

Axel RUOFF

COMPLETE WORKS FOR ORGAN, VOLUME FOUR
INTRODUCTION, VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON THE CHORALE
'DAS VOLK, DAS NOCH IM FINSTERN WANDELT'
ORGAN SYMPHONY NO. 1
SUITE GROTESQUE

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AXEL RUOFF: COMPLETE WORKS FOR ORGAN, VOLUME FOUR

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Unlike the previous volumes in this complete recording of Axel Ruoff's organ music,¹ each of which provides the listener with an overview of his *œuvre* by means of a large number of short compositions, this fourth instalment features three major and distinctive works from the past seventeen years. They represent three distinct genres – a set of chorale variations, a suite and a symphony – reflecting the composer's relationship to the instrument and the various strands of tradition in which it is involved, at the time of composition.

Axel Ruoff was born in Stuttgart on 24 March 1957. From 1975 to 1979 he studied composition, music theory and piano at the University of Music and Performing Arts in his native city, where his teachers included Milko Kelemen, Rolf Hempel and Erhard Karkoschka; he also spent some time at the Music Academies in Kassel and Helsinki. In 1979 he graduated with honours in music theory and piano, and five years later he obtained his Master's degree in composition, both in Stuttgart; there then followed an engagement as lecturer in music theory at the University of Music in Trossingen, south-west of Stuttgart, from 1983 to 1985. Awarded a scholarship by the Japanese Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, he pursued his further musical training at the National University of Fine Arts and Music in Tokyo from 1985 to 1987, studying with the Japanese composer Hiroaki Minami. During these years he was also active as a visiting professor at various Japanese universities. From 1992 to 2020 he was a professor of music theory and score-reading at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Stuttgart, serving from 2006 to 2010 as a Vice Dean and from 2010 to 2014 as an Academic Dean.

¹ Recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0567, TOCC 0596 and TOCC 0610.

His music has been awarded numerous prizes, with performances at major German and international festivals, among them the Documenta Kassel, Espace Musique, Ottawa, Settembre Musica, Turin, the St Petersburg and Budapest Spring Festivals and the Tokyo Summer Festival. In addition to the organ music documented in this series of recordings, his output encompasses a wide range of genres, including large-scale sacred music (the oratorios *Bergpredigt* ('Sermon on the Mount'; 1998–99) and *Credo* (2001–2), and the cantata *Die Hexe von Endor* ('The Witch of Endor'; 2010–12)); music for chorus; works for symphonic wind and brass orchestra (*Inferno* (1992), a *Sinfonietta* (2006) and a *Rapsodia appassionata* (2018)) and for large orchestra (*Nacht und Träume* ('Night and Dreams'; 1986–87) and another *Sinfonietta* (2013)), as well as concertos for piano (1989 and 1994), guitar (1993), cello (1995) and horn (2008–9); music for various solo instruments; chamber music; songs and other vocal music; and stage works, including the opera *Ein Fremder in der Stadt* ('A Stranger in the City'; 1999), after the Romantic poet Wilhelm Hauff.

Introduction, Variations and Fugue

on the chorale 'Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt' (2005)

Apart from his four individual chorale preludes from 1999 and 2014² and some allusions in his *Seven Biblical Scenes* (2004) and in his Second Symphony for Organ (2016),³ Ruoff explored the manifold possibilities of treating a chorale compositionally in particular in his nearly half-hour-long *Introduction, Variations and Fugue on the chorale 'Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt'* from 2005, his only contribution to this particular genre of organ music. The following detailed overview of the multifaceted development of this genre should help in an understanding of Ruoff's position, and will also show how much Ruoff's organ works, which are often one-sidedly associated with the French organ school, are at least as much rooted in the German tradition.

The history of cyclical chorale variations for organ, a subset of the variation form in general, can be traced to the early sixteenth century and thus even before the Lutheran

² Recorded on Volume Three of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0610.

³ Recorded on Volume Two of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0596.

Reformation. In his collection *Tabulaturen Etlicher lob gesang und liddlein uff die orgeln unn lauten* ('Tablatures of several hymns and songs for the organ and lute'), published in 1512, the Heidelberg organist Arnolt Schlick (c. 1460–c. 1521) set a series of three strictly contrapuntal variations on the Gregorian antiphon *Da pacem* ('Give [us] peace'), which is generally regarded as the first surviving set of chorale variations. In keeping with the paramount importance assigned to the congregational hymn in the Lutheran Reformation, on which in turn the development of the most important liturgical genre of Protestant organ music – the chorale prelude – is based, the multi-movement chorale partita, defined as a series of different chorale interpretations in variation form, played an important role in the history of Protestant church music. After weighty contributions to this genre by such masters as Heinrich Scheidemann, Matthias Weckmann, Franz Tunder and Samuel Scheidt in the first half of the seventeenth century (inspired in part by the Dutch Catholic Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck), and Dieterich Buxtehude, Georg Böhm, Johann Pachelbel and Johann Adam Reincken in the latter part, this type of composition was further refined by Johann Gottfried Walther and his cousin Johann Sebastian Bach (in the latter's four chorale partitas, BWV 766–68 and 770, and some others, but where his authorship is questionable), and in the more than 80 sets of chorale variations by their contemporary, Daniel Magnus Gronau, which were long considered to be lost, but of which 40 were recently rediscovered. The development of this genre reached an initial climax in Bach's *Canonic Variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her'*, BWV 769, from his last period, which were arranged for choir and orchestra by Igor Stravinsky in 1956 and consequently became known beyond organist circles.

Although in retrospect the historical significance of the chorale partita is to be rated highly, during its heyday it was not a genre that was widespread throughout Protestant Germany, since it was cultivated only in certain regions: in the northern German cities of Lübeck (Tunder, Buxtehude), Hamburg (Scheidemann, Weckmann, Reincken), Lüneburg (Böhm) and Gdansk (Gronau), in central Germany, whence Bach hailed, and in the cities of Halle (Scheidt), Erfurt (Pachelbel) and Weimar (Walther). It may also be assumed that the public performance of an entire series of variations was a rarity, since the organ recitals with which one is familiar today were by no means commonplace.

Further evidence for this assumption comes from the observations that in these chorale partitas the order of the variations often seems quite arbitrary, that contemporary copies present different orders, and that they are usually not oriented towards a convincing conclusion.⁴ The motives for their composition were varied, whether for domestic devotion, as in Pachelbel's collection of partitas, *Musicalische Sterbens-Gedancken* ('Musical Thoughts on Dying'), to commemorate the death of his wife and son, victims of the plague epidemic of 1683, to provide a fellow organist with a larger fund of various compositional models,⁵ or in the self-confident presentation of compositional excellence, as in Bach's *Canonic Variations*, written in 1747 as a contribution to the Leipzig 'Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences'.

