

CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL ORGAN, NEW ZEALAND

RESOUNDING AFTERSHOCKS

MARTIN SETCHELL



PIPELINE PRESS

HISTORY OF THE ORGAN

The pipe organ in the Douglas Lilburn auditorium of the Town Hall for the Performing Arts in Christchurch, New Zealand is one of the most significant in Australasia. Installed in 1997, it is the only late 20th century pipe organ in a modern concert hall in New Zealand, completing the 1972 auditorium both visually and acoustically. It was conceived and designed specifically for the hall, with close and harmonious communication between the organ builders (Rieger Orgelbau of Austria), architects (Warren and Mahoney) and acoustician (Sir Harold Marshall).



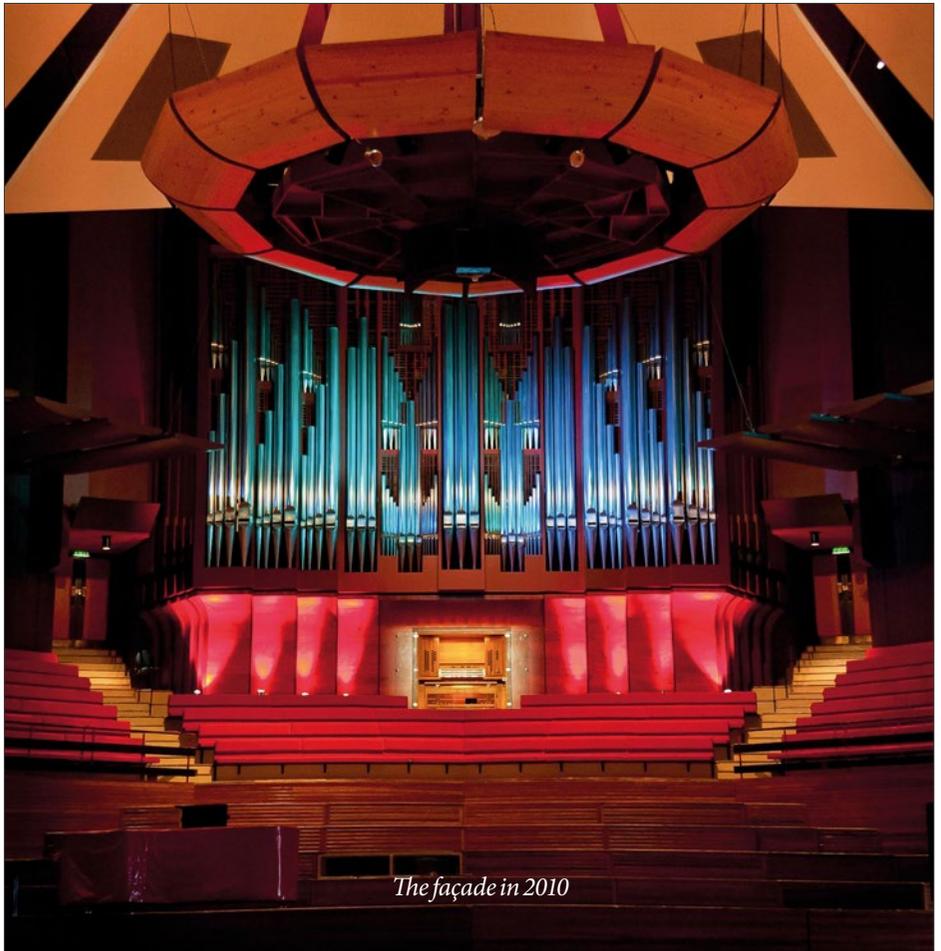
Post-February 2011 quake

The organ has mechanical (tracker) action, directly connecting the keys to the pipes, which allows extremely subtle articulation. As a European, rather than an English style organ, its tonal colours are those of German and especially French instruments, rather than English; as such it is ideal for authentic performances of much of the German and French concert organ repertoire. (It is ironic that the city with the strongest English heritage has a European designed organ).

At 12:51 pm on 22 February 2011, a powerful 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck directly underneath the city, causing widespread devastation and killing 185 people. In a few seconds, a city once rich in organs (approximately 77) lost many of its pipe organs for ever. Tragically, for the third time in a century, the civic organ was silenced, this time after only 14 years of use. (The first, by Ingram, was destroyed by fire in 1917; the second installed in 1930 by Hill, Norman and Beard was too small for the new auditorium and was sold in 1974).

