

London  
Hurford

Paris  
Guillou

København  
Nielsen

Venezia  
Ravanello

Zürich  
Kühnis

***TRANS EUROPE EXPERIENCE***

KEITH JOHN  
ORGAN OF  
GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

Amsterdam  
Andriessen



# ***TRANS EUROPE EXPERIENCE***

## **KEITH JOHN ORGAN OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL**

|    |                                                           |                   |       |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 1  | Thema met Variaties (1949)                                | HENDRIK ANDRIESEN | 6:34  |
| 2  | Adorazione                                                | ORESTE RAVANELLO  | 9:46  |
| 3  | Toccata, Op.9                                             | JEAN GUILLOU      | 9:34  |
|    | Suite 'Laudate Dominum'                                   | PETER HURFORD     | 11:06 |
| 4  | Processional                                              |                   | 2:20  |
| 5  | Rondo da Chiesa                                           |                   | 1:10  |
| 6  | Meditation                                                |                   | 2:11  |
| 7  | Scherzo                                                   |                   | 1:02  |
| 8  | French Carol                                              |                   | 1:12  |
| 9  | Exurgat Deus                                              |                   | 3:11  |
| 10 | Commotio, Op.58                                           | CARL NIELSEN      | 22:20 |
|    | Variations on the Swiss song 'Stets i Truure mues i läbe' | MARKUS KÜHNIS     | 11:27 |
| 11 | Theme                                                     |                   | 0:40  |
| 12 | Variation 1                                               | Sehr ruhig        | 1:47  |
| 13 | Variation 2                                               |                   | 1:04  |
| 14 | Variation 3                                               |                   | 0:59  |
| 15 | Variation 4                                               |                   | 1:25  |
| 16 | Variation 5                                               | Sehr ruhig        | 2:13  |
| 17 | Variation 6                                               |                   | 0:31  |
| 18 | Variation 7                                               | Final - Toccata   | 2:48  |

**TOTAL TIME: 70:47**

Recorded at 24-bit 192KHz

Front Cover Design: Breed Media

Photography (Organ Front Cover): Grace Willmott

Photography (Keith John): Carol John & Flash Bang Studios, Worthing

Recording Producers: John Baldson & Mark Hartt-Palmer

Recording Engineering & Editing: Mark Hartt-Palmer

Organ Tuning & Maintenance: James Atherton, Nicholson & Co (Worcester)

© © 2013, Willowhayne Records, a division of QED Quality Enterprise Development Ltd., East Preston, West Sussex, UK

[www.willowhaynerecords.com](http://www.willowhaynerecords.com)

## THE MUSIC:

### Thema met Variaties (1949)

HENDRIK ANDRIESSEN (1892 -1981)

Born in Haarlem, Hendrik Andriessen's father was the organist, Nicolaas Hendrik Andriessen and his mother, the painter Gezsina Vester. He initially had lessons from his father while his older brother, Willem, concert pianist and later Director of the Amsterdam Conservatory, was also an influence. Lessons from the city organist, Louis Robert, and work as a journalist for the Roman Catholic press, preceded his entry to the Amsterdam Conservatory aged 22. He succeeded his father at his post in Haarlem before being called to Utrecht in 1936 to be Director of the Royal Conservatory and Organist at the Catholic Cathedral. Other positions he held were at the Amsterdam Conservatory where he taught composition and music theory (1926-54) and at the Institute for Catholic Church Music in Utrecht (1930-49).

Andriessen had strong views (especially in cultural matters) and refused to tow the Nazi Party line during the wartime occupation. As a result he was allowed to do no more than give lessons and play for church services. He was even imprisoned for six months. After the war, he was appointed to further prominent positions, namely Director of the Royal Conservatory in The Hague (1949-57) and Professor of Musicology at the Nijmegen Catholic University (1954-62).

His visit to England for the summer of 1949 was particularly notable and fruitful: he and his wife stayed at Cleveland Lodge as the guest of Susi Jeans. Their interest in early music and views on historically informed performance practice were similar and whilst there, Andriessen wrote his Ricercare for orchestra (a tribute to J.S. Bach) for the forthcoming 200th anniversary of his death. Also from this same time were the Theme and Variations for organ which he dedicated to Lady Jeans. There is certainly a glance back to the past in the modal nature of the theme and some of the subsequent references but this is combined with more chromatic harmony sometimes reminiscent of other organist / composers such as Reger and Franck. The theme does not undergo a great deal of development: triple time remains constant throughout with slight changes of tempo, occasional moments of a lighter nature (such as the C minor middle section) but otherwise a solid modal / romantic homophony pervades the piece leading to an inevitable, but nevertheless powerful tierce de picardie conclusion.

