Le Poisson Magique
Organ works by
John McCabe

Tom Winpenny
The Organ of St Albans Cathedral
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Organ works by John McCabe (b. 1939)

Tom Winpenny organ
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About Tom Winpenny:

‘Resident organist Tom Winpenny clearly knows his way around St Albans Cathedral’s magnificent IV/72 Harrison & Harrison and makes much of its versatility in an eclectic half-century-spanning programme’
Choir and Organ

‘The combination of instrument, repertory and Tom Winpenny’s immaculate playing is beyond reproach’
International Record Review

1. **Dies Resurrectionis** (1963) [8:08]
2. **Sinfonia**, Op. 6 (1961) *
3. **Introduzione** [0:38]
4. **Passacaglia & Cadenza I** [4:19]
5. **Notturno** [1:59]
6. **Interludium I & Elegia** [2:26]
7. **Capriccio & Cadenza II** [1:56]
8. **Interludium II & Toccata** [3:27]
9. **Prelude** (1964) *
11. **Overture** [4:27]
12. **Intermezzo** [2:08]
13. **Ritornello** [4:25]
14. **Nocturne** (1964) *
15. **Le Poisson Magique** *
   Meditation after Paul Klee (1964/2004) [4:22]
16. **Carol-Preludes** (2008) *
17. **Weinachtenslied (Es kam ein Engel)** [1:33]
18. **Christmas Eve** [2:22]
19. **On Christmas Day in the Morning** [1:47]
20. **Angels from the Realms of Glory** [1:53]
21. **Es sungen drei Engel** [2:27]
22. **Tomorrow shall be my dancing day** [1:24]
23. **Gen Himmel aufgefahren ist** [2:51]
24. **Esperanza** (2010) *
25. **Esperanza** [8:12]

Total playing time [71:43]

* world premiere recording
Le Poisson Magique:
Organ Works by John McCabe

During the first half of the 1960s I wrote a substantial number of organ works, largely because a lot of my friends were organists, and they asked me to write pieces for them. As a young composer this was a splendid way of getting performances as well as exploring the potentialities of a remarkably versatile instrument – a veritable orchestra in itself, though not (in my view) a replacement for the orchestra, but rather a different kind of one. One of the friends in question was Gordon Thorne, who gave the premiere of the Sinfonia in 1961. When he was invited to give a recital in the inaugural series of concerts on the new Manchester University organ in 1963, he commissioned me to write a piece for the occasion, and Dies Resurrectionis was the result. Gordon recalls that he asked me for a toccata ‘[...]' and received one with more serious content’. I felt unable to restrain my innate desire for detailed structure and thematic integration, and thus produced a work which, though relatively short (about 6-7 minutes) is in three linked movements, all based on the motto theme heard in the pedals in the opening ‘Maestoso’ section. The three sections follow almost a traditional sonata outline, with an opening ‘Allegretto’ (Filius Mortuus) of somewhat toccata-like character, a central slow part Filius in sepulchro, and a faster final section (Filius resurrectus) which, with its irregular rhythms and C major chord punctuations, most closely resembles a straightforward toccata (though one organist described it as like a crazy tango). The final chord combines the tonalities of C major and F sharp major, which are at the heart of the work. Dies Resurrectionis really falls into the virtuoso tradition of the French organ toccata, with plenty of elaborate figuration and flashing chords. It also indicates early examples of my interest in different layers of activity (e.g. tonality) happening simultaneously. This continues to be something that fascinates me, and provides a way of developing material, as well as varying the texture.

The Sinfonia (1961) previously mentioned was in fact commissioned by Gordon Thorne, and first performed by him in Armley, Leeds. Sinfonia is a work for which, despite its occasional gaucheries, I have retained great affection. It was an attempt at writing a really substantial organ work, and dealing with a 20-minute timescale. The movements are Introduzione – Passacaglia...
The piece ranges widely over my interests at the time, including rhythms from Indian music, for which I also retain a fondness. In a sense, however, the Sinfonia might be taken as a journey from the deep slow bass of the Passacaglia to the higher-pitched, exhilarated final fugue, i.e. as a precursor of later dark-to-light pieces.