Fortunately the instrument suffered only minor damage and was gloriously restored by the company in late 2018 and early 2019. At the time of the 2011 quake, two Rieger workers were in Christchurch, about to finish the final voicing and tuning of 12 new ranks (shown in red on the specification) which had been added by the Friends of the Christchurch Town Hall Organ Trust, thanks to a legacy. These new colours are heard for the first time on this CD in an organ truly re-sounding after shocks.

For detailed historical information and pictures, visit the organ website www.nzorgan.com



The façade in 2010

THE MUSIC

Welcome to Resounding Aftershocks, the first recording of the Christchurch Town Hall Rieger organ since 2010. After an eight-year silence following the 2011 earthquakes, the predominant mood is naturally an outpouring of joy and celebration. An eectively new instrument calls for a new work, so I am delighted Mons Leidvin Takle accepted my request and wrote Celebration specially for the occasion. After an opening fanfare, it continues in typical Takle style with an exciting, pulsating ostinato and a festive march featuring solo Bombardes. In similar vein is Noël Goemanne's El día de Fiesta (Day of Celebration) from his San Antonio Suite, with its varied toe-tapping rhythms, and central virtuosic pedal solo.

Bach's great Prelude in G major BWV 541 is one of his most ebullient and joyful works, possibly written for his son Wilhelm Friedemann to impress at his audition for the post of organist at St Sophia's in Dresden. The ever-present two semiquavers–quaver rhythmic figure is seen by some critics as Bach's 'joy' motif.

Given Christchurch's English heritage, and since Queen Elizabeth II is now our longest-reigning monarch, I decided to include Reger's Variations and Fugue on 'God save the Queen', written on the death of the previous longest-serving monarch, Queen Victoria in 1901. A short chromatic introduction with a massive crescendo to full organ and two contrasting soft phrases is followed by two variations, first with the tune clearly heard in the top voice, then in the pedals in a delicate pp Andante. The third variation is a fugue, mainly using the first three lines of the tune, which gathers momentum through semiquavers cumulating in all parts, before the last four lines of the tune blaze forth triumphantly in a brilliant, majestic climax.

Guilmant's Grand Choeur pays homage to Handel in its D major key, harmonic progressions, and imitative counterpoint between treble and bass in the last section, but it mainly reflects the grandiose style in which Handel's music was performed in the 19th century. It is really a stately Minuet and Trio, with the outer sections scored for the tutti of the French Romantic organ, contrasting with the lighter texture of the middle section. The softer, lyrical side of the organ is heard in three French slow movements. The Voix céleste, Gambe and

solo Flûte harmonique feature prominently in the hauntingly beautiful outer sections of the Romance from Vierne's Symphony IV (1914), while the middle section (reflecting the outbreak of war in Europe and famously quoting from Wagner's Tristan), uses new and old foundation stops combined. Two new soft solo stops are highlighted: the Voix humaine with tremulant in Lefebure-Wély's Andante in F and the Clarinette in its beautiful tenor register in my arrangement of Reynaldo Hahn's popular love-song 'A Chloris'.

In lighter mood are two scherzos and a dance. Marc Enrico Bossi's Scherzo in G minor Op. 49 No. 2 which grew from an improvisation while he was demonstrating the organ at Como Cathedral, features echo effects on the flutes of all three divisions, while the perky 8' and 2' Oberwerk flutes depict Cats at Play, a movement from Denis Bédard's humorous Cat Suite.

The music of English composer Madeleine Dring is typically light and unpretentious, with echoes of Poulenc and Gershwin, as in my arrangement of her 1959 Caribbean Dance with its gently syncopated swing. Not one, not two, but THREE brilliant virtuoso Toccatas, especially well-suited to this organ's French-style Swell and Pedal reeds, complete the celebrations. All have big, grandiose pedal tunes against incessant perpetuum-mobile repeated chords in the manuals; all exude joy and élan, but those by Lanquetuit and Somma are perhaps less well-known. Marcel Lanquetuit was born in Rouen, studied in Paris with Eugène Gigout, and assisted Dupré at St Sulpice before returning to his birthplace to serve as cathedral organist for more than 40 years. His Toccata in D, published in 1927, is dedicated to Albert Dupré (Maurice's father). Bonaventura Somma was born in the small town of Chianciano Terme in Siena, and studied in Rome with composers like Respighi. His sonorous Toccata in A, written in 1934, was dedicated to Maestro Remigio Renzi. Both works may have been inspired by Widor's famous Toccata from his 5th symphony, as popular now as when it first appeared in 1879. This was the opening track of my first CD on the Rieger. It is included here to link hands with the past as the 'pealing organ blows' again and begins a new chapter in its life.

