

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, BRISBANE



BRISBANE
ORGAN
RECITALS
INTERNATIONAL
SERIES

Sunday 26nd April 2009
3pm

Organ Music from Down Under

Mark Quarmby

Programme

Festive Toccata (1998)	Colin Brumby
Captain Logan's Fancy (1988) <i>Variations and Toccata for Organ on Moreton Bay</i>	Colin Brumby
O Sacred Head (2008) <i>(i) Lament</i> <i>(ii) Dance – Moto Perpetuoso</i>	Robert Ampt
Soliloquy No 2 (2004)	Gordon Atkinson
Moto Perpetuo and Intermezzo (1916)	C. Edgar Ford
To his servant Bach, God grants a final glimpse: The Morning Star (1994)	Graeme Koehne
Toccata Aurora (1983)	Graeme Koehne

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Biography to be supplied

Notes on the Music

Originally a British colony, Australia was settled in 1788 and was strongly influenced by English traditions, which included the Church of England and its music. The early musicians either came from the UK or, if born in Australia, they studied with English teachers either in Australia or in the UK. Just as major American composers (such as Barber, Bernstein, Carter and Copland) showed relatively little interest in the organ, Australian composers with international reputations have written little, if any, organ music. Music by other Australian composers has a relatively low (but improving) profile in the Australian organ scene and is virtually unknown in the rest of the world. Yet, some 260 Australian composers are known to have written more than 1,000 organ pieces during the past 150 years.

Today's recital contains music from all five mainland states of Australia: Robert Ampt (New South Wales), Gordon Atkinson (Victoria), Colin Brumby (Queensland), C. Edgar Ford (Western Australia) and Graeme Koehne (South Australia).

Festive Toccata (1998) - Colin Brumby (b. 1933)
(unpublished)

Captain Logan's Fancy (1988) - Colin Brumby
Variations and Toccata for Organ on Moreton Bay
(published in *Organ Australis*, Currency Press, Sydney 1991)

Colin Brumby was born in Melbourne, Victoria and commenced his musical studies at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, from which he graduated in 1957. Further compositional study in Spain, London and Rome led to his return to Australia, where he joined the staff of the Music Department at the University of Queensland. He has been based in Brisbane ever since. He became Associate Professor at the University of Queensland, retiring in 1998. He has also worked as an organist and church musician along with directing various ensembles. His large output includes operas, concerti for various instruments and other orchestral works, chamber works, film and ballet scores, songs, a number of organ works and many choral works with organ accompaniment.

When Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral re-opened the restored and enlarged Hill/Létourneau organ in 1998, Colin Brumby was commissioned to write an opening piece. His Festive Toccata begins with a fanfare to demonstrate the instrument's new Bombarde reeds. The toccata is in ternary form with the central section hinting at Vierne's Berceuse.

The colonial folksong Moreton Bay has a tune of Irish origin. The infamous Moreton Bay penal settlement in Queensland was established in 1824 for the isolation of convicts who committed further crimes after being transported to New South Wales. No treatment was considered too harsh and the villain of the song, Captain Logan, was especially notorious for his brutality. He commanded the settlement at Moreton Bay for four years and chose the site of the future capital city of Queensland, Brisbane. He was murdered in 1830 by Aborigines.

Each variation possesses a title drawn from the lyrics of the ballad. These titles, however, are not intended to be programmatic nor to describe specific events. The cycle finishes with a toccata which exists in two forms. An easier version was written for High School organ students who have found these variations popular to study for various music examinations.

Moreton Bay

One Sunday morning as I went walking
By Brisbane waters I chanced to stray,
I heard a convict his fate bewailing
As on the sunny river-bank he lay:
'I am a native of Erin's island.
Though banished now from my native shore;
They took me from my aged parents
And from the maiden whom I do adore.

'I've been a prisoner at Port Macquarie,
At Norfolk Island and Emu Plains,
At Castle Hill and at cursed Toongabbie,
At all those settlements I've worked in chains;
But of those places of condemnation
And penal stations in New South Wales
To Moreton Bay I have found no equal,
Excessive tyranny each day prevails.

