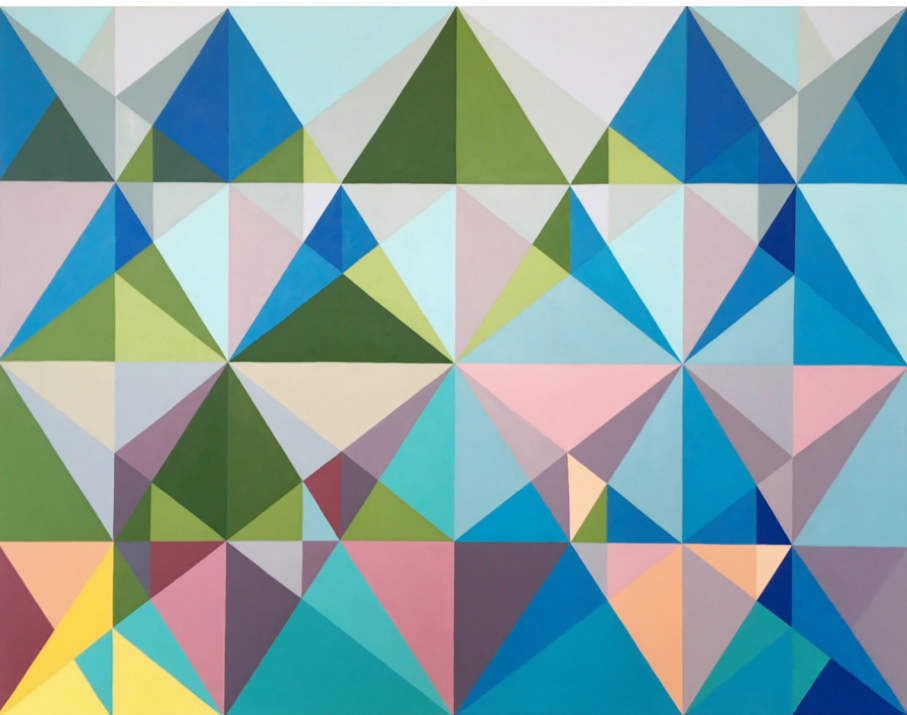


TRANSFORMATIONS

jongen
dove
liszt



ALEXANDER FFINCH

the organ of
cheltenham
college chapel

TRANSFORMATIONS

	Joseph Jongen (1873-1953)	
1	Sonata Eroica	19:12
	Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)	
2	The Dancing Pipes *	10:11
	Franz Liszt (1811-1886)	
	Fantasia and Fugue on the chorale	
	'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam', S.259	32:41
3	I. <i>Moderato</i>	10:23
4	II. <i>Recitativo - Adagio</i>	9:23
5	III. <i>Adagio - Allegro deciso - Fuga</i>	12:54
	Total playing time	62:05

ALEXANDER FFINCH™

The organ of Cheltenham College Chapel

* world première recording

THE MUSIC

Born, like César Franck, in Liège, **Joseph Jongen** was the most significant Belgian composer of his generation. Early success as a student was crowned in 1897 by the award of the Belgian *Prix de Rome*, which enabled him to broaden his horizons with some years of travel in Europe, including a season as chorus-master at Bayreuth, lessons with Vincent D'Indy in Paris, and six months in Italy. After ten years of composing and teaching in Brussels and Liège, his career was disrupted by the War in 1914; like thousands of his countrymen, Jongen and his family took refuge with relatives in England, where he played all over the country as pianist with the Belgian Quartet, conducted at the Proms, and gave many organ recitals. 'In England', he said, 'I experienced the most resounding successes of my career'. After the War he was appointed Professor of counterpoint and fugue at the Brussels Conservatoire, where he later became Director, from 1925 until his retirement in 1939. Many aspects of Jongen's music – the formal techniques, the melodic style, the sumptuous harmonies and warmth of emotion – are derived from the Franck tradition, but he was also influenced by the more delicately impressionistic textures of Debussy. He was a prolific composer, and his extensive output of orchestral, chamber and instrumental music is full of unexplored delights.

Jongen was also an accomplished virtuoso organist, though after his student years he never held an official church post. In November 1930 he played the inaugural recital on the grand concert organ in the new Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, sharing the programme with his colleague Paul de Maleingreau, Professor of Organ at the Conservatoire, who had designed the instrument. (Seriously damaged by fire in 1967, it was finally replaced by a new organ inside the original art-deco case in 2017) It was for this occasion that Jongen composed one of the great masterpieces of late-romantic organ literature, the *Sonata Eroica*. The title clearly recalls Franck's famous *Pièce Héroïque*, composed

50 years earlier for the new Palais du Trocadéro in Paris, a monumental symbol of the resurgence of the French Republic after the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. As Belgium recovered from the appalling destruction of the First World War, the new art-deco concert-hall and arts complex was a similar source of national pride, and especially significant in 1930 – the centenary of the Belgian Revolution and the founding of the independent Kingdom of Belgium.