It has also been plausibly argued that, at least in northern Germany, individual movements of early chorale partitas were played during church services between the verses sung by the congregation,⁶ or, if the chorale was suitable, during the distribution of the Eucharist, in which case the number of the variations played could be adapted to the circumstances.⁷ In addition to the partita as a compositional genre, the tradition of improvised chorale variations during the Saturday evening service existed in northern Germany, as is known from a report by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach about his father Johann Sebastian's almost half-hour-long improvisation at the organ of St Catherine's Church in Hamburg on the then widespread chorale 'An Wasserflüssen Babylon' in 1720. According to this report, Bach improvised 'very extensively' and 'in various ways' on his theme, which prompted Reincken, who had himself written a famed fantasia on

⁴ Pieter Dirksen, 'J. S. Bach und die Tradition der Choralpartita', in *Bach und die deutsche Tradition des Komponierens. Bericht über das 6. Dortmunder Bach-Symposium 2006. Festschrift Martin Geck zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Reinmar Emans and Wolfram Steinbeck, Klangfarben Musikverlag, Dortmund, 2009, pp. 39–48. Dierksen refers to the 'problem of ending' of the chorale partitas of the time (p. 40). All subsequent translations are my own.

⁵ Jakob Adlung, *Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit*, J. D. Jungnicol, Erfurt, 1758, reprinted by Bärenreiter, Basel/Kassel, 1953, p. 688. Adlung advised aspiring organists to take lessons to be able to extemporise chorale preludes, but also recommended that they study composed chorale preludes to improve their sight-reading and to use them as a model.

⁶ Siegbert Rampe, 'Abendmusik oder Gottesdienst? Zur Funktion norddeutscher Orgelkompositionen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts. Teile 2 und 3', in *Schütz-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 26, 2004, pp. 155–204, especially pp. 185–88.

⁷ Albert Clement, *O Jesu, du edle Gabe. Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Musik in den Choralpartiten und den kanonischen Veränderungen von Johann Sebastian Bach*, OMI-Grafisch Bedrijf, Utrecht, 1989, pp. 21–22, 51–52 and 96.

this very chorale, to remark, 'I thought this art had died out, but I see that it is still alive in you.'⁸

Since the cyclical chorale variation-set did not find anchorage in worship or concert life as a compositionally fixed overall form, as Reincken's comment would seem to confirm, it also failed to establish itself as a standard in organ music even in the ensuing periods. The work of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, the central figure of early-Romantic organ music in Germany, offers a vivid example. The chorale was an essential reference point in his work, and in an organ recital in the Leipzig St Thomas Church in 1840 he improvised so masterfully on the chorale 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden', including a final fugue, 'that in print it would constitute a perfect work of art',⁹ as Robert Schumann remarked. Even so, as a composer he devoted himself to this genre on only three occasions: from his youth there is a chorale-related compositional exercise;¹⁰ from later times an undated fragment of variations on the 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden' that possibly 'transmits material'¹¹ from the Leipzig improvisation; and from his late period, in disguise, as it were, his last masterpiece for this instrument, the Organ Sonata, Op. 65, No. 6, in D minor, from 1845, which essentially consists of five variations and a fugue on the melody of the Lutheran chorale *Vater unser im Himmelreich*, followed by a soothing finale in D major. It deserves mention that here the mere stringing of variations of the older organ partita is already abandoned in favour of an overarching large-scale form.

Only three years after Mendelssohn's premature death in 1847, Franz Liszt was to give the genre a decisive change of direction. In his *Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam'* he broke up the sequence of individual variations – a development comparable to the dissolution of the traditional number opera into the through-composed music drama, or to the transition from strophic song to continuous, freer constructions following the text that can be observed in the history of the Lied.

⁸ *Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1750–1800* (Bach-Dokumente 3), ed. Hans-Joachim Schulze, Bärenreiter/Deutscher Verlag für Musik, Kassel/Leipzig, 1972, No. 666, p. 84.

⁹ Mendelssohn's Organconcert, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 7 (1840), Vol. 13, No. 14, 15 August 1840, p. 56.

¹⁰ Three Variations on the chorale 'Wie groß ist des Allmächt'gen Güte', BWV 8 from 1823.

¹¹ R. Larry Todd, 'New Light on Mendelssohn's *Freie Phantasie* (1840)', in *Literary and Musical Notes. A Festschrift for Wm. A. Little*, ed. Geoffrey C. Orth, Peter Lang, Bern, 1995, pp. 205–18, here p. 211.

The innovative hybrid structure that resulted combines the monothematic sonata form and the variation form, which he embedded in the overall frame of a quasi-improvised fantasia and fugue now geared towards an overwhelming final effect with the quotation of the entire chorale in a radiant *fortissimo*. The choice of the inaugural concert of the newly built Ladegast organ, a pioneering work of German Romantic organ-building, in Merseburg Cathedral in 1855 as the occasion for the public premiere underscores this new form of presentation of chorale-bound organ music. Liszt, a Catholic, deliberately chose not an actual congregational hymn as the theme for his work but a chorale-like tune composed in the old style from Giacomo Meyerbeer's then new and successful opera *Le prophète*, which he nevertheless presumably regarded as a historical quotation, since the opera is set at the time of the Lutheran Reformation.

This revolutionary work was an important building block in a development that shaped the entire Romantic period, which no longer assigned a primarily ecclesiastical or liturgical function to the chorale, but rather an aesthetic one: the chorale became the vehicle of expression 'of the religious, the sublime, the solemn and archaic'.¹² Although Liszt's *Ad nos* fantasy stands in a certain tension between the sacred and the profane because of its operatic reference, it set new standards¹³ not only in the Catholic French organ school, which from then on tended towards symphonic dimensions, but also in Protestant Germany, where church musicians have always sworn to fidelity to the chorale. Four years after the premiere of Liszt's *Ad nos* fantasy, the Weimar organist Johann Gottlob Töpfer published three extended Concert Fantasies on church chorales, still wavering between following Mendelssohn and Liszt; other examples are Christian Fink's Fantasia on 'Ein' feste Burg', Op. 23, from 1857, Friedrich Lux's Concert Fantasy on the

¹² Hans Musch, 'Die Choralfantasie im 19. Jahrhundert', in *Zur Orgelmusik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Walter Salmen, Musikverlag Helbing, Innsbruck, 1983, pp. 49–56, here p. 51.

