

The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual  
4MBS FESTIVAL  
OF CLASSICS

# Felix Mendelssohn

(1809-1847)

*The Organ Works*

CHRISTOPHER WRENCH

11.00 am	<b>Ann Street Presbyterian Church</b>
12.15 pm	<i>German Sausage Sizzle at St Mary's</i>
1.00 pm	<b>St Mary's Kangaroo Point</b>

4MBS *Classic* FM  
103.7

**Saturday 16 May, 2009**

# Programme 1

**Prelude & Fugue in c** op.37/1

*Vivace*  
*Con moto*

**Prelude & Fugue in G** op.37/2

*Andante con moto*  
[*Andante con moto*]

**Theme & Variations in D** (1844)

**Prelude & Fugue in d** op.37/3

*Allegro*  
[*Allegro*]

**Sonata V in D** Op.65/5

*Chorale*  
*Andante con moto*  
*Allegro maestoso*

**Chorale in Ab** (1844)

**Sonata II in c** Op.65/2

*Grave - Adagio*  
*Allegro maestoso e vivace*  
FUGA *Allegro moderato*

ORGAN built by Charles Richardson, 1902/3

**Ann Street Presbyterian Church**

BRISBANE

# Programme 2

## **Sonata III in A Op.65/3**

*Con moto maestoso*

*Andante tranquillo*

## **Sonata VI in d Op.65/6**

CHORAL - *Andante sostenuto - Allegro molto*

FUGA *Sostenuto e legato*

FINALE *Andante*

## **Praeludium in c (1841) +**

*Andante*

## **Sonata I in f Op.65/1**

*Allegro moderato e serio*

*Adagio*

*Andante-Rezitativo*

*Allegro assai vivace*

## **Trio in F (1844) +**

*Andante*

## **Sonata IV in Bb Op.65/4**

*Allegro con brio*

*Andante religioso*

*Allegretto*

*Allegro maestoso e vivace*

*Allen Q-300 Digital ORGAN*

*+ ORGAN built by H.C.Lincoln, 1823*

**St Mary's Anglican Church**

KANGAROO POINT

## Programme Notes

Following the death of J.S. Bach in 1750, organ music suffered a steep decline in popularity. For centuries the organ had been the pre-eminent keyboard instrument of European music. This role was now being filled by the recently invented Fortepiano – an keyboard instrument which offered a new expressivity and the ability to control dynamics by varying the strength of the player's 'touch'. Although this had been possible previously, the power, and thus the public appeal of instruments such as the Clavichord could not match that of the new Fortepiano.



Mendelssohn's organ music heralded a new era of organ composition which included strong pianistic elements. The old 'articulated' style of touch so closely related to vocal and instrumental performance styles gave way to a more 'legato' style of playing. Although Mendelssohn's organ music pays homage to the contrapuntal era and includes four-part chorales, trios and fugues, there are many new elements, including the use of pianistic passagework and a Romantic lyricism.

Mendelssohn began studying the organ in 1822, two years after the composition of his first organ work (Prelude in d) at the age of eleven. He continued writing for the instrument throughout his life. In addition to the two primary collections, *Three Preludes & Fugue, op.37 (1834/7)* and *Six Sonatas, op. 65 (1844)*, Mendelssohn composed a number of other shorter, mostly unpublished works. Four of these (contemporary with the Sonatas) will be played today.

Mendelssohn was one of the great pianists of his era. However, when it came to organ playing he was without peer. He popularised the organ music of J.S.Bach which was all but forgotten, and astounded the English with his pedal playing, which in that country was quite unknown at the time.

### **Three PRELUDES & FUGUES (op.37)**

The composition of the *Three Preludes & Fugues (op.37)* for organ followed closely on the heels of the *Six Preludes & Fugues (op.35)* for piano. As one might expect, the Preludes and Fugues for the organ are more retrospective than those for the piano, and contain a much greater density of contrapuntal writing and thematic interplay.

## Six ORGAN SONATAS (op.65)

Mendelssohn's Six Organ Sonatas were published in 1845 as a result of a request by the English publisher Coventry & Hollier to write '3 Voluntaries for the Organ'. The composer suggested this be expanded to 'Twelve Studies for the organ' before finally providing 'Six Sonatas', in which he 'attempted to embody [his] way of conceiving and treating the organ'. As a testament to Mendelssohn's reputation, the Sonatas were published simultaneously in England, Germany, France and Italy. In building this collection, Mendelssohn departed from the traditional concept of the Sonata. In the process, he revised and reused some previously composed material and created a collection containing a truly fascinating diversity of styles. One Sonata only has two movements, several end with a slow movement, others incorporate chorale melodies (Sonatas 1,3,6), or chorale-like melodies (Sonata 5).

**Sonata No.1 in f** (4 movements). Begins most seriously and ends with an exuberant joy. In the first movement, full-organ passages are interrupted by quiet interjections of the chorale *Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit* (a hymn of trust and confidence in God). The following two movements also use manual changes as a means of musical dialogue. In the *Adagio* (2<sup>nd</sup> mvt) this results in a kind of echo effect, while in the *Andante* (3<sup>rd</sup> mvt) a quiet, almost pleading theme is repeatedly interrupted by massive chordal interjections on full-organ, in a role reversal of the first movement. Waves of rising and descending arpeggio figurations are used to create an unusual but magnificent conclusion to the Sonata.