Despite the title this is not a sonata in any accepted sense, but rather a continuous set of symphonic variations, preceded by a majestic introduction for the full organ. After the tumult of the opening pages subsides, the theme is introduced very quietly – a haunting modal melody in the style of a Belgian folksong. It initiates a sequence of contrasting developments and variations which exploit a rich variety of textures and colours; they include a dreamily romantic slow movement and a tightly-wrought neo-classical fugue, and culminate in a thunderous carillon that brings the sonata to a truly heroic conclusion.

Jonathan Dove is best known for his music for the opera-house, and for his work with children and community choirs; his Glyndebourne opera *Flight* in 1998 has been followed by more than twenty stage works of all kinds, which have moved and entertained audiences all over the world. With such experience and understanding of the human voice, it is no surprise that he is also one of the most successful composers of contemporary church music. And his music for orchestra and instruments without voices is all animated by a dramatic sense of narrative and forward movement, seeming perhaps to tell a story of some kind...

Dove's two organ works were both written for Thomas Trotter, *Niagara* in 1989 and *The Dancing Pipes* in 2014. Anyone who knows his music will appreciate that 'dancing' is one of his favourite tempo directions, and it becomes the dominant element in this new work, which was commissioned to celebrate the 250th

anniversary of the Snetzler organ in St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow. 'My first thought', he says, 'was that I might make reference to the splendid peal of ten bells in the church tower, or perhaps write something about St. Laurence himself. St. Laurence's martyrdom at the gridiron could make for a highly dramatic piece, while his description of the poor of his city as 'the treasures of the Church' might conjure up a kind of serene grandeur. I started to experiment with different musical ideas, to see if I could find some sounds which would match these subjects. Instead, a little dancing figure occurred to me, and kept demanding my attention. It wasn't at all what I was looking for, but eventually I gave in and let it have its way. The figure simply wanted to keep going, ignoring the challenges of various counterpoints that tried to knock it off balance. It seemed as if the organ pipes themselves wanted to dance, celebrating all the different colours of the instrument. Although one of the counterpoints takes on a life of its own for a while, in the end the original dancing figure prevails.'

In 1847, at the age of 36, **Franz Liszt** abandoned his superstar celebrity career as an international concert pianist, and disappeared from public life, settling quietly in Weimar to devote himself to conducting and composition. The effect of this early retirement on the musical world was electric: 'After having been the incarnation of romantic panache at the piano', said his friend Saint-Saëns, 'he vanished, leaving behind him the glittering trail of a meteor. We knew that at the Court of Weimar Liszt was occupying himself with the highest forms of composition. He dreamt of a rebirth of his art, and so gave rise to those anxious rumours which always appear whenever anyone sets out to explore a new world.' Works like this monumental organ Fantasia, the great Piano Sonata that followed soon afterwards, and the orchestral Symphonic Poems, did indeed come from a new world – revolutionary milestones in the history of music, revealing new horizons of form, technique and imagination.

The 'Prophet Fantasia', as the composer called it, had its origins in the spectacular world of the Grand Opera, the unique genre of monumental musical drama that enthralled the citizens of Paris in the mid-19th century. The golden

age of the Grand Opera was relatively brief, from 1828 until about 1850, and its chief composers (Auber, Halévy and Meyerbeer) do not rank very highly these days, but its influence was felt for much longer in the works of Verdi and Wagner among others, culminating in the apocalyptic vision of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. The production of these grand five-act operas brought together the finest stage technicians, designers and choreographers; there was a preference for inspirational revolutionary historical themes, ending if possible in some kind of spectacular disaster — an erupting volcano perhaps, or, in the case of *Le Prophète*, a castle destroyed by an exploding gunpowder store in the cellar. The king of the grand opera was Meyerbeer, and *Le Prophète* is a romanticised version of the story of the Anabaptist rebellion in the city of Münster in 1534. The leader, John of Leiden, proclaimed the arrival of the New Jerusalem and had himself crowned king of a millennial communist theocracy. In real life the 'ideal state' soon descended into chaos; its suppression two years later was brutal and bloody, and the iron cages in which the leaders' mutilated corpses were left to rot can still be seen hanging from the church tower.

In the early 19th century one of the most popular forms of piano music was the virtuoso fantasia or 'paraphrase' based on tunes from the fashionable operas of the day. In 1849, after the Parisian premiere of *Le Prophète*, Liszt wrote a set of three *Illustrations du Prophète*, incorporating many of its main themes. But the next year he returned to Meyerbeer's music, and composed a fourth 'Illustration' on a much grander scale. This time he concentrated on one short theme, which had already made a brief appearance in two of the earlier pieces -- the solemn Latin chant of the Anabaptists, *Ad nos, ad salutarem undam*. And now he wrote not for piano, but for the more inspiring, dramatic and colourful medium of the organ. The chant of the three sinister Anabaptists forms a leitmotif throughout the First Act of *Le Prophète*, in which they call on the peasants to rebel against their oppressive masters, regain control of their own destiny, and assert their right to liberty: 'Come to us, to the waters of salvation... Slaves and vassals, too long on your knees, Arise! Arise! Arise!... The nations shall see God's glory, the holy law shall shine for all!'



