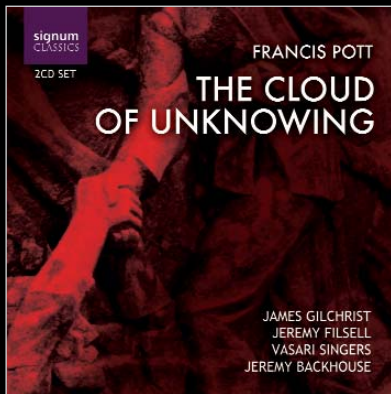


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The Cloud of Unknowing
Francis Pott

James Gilchrist, tenor
Jeremy Filsell, organ
Vasari Singers
Jeremy Backhouse, Conductor
SIGCD105

Following its premiere performance in 2007, Francis Pott's highly anticipated recording of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is likely to be musical milestone and a choral great.

Drawing together a variety of texts and musical influences, Pott weaves together a deep and emotional work with an ethos reminiscent of Michael Tippett's 'War Oratorio'.

"Jeremy Backhouse's excellent Vasari Singers performed it not just accurately, but with bags of heart and soul as well. A sincere, intelligent and admirably unsensational meditation on the darkness at the heart of man. The Cloud of Unknowing deserves a concert life beyond this moving performance." The Times

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CLASSICS

DURUFLÉ REQUIEM

GRUNENWALD DE PROFUNDIS

VASARI SINGERS
JEREMY BACKHOUSE CONDUCTOR

SARAH CONNOLLY MEZZO-SOPRANO
CHRISTOPHER MALTMAN BARITONE
ROBERT COHEN CELLO
JEREMY FILSELL ORGAN

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DURUFLÉ REQUIEM

Jean-Jacques Grunenwald 1911-1982

1. Tu es Petrus (1965) [2.16]

Psaume CXXIX (De Profundis) (1961)

2. De profundis [8.16]

3. Quia apud [9.21]

4. Requiem aeternam [4.47]

Maurice Duruflé 1902-1986

Quatre Motets sur des thèmes grégoriens

Op. 10 (1960)

5. Ubi caritas et amor [2.15]

6. Tota pulchra es [1.56]

7. Tu es Petrus [0.52]

8. Tantum ergo [3.02]

Requiem Op. 9 (1947-8)

9. Introit [3.50]

10. Kyrie [4.14]

11. Domine Jesu Christe (Offertory) [9.02]

12. Sanctus - Benedictus [3.08]

13. Pie Jesu [3.49]

14. Agnus Dei [4.02]

15. Lux aeterna (Communion) [4.22]

16. Libera me [5.35]

17. In Paradisum [3.19]

Total Timings [74.08]

SARAH CONNOLLY MEZZO-SOPRANO
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PROGRAMME NOTES

The twentieth-century French composers Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) and Jean-Jacques Grunenwald (1911-1982) were relatively close contemporaries as well as important figures on the musical scene of post-war Paris. Both composers trained and worked as organists through their entire careers and, while neither was particularly prolific in terms of their compositional output, more music remains from the pen of Grunenwald than that of Duruflé. Despite this fact Duruflé is far more revered, having composed one of the most enduring choral works of the twentieth-century in the form of his *Requiem* Op. 9.

While there are some similarities between the outputs of Duruflé and Grunenwald - with works for organ and choir dominating - a considerable amount of film music composed by Grunenwald, mainly during the 1940s and 50s, notably separates the two composers. In addition - as well as being an organist, composer and pedagogue - Grunenwald was also known as an architect, having studied for a diploma in architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris concurrently with his studies in music at the Paris Conservatoire.

Born in Cran-Gevrier, a town near Annecy in the Rhône-Alpes region, Grunenwald studied with Ludovic Breitner, a pupil of Franz Liszt, from 1922. He moved to Paris in 1932 to study at the Conservatoire under Marcel Dupré for organ and Henri Büsser for composition and was to win *premiers prix* in composition and organ and a Second Prix de Rome. His first position as an organist came in 1935 at the American Church in Neuilly-sur-Seine and from 1936 to 1946 he was also assistant to Dupré at the church of St Sulpice. Over the space of some twenty years from 1943, Grunenwald was to compose music for twenty-three films, a period which proved to be the most productive of his composing career.

