

Souvenir Programme

Organ Society of Queensland presents

BRISBANE CITY HALL GRAND ORGAN

*80th Anniversary
Celebration*

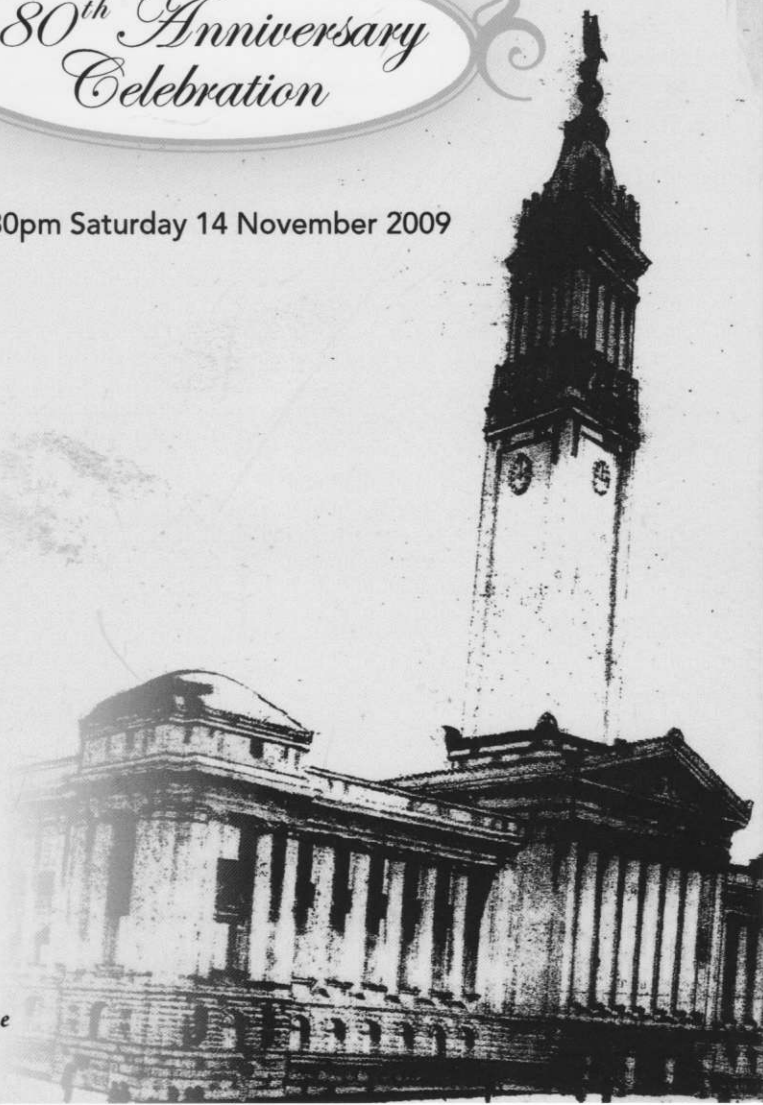
7.30pm Saturday 14 November 2009



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Dedicated to a better Brisbane



Part 1

CHRISTOPHER WRENCH

TUBA TUNE

Cocker

As Gustave Eiffel watched over the finishing touches to his contribution to the *Paris Exhibition* of 1889 and plans developed for the construction of the QNA's new Exhibition Hall, the composer of tonight's *Overture* was born in Yorkshire. By all accounts **Norman Cocker** (1889-1953) was a colourful character, an original cross-over musician equally at home in the cathedral or the theatre. His splendidly majestic *Tuba Tune* provides a bold demonstration of the organ's loudest stop on the eve of the anniversary of the composer's birth.

ROULADE

Bingham

Born in Bloomington USA, Seth Bingham (1882-1972) was organist at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church for 40 years. Composed in the early 1920's (whilst plans for the enlargement and relocation of the Willis organ were taking shape), Bingham's light-hearted *Roulade* reveals another side of the many faceted *King of Instruments* paying homage to the playful *Scherzi* of composers such as Widor, with whom he studied, and Vierne.

SONATA IN 'G' (1st Movement) Elgar

The 1890s saw the gradual rise of **Edward Elgar's** reputation and recognition as the leading British composer of the early 20th century. The *Organ Sonata* in G (1895) is Elgar's most significant composition from the period immediately preceding his masterpieces *The Enigma Variations* (1889) and *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900); and displays the genius for melody, poetry and drama for which these works made him famous.

CITY ORGAN MONOLOGUE

A short *autobiographical sketch* of the eventful life of Brisbane's City Organ and a tribute to Queensland's early music pioneers. Narrated by Howard Ainsworth.