'For three long years I've been beastly treated
And heavy irons on my legs I wore;
My back with flogging is lacerated
And often painted with my crimson gore.
And many a man from downright starvation
Lies mouldering now underneath the clay;
And Captain Logan he had us mangled
At the triangles of Moreton Bay.

'Like the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews
We were oppressed under Logan's yoke,
Till a native black lying there in ambush
Did deal our tyrant with his mortal stroke.
My fellow prisoners, be exhilarated
That all such monsters such death may find!
And when from bondage we are liberated
Our former sufferings shall fade from mind.'

Theme: Moreton Bay

Var. 1: On the Sunny River Bank

Var. 2: In Chains

Var. 3: By Brisbane Waters

Var. 4: Flogging

Var. 5: Penal Stations

Var. 6: Mouldering Underneath the Clay

Var. 7: Beastly Treated

Var. 8: Excessive Tyranny

Var. 9: The Maiden

Var. 10: Places of Condemnation

Var. 11: Former Sufferings

Var. 12: Toccata – From Bondage we are Liberated.

O Sacred Head (2008) - Robert Ampt (b. 1949)
(Birralee Publishing, Woodford 2008)

(i) **Lament**

*O sacred head, now wounded, with pain and scorn weighed down.
In mockery surrounded, with thorns Thine only crown.*

(ii) **Dance – Moto Perpetuoso**

*O sacred head, what glory, what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine!*

Robert Ampt was born in Victoria and grew up in South Australia before studying in Vienna with Anton Heiller. After his return to Australia he was appointed Sydney City Organist in 1978, presiding over the world famous 1890 Hill organ in the Sydney Town Hall. He has taught at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and he is the organist of the German Lutheran Church, Sydney. A past President of the Organ Music Society of Sydney, he has written a number of works for the organ.

The composer writes: “The two movements recognize the opposing sentiments and moods of this famous Passion hymn: on one side, bitterness and sadness (the *Lament*), and on the other side, triumphant joyfulness (the *Dance – Moto Perpetuoso*). While different verses of this long hymn emphasize either one of these sentiments, the first verse already refers powerfully to both. The Trinitarian number three is used throughout, including groups of three-bar phrases.

“The *Lament* opens and closes with chords constructed of three sets of two-note intervals; these intervals all correspond to the first two notes of the hymn melody. The superimposing of the first phrase of the melody at different tempos over the somber harmonization imparts a sense of mockery, in the same way that a melody played fast-forward on a tape makes a mockery of the original. The *Dance – Moto Perpetuoso* opens with, and is largely based on, the first phrase of the hymn melody inverted and in retrograde, and is at first totally fragmented. The full statement of the hymn tune heard a third of the way into the movement is dark but still positive and energetic. The final statement of the hymn’s first phrase towards the end of the movement is intended as a blaze of triumph, symbolizing the true nature and purpose of the Passion. A pulsating, dancing energy drives the entire movement.”

***Soliloquy No 2* (2004) - Gordon Atkinson (b. 1928)**

(published in *Te Deum Laudamus*, RCCO, Toronto, Ontario 2004)

Although born in Melbourne, Victoria and retiring there in 2005, Dr Gordon Atkinson spent much of his life in England and North America. Following study in Melbourne with A.E.H. Nickson, he attended the Royal College of Music in London from 1950 to 1953, where Harold Darke and William Lloyd Webber were among his teachers. He moved to Canada in 1958, and his various activities there included teaching at the University of Western Ontario and Brock University, serving as National President of the Royal Canadian College of Organists (1976-78), and being Director of Music at St Catherine's Cathedral in St Catharines, Ontario (1981-87). Following completion of a Master's degree at the University of Michigan, where his organ teacher was Marilyn Mason, he held appointments in Florida and Virginia until his permanent return to Melbourne. He has composed a number of organ works as well as vocal works ranging from anthems for various combinations of voices and instruments to a set of songs for soprano and oboe. In 2003 Atkinson completed a doctorate at The Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana, a significant achievement for a man in his 70s, for which he composed *Psalms and Doxologies*, a 30-minute work for soprano, SATB choir and organ.