Let the celebrations begin!

THE ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS: 1997-2018

I Hauptwerk

16 stops

Principal	16'
Principal	8'
Gedackt	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Octav	4'
Spitzflöte	4'
Quinte	2 2/3'
Nazard	2 2/3'
Superoctav	2'
Flöte	2'
Mixtur VI	2'
Scharff IV	1'
Cornet V	8'
Trompete	16'
Trompete	8'
Trompete	4'
Windpressure: 100mm	

II Schwellwerk

(enclosed)

15 stops + Tremulant

Pommer	16'
Principal	8'
Bourdon	8'
Gambe	8'
Voix céleste	8'
Prestant	4'
Flûte à cheminée	4'
Nazard	2 2/3'
Flûte	2'
Tierce	1 3/5'
Plein Jeu VI-VIII	2 2/3'
Basson	16'
Trompette harmonique	8'
Hautbois	8'
Clairon	4'
Tremulant	
Windpressure: 115mm	

III Oberwerk

(enclosed)/Bombarde

15 stops + Tremulant

Bourdon	16'
Principal	8'
Holzgedackt	8'
Quintade	8'
Salicional	8'
Viola	4'
Traversflöte	4'
Flachflöte	2'
Larigot	1 1/3'
Clarinette	8'
Voix humaine	8'
Tremulant	
Cornet V	8'
Bombarde	16'
Bombarde	8'
Bombarde	4'
Windpressure: 130mm	

Pedal 13 stops

Untersatz	32'	Flöte	8'	Posaune	16'
Principal	16'	Bourdon (from III)	8'	Fagott	16'
Subbaß	16'	Choralbaß	4'	Trompete	8'
Bourdon (from III)	16'	Bourdon (from III)	4'		
Principal	8'	Kontraposaune	32'	Windpressure: 120mm	

(red=2011 additions)



The organ console in 2019

Couplers: II/I, III/I, III/II, I/P, II/P, III/P

Compass: Manuals C-c4 (61 notes), Pedals C-g' (32 notes). Tuning equal temperament: A=440Hz@20c

Rieger combination system with touch screen keypad allowing individual storage of up to 1000 combinations for each of 10 different organists, with insert and delete, Sequ. < >, 4 Cresc.(adjustable)
All Swells to Swell, General Cancel.



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THE ORGANIST

www.organist.co.nz

Martin Setchell is an international concert organist who believes in promoting entertaining music to a wide audience. For the last 25 years he has delighted audiences with his spirited playing, lively personality and entertaining repertoire. Born and educated in England where he gained Honours degrees in both Music and French, and was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists, his teachers include Pierre Cochereau, Marie-Claire Alain, Piet Kee, and Peter Hurford. He immigrated to New Zealand in 1974 on his appointment to the University of Canterbury where he taught for 40 years and became Associate Professor of Music. In 1997 he was appointed city organ curator, later receiving a Civic Award for services to music in the community.

His solo concert tours outside New Zealand have taken him to Australia, America, Europe and the Far East. Some concert highlights include the Spreckels organ in Balboa Park, San Diego, the Mormon Tabernacle Organ in Salt Lake City, USA; the famous Hill organ in Sydney Town Hall, Australia; Oliwa Cathedral in Poland as part of the Gdansk International Organ Festival; the Hong Kong Cultural Centre; the Oriental Arts Centre in Shanghai, China; the Esplanade Concert Hall in Singapore; Musashino Civic Cultural Hall in Tokyo, Japan; Birmingham Town Hall, St Paul's Cathedral, London; St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh; the historic Gabler organ in Weingarten Abbey, and Regensburg Cathedral, Germany.

His publications include the humorous Wedding March Extraordinaire (Butz Musik Verlag) and organ arrangements of music by Fauré, Bizet and Sousa (Kevin Mayhew Music) and Saint-Saëns, Purcell, Bach and Verdi (Oxford University Press). This is his 6th CD on the Rieger organ of Christchurch Town Hall, after Let the pealing organ blow (1997), Bonbons for Organ (2000 and 2003), Pink and White, an anthology of New Zealand organ music (2005), and Priory's Great Australasian Organs VII (2010).