**Sonata No.2 in c** (3 movements - 4 sections). A rather serious opening *Grave – Adagio* leads to a triumphal March in  $\frac{3}{4}$ , followed by a majestic fugue.

**Sonata No.3 in A** (2 movements - 3 sections). The majestic opening *Con moto maestoso* of this Sonata had its origins as a Wedding March for Mendelssohn's sister Fanny. This leads to a marvellous 'crescendo' Fugue which plays out above the appearance in the pedal of the Lenten Choral *Aus tiefer Not, schrei ich zu Dir* ('Out of the Depths have I called to you, O God), a chorale setting of Psalm 130. Following a mighty climax, the grand opening music returns to conclude the movement. The *Andante tranquillo* which concludes this 2-movement Sonata is a delightfully gentle Minuet.

**Sonata No.4 in Bb** (4 movements). This is the most traditionally structured of the Six Sonatas. Even though the first movement contains two principal ideas, they are not treated in traditional 'Sonata' form which has an Exposition (Theme 1 in tonic, theme 2 in related key), Development, Recapitulation (Themes 1 & 2 in Tonic, Coda). There are three sections, but simply as follows: we hear the first theme (rising arpeggio / falling scale figure), then the second (grand dotted note figure), then both in combination.

**Sonata No.5 in D** (3 movements). A simple three-movement formula: ‘pseudo’ Choral (major) – Slow (minor) – Fast (major).

**Sonata No.6 in d.** An exquisite set of variations on *Vater unser im Himmelreich* (a strophic, chorale version of the Lord’s Prayer) leads to a Fugue on the first phrase of the chorale, followed by a gentle *Andante* in the major mode.

### *Artist Biography*

Australian organist CHRISTOPHER WRENCH is a distinguished graduate of the Queensland and Vienna Conservatoriums, and the Vienna University of Music. Born in Brisbane in 1958, his musical formation was strongly influenced by pianist Nancy Weir and organ mentor Michael Radulescu in Vienna.



Following prizes at international competitions in Melbourne (1<sup>st</sup> Prize, 1985), St Albans (Audience Prize, 1989), Odense (1<sup>st</sup> Prize, 1992), and Dublin (2<sup>nd</sup> Prize, 1988 & 1990), annual concert tours have taken Christopher Wrench to Austria (incl. Augustinerkirche, Klosterneuburg, St Stephen’s Cathedral), Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England (incl. Westminster Abbey and King’s College Cambridge), Germany, Hong Kong, Italy and Sweden.

He performs regularly in all major Australian venues and organ festivals and has appeared and as soloist with the *Australian Chamber Orchestra*, the *Adelaide Chamber Orchestra*, *The Queensland Orchestra* and the *Queensland Youth Symphony Orchestra*. His live and studio performances are broadcast regularly throughout Australia.

Christopher Wrench commands a broad solo repertoire including the complete organ works of Bach, whilst also working as a liturgical musician, pedagogue, and chamber player. He teaches organ at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and directs the music programme at St Mary’s Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point in Brisbane.

In 2008 he was awarded the Lord Mayor’s Australia Day Cultural Award for his outstanding contribution to the musical life of Brisbane.

# *Acknowledgements*

4MBS acknowledges the gracious assistance of the staff and parishioners of **Ann Street Presbyterian Church** and **St Mary's Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point** in making these beautiful historic churches available for today's performances.

THANK YOU to

Trevor Barrell, Emily Cox, John Reuschle, other volunteers  
and St Mary's Flower Team  
for valuable assistance with hospitality at St Mary's.

St Mary's says a special thank you to Pat Reuschle and

*music*NOTES  
box office volunteers

**CD news**

**CHRISTOPHER  
WRENCH**

*performs*

**J.S.BACH**  
**Six Organ Sonatas**

Garnisons Kirke, Copenhagen

*Melba Recordings*

[www.melbarecordings.com.au](http://www.melbarecordings.com.au)

Release JULY '09

To receive information about the forthcoming CD RELEASE  
or to join Christopher Wrench's MAILING LIST, please contact:

[cwrench@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cwrench@bigpond.net.au)

# Music Saint at Mary's

KANGAROO POINT

For information about concerts at St Mary's and special musical services,  
and for information about *St Mary's Music Foundation*,  
download brochure at:

[www.saintmarys.org.au/concerts.htm](http://www.saintmarys.org.au/concerts.htm)

## NEXT CONCERT (at St Mary's)

**Fantasy: Word-Art-Music**

**Sunday 26 July, 3pm**

A creative collaboration of four artists inspired by the theme of wholeness and kinship. **Godelieve Ghavalas** (organ), **Carmen Cheong-Clinch** (piano), **Susan Griffiths** (words), **Megan Forward** (visual artist).

*Tickets at the door \$20 / \$15*

### **Tax Deductible Donations - St Mary's ORGAN**

St Mary's is the proud custodian of Queensland's oldest pipe organ, built by H.C. Lincoln in 1823. As a result of the 'modernization' of this instrument in 1961 many important original components were removed. A major project to regain the integrity of the original instrument awaits funding. In order to accommodate St Mary's significant musical requirements in the interim, a 3-manual Allen digital organ was purchased from *All Organs Australia* in 2008.

**Tax-deductible donations** toward the cost of the digital instrument, the organ refurbishment project, or St Mary's music programme may be made via St Mary's Music Foundation:

[www.saintmarys.org.au/musicfund.htm](http://www.saintmarys.org.au/musicfund.htm)