Soliloquy No 2 was written for inclusion in *Te Deum Laudamus* (2004), a collection of organ works published by the Royal Canadian College of Organists in memory of Gerald Bales (1919-2002), a Canadian composer and organist and past President of the RCCO. "The melody (played on a warm 8' flute) provides a filigree to the underlying harmony. The accompaniment of the melody consists mainly of dominant 7ths which do not resolve in the normal way." The work was first performed, along with the other nine pieces in the collection, in September 2004 in Toronto by the Australian-born, Canadian organist/composer Barrie Cabena.

Moto Perpetuo and Intermezzo (1916) – C. Edgar Ford (1881 – 1961)

(The Midland Music Press, Lemmington, UK 1916)

Charles Edgar Ford, organist, composer and music examiner, was born in Staffordshire, England. He graduated from New College, Oxford (B.Mus., 1908 and D.Mus., 1913) where he studied composition. He later held several parish organist positions in London. It was in the capacity of an examiner that he first visited Australia in 1917. In 1941 he took up residence in Perth (the capital of Western Australia) where he became the organist at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral and gave numerous recitals. During this time he continued to compose and examine. Romantic and conservative in style, his compositions include many pieces for piano and organ, solo and part-songs, as well as some larger choral works, such as two masses with organ and several cantatas with orchestra. The *Moto Perpetuo* is in the style of a scherzo with the *Intermezzo* building to fortissimo before the return of the hypnotic rhythmic patterns that characterize the opening and closing sections.

To his servant Bach, God grants a final glimpse:

The Morning Star (1994) – Graeme Koehne (b. 1956)

(Australian Music Centre, Sydney 1994)

Toccata Aurora (1983) - Graeme Koehne

(Boosey & Hawkes Pty Ltd, Sydney 1983)

Graeme Koehne is one of the most widely performed of the younger generation of Australian composers. He is a graduate of the University of Adelaide, where he studied composition with Richard Meale, became a Lecturer in Composition and later Head of Studies in Composition. He gained national attention at the 1982 Adelaide Festival when he was awarded the Young Composers Prize for his orchestral work *Rain Forest*. In 1984 he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship to work at Yale University, and during the two years of the Fellowship he also took private lessons in New York with Virgil Thomson. Some of his orchestral works are available on a Naxos CD.

To his servant Bach was composed in 1989 for string quartet, and subsequent versions for string orchestra, guitar quartet, harp and organ now exist. The score is prefaced by a quotation from Philipp Spitta's book on the composer: "... so that Bach was henceforth totally blind ... on 18 July he suddenly found his eyesight restored, and could bear daylight; but this was life's parting greeting ... he died on Tuesday 28 July 1750." In Koehne's gentle homage, Bach's valedictory vision has the form of a chorale prelude in which the tune *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (How brightly shines the morning star) can be clearly heard in the right hand in the second half of the piece. This melody appears above a stream of quavers which flow through the entire piece as a musical metaphor for the German word *Bach* (= brook).

Koerne's infectious and virtuosic *Toccata Aurora* (1983) is one of the most successful recent Australian organ works. It was the choice of both finalists for the Australia Prize at the 2003 Sydney Organ Competition. Originally entitled *Gothic Toccata*, the title was later changed by the organist who commissioned it as he saw the piece with its large crescendo symbolizing the rising of the sun at dawn over Antarctica. Rather minimalist in style, the piece builds from single notes to huge chords. Rhythmic interest is maintained by changing meters, odd numbers from five to seven beats per bar, grouped in twos, threes and fours. A climax is reached at the *molto allegro estatico* as the manuals and pedals play in matching rhythms for the first time, heightened in excitement by four short glissandi before five distinctive chords close the piece on full organ.