FANTASIA & FUGUE IN G Minor Bach

The musical use of the term *Fantasia* is a curious one, in that it generally refers to music that is free-form in structure, sounding somewhat like an improvisation (music made up on-the-spot). Originally however, *Fantasias* were rather strict pieces (similar to fugues), and the composer's task was to use his imagination (or fantasy) to achieve something interesting based on one small idea or theme. It is not surprising to find that organ music's greatest genius **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) has combined both approaches in his *Fantasia in G Minor*, (BWV 542) where he alternates between music which is free, and that which is more tightly woven. This was the first piece played by George Sampson at the first public recital of the Brisbane City Organ on the 8th of April 1930.

TOCCATA

Jongen

1935: Brisbane enjoys the musical riches of having its first major concert hall and a five-manual Willis organ, Hitler orders German rearmament in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, and Belgian composer **Joseph Jongen** (1873-1953) writes his *Toccata* op.105. The main features of the *Toccata* are Carillon effects which result from the rapid alternation of chords between the hands, and rhapsodic waves of arpeggios over a sweeping melody played in the pedals.

Intermission

(10 minutes)

Part 2

RUPERT JEFFCOAT

MARCHE SOLENNELE

Borowski

Felix Borowski (1872-1956) was born in England to a Polish father and after studies moved from Europe to Chicago where he wrote the programme notes for the Chicago Orchestra for almost 50 years. While his Solemn March has an air of grandeur, some neat syncopations push it more towards music-hall sounds than a state funeral: its structure is simple and the occasional audacious harmonic splash suggest strongly that one can be solemn without being serious.

HUMORESQUE (Toccata)

Yon

Pietro Yon (1886-1943) was born in Italy and moved to New York where he became Organist of the Cathedral of St John the Divine, one of the world's largest Cathedrals. The Toccata is in *old style* and can be performed on one stop. Its tone is light and affectionate.

CONCERTO

Festing

M.C. Festing (1705-1752) was Master of the King's Music at the time of Handel, and this charming Concerto started life as an Oboe Sonata, though as this has never been found, one wonders if the arranger had rather more licence in transcribing this than might be thought. George Thalben-Ball, the Sydney-born organist, has dressed up this work to contain some sparkling variations that show off the City Organ's vast palette.

THE INSIDE STORY

Steven Nisbet and organ-builder, **Simon Pierce** discuss the mechanism of this historic musical masterpiece by Henry Willis & Sons.

HOMAGE TO HANDEL Karg-Elert

Handel was to some extent both German and English, so when the Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933) was offered honorary membership of the Royal College of Organists it was only natural he found a skeleton from one of Handel's keyboard pieces and put flesh on these bones. Called a *Homage to Handel*, it is 54 variations – all with different colours and atmospheres. He even gets Handel to say *Hallelujah* at one point, and the markings range from *indecisive* to *demonic*.

THE SWAN

Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) banned the publication of *Carnival of the Animals* during his lifetime, worried that, as serious musician, his reputation might be compromised by *silly* music. As it happens, the swan flew its nest, and escaped his music-o-graphical zoo. Tradition has it that when death approaches, the swan unlocks its silent throat, hence *swan-song*.

COUNCILLOR MARGARET DE WIT


A Message from Brisbane City Council.

TOCCATA

Widor

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) wrote his fifth symphony in 1879. The vibrant Toccata has the energy of a young man coursing through its veins and the delightful harmonic sequences are full of vitality. Widor himself recorded it when he was approaching 90. Amazingly, when Mrs Willmore was invited to test the City Organ in 1930 she knew this piece off by heart. She was 89.

Tonight, we celebrate the 80th Anniversary of one of Queensland's greatest musical assets and give thanks to the musical pioneers who campaigned for decades to obtain this majestic instrument for the city.



This occasion is both a birthday party and a temporary goodbye since, at the end of the year the grand organ will be carefully taken down, pipe by pipe, transported and put into storage for the next three years during the restoration of the building that houses it. During this time the City Organ will be meticulously restored.

The Brisbane City Hall Organ, built by Henry Willis & Sons of London, gave its first public recital on 8 April 1930, the day the City Hall officially opened. However, the installation of the organ was completed nine months earlier and its very first performance was a private, preview concert, for the aldermen of the recently centralised Brisbane City Council in July 1929. Presiding at the console on both occasions was George Sampson FRCO, Brisbane's first City Organist, under whose general direction the organ was constructed. As Chief Musical Advisor to Brisbane City Council, George Sampson worked tirelessly throughout the 1920s to ensure Brisbane possessed *in many respects the finest organ in the world*.

For the relatively modest sum of £16,500, a fraction of the cost of Sydney and Melbourne's town hall organs, Sampson's design specification left nothing to be desired, even by the most accomplished and assiduous organists of the day. Under Alderman William Jolly, Brisbane City Council was able to afford the luxury of such a large, exquisitely voiced pipe organ because it was not an entirely new organ built from scratch. Rather, it was an elaborate enlargement and modernisation

of an already existing instrument, the Exhibition Concert Hall Organ, purchased by the City Council in January 1900.

