and the organ by Willis, which has retained a reputation as one of his finest instruments. Scott's work at Salisbury was typical of his repurposing of many mediæval cathedrals for a new age. In the twentieth century, the Skidmore screen was removed in line with the growing distaste for such objects, but the Willis organ survived largely unaltered, thanks to several faithful renovations, particularly the restoration of 1934. Under the watchful eye of Walter Alcock, the Willis firm 'willingly agreed to remove no pipes from the Cathedral, and to undertake no re-voicing or changes of pressure'. Thus, we know that Willis would recognise its sound today.

As early as 1847, Willis had rebuilt a cathedral organ, but the turning point in his fortunes came in 1851 with the large instrument he built for the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace, which was bought by the Dean and Chapter of Winchester

Cathedral on the advice of Samuel Sebastian Wesley. Church organists such as Wesley were doubtless pleased by the developments in organ building which enabled more colourful and virtuosic liturgical accompaniment. In the newly-emerging concert halls, kindred organists began to play music by the great masters, reaching massed audiences via the thrilling transcriptions of, among others, W. T. Best at St George's Hall, Liverpool.

The tendency for nineteenth-century revolution to intrude upon sacred spaces was not welcomed universally. In 1871, Willis provided the largest organ yet built in the world for the Royal Albert Hall, a so-called 'horror' cited by William Monk in his argument against Westminster Abbey awarding a similar contract to Willis in 1879. He complained that cathedrals (Salisbury among them) were quite inappropriate homes for Willis's brilliantly-toned instruments. Frederick Sutton bewailed the manner in which churches were now 'choked up with machines', and indeed, Scott had reservations over Willis's positioning of the Salisbury organ, warning that the architecture could become 'very seriously injured'.

Such alterations to an ancient building





would be forbidden today. But the installation of such grand machines (with pipes up to 32 feet in length) liberated the organist: with a full pedalboard, the works of Bach could now be played in the grandest buildings in the land, but the performer could also make rapid changes of stops, encouraging an orchestral approach to Baroque repertoire. The **Toccata and Fugue in D minor**, often alleged to be by Bach, has long been coloured in a Romantic way, adaptations beyond the organ including Max Reger's version for piano (four hands) and Henry Wood's own arrangement for symphony orchestra. Louis Vierne viewed the work as the highest artistic achievement, surviving recordings of his playing on the Cavaillé-Coll organ at Notre-Dame revealing a typically grandiose approach to Bach.

Aristide Cavaillé-Coll's work as an organ builder in France was of one of several European influences on Willis, the Royal Albert Hall organ in particular betraying the hallmarks of Cavaillé-Coll's organ in the Church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris. Charles-Marie Widor was Organist at this great church between 1870 and 1933. Here he composed ten organ symphonies, the

famous **Toccata in F** concluding the fifth, which was composed in 1879. Alongside his own symphonic output, Vierne transcribed several works for organ, and his arrangement of Rachmaninoff's piano **Prelude in C sharp minor** was made in 1932, a contrast to the Parisian practice of Baroque transcription embraced by Saint-Saëns, Dubois, Dupré, Duruflé and Guilmant.

This album's version of the so-called **Largo** from Handel's opera *Xerxes* is taken from an expansive arrangement by Edwin Lemare who, towards the close of the nineteenth century, was inheriting Best's reputation as England's foremost concert organist. Lemare's charming original organ work—the **Andantino in D flat**—is typical of his fastidious attention to console technique and tonal colour. A particular interest in Wagner led Lemare to transcribe the operatic overtures, preludes and marches, including the **Prelude to Act III** and **Bridal Chorus** from *Lohengrin*, enabling the stories of mediæval romance, lost kingdoms and fairy-tale landscapes to be shared with wider audiences.

Elgar imprinted his own fondness for storytelling in his series of musical portraits, the *Enigma Variations*, a

masterclass in thematic transformation heavily indebted to Wagner himself. The famous ninth variation, **Nimrod**—a pun on the name of Elgar's great friend Augustus Jaeger (*Jäger* the German for 'hunter', and Nimrod the 'mighty hunter' of the Old Testament)—has long been played on the organ, and has become associated particularly with solemn occasions. Of similar style, the renowned **Elegy** by George Thalben-Ball—Organist at the Temple Church from 1923 to 1982—began life as an extemporisation at the end of a BBC broadcast during the Second World War. It offers a glimpse at Thalben-Ball's renowned skill at majestic liturgical improvisation, a quality displayed by many distinguished organists of the time. Indeed, Thomas Armstrong remembered Walter Alcock's own improvisations on the Salisbury Willis as 'exquisitely adapted either to the splendour of a great celebration or to the intimacy of evensong on some autumn afternoon'.

This album contains three marches, two of which are well-known, but I have also included a march by a lesser-known composer, Alcock himself. His **Marche Triomphale** dates from his tenure as Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey,

where he would bear the unique distinction of playing the organ for no fewer than three coronations.