The movements of the Johannis-Partita are Overture (Grave – Allegro vivo – Grave); Intermezzo (Lento mallincolica); Ritornello (Tempo I); Allegro giocoso (Tempo II); Tempo I; Tempo II; Tempo I; Grave (Tempo cominciato). It was composed in 1964 during a study course in German in Luneburg and is named after the local church where Bach often played as a young man. It revives the old form of the partita in three movements: a vigorous French Overture replete with dotted rhythms, a lyrical, somewhat melancholy slow piece, and a rondo finale. It was written for the Pershore Abbey Organ Week, 1965, and is dedicated to Rodney Baldwyn, who gave the premiere.

The short piece entitled Le Poisson Magique (1964) was commissioned by the late Brian Runnett, to whom it is dedicated. The idea for the work came from the painting of that name by Paul Klee, and my response to the colours of the picture can be noted in the harmonic style of the work and the use of arabesque-like decoration of the chords. There are two tempi, which alternate, and the work is in the form of both a free Passacaglia and a set of alternating variations in the tradition of Haydn. In the painting there is tremendous variety both of colour and line, unified by a delicate balance of form and an overall sense of a single experience. I hope that a similar unity through diversity is to be found in the music.

The Carol-Preludes were written in 2008, but the idea was in my mind for many years before this. Essentially they revive the old style of the Chorale-Prelude, but using carol tunes instead of hymns or chorales. They are derived from German, French
Organ Music. Nocturne is a single movement, consisting of a slow piece from a piano sonata written during my teens, and the title indicates its character. The main theme is not unlike a slow version of the main theme of the finale of Mozart’s ‘Jupiter’ Symphony, which had an important therapeutic effect on me during a severe teenage illness.

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Esperanza was composed in 2010, and was inspired by the amazing rescue of the thirty-three miners trapped underground for seventy days in that year, at the San Jose Mine in Chile. The rescue camp was known as Esperanza (Camp Hope), and the rescue itself, televised live, was one of the most moving things I have ever seen. By the most extraordinary coincidence I had already done a good deal of sketching for this organ piece before this all happened, and had determined on a ‘darkness-to-light’ kind of piece — so the coincidence, as well as my feelings of elation, were both too strong to ignore.

The piece pursues a course from a fairly knotty slow beginning (heralded by a few chords that recur at the very end), full of rising themes (another coincidence — the material had already been sketched before the miners were trapped underground), and reaching a loud climax, the quick, toccata-like second section bursting vigorously out of the tension which is created at the beginning of the work. Esperanza was commissioned for the 26th International Organ Festival at St Albans in 2011.

There remain on this recording two very short early works, namely a Prelude, and a Nocturne. In 1969, Novello published an album of five simple new organ pieces entitled Music Before Service: 5 Modern Pieces for Organ, of which this short Prelude was one. It was written in 1964, and it explores a brief ‘wriggling’ motif and a chordal theme.

Finally, in 1964 Oxford University Press published a collection of Easy Modern

and English melodies. Some of the German tunes were found in my mother’s old school songbook from her schooldays in Germany after the First World War.

The movements are: ‘Weihnachtslied’ (Es kam ein Engel), a vigorous treatment of an old German tune; ‘Christmas Eve’, a flowing, reflective setting of an English tune, with many shifts of metre; ‘On Christmas Day in the Morning’, a familiar English carol, given a mysterious, rather misty treatment; ‘Angels from the Realms of Glory’, a full-blooded, virtuoso toccata on this old French tune; ‘Tomorrow Shall be my Dancing Day’, a light-hearted scherzo, taking its cue from the title of this well-known English tune; ‘Es sungen drei Engel’, a German tune, given a quietly thoughtful setting; and ‘Gen Himmel aufgefahren ist’, another virtuoso toccata, on an old German theme, dominated by fanfare-like figures.