From 1955 to 1970 Grunenwald was organist at the church of St Pierre-de-Montrouge in the 14th Arrondissement, a post that he combined with teaching as a professor of organ at the Schola Cantorum from 1957 to 1961, and then from 1961 to 1966 at the Geneva Conservatoire. Following the death of Dupré, Grunenwald returned to St Sulpice in 1973 as titular organist where he remained until his death nine years later. Among his most notable achievements was a recording of the complete organ works of Bach between 1957 and 1962 on some twenty-four LPs.

Durufié's musical path was similar, and he began his career as a chorister at Rouen Cathedral from 1912 to 1918, where he also took lessons in piano, organ and music theory from the cathedral's organist Jules Haelling, a pupil of Alexandre Guilmant. Durufié moved to Paris in 1919 to study further and enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire in 1920, where he studied with Eugène Gigout for organ and Paul Dukas for composition. He was the assistant to Charles Tournemire at Sainte-Clotilde and then Louis Vierne at Notre-Dame - completing a truly venerable list of teachers and mentors. Durufié was appointed organist at the church of St Etienne-du-Mont in 1930 where he remained until his death over fifty years later. Like Grunenwald, Durufié was also a teacher and was professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatoire from 1943 until 1970.

The two main works of this recording, *Requiem* and *Psaume CXXIX*, are significantly different, but share the common subject of hope. The *Requiem* employs sections of the Latin ordinary text of the Mass for the Dead, which frequently talks of the hope of redemption, a heavenly paradise, and perpetual light. More commonly known today as Psalm 130, rather than 129 - Grunenwald employed the Greek (or Septuagint) arrangement of the psalms rather than the more common Hebrew (or

Masoretic) arrangement found in most modern translations - the first half of this penitential psalm is despairing and pleads for help and forgiveness, while the second half speaks of a confident hope.

Separated into three movements, *Psaume CXXIX* was written in 1961 for choir and orchestra, including organ, and presents the complete Latin text of the psalm. It is presented here as a version for choir and organ only, with the organ effectively adopting the various orchestral textures. The instrumental sections of this work are extensive and are vital in creating a dark atmosphere at the opening of the first movement ('De Profundis'). The opening words of the text 'Out of the deep have I called unto you O Lord' are appropriately introduced by the basses, before a wordless section for full choir brings a quiet cry of despair vividly to life in a considerable and early climax. A softer section follows, in which the mood slowly begins to change as the psalmist states his plea further.

A sense of relief is felt as the second movement begins ('Quia apud') with a calm statement 'For with thee there is merciful forgiveness' in the upper voices. The tone becomes more confident as the resultant affirmation of 'Let Israel hope in the Lord' approaches, before the return of material from the opening movement lends an air of

uncertainty once more. The text of this psalm is traditionally found in the Mass for the Dead, and Grunenwald appends the opening incantation of the Mass as the final movement ('Requiem aeternam'). The sentiment is one of optimism once more, however, as gentle counterpoint works its way through the choir, before the sopranos are left alone to bring the work to a close with a clear vision of ecstasy.

Durufié composed meticulously; he was self-critical and a perfectionist, and allowed only a few select works to make it to publication. As a result there are extremely strong elements of quality and consistency throughout his compact catalogue. Durufié wrote three versions of his *Requiem*, the first of these was the version for full orchestra and organ completed in 1947. The second version was for organ only, while the third version for small orchestra and organ was completed in 1961. Commissioned by his publisher, Durand, the *Requiem* is clearly modelled on that of Gabriel Fauré, and follows a similar pattern in avoiding those parts of the requiem text that focus on the terrible fear of the unknown following death. Like Fauré, Durufié also chose to use a baritone soloist, while the 'Pie Jesu' is also a solo movement, although with mezzo-soprano rather than soprano.

Gregorian chant was a vital influence and features heavily in Durufié's music, a trait epitomised by the *Requiem*, and he quotes heavily from the chant of the Mass for the Dead from the opening bars and throughout the work. The prevailing mood of the *Requiem* is set from the start of the first movement and Durufié's extensive use of the chant intends to follow closely the rhythms set out by the Benedictine monks of Solesmes within the restrictions of modern barring.