William Walton kept the English ceremonial march alive well into the middle of the twentieth century through the arresting **Orb and Sceptre March**, composed for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. It harks back to Elgar's iconic first **Pomp and Circumstance March**, which Lemare transcribed for the organ soon after its composition in 1901. In its first orchestral performance at the Queen's Hall, Elgar's 'damned fine popular tune' set the audience ablaze, professing with memorable power the accomplishment of Henry Wood's lifelong ambition to 'democratise the message of music, and make its beneficent effects universal'.

This message remains so very important amid the uncertainties of today. And so I close with recent words by one of the great conductors of our own time, Marin Alsop:

Use this time wisely: take time with your loved ones talking about what brings each of you joy. Together we will endure, overcome and be joyous again.

**John Challenger**  
July 2020





TREMOLO

SWELL

TROMBETTE

CLARION

CLARION

CONTRA FAGOTTO

CONTRA FAGOTTO

HAUTOBOY

HAUTOBOY

3 BKS. MIXTURE

VOX HUMANA

OCTAVE FLUTE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

FLUTE HARMONIOUS

2 SUPER OCTAVE

FLUTE

SUPER OCTAVE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

FLUTE HARMONIOUS

2 SUPER OCTAVE

OCTAVE

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

VOX ANGELICA

OCTAVE

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

LIBELICH GEDACKT

VIOLA

VIOLA

VIOLA

4 BKS. MIXTURE

4 BKS. MIXTURE

HENRY WILHELM & SONS  
1871  
1872  
1873  
1874  
1875  
1876  
1877  
1878  
1879  
1880  
1881  
1882  
1883  
1884  
1885  
1886  
1887  
1888  
1889  
1890  
1891  
1892  
1893  
1894  
1895  
1896  
1897  
1898  
1899  
1900  
1901  
1902  
1903  
1904  
1905  
1906  
1907  
1908  
1909  
1910  
1911  
1912  
1913  
1914  
1915  
1916  
1917  
1918  
1919  
1920  
1921  
1922  
1923  
1924  
1925  
1926  
1927  
1928  
1929  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933  
1934  
1935  
1936  
1937  
1938  
1939  
1940  
1941  
1942  
1943  
1944  
1945  
1946  
1947  
1948  
1949  
1950  
1951  
1952  
1953  
1954  
1955  
1956  
1957  
1958  
1959  
1960  
1961  
1962  
1963  
1964  
1965  
1966  
1967  
1968  
1969  
1970  
1971  
1972  
1973  
1974  
1975  
1976  
1977  
1978  
1979  
1980  
1981  
1982  
1983  
1984  
1985  
1986  
1987  
1988  
1989  
1990  
1991  
1992  
1993  
1994  
1995  
1996  
1997  
1998  
1999  
2000







## **SALISBURY CATHEDRAL ORGAN**

The organ in Salisbury Cathedral was built by Henry Willis between 1876 and 1877, replacing earlier instruments by Renatus Harris (1710) and Samuel Green (1792). A gift of Miss Chafyn Grove, it cost £3,500 to build, and the casework and blowing apparatus an additional £2,000. The console was originally located in a loft within the north organ case.

In 1934, Henry Willis III undertook an extensive, yet conservative, rebuild of the instrument. The Cathedral's Organist, Sir Walter Alcock, demanded that very few tonal alterations be made during this rebuild, and indeed no pipes were removed from the building during the work. A few carefully-chosen additions and transfers of stops were made to enhance the original specification, and the instrument received its electro-pneumatic console, installed in a loft on the south side.

Further renovations took place in 1969,

1978 and 1993, and aside from small changes of layout, mechanics and specification, the organ remained as Willis left it in 1876–7.

The comprehensive restoration work undertaken by the firm Harrison & Harrison in 2019 and 2020 included cleaning and regulation of the pipework, renewal of the console, key actions and wind system, and simplification of the layout. The Willis specification and tonal scheme have remained unaltered save for a minor change to the Pedal chorus: the 4ft Octave Viola (an ineffective extension stop added in 1934) has been replaced by a new Willis-style 4ft Super Octave. The majority of the pipework and soundboards remain original to 1876 and the instrument retains its historic pitch. The Great, Swell and Pedal choruses remain cone-tuned, and the Choir pipework was returned to its original cone-tuned state in 2020. The organ is divided on either side of the quire: the Swell and Choir divisions are located on the south side, and the Great and Solo on the north. The Pedal department is dispersed either side of the instrument, and some 32ft pipes are located in the north transept.