¹³ Naturally, Liszt's new work was the subject of polemics also from the conservative side – for example, by an unnamed correspondent in the British magazine *The Musical World*, for whom it was merely 'a great, monstrous, lumbering, heavy *fantaisie*, without either form or substance [...] that might have been played any where but in the house of God' (Anonymous, 'Leipzig', in *The Musical World*, Vol. 33 (1855), No. 40, 6 October 1855, p. 647).

same chorale, Op. 53, from 1877,¹⁴ or Carl Müller-Hartung's three chorale sonatas from 1864. Although decidedly conservative composers continued to follow Mendelssohn's or even Bach's paths in the 1880s, such as Gustav Adolf Merkel in his *Organ Sonata No. 6*, Op. 137, on two contrasting chorales, and Heinrich von Herzogenberg in his two *Chorale Fantasies*, Opp. 39 and 46, the Berlin organist Heinrich Reimann developed Liszt's and Töpfer's structural models further in his *Fantasy on the chorale 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern'*, Op. 25, from 1895. Reimann designed his work, following the developments in organ-building, for the Romantic orchestral organ with frequent *crescendo* and *decrescendo* passages and codified for this genre the large-scale form of 'introduction, variations and fugue', culminating in an apothotic conclusion. Both Töpfer and, even more, Reimann were then to exert considerable influence on Max Reger's landmark seven *Chorale Fantasies*, Opp. 27, 30, 40 (two numbers) and 52 (three numbers), written between 1898 and 1900.¹⁵ A common feature of these works is the appearance of the chorale theme at the end in a grandiose harmonisation and at the maximum *fortissimo*. These works represent a brilliant outburst of creativity in a genre to which Reger was never to return, but which lived on in some works by his pupils and in the three expansive *Symphonic Chorales* for organ, Op. 87, from 1911 by his contemporary and competitor Sigfrid Karg-Elert.

Roughly from 1930 onwards, however, as part of the general European Neo-Classical reorientation, composers of the so-called renewal movement in Protestant church music turned the tables by revisiting the type of Baroque chorale partita for organ in an anti-Romantic counter-movement and attempting to breathe life into it with a renewed musical language, thus creating an aesthetic that claimed validity for generations within Protestant church music. Among the formative composers were Hugo Distler, Ernst Pepping, Helmut Bornefeld, Siegfried Reda and, as a rather independent lateral offshoot and most comprehensively, the Austrian Catholic Johann

¹⁴ Recorded by Jan Lehtola on Toccata Classics TOCC 0663.

¹⁵ Karl Straube, an organ pupil of Reimann and Reger's main interpreter at the organ, communicated in a letter of 28 April 1944 to his former student Hans Klotz that Reimann had invented 'the form of the chorale fantasy: introduction, variations and fugue' and Reger had 'adopted' it (Karl Straube, *Briefe eines Thomaskantors*, ed. Wilibald Gurlitt and Hans-Olaf Hudemann, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart, 1952, p. 234).

Nepomuk David in his 21-volume *Choralwerk* for organ (1929–73).¹⁶ It goes without saying that this reorientation went hand in hand with another reform of organ-building that explicitly turned away from the Romantic ideal and back to the sound-world and the polyphonic clarity of the Baroque organ.

Whenever composers today take up the project of chorale variations, they are confronted with the five centuries of development of this genre and the two fundamental strands of tradition described above. Indicative of his historical awareness and typical of his non-ideological positioning, Axel Ruoff chose a middle course when composing his own set of chorale variations. He decided to combine the two possibilities that history offered him, i.e., on the one hand, to follow the model of the older organ partita in the sequence of the individual, independent variations which each represents a self-contained affect in the Baroque sense of that word, and, on the other, to shape the outer sections – the introduction, the fugue and the glorifying conclusion – according to the late-Romantic model, thus conceiving a work for performance in concert rather than for use in church services. This hybrid form alone can claim originality,¹⁷ but his composition proves to be a contemporary work in another crucial respect. Ruoff's theme is not a tune that had long been anchored in church life and cultural memory, as is the case with many chorale variations, but a chorale that originated in the many efforts in the second half of the twentieth century to renew congregational singing.

The author of its text, Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt (1920–95), was a member of a group of poets who collaborated on the new hymnal of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, *Liedboek voor de Kerken*, in the 1950s.¹⁸ As a historian he was appointed professor of the history and culture of North America at the University of Leiden in 1966. Ten years before, his best-known monograph, *Het volk dat in duisternis wandelt* ("The

¹⁶ Other protagonists of this renewal movement regarding chorale variations include the Berlin organist Joseph Ahrens, and, outside Germany, the Dutchman Flor Peeters, the Austrian Anton Heiller and the Swiss Willy Burkhard.

¹⁷ The Reger pupil Karl Hoyer had already arrived at a similar conception of form in his *Introduction, Variations and Fugue on 'Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt'* in 1911, although this composition did not influence Ruoff.

¹⁸ Marijke Bleij-Pel, 'Niederlande – Flandern,' in *Werkbuch zum Evangelischen Gesangbuch, Lieferung VI: Lieder aus anderen Ländern und Sprachen*, ed. Wolfgang Fischer, Dorothea Monninger and Rolf Schweizer, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2000, pp. 20–26, here p. 21.

People Who Walk in Darkness'), a history of African Americans in the United States, was published.¹⁹ He took the title from a passage in the Old Testament that seemed to him to be an apt metaphor for his account. In 1959, Schulte Nordholt wrote the text of a hymn beginning with almost the same line, 'Het volk dat wandelt in het duister', which was set to music by his compatriot, the Amsterdam organist Frits Mehrrens (1922–75) in the same year and which appeared in the above-mentioned hymnal in 1973.²⁰ In 1981, Jürgen Henkys, a pastor in the German Democratic Republic, presented a German translation in his publication *Steig in das Boot* ('Get into the Boat'), with the opening line, 'Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt' ('The people who still walk in darkness'), which strives for literalness but also sets its own accents. During the hymnal reform in the German Protestant Church, the chorale was finally included with Henkys' translation as an Advent hymn in the new *Evangelisches Gesangbuch* in 1996.

Its first stanza reads:

Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt –
bald sieht es Licht, ein großes Licht.
Heb in den Himmel dein Gesicht
und steh und lausche, weil Gott handelt.

The people who walk in darkness
will soon see light, a great light.
Lift your face to the sky
and stand and listen because God
is acting.