In the first of the nine movements, 'Introit', the chant is punctuated by cherubic upper voices, all above flowing organ figures. The chant is passed from lower to upper voices before being heard in the organ, building to a peak and falling away once more. Continuing directly from the 'Introit', Durufié displays his faultless abilities at counterpoint in the 'Kyrie', which goes through a number of emotions as the text beseeches compassion. A sense of varied drama ensues in 'Domine Jesu Christe' as further fervent pleas to be delivered from horrors of death and to be led into life and paradise by St Michael. An insistent and uninterrupted flowing figure in the middle of the texture characterises the 'Sanctus', which builds towards an immense climax at the words 'Hosanna in excelsis', which rapidly dissipates in a return to the opening textures for the text of the 'Benedictus'.

The fifth movement, 'Pie Jesu', is scored for mezzo-soprano solo with a part for solo cello, and is a heartfelt rendering of the text and chant that leaves an indelible impression. The 'Agnus Dei' is uncomplicated, uncluttered and at times even hypnotic, while 'Lux aeterna' is confirmatory and restful in outlook. The penultimate movement, 'Libera me' brings a more fervent and uneasy tone, which is exploited to the full by Duruflé, with substantial climaxes and the final appearance of the baritone. Duruflé's vision and hope of eternal paradise is expressed in the closing 'In Paradisum' bringing the *Requiem* to a calm and peaceful end, with the luxurious harmony found in profusion throughout this work present until the final unresolved chord.

Tu es Petrus and the *Quatre Motets* show both composers to be accomplished at shorter forms. Grunenwald's *Tu es Petrus*, written in 1965, is a grand setting of the text spoken by Jesus to his disciple Peter, and employs the fairly common French scoring of choir and two organs (the *orgue de chœur* and the *grand orgue*), although with both parts played here on one instrument. Composed in 1960, the *Quatre Motets* are a further example of Duruflé's extensive use of Gregorian chant in his music, with each motet based on an individual chant. Each of the motets

are contrasted forming an arch-like shape overall; the first motet 'Ubi caritas et amor' is rich and flowing, while 'Tota pulchra es' is for upper voices and is quick and delicate, 'Tu es Petrus' is a bold and succinct statement, while 'Tantum ergo' completes this set of four with a return to the contemplative, and a restful 'Amen'.

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TEXTS

1 Tu es Petrus (1965)

Tu es Petrus
et super hanc petram
aedificabo ecclesiam meam.

*Thou art Peter
and upon this rock
I will build my church.*

2 - 4 Psaume CXXIX (De Profundis) (1961)

2 I

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine;
Domine, exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuæ intendentes in vocem
deprecationis meæ.
Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine,
Domine, quis sustinebit?

*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.
let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my
supplications.
If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?*

3 II

Quia apud te propitiatio est;
et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.
Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus:
speravit anima mea in Domino.
A custodia matutina usque ad noctem,
speret Israël in Domino.
Quia apud Dominum misericordia,
et copiosa apud eum redemptio.
Et ipse redimet Israël
ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

*But there is forgiveness with thee;
that thou mayest be feared.
I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait:
and in his word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that
watch for the morning.
Let Israel hope in the Lord:
for with the Lord there is mercy,
and with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

4 III

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

5 - 8 **Quatre Motets sur des thèmes
grégoriens, Op.10** (1960)

5 **Ubi caritas et amor**

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Amen.

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine on them.*

*Where charity and love is, there God is also.
We are come together as one in Christ's love.
We praise him and are joyful.
We fear and love the living God.
From our hearts, diligently and sincerely.
Where charity and love is, there God is also.
Amen.*

6 **Tota pulchra es Maria**

Tota pulchra es Maria,
Et macula originalis non est in te,
Vestimentum tuum candidum quasi nix,
Et facies tua sicut sol.
Tota pulchra es ...
Tu glorias Jerusalem,
Tu laetitia Israel,
Tu honorificentia populi nostri.

*Mary, most beautiful of all,
In you is there no original stain,
Your shining white vestments are like snow,
And your form is like the sun.
Mary, most beautiful ...
You, the glory of Jerusalem,
You, the joy of Israel,
You, the most honoured of our people.*

Tota pulchra es ...

Mary, most beautiful ...

7 **Tu es Petrus**

Tu es Petrus
et super hanc petram
aedificabo ecclesiam meam.

*Thou art Peter
and upon this rock
I will build my church.*

8 **Tantum ergo sacramentum**

Tantum ergo sacramentum
veneremur cernui,
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui,
praestet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.

