

Edwin H. Lemare – Organ Works, Volume 3

Marche Moderne, Op.2; *Allegretto*, *Toccata & Fugue in D Minor* Op.98; *Variations Sérieuses*

Op.96; *Toccata di Concerto* Op.59; *Irish Air from 'County Derry'*; *Grand Cortège (Finale)* Op.67

Lars Rosenlund Nørremark at the Frobenius Organ of Aarhus Cathedral

Brave is the man who travels the world brandishing his own *D Minor Toccata and Fugue*. But such was the celebrity and reputation of Edwin Lemare, that he could kidnap both key signature and framework of the organ world's most famous acquisition with impunity.

He went on, as also proven by this final welcome tribute in a trilogy of CDs, to encapsulate the

later, and by then fully emerging, spirit of the French toccata, epitomised in a specifically concert rather than church context.

One of the chief joys of this collection has been the extended essays (rather than itemised programme notes) by the recitalist. Here, he persuasively argues that while the German and French repertoires maintained prominence, it was British organists who set performance standards, as true disciples of an internationalism which off-set French indulgence and a wider European pragmatism over content and style. So, we may conclude that it was British-based players like Lemare, the natural successor to W.T. Best, who garnered the live performance plaudits, even if there sadly remains a dearth of



early recordings.

The remarkable instrument at Aarhus – most notably used by Gillian Weir for a complete Franck set of CDs – proves just how invigorating a Lemare performance must have been. Not only by virtue of the many orchestral transcriptions which are enjoying renewed attention, but also through his own stirring musical voice.

Joe Riley

Guy Weitz Complete Organ Works & Joseph Jongen Quatre Pièces; Toccata; Sonata Eroica

CD 1 (TT 81:32): Guy Weitz (1883–1970) *Fanfare and Gothic March*

(1937); *Ave Regina; Benedicite Dominum, Introit; Prière, Prelude on 'Salve Regina'; Christmas Rhapsody; De profundis clamavi; In Paradisum; Mortify us by thy grace* (Chorale, Cantata no.22): J.S. Bach (transcription); *Sicilienne* (1935); *Grand Choeur (Voluntary on the Fifth Mode, 1939)* Joseph Jongen (1873–1953) *Quatre Pièces* Op.37 (1911) *Cantabile/Improvisation Caprice/Prière/Choral; Toccata* Op.104 (1940)

CD 2 (TT 78:12): Guy Weitz *Symphony* (1930) *Regina Pacis/Mater dolorosa/Stella maris; Symphony no.2* (1949) *Symphonic Movement/Passacaille/Prologue and Scherzo/Procession/Finale; Paraphrase on 'Regina Coeli Laetare'*; Joseph Jongen *Sonata Eroica* Op.94 (1930)

Peter Van de Velde plays the

organs of Our Lady's Cathedral and the Laurentius Church, Antwerp

The monumental Antwerp Cathedral organ (1891, IV/87) was Belgian firm Pierre Schyven's largest. This is the last recording before its restoration of 2015–16. The Sint-Laurentiuskerk organ (III/46) is by B. Pels & Zoon (1935). Some of the solo stops were lauded by Flor Peeters at the inauguration as 'singularly beautiful in colour'. Cathedral organist and international recitalist Peter Van de Velde proves a persuasive champion of his fellow-countrymen's music and there is no shortage of virtuosity.

Guy Weitz is accorded 'star-billing' in terms of print size (by a short neck) on the CD cover. However, his complete organ works by no means fill two CDs and the space left over is suitably occupied by several pieces composed by his contemporary Joseph Jongen. (Both

Weitz and Jongen fled to London just before the First World War; Jongen returned to Belgium in 1919.)

Composed for the High Mass held in Westminster Cathedral on the day of King George VI's coronation, Weitz's *Fanfare and Gothic March* gets us off to a lively start, alternately splashy and flashy – characteristics featuring later on in the two substantial symphonies. Many of his other pieces tend to be 'organ-lofty', plainsong-based, predominantly liturgical of purpose, although none the less attractive for that. As the abstract titles suggest, Jongen's intent is less church-bound perhaps, notably concluding with the magisterial *Sonata Eroica*. Which also benefits here from the seven seconds reverberation period of the Laurentius Church (equally stunningly in loud passages as in magically mysterious moments of quiet).

Michael Bell