As is customary with Reformed hymns, the text draws closely on a biblical passage, following the example of the *Genevan Psalter* of 1562, which is fundamental in the Reformed Church and consists mainly of rhymed renditions of psalms. In this case the reference is to the promise in Isaiah 9:2–7, starting with the words, 'The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light',²¹ which has been immortalised in musical terms in the aria for bass, No. 10 in Handel's *Messiah*. Originally this passage referred to the

¹⁹ Loghum Slaterus' Uitgeversmaatschappij, Arnhem, 1956.

²⁰ Wim Kloppenburg, '20 – Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt', in *Liederkunde zum Evangelischen Gesangbuch*, No. 1, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2000, pp. 62–64, quotation on p. 62. Mehrrens' original version, which was not included in the hymnal, used the method of the French Jesuit priest and composer Joseph Gelineau to juxtapose the present melody with a second one in the manner of a psalm hymn, both sung in alternation.

²¹ Isaiah 9:2–3, King James Version.

Jewish population in the then militarily occupied region of Galilee but has since been read as foreshadowing the Messiah, in Matthew 4:13–16 and in subsequent Christian exegesis. Besides the traditional ecclesiastical reference to Christmas, both the lyricist and his translator related their adaptations to political circumstances which they had experienced. Schulte Nordholt's position was shaped by the German occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War, during which he was sentenced to prison for distributing an illegal magazine; Henkys worked as a theologian under a totalitarian, atheist regime. Thus, the fifth verse of the Isaiah passage, 'For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire,'²² became in the third stanza (in the German version): 'He [God] comes with peace. No more lamentations, / no more war, betrayal, and bitter time! / No more children screaming in terror at night, / because boots hit the pavement.'²³ Considering that Schulte Nordholt later contended that the suffering of the African American population in the United States was 'concentrated and thus transcended' in their spirituals, 'and nota bene with the stories of another suffering people, the Jews,'²⁴ the topical reference in his rewriting of the Isaiah passage becomes comprehensible.

Certainly, it was not only the textual content of this chorale, which is so different from other church hymns, that prompted Ruoff to adapt it, but also its striking melodic form, which provides ideally suited elements for variations. Indeed, Mehrtens' melody virtually invites the composer to subject it to manifold permutations. It is notated without bar lines, following the model of the *Genevan Psalter*, as does the text. This notation keeps the metrical stresses comparatively open and includes the option of having it begin with an upbeat or downbeat. And although the tonal centre is recognisably E minor, the harmonisation allows for some ambiguity. Above all, the conspicuous construction of intervals at the beginning calls for attention. Deviating from a more conventional

²² Isaiah 9:5, English Standard Version.

²³ The wording in the hymnal has been revised; Henkys' original version is even more outspoken: 'His peace comes. No more sirens, / no more war, betrayal and bitter time! / No more children screaming in terror at night, / because boots are thundering on the pavement' (Kloppenborg, *op. cit.*, p. 63).

²⁴ Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, *Het woord brengt de waarheid tweeweg. Essays over literatuur en werkelijkheid*, J. H. Kok, Kampen, 1992, p. 180.

Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt -
 bald sieht es Licht, ein großes Licht.
 Heb in den Himmel dein Gesicht
 und steh und lausche, weil Gott handelt.

progression in semitones, whole tones and thirds, the melody is characterised by three upward leaps of perfect fourths piled on top of one another, which are recalled in the last line, 'a formula not found in any other hymn'.²⁵ Mehrten's idea was inspired by the text repetition at the beginning of the last stanza (in the Dutch original): 'En alle, alle mensen samen' ('And all, all people together').²⁶

En al - le, al - le men-sen

²⁵ Wolfgang Fischer, 'Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt', in *Werkbuch zum Evangelischen Gesangbuch, Lieferung I: Advent und Weihnachten*, ed. Wolfgang Fischer, Dorothea Monninger, Reinhold Morath and Rolf Schweizer, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1993, pp. 18–19, here p. 19.

²⁶ Kloppenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

In Ruoff's composition, the introduction, the thirteen variations and the theme of the fugue, however different in their expressive content, are all permeated by the sequence of these initial intervals, whether in their original form or in inversion, transforming the ascending fourth into a descending fifth. In terms of content, the variations do not follow the straightforward sequence of the text as in some older partitas (a procedure called 'per omnes versus') but seem to musically illuminate individual passages of the text without the constraint of a particular order or completeness. Refraining from initially presenting the theme as a self-contained unit (that is saved for the end), the variations immediately follow the concise and sinister Introduction [1], bursting in triple *forte* and, with its double-dotted rhythm, reminiscent of a Baroque French overture. The first two variations, *Andante tranquillo* in $\frac{2}{4}$ [2] and *Lento assai* (with the performance instruction 'as if from afar') in $\frac{4}{4}$ [3], which seem to be inspired by the second stanza of the chorale, evoking the 'valley of tears, where death casts the black shadow', are dynamically subdued, allowing the *cantus firmus* to be heard clearly in the lower and then in the upper voice. The next variations, *Scherzando* [4] and *Vivace con fuoco* [5], which are again built over the theme in the bass, change to $\frac{3}{16}$ time, but differ in character (the former is sparkling with light; in the latter the thudding soldier's boots referred to in the third stanza might be portrayed), and lead to the $\frac{4}{8}$ time of the *Presto agitato* [6], a virtuosic elaboration of the ascending and descending core intervals. The sixth variation [7] introduces a majestic march in alternating $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time (as if representing Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem alluded to in the seventh stanza), followed by a colourful *misterioso* section in $\frac{4}{16}$ [8] that flits back and forth, and another march-like variation, *Moderato, molto marcato* [9], this time exclusively in $\frac{3}{4}$ time that transforms the theme into a fanfare. The ninth variation, *Pastorale, Lento assai, dolcissimo* [10] in $\frac{6}{8}$ and triple *piano*, which apparently picks up on the polarity in the fifth stanza – 'the Son of God who holds the sceptre' versus 'the Good Shepherd' – forms both the resting position and the turning point of the series. The variations that follow – *Allegro precipitando* in $\frac{2}{4}$ [11], with its chromatic, rushed double thirds (derived from the third intervals of the second to fourth lines of the chorale tune), *Moderato* in $\frac{4}{8}$ [12], with its intricate rhythm of duplets against triplets, *Allegro molto* in $\frac{4}{8}$ [13], that further heightens the swirling figures

of thirds, and the highly agitated *Presto con fuoco – Prestissimo* in changing metres [14] – build restlessly to the end in quadruple *forte*. The horrors of war from the third stanza quoted above come to mind here.