A footnote here with particular interest to this recording concerns the influence of Susi Jeans. She was a pupil of Schmidt, Widor and Straube but later developed a keen interest in Neo-Classical organ design; the first such instrument in this country being built for her Cleveland Lodge home. She was a friend of Ralph Downes who shared similar ideas and when it came to the Royal Festival Hall organ, Susi Jeans was an advisor and helped in procuring the 'correct voicers' for some stops. Her one time pupil, Peter Hurford, was clearly a convert to her ideas on organ design which

must have been a factor in the Hurford / Downes collaboration at St. Alban's. Similarly with the complex Gloucester Cathedral rebuild and its two historic cases, Lady Jeans's advice was sought.

## **Adorazione**

## **ORESTE RAVANELLO (1871 -1938)**

Oreste Ravanello was born and brought up in Venice where his early piano studies began at the Liceo Musicale. Surprisingly, he was asked to leave after two years because of a lack of talent for music! He went privately to Andrea Girardi, the organist of St. Mark's Basilica, for organ and composition lessons and to P. Angelo De Santi for history of music and studies in Gregorian Chant. He was awarded his music certificate aged 16 and, when still 17 years old, appointed organist to the official choir at St. Mark's. In 1893 he became the second organist and from 1895, the first. In 1898 he became 'Master of the Chapel' at St. Anthony's, Padua and held this post until 1936. As an organist working in the Catholic Church, he supported the Cecilian movement for music reform and was also editor of a journal for organists on the subject of liturgical repertoire. Enrico Bossi named Ravanello his successor as Professor of Organ at the Venice Conservatory in 1902, and from 1912 he taught composition at the Institute Musicale Cesare Pollini in Padua, where he was also Director. One notable concert he organised here included Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with the composer directing.

1893 onwards must have been a fascinating time with Ravanello's promotion and the new appointment of Lorenzo Perosi as Maestro of the Cappella Marciana at St. Mark's as well as the arrival of Bossi in Venice. Improvisation contests between the three friends took place, often in the presence of the music-loving Cardinal Sarto, who was later to become Pope Pius X and issue the 1903 Moto Proprio which decreed that Gregorian Chant must be reinstated in every Catholic church throughout the world. Ravanello and Bossi were very accomplished pianists and organists with a high level of technical expertise. The works of both composers speak for themselves: particular examples in Ravanello's case are his *12 Polyphonic and Rhythmic Studies* for organ or the *Variations in the form of Studies on a theme of Scarlatti* for Piano Left Hand.

*Adorazione* is one of a number of works for organ (the greater part of his compositions are Masses and other liturgical compositions) and is both intense and highly expressive. The late romantic language is naturally chromatic but after the rises and falls of the exploratory first pages, the main melody is gently introduced and with it, a more direct expression which can only come from the opera house. The first 'big aria', using motifs heard in the opening, is preceded by an extraordinary change of key; the second, in the home key of A flat, is a grand statement of the melody with pianistic figuration for the left hand; the third is high drama with powerful homophony and spread chords, again reminiscent of piano writing. A shattering C major chord ends this 'aria' and the music dies down before the ethereal coda which finally floats away to heaven.



## **Toccata**

**JEAN GUILLOU (b. 1930)**

Jean Guillou is renowned today as a recitalist, improviser, composer and organ designer of strikingly original thought. His studies at the Paris Conservatoire with Dupré, Duruflé and Messiaen were followed by positions in Lisbon and Berlin before his return to Paris and the church of Sainte Eustache where he succeeded André Marchal as Titulaire in 1963. It is here that one of his finest instruments can be found, following on from the earlier groundbreaking organs in Alpe d'Huez and Chant d'Oiseau, Brussels. His often controversial ideas are presented in the book *L'Orgue Souvenir et Avenir*.