LE PROPHÈTE

Opéra
en 5 Actes.
Représenté le 24.3.1849.

Musique
de
G. Meyerbeer.

Partition

Pour Piano et Chœur

Arrangé par

CARAUDÉ

PARIS

BRANDUS & Co.
67, Rue Vivienne.



TROUPENAL & Co.
40, Rue Vivienne.

LONDRES:
Guerin, Fils et Co. (Chapel).

LEIPZIG:
Breitkopf et Härtel.

MILAN:
Ricordi.

This short chorale, in many different transformations, provides all the material for half an hour of music in a work that opened up whole new horizons in its endless technical invention, its subtle thematic construction, and its sheer grandeur of conception ('one of my least bad productions', as Liszt modestly described it). The elements of the theme are ever present, in the sections of free recitative, in cadenzas and decorative passagework for both manual and pedal, and in all the melodic lines, which undergo some astonishing transformations in the course of the piece; as just one example, the vibrant trumpet fanfares of the first section, and the sensuous cantilena that develops out of the adagio, both derive from the third phrase of the chorale, with its prominent falling fifth. Nominally in the key of C minor, the whole work falls into three main sections, encompassing a kaleidoscopic range of moods and colours. In the middle there is a slow movement in Liszt's favourite mystical key of F# major, and it is here that the whole chorale is clearly heard for the first time. Enlivened by some jaunty dotted rhythms, it also provides the subject for the fugue that begins the final section, building up to a grandiose final apotheosis in C major.

In the 1840s new ideals of democracy were sweeping across Europe like wildfire. There were revolutions in France and in Germany, and Liszt's friend Wagner was briefly involved in an uprising in Dresden. Wagner echoed the appeal of the Anabaptists in a fiery exhortation in 1849: 'The old world is in ruins from which a new world will arise. So up, ye peoples of the earth! Up ye mourners, ye oppressed, ye poor!...' More importantly perhaps for Liszt himself – the poet and idealist, increasingly drawn to the Catholic Church in which he would soon take Minor Orders in Rome – there was a profound personal significance in the spiritual side of the invitation to the waters of salvation. In this context, his 'Prophet Fantasia' can be interpreted as a visionary manifesto for the future of humanity: its arresting opening as a passionate call to arms, its central adagio as a journey into the still, quiet depths of the soul, and its glorious conclusion as a real hymn to freedom, a vision of a new and better world...

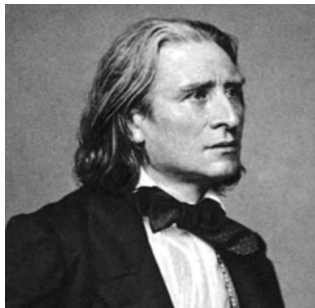
Jonathan Dove



Joseph Jongen



Franz Liszt



THE ORGANIST

Alexander Ffinch studied at the Royal College of Music, and was later organ scholar of Keble College, Oxford where he subsequently became a pupil of Thomas Trotter. He was resident organist at Lancaster Town Hall where he gave over 100 recitals in the 1990's and also gained recognition in the St Albans Interpretation Competition in 1999. He has since performed extensively in UK, Europe, USA and Asia.

He was appointed College Organist of Cheltenham College in 2004, after a three-year tenure as Director of Music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge and is responsible for the daily organ playing in the College Chapel as well as accompanying the Choirs. He also directed the College Chamber Choir which released the album *Coeperunt Loqui* (HAV 351) in 2009. Throughout his time at Cheltenham, he has continued to give recitals regularly and has featured in Cheltenham International Music Festival and also on BBC Radio 3 broadcasts as organist.

In 2017, he oversaw the second complete rebuild of the College organ by Harrison and Harrison, and he continues to promote opportunities for both the College organ pupils as well as visiting recitalists. His schedule for 2019 includes recitals both in Europe and USA as well as the launch of this new recording.

"...I like this performance enormously. The control of colours is masterly: there's a lovely play of timbres throughout and you sustain a gradual development all the way to the end, which is thrilling. Bravo!..." Jonathan Dove

www.alexanderffinch.co.uk



THE ORGAN

At the heart of Cheltenham College Chapel lies the College organ, originally built in 1897 by Norman & Beard. The case was designed by Henry Prothero, architect of the Chapel. The organ was rebuilt and extended by Harrison & Harrison in 1930 and was last restored with minor alterations in 1976. In 2013, a 32-foot 'Double Ophicleide' stop was added.