The extended five-part final Fugue [15] is a contrapuntal masterpiece. At 200 bars in length, it constitutes roughly a third of the entire piece. Its theme serves as a vivid example of how certain musical archetypes or rhetorical figures have been used over centuries as an immediately understandable means of expression. It builds again on the ascending fourths of the chorale, which themselves already represent the figure of a *gradatio*, a recurring melodic fragment repeated in higher pitches to reinforce the expressive intention and referring in the chorale melody to the lifting of the head pronounced in the third line ('Lift your face to the sky'). However, these intervals are now obscured by a series of descending semitones, called *passus duriusculus*. As a result of these melodic descents, the intervals of ascending fourths are twice extended to those of ascending sixths, corresponding to the figure of an *exclamatio* that symbolises here first a painful, then a more joyful, exclamation.

Lento

Chorale theme:
perfect fourth upward

gradatio

Chorale theme:
perfect fourth upward

passus duriusculus *exclamatio* *passus duriusculus* *exclamatio*

Chorale theme, inversion:
perfect fifth downward

passus duriusculus

Whether Ruoff was aware of it or not, these are the same rhetorical figures found in Handel's aria from *Messiah* on the same biblical text mentioned above. Charles Burney was the first to observe 'a very curious expression of the words' employed for the passage 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light', where 'the chromatic and indeterminate modulation, seems to delineate the uncertain footsteps of persons exploring their way in obscurity'.²⁷

Handel, *Messiah*, No. 10, bars 6 and 21

Larghetto

exclamatio

dark - - - ness, that wal - ked in dark - ness,

passus duriusculus passus duriusculus

In terms of content, then, the fugue leads back to the beginning of the text, to darkness and waiting for light. Wearily, it starts *Lento* and *ppp*, and, using in addition to the regular sequence of thematic entries contrapuntal techniques such as inversion, diminution and augmentation, increases in two subsequent waves, *Più mosso, misterioso* (at 3:55), *Allegro* (at 6:07), where it merges with the chorale theme (at 6:13 and 6:34), and *Allegro vivace* (at 7:12). The opposite direction of tempo progression, from *Largo* (at 7:32) to *Grave assai* (at 8:29) to *Allargando* (at 9:05), characterises the concluding section, in which the chorale theme, now used as a symbol of the 'great light', appears for the first time (at 7:48) in exciting harmonisation in its entirety and in all its magnificent

²⁷ Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey and the Pantheon [...] in Commemoration of Handel*, London, 1785, p. 75.

grandeur, representing the religious idea of redemption underlying the chorale and its biblical passage: *per aspera ad astra*.²⁸

The work is dedicated to Andreas Gräsle, who premiered it on 10 December 2005 at the organ of the Stiftskirche in Stuttgart.

***Suite grotesque* (2019)**

The key to Ruoff's peculiar *Suite grotesque*, which is also dedicated to Andreas Gräsle, who first presented it on 5 July 2020 in the Konstanzer Church in Ditzingen, near Stuttgart, lies in a statement made by the composer in an interview with the author that this composition was planned from the outset as his 'definitive last work for solo organ' – a conscious swansong after more than 30 years of devoted work in writing organ music, which began in 1985 with a meditation on the Stations of the Cross, *Via dolorosa*,²⁹ and is fully documented in this series of recordings. It is characteristic of Ruoff's attitude that, as a farewell, he did not aim to surpass his previous works in this genre with a heroic or erudite composition but presented a facet of his personality hitherto hidden in his organ music, except for some rather tame gimmicks in his *Nine Easy Pieces* from 2013,³⁰ by writing music that in several respects is a sardonic commentary. First, he consciously and gleefully undermines established listening expectations of so-called 'contemporary music', which in his estimation often proves to be nothing more than outdated avant-garde held up by academic orthodoxy and cultural trend-setters, and which he sometimes considers to be a variety of a 'madness of normality', in reference to the title of a 1987 book by the psychoanalyst Arno Gruen.³¹ Interspersed are parodic exaggerations of the stereotypical playing habits of organists. Parts of this composition,

²⁸ The German equivalent of this Latin phrase, which translates as 'through hardship to the stars', 'Durch Nacht zum Licht' ('Through night to light') has already been used to summarise the mental processes in Reimann's *Morgenstern* fantasy discussed above (Fritz Vollbach, 'Vom Musikalienmarkt. Dr. Heinrich Reimann, Fantasie über den Choral: "Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern" für Orgel', in *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, Vol. 23 (1896), Nos. 22/23, p. 309). Ruoff's affirmative acceptance of tradition, unimpressed by avant-garde tendencies, is evident in this conclusion; at the same time, it represents a coherent interpretation of the content.

²⁹ Recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0567.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Arno Gruen, *Der Wahnsinn der Normalität*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, 1987; reprinted as *The Insanity of Normality: Toward Understanding Human Destructiveness*, Grove Weidenfeld, London, 1992.

moreover, seem to refer to the supposed amenities of a hedonistic, ‘fun’ society, so that it can be understood as an ironic commentary on the spiritual crises of the contemporary world, with their misleading tendency to take entertainment as a substitute for spirituality. Finally, Ruoff does not exclude himself from this critical perspective, since this work also self-referentially takes up and satirises some of his previous compositions and compositional methods in a tongue-in-cheek manner.

The comparatively loose sequence of movements of a suite seemed to him an apt medium to convey these messages; the French language of the main title and most of the individual titles (‘Prélude’, ‘Danse champêtre’, ‘Nocturne’, ‘Marche héroïque’) and the choice of this genre, which is usually associated with the ‘old style’, create the desired distance; the added adjective ‘grotesque’ is intended to form a contrast with the sublime. This choice of words seems to have been made entirely in the spirit of the German Romantic poet Jean Paul, who memorably defined humour as ‘the inverted sublime’ in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik*. The existence of another Ruoff *Suite grotesque*, this time for piano solo, from the same year and still unpublished, with partly identical movement titles (‘Danse champêtre’, ‘Marche héroïque’) and comparable stylistic orientation shows that this theme preoccupied him at the time. Even so, to compose this kind of music explicitly for the organ, for a sacred instrument in a sacred space (which was Ruoff’s clear intention), seems a pure provocation. ‘Every one of my organ works is ultimately a profession of faith’, he nonetheless stated in the aforementioned interview, ‘Like all my music for this instrument, the *Suite grotesque* will create images in the church space, but this time they will not relate specifically to biblical passages. Precisely for that reason, however, they will raise questions.’