One of the maestro's earlier compositions, the *Toccata* dates from the early 1960s and is probably the final notated version of various improvisations, much in the same vein as the *Six Sagas*. Alongside the *Sinfonietta* and *18 Variations* (from the late 1950s), the *Toccata* has become a classic of the repertoire. It represents a unique interpretation of the toccata form which derives its name from the Latin verb *Toccare*, meaning 'to touch'. Various means of touching the keyboard and pedals are employed from a vigorous détaché style of playing, often including fast, staccato repeated chords, to a cantabile legato style. There is much brilliant, rapid, virtuosic passagework but still a certain rhythmic freedom, for instance in the quieter, quasi improvisatory solos for the Cromorne and then a Cornet. Some of the material is no more than short, angular motifs, as announced right at the start, and jagged 'secco' chords interspersed with moments of silence add to the drama. Longer melodic phrases sometimes appear in contrapuntal form within the manuals, or in canon between manuals and pedals.

A high point is reached near the end on full organ when the hands have a powerful tremolando, underneath which the pedals play a slow resounding version of one of the melodic fragments from earlier. Pure rhetoric and showmanship bring the work to its exciting conclusion.

## **Suite 'Laudate Dominum'**

**PETER HURFORD (b. 1930)**

### **i) Processional (Psalm 93 vv.1-3)**

*The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel: the Lord hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength. He hath made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved. Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared: thou art from everlasting.*

### **ii) Rondo da Chiesa (Psalm 100 v.1)**

*O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.*

### **iii) Meditation (Psalm 42 v.1)**

*Like as the hart desireth the water brooks: so longeth my soul after thee O God.*

#### **iv) Scherzo (Psalm 149 vv.2-3)**

*Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his Name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with tabret and harp.*

#### **v) French Carol (Psalm 128 vv.1-4)**

*Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labours of thine hands: O well is thee and happy shalt thou be. Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine: upon the walls of thine house. Thy children like the olive branches, round about thy table.*

#### **vi) Exurgat Deus (Psalm 68 vv.1-3)**

*Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God: let them also be merry and joyful.*

Better known as a recitalist and a scholar (particularly in the field of performance practice), Peter Hurford's modest output of choral and organ music was mostly written while he was Master of the Music at St. Alban's Abbey, a post he held for twenty years until 1978. His Suite '*Laudate Dominum*' was published in 1961 and dedicated to Ralph Downes with whom he collaborated on a new organ for the Abbey. This instrument, built in 1962, was something of a landmark as it was the first cathedral organ in the country to be rebuilt on neo-classical lines.

The six movements begin with a robust *Processional* whose progress is marked by a steadily moving pedal line. The inner movements are characterful miniatures demonstrating some of the softer combinations of stops and solo registers typically to be found on a neo-classical organ. The surprise in the *Rondo da Chiesa* comes with an entry of the principal motif in the pedals on a 4' reed stop before a reprise of the opening and a 'throw away cadence' to finish. The *Meditation* has a slightly soulful nature to it: solo flute and reed stops accompanied by celestes are heard and the ending is the most agonising example in the suite of an English false relation. The *Scherzo* is a manuals-only piece which trips along in varying combinations of duple and triple time before its understated conclusion. The *French Carol* perhaps owes something to the minuet in its gentle, dance-like triple time. The concluding *Exurgat Deus* finishes the Suite in joyous style with lively, irregular rhythms. A more lyrical middle section is linked to a repeat of the opening by a long crescendo, also driven by the expectant, rising harmony.

#### **Commotio, Op. 58**

Completed on 27th February 1931 at Damgaard, *Commotio* was Nielsen's only major work for organ. His other pieces for the instrument are small in scale: 29 *Little Preludes for organ*

#### **CARL NIELSEN (1865 -1931)**

or *harmonium*, Op. 51 dating from 1929 in response to a challenge from the organist, Johannes Hansen, to write something suitable for church services; a short piece entitled *Melody* and two more *Preludes* written in 1931, probably after the completion of *Commotio*. There were the beginnings of an earlier work which sadly never came to fruition. Following a meeting with the German organist Karl Straube in 1913 in Copenhagen, he wrote to his wife: *"I have the urge to write a fantasia for organ and have already begun. It is tremendous how an organ can sound when a great master is handling it"*. Various brief sketches exist proving that Nielsen wanted to write for the instrument; one is even labelled *Organ Fantasia*, but nothing further materialised. The writing of *Commotio* fulfilled what must have been a personal goal and longstanding wish. He said: *"It is perhaps foolish to create a work for which there may be no use and for which no one has asked, but I suppose we are all foolish when it comes down to it"*.