The organ has been excellently maintained by Harrison & Harrison since the last rebuild, but the time was right for the entire instrument to be taken apart in 2017 for major restoration, which was again undertaken by Harrison & Harrison.

The complete console, soundboards, wind system and pipework were all removed from the organ case and moved to Durham for overhaul, reworking and releathering before being reinstalled. Some pipework was removed and cleaned onsite. The organ has retained all of its valuable historical features and, like its larger cousin at King's College, Cambridge, which has also been newly and successfully restored, it will certainly remain one of the finest examples of British organ building of the period.



ORGAN SPECIFICATION

PEDAL ORGAN

1. Open Wood	16'
2. Violone (from 21)	16'
3. Sub Bass	16'
* 4. Principal (from 21)	8'
5. Flute (from 3)	8'
* 6. Fifteenth	4'
* 7. Mixture 19.22	II
# 8. Double Ophicleide	32'
† 9. Ophicleide	16'
10. Trumpet (from 42)	16'
* 11. Clarion (from 42)	8'
* 12. Oct. Clarion (from 42)	4'

I. Choir to Pedal

II. Great to Pedal

III. Swell to Pedal

CHOIR ORGAN

13. Hohl Flute	8'
14. Viole d'Orchestre	8'
15. Wald Flute	4'
* 16. Nazard	22/3'
* 17. Piccolo	2'
* 18. Tierce	13/5'
* 19. Mixture 19.22	II
20. Clarinet	8'
<i>IV. Tremulant</i>	
<i>V. Octave</i>	
<i>VI. Sub Octave</i>	
<i>VII. Unison Off</i>	
<i>VIII. Swell to Choir</i>	

GREAT ORGAN

21. Double Open Diapason	16'
22. Large Open Diapason	8'
23. Small Open Diapason	8'
24. Claribel Flute	8'
25. Octave	4'
26. Harmonic Flute	4'
27. Octave Quint	22/3'
28. Super Octave	2'
† 29. Sesquialtera	12.17 II
† 30. Mixture (12)15.19.22	III-IV
† 31. Tromba	8'
† 32. Octave Tromba	4'
<i>IX. Reeds on Choir</i>	
<i>X. Choir to Great</i>	
<i>XI. Swell to Great</i>	

SWELL ORGAN

33. Open Diapason	8'
34. Lieblich Gedackt	8'
35. Salicional	8'
36. Voix Céleste	8'
37. Gemshorn	4'
38. Lieblich Flute	4'
* 39. Fifteenth	2'
40. Mixture 22.26.29	III
41. Oboe	8'
<i>XII. Tremulant</i>	
42. Double Trumpet	16'
43. Trumpet	8'
44. Clarion	4'
<i>XIII. Octave</i>	
<i>XIV. Sub Octave</i>	

ACCESSORIES

Eight general pistons and general cancel

Six foot pistons to Pedal Organ

Five pistons to Choir Organ

Six pistons to Great Organ

Six pistons to Swell Organ (duplicated by foot pistons)

Stepper, operating general pistons in sequence

16 divisional and 128 general memory levels

Reversible foot pistons: *II, XI & 8*

Combination couplers: *Great and Pedal pistons; general foot pistons*

Balanced expression pedals to the Choir and Swell organs

Reversible foot pistons: *II, XI & 8*

Combination coupler: *Great and Pedal pistons*

Balanced expression pedals to the Choir and Swell organs

* 1976 † revoiced 2000 # revoiced 2013

The manual compass is 58 notes; the pedal 30 notes

The actions are electro-pneumatic



The Cheltenham College organ console

Recorded at Cheltenham College Chapel, Cheltenham, England on 23, 24 & 27 July, 2018
by kind permission of the Head of the College and College Council.

Photo of Jonathan Dove © Marshall Light Studio

Photo of Alexander Ffinch (rear inlay) © Cathy LL Wong

Photos of the Chapel and Organ courtesy of Cheltenham College

Booklet and packaging design by Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)

Cover image: "Paradise of Possibility" by Nina Baxter © 2016, (acrylic on canvas)

Program notes by David Gammie

All images, texts and graphic devices are copyright and used with permission. All rights reserved

Sonata Eroica is published by Alphonse Leduc

The Dancing Pipes is published by Edition Peters

Fantasia and Fugue is public domain

©© 2019 Divine Art Limited (Diversions LLC in USA/Canada)

DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP



Over 500 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. Available at any good dealer or direct from our online store in CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3 digital download formats.

UK: Divine Art Ltd.

email: uksales@divineartrecords.com

USA: Diversions LLC

email: sales@divineartrecords.com

www.divineartrecords.com

find us on facebook, youtube and twitter

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.



Cheltenham College Chapel