The main feature of the ‘Prélude’, *Prestissimo* [16], is its comic discontinuity, as if an only slightly gifted improvising organist could not perform in a certain model for long – and that only clumsily. A deliberately unimaginative mixture of broken triads, scale fragments and technically unsuccessful sequencing alternates with passages that suddenly fall into a rough polka before the piece abruptly collapses. The ‘Danse champêtre’, *Agiatamente; farsesco* (‘prosperous; farcical’) [17], resumes and develops the polka fragments just heard; it may have been inspired by certain features from the

work of the same name for violin and piano, Op. 106, from 1924 by Jean Sibelius, a composer Ruoff reveres, which also contains ironic comments on his own work. Quite incongruously, the listener is transported to a fairground amidst the groans of the mechanical organ, which incessantly wants to spread good humour there. The 'Nocturne' [18] bearing the mocking tempo indication *Lento, strascinando* ('Slow, dragging') is intended to recall Ruoff's pastoral movements, namely in the ninth variation of his 2005 chorale variations discussed above, as well as in the single piece *Erscheinung* from 2007.³² Here, however, the music seems to be all too 'cosy'. The 'Marche héroïque', *Alla marcia, malizioso* ('March-like, gloatingly') [19], by contrast, exposes, in straightforward ABA form with a derisive trio (*con scherno* ('scornfully')), with the alleged hero as an object of fear.

The turbulent finale, *Allegro precipitando* and in $\frac{4}{8}$ with changing metres [20], is conceived as by far the most extensive movement of the suite and is divided into three sections, each separated by general pauses; the second, beginning *misterioso* and *pp* (at 2:22), leads in two waves into a rousing climax, which, in the third section with increased tempo, *precipitando, prestissimo* (at 6:24), concludes the suite in a highly virtuosic manner and with a D flat major chord, typically for Ruoff's harmonic language, 'spiced' with two biting neighbouring notes. It begins with an almost exact quotation of the opening from Ruoff's Third Toccata, *Shirufa*,³³ from 2003; later there are references to his Sixth Toccata, *Sacrum*,³⁴ from 2018, and to the Toccata discussed below, which concludes his First Symphony for Organ from 2013 – thus, without calling it by name, the composer evokes for the last time a genre to which he devoted himself more than to any other in his organ works. Once again, music emerges that draws its intoxicating vitality from uninhibited, unexpectedly evolving rhythms against ostinato patterns, energetic rests, compound metres and frequent changes of metres, obsessive repetitions of individual notes or chords, bitonal or even multi-tonal superimpositions and, in general, surprises of all kinds that serve to keep the listener spellbound. Now, though, these typical

³² Recorded on Volume Two of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0596.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0567.

features, which he has developed over decades in his personal style, are exaggerated almost as caricatures – a last uprush that created space for him to take new approaches.

Symphony No. 1 (2013)

To locate the organ symphonies of a composer as historically aware and knowledgeable as Axel Ruoff – whose independent position is nonetheless derived from tradition – a brief outline of the development of this genre, too, might be helpful.

The Merseburg premiere of Franz Liszt's *Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam'* in 1855, already briefly discussed, completed the reinterpretation of the organ from an instrument that had its place and function within the liturgy of worship, to a public concert instrument. As an immediate reaction to this event, the young Hans von Bülow wrote an article that even appeared in translation in the United States, calling the organ an instrument, 'whose importance in these latter times was threatening to fall into undue neglect on account of its supposed stiffness and one-sided dignity'. For him 'the perfectibility of this instrument in the modern spirit' was 'now clearly proved; the "stiffness" of the organ is broken, and this experience may also react upon the instruments of older construction to modify our views of what may be expected of the organ as such'.³⁵ Now visions that had preoccupied progressive eighteenth-century musicians such as Georg Joseph Vogler and Johann Friedrich Reichardt seemed to have come to fruition. Vogler sought to rebuild organs so that they came close to the sound of the Mannheim court orchestra he conducted, famous for its *crescendo* and *decrescendo* effects,³⁶ and Reichardt wondered in 1795 how 'the most splendid of all instruments comprising an entire orchestra with all its mighty power and opulence should be left so unused'.³⁷

³⁵ Hans von Bülow, 'Alexander Winterberger and the Modern Organ-Playing,' in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, Vol. 10 (1856), No. 9, 29 November 1856, pp. 65–66, here p. 65. The German original of this article appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 23 (1856), No. 1, 1 July 1856, pp. 1–3.

³⁶ Martin Balz, 'Die Orgel als Orchester – Zum 250. Geburtstag von Georg Joseph Vogler,' in *Ars organi*, Vol. 47 (1999), No. 4, pp. 194–204.

³⁷ Johann Friedrich Reichardt, 'Wanderungen und Träumereien im Gebiete der Tonkunst,' in *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks*, Vol. 1 (1795), June, pp. 584–93, here p. 588.

With this change of role, the organ naturally also acquired new repertoire. Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg, a member of the inner Liszt circle, stated in retrospect in 1877 that after the premiere of the *Ad nos* fantasy ‘almost all thinking organ composers [...] gradually began to strive to leave the old monotony of the organ and to bring it closer to the great modern orchestra,’³⁸ nevertheless bemoaning ‘that for organs which have been equipped with all modern achievements, there are actually still no quite appropriate compositions available.’³⁹ Plenty of suitable organ music was written and performed in Germany in the following decades, although the terms ‘symphony’ or ‘symphonic’ appeared only rarely in titles. After a first instance in the starkly classicist Organ Symphony in D major, Op. 172, by the prolific organ virtuoso and pedagogue Wilhelm Volckmar⁴⁰ from 1867 (in five movements, ‘Intrada,’ ‘Sonata,’ ‘Cavatina,’ ‘Intermezzo,’ ‘Finale,’ equipped with abundant registration instructions and a passage calling for four-part pedal playing), almost the only examples are two works pointing far into the future: Max Reger’s technically exceedingly demanding *Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue* (‘Inferno’), Op. 57, from 1901, which was inspired by Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, and Sigfrid Karg-Elert’s four-movement Organ Symphony in F sharp minor, Op. 143, from 1930, which was denied the impact it should have had: it was rediscovered only in 1984 and first published in 1987.⁴¹

In France, on the other hand, the combination of the terms ‘organ’ and ‘symphony’ had been on everyone’s lips since César Franck’s *Grande pièce symphonique*, Op. 17, No. 2, from 1863 – though opposed by the counter-movement of the ‘liturgistes’ who emerged from the École Niedermeyer and later the Schola Cantorum de Paris – followed, among others, by ten organ symphonies by Charles Marie Widor (written between 1872

³⁸ Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg, ‘Die moderne Orgel in orchesterlicher Behandlung,’ in *Urania. Musikzeitschrift für Orgelbau und Orgelspiel insbesondere* [...], Vol. 24 (1877), No. 7, pp. 99–106, here p. 100.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁰ Volckmar was also the first reviewer of Liszt’s *Ad nos* fantasy, which he praised, despite some objections, as a ‘great, rich tone painting’ that bore witness to the ‘most profoundly serious studies’ of this ‘ingenious artist’ (Wilhelm Volckmar, ‘Drei Tonstücke [...]’, in *Urania oder Das unentbehrliche Buch der Orgel*, Vol. 10 (1853), Nos. 8/9, pp. 103–5).