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Tom Winpenny

Tom Winpenny is Assistant Master of the Music at St Albans Cathedral where his duties include accompanying the daily choral services and directing the acclaimed Abbey Girls Choir. Previously, he was Sub-Organist at St Paul’s Cathedral, and during this time he performed with the Cathedral Choir at the American Guild of Organists National Convention, performed in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Valery Gergiev and the LSO, and played for many great state occasions. He has also broadcast regularly on BBC Radio and been featured on American Public Media’s Pipedreams.

He began organ lessons under John Scott Whiteley while a chorister at York Minster, and continued as a music scholar at Eton College under Alastair Sampson. After holding the post of Organ Scholar at Worcester Cathedral and then St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle, he was for three years Organ Scholar at King’s College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a degree in music. With the Choir of King’s College, he gave concerts in the USA, Hong Kong and throughout Europe, in addition to appearing as their accompanist on CD releases on EMI Classics.

He has taken part in the first performance of works by Cecilia McDowall, Judith Bingham, Jonathan Dove, Paul Mealor, Francis Grier and Francis Pott. He has studied with Thomas Trotter and Johannes Geffert, and won First Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2008 Miami International Organ Competition.

Recent and forthcoming engagements include recitals in Birmingham Town Hall, Coventry Cathedral, Stockholm Cathedral and St Paul’s, K Street, Washington DC and a performance as organ soloist in John Rutter’s Christmas Celebration concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. His solo organ recordings include a recital on the organ of St Albans Cathedral (JAV Recordings), organ works by Olivier Messiaen and Judith Bingham (Naxos), music by Malcolm Williamson (Toccata Classics) and works by Charles Villiers Stanford and Lennox & Michael Berkeley (Resonus Classics). He also directs St Albans Abbey Girls Choir in a recording of Mendelssohn Choral Works (Naxos).

www.tomwinpenny.org
The Harrison & Harrison Organ of St Albans Cathedral

Built in 1962 by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, the design of the organ at St Albans Cathedral was revolutionary, being the first cathedral instrument in Britain to be voiced and built on neo-classical lines, to a specification by Ralph Downes and Peter Hurford. The organ incorporates pipework from the previous instrument together with the north and south cases of 1908, designed by John Oldrid Scott. However, all of the old pipework was revoiced and the tonal design was entirely new. Its unusual versatility means it is possible to perform all schools of organ repertoire on the instrument, as well as being ideal for accompanying the English cathedral repertoire.

In 2007-9 the organ was comprehensively refurbished and enlarged, again by Harrison & Harrison, with the addition of a new console with a fourth manual, new Great reeds and a 32’ pedal reed. The facade pipes on the north and south cases were all replaced, while a new nave division was also prepared for, to be installed in the coming years.

Aside from its regular liturgical duties, the organ is the centerpiece of the biennial St Albans International Organ Festival and Competitions, which were founded by the cathedral’s former Master of the Music, Peter Hurford, in 1963.
Organ Specification

PEDAL ORGAN
1. Sub Bass  32
2. Principal  16
3. Major Bass  16
4. Bourdon  16
5. Quint  10 2/3
6. Octave  8
7. Gedackt  8
8. Nazard  5 1/3
9. Choral Bass  4
10. Open Flute  2
11. Mixture 19.22.26.29  IV
12. Fagotto  32
13. Bombardon  16
14. Bass Trumpet (from 41)  16
15. Fagotto (from 12)  16
16. Tromba  8
17. Shawm  4

CHOIR ORGAN
18. Quintaton  16
19. Open Diapason  8
20. Gedacktpommer  8
21. Flauto Traverso  8
22. Octave  4
23. Rohr Flute  4
24. Wald Flute  2
25. Larigot  1 1/3
26. Sesquialtera 19.24/12.17  II
27. Mixture 22.26.29.33  IV
28. Cromorne  v