First sketches for *Commotio* date from June 1930 and are written on the same paper that contained theory tasks for organists at the Royal Danish Conservatoire. Nielsen escaped from Copenhagen to the Damgaard estate when possible to work on *Commotio* and finally on 26th February, 1931 he wrote to a friend: *"I am here to make the last concentrated effort on my big organ work, and in a few days I shall have it finished."* On March 2nd, he wrote to his wife: *"Now my big organ piece is quite finished and I am happy about the work because it has been done with greater skill than all my other things; I myself must be the judge of that, although not of what it is otherwise like in spirit. It is a large work, and lasts I think about 22 minutes. Bach's longest organ work (Prelude & Fugue in E minor) is 368 bars long, mine is 511; so far as size is concerned, Bach is unreachable!"* The fair copy is intriguingly titled *Commotio Nr. 1*. Had Nielsen planned more?

The inspiration for *Commotio* came mainly from two sources. Firstly, the great organ works of the Baroque, particularly those of J.S. Bach and Nielsen's compatriot, Buxtehude; secondly, Renaissance polyphony, a study of which his Finnish contemporary, Sibelius, also made. The composer wrote that *"The Latin word Commotio, meaning 'Movement, also spiritual', really applies to all music, but the word is used more specifically here as an expression of self-objectification."* Structurally, whilst appearing to be free of form, it does pay contemporary tribute to the Baroque Fantasia and Toccata. When asked for a programme note, Nielsen wrote that: *"The work is borne up by two fugues, to which an introduction, intervening movements and coda cling like climbing plants to the tree-trunks of the forest; however, the composer thinks that further analysis is superfluous."* After various private performances, a letter from a friend suggested that the work was slightly too long and a cut be made eliminating the 'little idyllic piece in 3/4 time' (G tonality) so that the momentum gained by the 2nd fugue should not be lost: a bridge passage would be needed to provide a link into the final fugue entries. Nielsen, who was known to value

colleagues' opinions, was adamant that the structure was as he had planned, but offered the enticing suggestion that *"the last fugato movement should be mightier, that's also to say broader."*

One statement that Nieslen made may create a dilemma: *"an attempt to reconstitute what is truly the only valid organ style, the polyphonic music that is especially suited to this instrument, which for a long time has been regarded as a kind of orchestra, which it absolutely is not."* Whilst this may be clearly relevant to the closely argued fugues and the contrapuntal nature of much of the writing, there still remains an intrinsic 19th century orchestral presence to the work.

At the time, there was a definite move away from the previous century's type of organ which simply attempted to imitate orchestral instruments; indeed, many could still be commonly found. Nielsen left very few performance indications - at one time he considered leaving none at all - and there are no instructions specific to the organ at all. With the advent of large, modern instruments with complete and balanced choruses, singing solo stops, reeds of varying characters both in nature and volume, an organ orchestration is possible to communicate clearly and colourfully the intricacy and nature of the work. Some commentators have suggested that the work is in a way his 'Seventh Symphony' and perhaps the excellent orchestration by Bo Holten goes some way to acknowledge this statement.

The first performances of Commotio were given by two Danish organists: Peter Thomsen who played the work to a private gathering of friends at the chapel in Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen on 24th April 1931, followed shortly by other private performances, and Emilius Bangert who gave the first public performance in Aarhus Cathedral on 14th August 1931. Nielsen managed to attend despite his severe heart condition, but he was not well enough to travel to Lübeck where a performance had been requested for the Nordic-German organ week taking place in October. Bangert was the selected organist, and prior to leaving for Germany, played the work again for the ailing composer in Roskilde Cathedral. This was the last time Nieslen was to hear Commotio as he died on October 3rd, 3 days before the Lübeck performance.