⁴¹ Karg-Elert had already employed the term ‘symphonic’ in his *Drei sinfonische Kanzonen*, Op. 85, and his *Drei symphonische Choräle*, Op. 87, mentioned above, both from 1911.

and 1900), six by Louis Vierne, a pupil of the first two composers (1899–1930), two each by the Widor pupil Marcel Dupré (1924, 1929) and Charles Tournemire (1935, 1936), another pupil of Franck and Widor, which were joined by Dupré's symphonic poem *Évocation*, Op. 37 (1941), and Tournemire's *Fantaisie symphonique* (1934), among others, as well as three by Jean Langlais, a pupil of the previous two (1941–42, 1976, 1959/1979). As is well known, the genesis of all these organ symphonies or symphonic pieces is intricately linked to the organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, which opened new worlds of sound and on which the composers mentioned worked for decades in Paris – Franck, Tournemire and Langlais in Sainte-Clotilde, Widor and Dupré in Saint Sulpice and Vierne in Notre Dame.

Some terminological indecision can be observed in both France and Germany, in so far as Franck's pioneering work was still labelled 'symphony' in the first printing of the first edition before the choice fell on the composite title,⁴² and conversely, Karg-Elert's composition was initially to appear under the Regerian title 'Symphonic Fantasy'.⁴³ This vacillation can be taken as an indication that the use of the term 'symphonic' for organ works was less about a reference to the symphonic form than one to the expanded tonal and dynamic palette of the Romantic organ, and to categories such as temporal expansion, grandeur, dignity and monumentality to which the symphony was typically ascribed in the late Romantic period. In a recent reassessment, Cordelia Miller has convincingly shown that 'French organ composers [...] were freer from scruples regarding the transfer of the symphony as a genre concept to the organ' than their German equivalents, because of the historical development in their country 'that centred on opera rather than symphony in the 19th century'. In her observation, the organ symphony has gone down in history as a French 'invention' only because of the German reluctance since 1870 to combine the terms 'organ' and 'symphonic' or 'symphony' in the title in works where it

⁴² Kurt Lueders, "Mon orgue? C'est un orchestre". Über die Wechselbeziehung Orgel-Orchester bei César Franck und ihre Auswirkung im Orgelwerk, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der *Six Pièces*; in *César Franck, Werk und Rezeption*, ed. Peter Jost, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2004, pp. 174–190, here p. 180, note 6.

⁴³ Johannes Matthias Michel, 'Vorwort', in Sigfrid Karg-Elert, *Sinfonie für Orgel fis-Moll*, ed. Johannes Matthias Michel, Edition Breitkopf 8710, Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden, 2001, pp. 2–3, here p. 2.

would have been appropriate to do so – in other words, because of efforts in Germany to keep the sacred and the profane pure and separate.⁴⁴

In view of the widespread association of the organ symphony with France, it is not surprising that Thomas Schacher, reviewing of the world premiere of Ruoff's First Symphony for Organ, given by its dedicatee, Ludger Lohmann, on 6 August 2014 at the Grossmünster in Zurich, saw the composer as anchored in the French tradition and recognised 'formal and tonal references to the great French models'. Schacher also reported on the enormous impression the performance left and stated that the music had evoked many images in him,⁴⁵ which is ultimately true of nearly all of Ruoff's organ works. Listeners will come to their own conclusion on that question – but I hope that the unconditional expressivity of this music will be understood as having a programmatic root: the representation of an existential struggle.

With a playing time of approximately 37 minutes, Ruoff's First Organ Symphony surpasses all his other organ works, including its more introspective counterpart, the Second Organ Symphony of 2016.⁴⁶ In terms of technical demands, too, it leaves behind all his other compositions for this instrument, which are often already deliberately virtuosic, and altogether can be counted among the most difficult works in modern organ literature. In addition to its enormous temporal expansion, it also fulfils the other categories mentioned above that are traditionally assigned to the symphony; accordingly, it also requires a large, richly coloured instrument capable of presenting the extreme dynamic range prescribed, from quadruple *piano* to quadruple *forte*.

In spite of the internal division into several sections with different tempos and dynamic levels, the symphony is meant to be perceived as one large whole, since all its subsections merge into one another. Traditional parts of a symphony, such as the scherzo, the slow movement or the finale, can be recognised, but the expectation

⁴⁴ Cordelia Miller, 'Sinfonische Orgelmusik nach 1870 zwischen Sakralität, Profanität und Nationalismus. Ein deutsch-französischer Vergleich', in *Die Musikforschung*, Vol. 70 (2017), No. 2, pp. 106–125, here p. 125.

⁴⁵ Thomas Schacher, 'Elementares Gebrause', in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 8 August 2014, online edition, https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/zuercher_kultur/elementares-gebrause-ld.718829, accessed 5 August 2022.

⁴⁶ Recorded on Volume Two of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0596.