GREAT ORGAN
29. Principal  16
30. Bourdon  16
31. Principal  8
32. Diapason  8
33. Spitzflute  8
34. Spitzflute  8
35. Octave  4
36. Stopped Flute  4
37. Quint  2 2/3
38. Super Octave  2
39. Blockflute  2
40. Mixture 19.22.26.29  IV-VI
41. Bass Trumpet  16
42. Trumpet  8
43. Clarion  4
44. Grand Cornet 1.8.12.15.17. (tenor g)  V
45. Great Cornet 1.8.12.15.17. (tenor g)  V
46. Corno di Bassetto  16
47. Hautboy  8
48. Vox Humana  8
49. Super Octave  8
50. Blockflute  2
51. Celeste (tenor c)  8
52. Celeste (tenor c)  8
53. Gemshorn  8
54. Tierce  8
55. Mixture 22.26.29  IV
56. Cimbel  29.33.36

SWELL ORGAN
45. Open Diapason  16
46. Rohr Flute  16
47. Viola  8
48. Celeste (tenor c)  8
49. Principal  8
50. Open Flute  8
51. Nazard  8
52. Octave  8
53. Gemshorn  8
54. Tierce  8
55. Mixture 22.26.29  IV
56. Cimbel  29.33.36

(SWELL ORGAN cont.)
57. Corno di Bassetto  16
58. Hautboy  16
59. Vox Humana  8
60. Trumpet  8
61. Clarion  8
62. Tremulant  xiv
63. Octave  xiv
64. Sub Octave  xvi
65. Unison Off  xvi

SOLO ORGAN
62. Fanfare Trumpet  8
63. Grand Cornet (from Great)  V
64. Corno di Bassetto (from Swell)  16
65. Octave  xvii
66. Unison off  xvii
67. Great Reeds on Solo  xvii
68. Corno di Bassetto (from Great)  16
69. Great Reeds on Solo  16

NAVE ORGAN (prepared)
70. Bourdon  16
71. Principal  8
72. Rohr Flute  8
73. Octave  8
74. Spitzflute  8
75. Super Octave  8
76. Blockflute  2
77. Celeste (tenor c)  8
78. Gemshorn  8
79. Tierce  8
80. Mixture 22.26.29  IV

ACCESSORIES
Sixteen general pistons and general cancel 16
Eight foot pistons to the Pedal Organ 8
Eight pistons and cancel to the Choir Organ 8
Eight pistons and cancel to the Great Organ 8
Eight pistons and cancel to the Swell Organ (duplicated by foot pistons) 4
Three pistons and cancel to the Solo Organ 4
Four pistons and cancel to the Nave Organ 4

Reversible pistons: i – iv, viii, x – xii, xix – xxi
Reversible foot pistons: ii; xx

Stepper, operating general pistons in sequence
(Thumb – 9 advance, 2 reverse: toe – 2 advance, 1 reverse)

Combination couplers:
Great & Pedal Combinations Coupled,
Generals on foot pistons 8
Eight divisional and 256 general piston memory levels 4

Cimbelstern (drawstop and foot pedal)
Balanced expression pedal to the Swell Organ

Rotary switch for Choir Organ west shutters

iii Swell to Pedal iv Solo to Pedal

ixii Swell to Great xii Solo to Great

viii Swell to Choir ix Solo to Choir

vi Corno di Bassetto (from Swell)
viii Sub Octave

vii Tremulant

vii Octave

xii Tremulant

xii Octave

xix Tremulant

xx Nave on Great

xxi Nave on Solo

iv Solo to Pedal

vii Tremulant

vii Octave

xii Tremulant

xii Octave

xix Tremulant

xxi Nave on Pedal

xxii Nave on Pedal
More titles from Resonus & Tom Winpenny

Charles Villiers Stanford: Organ Works
Tom Winpenny
The Binns Organ of Queens’ College, Cambridge
RES10104

‘ [...] this recording now leads the field. [...] I look forward to hearing more from Tom Winpenny’
MusicWeb International

Lennox & Michael Berkeley: Organ Works
Tom Winpenny
The Harrison & Harrison Organ of St Albans Cathedral
RES10119

‘Tom Winpenny clearly knows his way around St Albans Cathedral’s magnificent IV/72 Harrison & Harrison and makes much of its versatility’
Gramophone

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Recorded at 24-bit / 96kHz resolution
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The organ console of St Albans Cathedral
Harrison & Harrison, 2009