*So great a sacrament let us
therefore worship with bowed heads,
and let the ancient example
give way to new rite,
let faith make good
the insufficiency of our senses.*

Genitori, genitoque
laus et jubilatio,
salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et beneditio;
procedenti ab utroque
compar sit laudatio.
Amen.

*To the Begetter and the Begotten
be praise and rejoicing,
safety, honour, virtue
and blessing;
to Him who proceeds from both
let there be equal praise.
Amen.*

9 - 17 **Requiem Op. 9** (1947; version with choir and organ: 1948)

9 - 10 **I. Introit and II. Kyrie**

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem, meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison.

11 **III. Domine Jesu Christe (Offertory)**

O Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas defunctorum
de poenis inferni
et de profundo lacu;
libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum.
Hostias et preces tibi, Domine,
laudis offerimus;
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus;

*Eternal rest grant them, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

*A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion
and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.
O Lord, hear my prayer,
all flesh shall come to Thee.*

*Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy.*

*O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
deliver the souls of the departed
from the pains of hell
and from the deep pit;
save them from the mouth of the lion
nor let the dark lake swallow them up,
nor darkness to enshroud them.
With our prayers, O Lord,
we offer a sacrifice of praise;
do Thou receive it for those souls
whom we commemorate this day.*

fac eas, Domine, de morte
transire ad vitam,
quam olim Abrahae promisisti,
et semini eius. Amen.

12 **IV. Sanctus - Benedictus**

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Domine Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis

13 **V. Pie Jesu**

Pie Jesu, Domine,
dona eis requiem;
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

14 **VI. Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.
Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.

*Grant, O Lord, that they may pass
from death to life,
which Thou didst promise to Abraham
and his seed. Amen.*

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest*

*Blessed Jesus, O Lord,
grant them rest;
grant them eternal rest.*

*Lamb of God,
who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.
Let light perpetual shine upon them, O Lord,
together with Thy saints
for Thou art good.*

15 VII. Lux aeterna (Communion)

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

16 VIII. Libera me

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda;
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra;
dum veneris judicare saeculum
per ignem.

Tremens factus sum ego et timeo,
dum discussio venerit
atque ventura ira.

Dies irae, dies illa,
calamitatis et miseriae;
dies magna et amara valde.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Libera me, Domine.

17 IX. In Paradisum

In paradisum deducant angeli;
in tua adventu suscipiant te
martyres et perducant te
in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus angelorum te suscipiat
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.

*Eternal rest grant them, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

*Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death
in that awful day;
when heaven and earth shall be moved,
when Thou shalt come to judge
the world by fire.*

*Trembling, I stand before Thee, and I
fear the trial that shall be at hand
and the wrath to come.*

*That day, a day of wrath,
of calamity and of misery,
a great day and exceeding bitter.*

*Eternal rest grant them, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
Deliver me, O Lord.*

*May the angels receive thee in paradise;
at thy coming may the martyrs
receive thee and bring thee
into the Holy City Jerusalem.*

*May choirs of angels receive thee
and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may thou have eternal rest.*

BIOGRAPHIES

VASARI SINGERS

Under their Music Director Jeremy Backhouse, Vasari Singers is one of the UK's leading chamber choirs, performing a wide range of repertoire with passion and sensitivity to critical acclaim.

MusicWeb International's review of their recording of Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* described Vasari as "one of the world's finest choirs". In Gramophone Magazine's review of *Anthems for the 21st Century*, Vasari was described as "a consistently outstanding choir" and "one of the most accomplished small choral groups of our time".

The choir performs regularly in most of London's major concert venues and festivals, with regular appearances on BBC Radio and Television. Choral evensong is also a major feature of Vasari's schedule, sung at services in the main English cathedrals.

Performing and commissioning new music is central to the choir's activities. In 2005 Vasari

celebrated its 25th anniversary with 10 new commissions, a recording of these and other 21st Century anthems and a world première concert at St John's, Smith Square.

Vasari's extensive discography reflects the choir's versatility, passion and quality. Francis Pott's highly acclaimed *Cloud of Unknowing* was MusicWeb International's Disc of the Year in 2007. The two discs of works by Marcel Dupré both received Gramophone's 'Editor's Choice' award. The Howells *Requiem* and Frank Martin *Mass* recording was Gramophone Award-nominated, and the 2007 disc *Noel Nouvelet* was MusicWeb International's Recording of the Month. In 2006, Vasari Singers' recording of the Vaughan Williams *Mass in G minor* was chosen as the Top Recommendation on BBC Radio 3's 'Building a Library' programme.