## ORGAN SPECIFICATION

**Great** Double Open Diapason 16 / Open Diapason I 8 / Open Diapason II 8 / Claribel Flute 8 / Stopped Diapason 8 / Principal I 4 / Principal II 4 / Flûte Couverte 4 / Twelfth 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> / Fifteenth 2 / Mixture IV / Trombone 16 / Trumpet 8 / Clarion 4

**Swell** Contra Gamba 16 / Open Diapason 8 / Lieblich Gedackt 8 / Viola-da-Gamba 8 / Vox Angelica 8 / Octave 4 / Flûte Harmonique 4 / Super Octave 2 / Mixture III / Vox Humana 8 / Hautboy 8 / Contra Fagotto 16 / Trompette 8 / Clarion 4 / Tremolo

**Choir** Lieblich Gedackt 16 / Open Diapason 8 / Flûte Harmonique 8 / Lieblich Gedackt 8 / Salicional 8 / Gemshorn 4 / Flûte Harmonique 4 / Lieblich Gedackt 4 / Nazard 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> / Flageolet 2 / Tierce 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub> / Trumpet 8 / Tremolo

**Solo** Violoncello 8 / 'Cello Celestes 8 / Flûte Harmonique 8 / Flûte Harmonique 4 / Cor Anglais 16 / Clarinet 8 / Orchestral Oboe 8 / Tremolo / Tuba 8 / Tuba Clarion 4

**Pedal** Double Open Diapason 32 / Open Bass 16 / Open Diapason I 16 / Open Diapason II 16 / Violone 16 / Bourdon 16 / Lieblich Gedackt (Ch) 16 / Octave 8 / Viola 8 / Flute 8 / Super Octave 4 / Octave Flute 4 / Mixture IV / Contra Posaune 32 / Ophicleide 16 / Clarion 8

**Couplers** Sw to Gt / Sw 4 to Gt / Sw 16 to Gt / Ch to Gt / Ch 4 to Gt / Ch 16 to Gt / So to Gt / So 4 to Gt / So 16 to Gt / So to Sw / Sw 4 / Sw 16 / Sw Unis Off / Sw to Ch / Sw 4 to Ch / Sw 16 to Ch / So to Ch / So 4 to Ch / Gt Reeds on Ch / Ch 4 / Ch 16 / Ch Unis Off / Gt to So / So 4 / So 16 / So Unis Off / Gt to Ped / Sw to Ped / Sw 4 to Ped / Ch to Ped / Ch 4 to Ped / So to Ped / So 4 to Ped

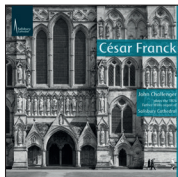


## JOHN CHALLENGER

Described as a 'youthful keyboard virtuoso' by The Guardian (July 2019), John Challenger has performed in the USA and Japan, throughout the UK and Europe. A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, he is a former Organ Scholar of St John's College, Cambridge, and a former pupil of Frédéric Blanc, David Briggs, Jeremy Filsell, Mark Williams, and the late David Sanger. At the age of 23, he was appointed to his present role as Assistant Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral. In 2017, he acted as Director of Music at St John's College, Cambridge, during the sabbatical of the College's Director of Music, Andrew Nethsingha. John's much-acclaimed début solo album *Elgar from Salisbury* (hailed by Organists' Review as 'phenomenal') was followed by César Franck – *Organ Works* in 2019. He works regularly as a conductor with Salisbury Musical Society and Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, and alongside his teaching work, he has been responsible for many recent initiatives including Organ Vespers, the Organ Prom, and the installation of the Salisbury Cathedral 'virtual' Father Willis Organ.

🐦@johnorganist

## Also available



### César Franck Organ Works

John Challenger

*Pièce héroïque •  
Prélude, Fugue et  
Variation • Cantabile •  
Trois Chorals pour  
Grand Orgue*

\*\*\*\*\*

*'Uniformly excellent'*  
**Organ Magazine**

*'Challenger displays  
technical wizardry  
and infinite sonic variety  
throughout'*

**The Guardian**

*'Challenger luxuriates in  
the big-boned Britishness  
of this splendid instrument,  
turning Franck's generously  
proportioned structures into  
monumental, statuesque  
edifices'*

**Gramophone**

Sales of recordings released by Salisbury Cathedral continue to support our music funds. To purchase recordings, or to learn more about the work of preserving the Cathedral's rich musical heritage, visit [salisburycathedral.org.uk](http://salisburycathedral.org.uk)

Recorded in Salisbury Cathedral on 6, 7, 8 July 2020

Engineer, Producer and Editor: Andrew Post (Vif Records)

Producer: Samuel Bristow

Organ tuners: Stephen Alliss and Samuel Keeler-Walker

Booklet notes: John Challenger

Booklet preparation: Salisbury Cathedral Marketing Department and Claudia Grinnell

Publishers: Bärenreiter<sup>3, 4</sup>, Boosey & Hawkes<sup>11</sup>, Hamelle<sup>9</sup>, Novello & Co.<sup>3, 6, 7, 10</sup>, Schott & Co.<sup>2</sup>, Wayne Leupold Editions<sup>8</sup>

The arrangement of *Orb and Sceptre March*<sup>1</sup> is made by permission of Oxford University Press

Album artwork: painted collage © Shadric Toop / source images © Ash Mills, Salisbury Cathedral and Wikimedia Commons  
Photographs: © Ash Mills (Digipak inside left, booklet pp. 6, 7, 10, 11, 15) and Salisbury Cathedral (booklet p. 4)

© 2020 The copyright in this sound recording is owned by Salisbury Cathedral

© 2020 The copyright in the booklet notes is owned by John Challenger

John Challenger would like to thank Mr Luke March for his generous support of this recording









Henry Willis.

Geo: Gilbert Scott