of a conventionally designed opening movement initially is subverted. In the first part [21], extremely powerful segments with the tempo marking *Grave* (at 0:00 and 7:58), characterised by strong rhythms, dissonant chord-clusters and agitated cadenza-like passages, contrast, in twofold succession, with rapturous islands of sound in the lowest dynamic range, marked *Lento assai*, *tristamente* or *Lento assai* respectively (at 3:48 and 10:25), featuring gently plaintive voices in the upper manual and pedal. Performance instructions such as *lugubre* ('lugubrious') and *con tristezza* ('with sadness') further point to the prevailing mood of these sections, which recall the second, more lyrical theme of a sonata movement only in retrospect. A short transitional passage announces the main motif of the ensuing *Prestissimo* [22], a chromatic cell of two ascending semitones in *staccato* articulation in changing metres ($\frac{4}{8}, \frac{3}{8}, \frac{2}{8}$), which is juxtaposed, as if in a chase, with groups of irregular chords and finally subjected to a fugal treatment (at 3:07). Another transitional passage that compresses the accumulated energy (at 6:09) leads to a third *Grave* section in *fff* (at 6:59) that resumes the gesture of the previous two and thus closes the first arch. As if exhausted, all vitality now ebbs away (*affievolendo*), giving way to a soulful and dynamically restrained *Adagietto* [23], the spiritual core of the symphony, which expands material exposed in the previous *Lento assai* sections, hovering and meandering over a restless chordal pulse (which must nevertheless be played *dolcissimo*) in seemingly endless, dream-lost melodies, assigned, again in twofold succession, first to the solo manual and then, to an accompaniment in a paradisiacal (*paradisiaco*) timbre, to the pedal (at 4:50). After the dynamic low point of the entire symphony has been reached (at 7:41), the energy slowly works its way back up amid threatening (*minacciosamente*) gestures, leading in a convulsive build-up to the concluding *Toccata* [24], in which despair does not give way until the hopeless impasse at the end, as specified by the tempo indication *Allegro precipitando* ('pressing forward') and articulation and performance instructions such as *martellato* ('hammered'), *malizioso*, *sarcastico*, *ridendo* ('laughing'), *infernale* and *scharf*; 'skurril' ('sharply'; 'bizarre').

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Jan Lehtola collaborates regularly with composers and has given more than 160 world and regional premieres. He was the Artistic Director of the Organo Novo Festival in Helsinki from 2007 to 2016 and Chairman of the Finnish Organum Society from 2009 to 2014. He has recorded for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) and can be heard on more than 50 commercial recordings.

Jan Lehtola studied the organ in Helsinki with Olli Porthan and Kari Jussila, in Amsterdam with Jacques van Oortmerssen and Jean Boyer, in Stuttgart with Ludger Lohmann, in Lyon with Louis Robilliard and in Paris with Naji Hakim. He graduated from the Church Music Department of the Sibelius Academy, gaining his diploma with distinction in 1998. In 2000 he gave his Sibelius Academy debut recital in the Kallio Church, Helsinki, and in 2005 received a Doctorate for his dissertation on Oskar Merikanto as a transmitter of European influences to Finland. He is a university lecturer at the University of the Arts, Sibelius Academy, and is also active as a lecturer and a teacher of master-classes.

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Photograph: Gianni Proietti

The Main Organ of St Paul's Church in Helsinki, Finland

**Kangasalan Urkutehdas,
1931
Veikko Virtanen Oy, 2005**

*=from the 1931 organ

I C-a³

Principal 16'
Octava 8'
Flauto Major 8'
Quintatön 8'
Rohrflöte* 8'
Gamba 8'
Octava* 4'
Flöte* 4'
Quinta* 2 2/3'
Octava 2'
Kornett* 3-4 f
Mixtur* 4-6 f 2 2/3'
Fagott 16'
Trompete 8'

II C-a³

Quintadena* 16'
Geigen Principal* 8'
Flöte* 8'
Nachthorn* 8'
Gemshorn* 8'

Octava 4'
Querflöte* 4'
Piccolo* 2'
Sesquialtera* 2 f 2 2/3'
Krummhorn* 8'
Singend regal* 4'
tremolo

III C-a³

Liebligh Gedact* 16'
Principal 8'
Fugara 8'
Spitzflöte* 8'
Gedact* 8'
Voix celeste* 2 f 8'
Flauto dolce* 4'
Viola d'amore 4'
Querpfeife* 2 2/3'
Flageolet* 2'
Terz* 1 1/3'
Harmonia aetheria 4 f 2 2/3'
Basson* 16'
Trompet harmonique 8'
Oboe 8'
Vox humana* 8'
Klarine 4'
tremolo

Pedal C-f¹

Grand Bordun 32' (octave transmission)
Violonbass 16'
Subbass* 16'
Echobass 16' (transmission)
Violoncello 8'
Flötenbass 8' (transmission)
Octava* 4'
Bombarde 16'
Trompete 8' (transmission)
Klarine 4' (transmission)

Couplers

II-I 8'
III-I 8'
III-II 8'
I, II, III-P 8'
III-I 16'
III 16'
II-I 4'
III-I 4'
III-II 4'
I, II, III-P 4'
General coupler 8'
General crescendo
Setzer





Recorded in St Paul's Church, Helsinki, Finland, on 24 May 2021 (*Introduction, Variations and Fugue*), 1 June 2021 (*Suite grotesque*) and 14 February 2022 (Symphony No. 1)

Recording and editing: Antti Pohjola
Producer: Jan Lehtola

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AXEL RUOFF Complete Works for Organ, Volume Four

Introduction, Variations and Fugue on the chorale 'Das Volk, das noch im Finstern wandelt' (2005)*		28:04
1	Introduction, <i>Grave</i> –	1:03
2	Variation 1, <i>Andante tranquillo</i> –	1:09
3	Variation 2, <i>Lento assai</i> –	1:34
4	Variation 3, <i>Scherzando</i> –	0:43
5	Variation 4, <i>Vivace con fuoco</i> –	0:40
6	Variation 5, <i>Presto agitato</i> –	1:15
7	Variation 6, <i>Maestoso</i> –	1:13
8	Variation 7, <i>Misterioso</i> –	1:16
9	Variation 8, <i>Moderato, molto marcato</i> –	1:04
10	Variation 9, <i>Pastorale, Lento assai, dolcissimo</i> –	2:53
11	Variation 10, <i>Allegro precipitando</i> –	1:48
12	Variation 11, <i>Moderato</i> –	1:22
13	Variation 12, <i>Allegro molto</i> –	0:55
14	Variation 13, <i>Presto con fuoco – Prestissimo</i> –	1:25
15	Fugue, <i>Lento – Più mosso, misterioso – Allegro – Allegro vivace – Largo – Grave assai</i>	9:44
Suite grotesque (2019)*		20:00
16	I Prélude: <i>Prestissimo</i>	2:24
17	II Danse champêtre: <i>Agiatamente; farsesco</i>	2:38
18	III Nocturne: <i>Lento strascinando</i>	4:25
19	IV Marche héroïque: <i>Alla marcia, malizioso</i>	2:28
20	V Finale: <i>Allegro con fuoco; molto marcato</i>	8:05
Symphony No. 1 (2013)		36:33
21	I <i>Grave – Lento assai, tristamente – Grave – Lento assai</i>	14:11
22	II <i>Prestissimo – Grave</i>	8:04
23	III <i>Adagietto</i> –	8:38
24	IV Toccata: <i>Allegro precipitando</i>	5:40

Jan Lehtola
organ of St Paul's Church, Helsinki

TT 84:38

*FIRST RECORDINGS