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www.vasarisingers.org

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JEREMY BACKHOUSE

Jeremy Backhouse is one of Britain's leading conductors of amateur choirs, and enjoys a growing reputation in the UK and overseas for inspiring vivid, passionate performances. He began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was Senior Chorister, and later studied music at Liverpool University. He spent five years as Music Editor at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, where he was responsible for the transcription of print music into Braille. In 1986 he joined EMI Records as a Literary Editor and from April 1990 combined his work as a Consultant Editor for EMI Classics and later Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers with his career as a freelance conductor.

Since winning the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1988, Jeremy has led the Vasari Singers in regular performances at the South Bank and at St John's, Smith Square in London, as well as in the cathedrals of Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Hereford, Ely, Peterborough and Westminster Abbey.

Jeremy is totally committed to contemporary music and to the commissioning of new works. He and Vasari have commissioned over 20 new works in



their recent history, from small anthems, to works of the grandest scale: the most recent examples being an 80-minute oratorio by Francis Pott entitled *The Cloud of Unknowing* (2006), and a glorious Requiem from Gabriel Jackson (2008).

In January 1995, he was appointed Chorus Master of the Vivace Chorus (formerly the Guildford Philharmonic Choir). Jeremy has presented some ambitious programmes, including a thrilling performance of Mahler's "*Symphony of a Thousand*" (No.8) and most recently (November 2008) a stunning performance of Verdi's Requiem. From September 1998 to December 2004, Jeremy was the Music Director of the Wooburn Singers, only the third conductor in the distinguished 30-year history of the choir, following Richard Hickox and Stephen Jackson.

In January 2009 Jeremy took up the post of Music Director of the Salisbury Community Choir, a 180-strong non-auditioned choir.

www.jeremybackhouse.com

SARAH CONNOLLY

Born in County Durham, mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly studied piano and singing at the Royal College of Music, of which she is now a Fellow.

She has performed with many of the world's leading opera companies, including La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Paris Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. Highlights from her most recent season include her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Purcell's *Dido*; her debut at the Liceu in Barcelona as Nerone; *Romeo for Opera North* and a return to the Glyndebourne Festival as *Giulio Cesare*. Her future plans include returns to the ENO and to the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

As well as frequent recitals in London and New York, her many concert engagements include appearances at the Salzburg Festival, Tanglewood Festival, BBC Proms, Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin Philharmonie and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with many of the world's great orchestras.

A prolific recording artist, her many discs include Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with L'Orchestre des Champs-Élysées and

Herreweghe (winner of an Edison Award), Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra for Naxos (nominated for a Grammy Award) and her two recital discs 'The Exquisite Hour' (also on Signum Records) and 'Songs of Love and Loss' have both won universal critical acclaim. She has also recorded the soundtrack, *Fragments of a Prayer* by Sir John Tavener, for the feature film 'Children of Men'.

She studies with Gerald Martin Moore.

www.sarah-connolly.com



CHRISTOPHER MALTMAN

Winner of the Lieder Prize at the 1997 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, Christopher Maltman read biochemistry at Warwick University and studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music.

He recently made an acclaimed debut at the Salzburg Festival in the title role of Don Giovanni, and has also appeared at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, Welsh National opera, Bayerische Staatsoper and Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin.

His concert engagements have included the Cleveland Orchestra with Welsler-Möst, Philharmonia Orchestra with von Dohnanyi, BBC Symphony Orchestra with John Adams, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with Norrington, London Symphony Orchestra with Rattle, Otaka and Sir Colin Davis, Concentus Musicus Wien with Harnoncourt, Dresden Staatskapelle with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Boston Symphony Orchestra with James Conlon, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra with Kurt Masur.



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A renowned recitalist, he has appeared at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Salzburg Mozarteum, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, the Philharmonie in Cologne, in New York at both Carnegie Hall and at the Lincoln Center, and at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh and Cheltenham Festivals. He is a regular guest at the Wigmore Hall and at the Schwartzberg Schubertiade Festival.