### **Variations on the Swiss song 'Stets i Truure mues i läbe' (1991)**

**MARKUS KÜHNIS (b. 1955)**

Markus Kühnis was born in Rheineck, Switzerland and, when only 14 years old, became principal organist at the church of St. Hilarius, Näfels in the canton of Glarus. He studied piano with Eduard Hug and organ with Hans Vollenweider at the Music Academy in Zürich before pursuing his organ studies abroad with Franz Lehrndorfer in Munich and Jean Langlais in Paris. Currently based in Emmen in the canton of Lucerne, he divides his time between teaching and concert work. As a solo organist he performs worldwide and his skill as an arranger can be heard in the wide-ranging repertoire for the Timporg Trio (Organ 4 hands and percussion). The diversity of his skill as an

organist is also evident in his concerts and recordings with the Lucerne Trumpet Ensemble.

The Variations are based on a well-known Swiss popular song, sad in nature, about lost love. Kühnis' composition transforms the melody completely into many different styles, starting with a direct statement in the manner of a chorale. The Swiss landscape is evoked in the first variation with horn calls and a shepherd's flute. Following variations feature syncopated dance rhythms and a jazz influence. There is perhaps a hint of the French 20th century organ style in the haunting harmony of Var. 5, while in Var. 6 the uneven movement created by alternating 5/16 and 6/16 time signatures creates a curious kind of jazz chorale. The headlong final *Toccata* features some of the elements already mentioned: grand statements of the theme gloriously side step down to Eb major from F major and culminate with a change of metre into a triumphant D major, complete with an added sixth for the final chord.

© 2013, Keith John

### THE ORGAN:

The beautiful 17th century case which we see today still contains some of the original pipework by Thomas Harris. The east and west display pipes, from the 1665 instrument, form the basis of the two Great diapasons. The Chair case on the east was probably by Dallam in 1640. Originally positioned in the south transept, today's east side would have faced north and today's nave display would have been the "back" of the organ – hence its rather plainer design.

As with countless other English cathedral organs, many organ builders have worked on and enlarged the Gloucester organ down the years including the Grays, Bishops, Willis, Harrison's, Hill, Norman and Beard and most recently, Nicholson's of Malvern. The Brewer / Summison instrument of the 50s and 60s was the Harrison rebuild of what was mainly an English "orchestral" Willis by then, although the Harris display pipes were silenced by Willis until the 1971 rebuild.

The 1971 rebuild was the result of John Sanders' vision for a more *"pure organ tone, classical in style but which could fulfil all the demands of a busy English cathedral"*. Ralph Downes was the consultant for the work carried out by Hill, Norman and Beard. This work was the most controversial English cathedral organ rebuild ever, with cries of "vandalism" even making the Sunday papers. But it was truly inspirational and gave us the magnificent instrument we hear today, enlarged to great effect by Nicholson's in 1999 and more recently in 2010 when they added the new "solo" Trompette Harmonique, which can be heard crowning the full organ on this recording during Ravanello's *Adorazione* and Guillou's *Toccata*, here, both as a solo and with full organ.



| GREAT                |           | CHOIR            |                               | WEST POSITIVE |                               |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Gedecktpommer        | 16        | Stopped Diapason | 8                             | Gedecktpommer | 8                             |
| Open Diapason (East) | 8         | Principal        | 4                             | Spitzflute    | 4                             |
| Open Diapason (West) | 8         | Chimney Flute    | 4                             | Nazard        | 2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> |
| Spitzflute (West)    | 8         | Fifteenth        | 2                             | Doublette     | 2                             |
| Bourdon              | 8         | Nazard           | 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | Tierce        | 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub> |
| Octave (East)        | 4         | Sesquialtera     | II                            | Septième      | 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>7</sub> |
| Prestant (West)      | 4         | Mixture          | III                           | Cimbel        | III                           |
| Stopped Flute        | 4         | Cremona          | 8                             | Tremulant     |                               |
| Flageolet            | 2         | Tremulant        |                               | Trompette     |                               |
| Quartane (West)      | II        | Trompette        |                               | Harmonique    | 8 (Choir)                     |
| Mixture              | IV-VI     | Harmonique       | 8                             |               |                               |
| Cornet               | IV(Mid C) |                  |                               |               |                               |
| Posaune              | 16        |                  |                               |               |                               |
| Trumpet              | 8         |                  |                               |               |                               |
| Clarion              | 4         |                  |                               |               |                               |