He has recorded the Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* for Decca; Warlock, Holst and Somervell songs for Collins Classics; and he took part in Deutsche Grammophon's complete Beethoven Folk Song project. His recording of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* for Hyperion was released to tremendous critical acclaim and he has recently recorded Schumann's *Liederkreis*, Op.24, with Graham Johnson, a Debussy album with Malcolm Martineau and a disc of English songs with Roger Vignoles. On film, he has appeared in John Adams' award-winning *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

JEREMY FILSELL

Jeremy Filsell enjoys a concert career as one of only a few virtuoso performers on both the Piano and the Organ. He has performed as a solo pianist in Russia, the USA and throughout the UK and has appeared regularly at St John's Smith Square and the Conway and Wigmore Halls in London. His Concerto repertoire encompasses Mozart and Beethoven through to Rachmaninov (2nd and 3rd Concertos), Shostakovich and John Ireland and in recent years, he has recorded the solo piano music of Carl Johann Eschmann, Eugene Goossens and the two Sonatas of Liszt's pupil Julius Reubke. In the piano music of Herbert Howells and Bernard Stevens, Classic CD magazine commented that "he does not attract for his virtuosity but for his ability to make the music unfold with irresistible logic and clarity: music-making of the highest calibre." He is pianist with the London-based Burghersh Piano Trio and performs regularly with Oliver Lewis (Violin), with whom he has recorded discs of Elgar, Ireland, Ferguson and Goossens for Guild. With Michael Bundy (Baritone), two discs of *Mélo* by Widor, Vierne and Dupré are due for release by Naxos.

Jeremy Filsell has recorded for BBC Radio 3, USA and Scandinavian radio networks in solo and concerto roles as both a pianist and organist and, as an organist specifically, has a discography comprising over 20 solo recordings for labels Signum, Guild, Gamut, Herald and ASV. Gramophone magazine, writing on the series of 12 CDs comprising the premiere recordings of Marcel Dupré's complete organ works for Guild in 2000, praised his performance as "one of the greatest achievements in organ recording...Filsell's astonishing interpretative and technical skills make for compulsive listening ... truly distinguished, compelling and unquestionably authoritative performances; Filsell has phenomenal technique." In 2005, Signum released a 3-disc set on the famous 1890 Cavaillé-Coll organ in St. Ouen Rouen of the complete organ symphonies of Louis Vierne. These were BBC Radio 3's Disc of the Week in September of that year.

Jeremy studied as a music scholar at Oxford University, then as a post-graduate pianist under David Parkhouse and Hilary McNamara at the Royal College of Music before completing a PhD at Birmingham Conservatoire researching aesthetic and interpretative issues in the organ music of



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Marcel Dupré. Over the course of his career, he has taught piano, organ and academic studies at Cranleigh, Eton and the London Oratory School, given masterclasses at universities and summer schools in both the UK and USA, served twice on international competition juries and, until recently, held lectureships at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and London's Royal Academy of Music. He lives currently in the

USA and is Principal Organist at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C., one of the largest churches in the world and the flagship Catholic Church in North America.

ROBERT COHEN

Following his Royal Festival Hall debut at the age of 12, Robert Cohen subsequently achieved international recognition whilst still a teenager with a recording of the Elgar Cello Concerto which earned a silver disc and placed him at the forefront of his musical generation. He has gone on to consolidate an impressive discography ranging from solo Bach (and the Schubert Quintet with the Amadeus on Deutsche Grammophon) to a recent release of the HK Gruber Cello Concerto under the direction of the composer.

The creative give-and-take of the concert hall remains Cohen's first love however. As a busy performing artist his career takes him to the USA, Europe, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, Japan and the UK. He has performed with such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Maris Jansons, Riccardo Muti and Sir Simon Rattle, and he retains a lively enthusiasm for chamber music (which provides the bedrock of the Charleston Manor Festival which he has directed since 1989).

Cohen's passionate and articulate views on the art of learning, performing and communicating music have stimulated illuminating masterclasses, and have been widely broadcast and published. Since



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1999 he has been a Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music. Robert Cohen is also Professor of Advanced Cello at the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano.

As soloist, conductor and teacher Robert Cohen's music-making takes him all over the world; holding, as 'The Guardian' observed, audiences "in the palm of his hand".

He plays the 'Ex Roser' cello by David Tecchler, Rome 1723.

www.robertcohen.info

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