| SWELL         |                               | PEDAL         |                                | COUPLERS / TRANSFERS          |  |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Chimney Flute | 8                             | Flute         | 16                             | Swell Sub Octave              |  |
| Salicional    | 8                             | Principal     | 16                             | West Great Flues Sub Octave   |  |
| Celeste       | 8                             | Sub Bass      | 16                             | Swell to Great                |  |
| Principal     | 4                             | Quint         | 10 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | West Positive to Great        |  |
| Open Flute    | 4                             | Octave        | 8                              | Choir to Great                |  |
| Nazard        | 2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> | Stopped Flute | 8                              | Swell to Choir                |  |
| Gemshorn      | 2                             | Tierce        | 6 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>5</sub>  | West Positive to Choir        |  |
| Tierce        | 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub> | Septième      | 4 <sup>4</sup> / <sub>7</sub>  | Great to Pedal                |  |
| Mixture       | IV                            | Choral Bass   | 4                              | West Positive to Pedal        |  |
| Cimbel        | III                           | Open Flute    | 2                              | Choir to Pedal                |  |
| Fagotto       | 16                            | Mixture       | IV                             | Swell to Pedal                |  |
| Trumpet       | 8                             | Bombarde      | 32                             | Great and Pedal combs coupled |  |
| Hautboy       | 8                             | Bombarde      | 16                             | Generals on Swell toe pistons |  |
| Vox Humana    | 8                             | Trumpet       | 8                              | Great Reeds on Man IV         |  |
| Tremulant     |                               | Shawm         | 4                              | West great Flues on Man IV    |  |
|               |                               |               |                                | Pedal Divide                  |  |
|               |                               |               |                                | Tremulants – all adjustable   |  |

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Comprehensive allocation of pistons to Manuals and Pedals. 16 levels of divisional pistons and 384 levels of general pistons with Advance / Retard Steppers and Setter. Balanced mechanical pedals to East and West Swell Shutters. Action is electro-magnetic. The console and bench are oak: pedal keys of birch and contrasting rosewood.

## NOTES ON THE RECORDING

Our aim was to produce a natural recording of this instrument (and the wonderful building) as they are heard together by the listener in the Nave. Listeners may be able to detect some wind sounds in certain quieter passages. This is NOT the organ, but nature itself, adding we felt to the presence of the moment – something we all agreed we should not edit out.

## KEITH JOHN - A personal note

To record the organ in Gloucester Cathedral was a particular pleasure for me, and the opportunity to return once more to one of my favourite instruments was one I could simply not refuse. This has been made possible by my friend from chorister and school days, John Balsdon.

The 20th century contains an absolute wealth and diversity of organ literature which is well suited to the Gloucester organ. We decided to feature a period of 60 years (1931-1991) which includes less familiar yet vastly contrasted music, and present it in the spirit of a short musical tour across parts of Europe.

I was born and brought up in the city and was a chorister in the Cathedral Choir when Herbert Sumsion was Organist and Master of the Choristers. This was an extremely valuable musical experience and I was determined to learn the instrument which I had been hearing day in, day out for five years: and so, it was on the thoroughly English Romantic organ of Harrison & Harrison that I began my official lessons. I first realised that there were other totally different kinds of organ when I had to go to the Royal College of Organists to take my Associateship and play the instrument in the hall at Kensington Gore. I was baffled by a pedal department which had stops higher than 8' pitch, reed stops with unusual names making unfamiliar buzzing noises, and stops whose pitch contained unusual fractions. However, I soon began to learn about the different schools and nationalities of organ design, balanced choruses on all manuals and independent pedal departments as well as the importance, merits and subtle characteristics of each individual stop.

Little did I know that it would not be long before I found myself at the heart of one of the most controversial organ rebuilds in the country. The organ which I had known and loved was being dismantled with most of its innards littered around the cathedral; I had to play a small chamber organ from Prinknash Abbey. Behind the scenes, there was clearly a great deal of debate and discussion going on. Eventually, I remember being introduced to an important visitor in the shape of the consultant, Ralph Downes. I was asked to do some of the menial tasks associated with the rebuilding of an organ on this scale, learning a lot about the scheme and, of course, hearing Mr. Downes' particular take on many aspects of the whole business. I was due to go to the Royal College of Music, and Ralph Downes was my obvious choice of professor. Needless to say, the completion of the organ was a revelation and a triumph for both builders, Hill, Norman & Beard and Ralph Downes. Today's instrument, as heard on this recording is slightly different, having been enlarged and its volume increased by various means. This whole experience helped lay the foundations and direction of my future thinking about the organ.