Originally, this more modest, four manual instrument was purchased by the Queensland National Agricultural and Industrial Association, (RNA) and installed in the Exhibition Building in 1892. The pride of the local music community, it was a powerful catalyst in the early development of classical music in Brisbane until, in 1897, the QNA was declared bankrupt largely due to the global economic recession of the 1890s.

During the last two years of the 19th Century, Brisbane musicians joined together to rescue the organ from the auctioneer's hammer, and retain it permanently for Queensland by raising one third of the sale price of £3,000.

Both figuratively and literally, this fine instrument belongs to the people of Queensland by virtue of the fact that an earlier generation of Brisbane citizens refused to let it go, investing in the future of local classical music to the tune of £1,000.

Eleven decades later, the Brisbane City Hall organ is a rare masterpiece of Victorian craftsmanship embodying the best work of three generations of the renowned English organ-building family of Henry Willis & Sons.

Henry Willis the First was an uncompromising, innovative genius who did more than any other organ-builder to create the modern concert organ, designed to thrill large audiences attending secular organ recitals, as opposed to accompanying church choirs and congregations. Ironically, so beautiful in tone and reliable in performance was this new breed of pipe organ that, when he died in 1901, "Father" Willis, as he was affectionately known, could proudly claim to have built and installed over twenty of England's great cathedral organs.

Brisbane residents, especially local music lovers, can be equally proud to be the owners of one of the best preserved examples of a five-manual Willis organ anywhere in the world.



Christopher Wrench is a distinguished graduate of the Queensland and Vienna Conservatoria, and the Vienna University of Music.



Rupert Jeffcoat was still a chorister at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh in his native Scotland when he gained his O-level in music.

Performances at international competitions in Odense, Denmark (1st Prize, 1992), St Albans, England (Audience Prize, 1989), Dublin and Calgary helped establish Wrench's reputation as one of the leading organists of his generation.

Annual concert tours have included Austria (incl. St Stephen's Cathedral & Schönbrunn Palace), Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England (incl. Westminster Abbey & King's College Cambridge), Germany, Hong Kong, Italy and Sweden.

Wrench's broad solo repertoire spans six centuries of music including the complete organ works of Bach. A passionate liturgical musician, pedagogue, and chamber player, Wrench is also Music Director/Organist at St Mary's Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point, organ tutor at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and organist with the Queensland Orchestra. In 2008 he was awarded the Lord Mayor's Australia Day Cultural Award for his outstanding contribution to the musical life of Brisbane. Rave reviews followed Melba Recordings release in August this year of Wrench's latest CD (J.S.Bach's *Six Organ Sonatas* recorded at the Garrison Church, Copenhagen).

He performs regularly in major Australian venues and festivals, and has appeared as soloist with *The Australian Chamber Orchestra*, *The Adelaide Chamber Orchestra*, *The Queensland Symphony Orchestra*, *The Queensland Youth Symphony Orchestra* and the *Camerata of St John's*. His performances are broadcast regularly throughout Australia on ABC Classic FM and MBS networks.

However, he only took the organ up as a bet with his father and is still not sure who has won! Studying with Peter Hurford and Peter le Huray, he was a Scholar of St Catharine's College in Cambridge, and he was fortunate to work regularly with the choirs of St John's and King's Colleges. He was also awarded a Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists at age 20.

In 1997 Rupert became Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral and took the choir on twelve foreign tours including South Africa, Japan and Russia. He has appeared regularly on BBC TV and Radio, and his compositions have been performed on every continent except Antarctica! His recordings as a soloist and continuo player have received critical acclaim – *Gramophone* called him 'truly virtuosic' and *Organ Magazine* 'really top-notch'.

Rupert moved to be Director of Music at St John's Cathedral Brisbane in July 2005. He is also an Anglican priest on top of his musical duties. He has performed at Sydney Town Hall, Melbourne Town Hall, Newcastle Cathedral, and in New Zealand's Wellington Cathedral. The *Melbourne Age* (Oct 2006) called his interpretation of Bach 'masterly'.

Historical note: The musician who conceived Brisbane City Hall's majestic Willis organ and the beautiful St Johns Cathedral's instrument by Hill, Norman and Beard are one and the same – George Sampson FRCO. Among other things, he was the organist of St Johns (1898-1946) and Brisbane City Organist 1910-1949.

GRAND ORGAN

BRISBANE CITY HALL

Henry Willis & Sons, London
Exhibition Concert Hall Organ

Built by Father Willis (1891-92)

CITY HALL ORGAN

Re-built by Henry Willis III (1927-29)

The organ console has five manuals (keyboards) each with five octaves (61 notes), and a pedalboard of two and a half octaves (30 notes). The organ contains 78 speaking stops with a total of approximately 4600 pipes, some metal and some wooden. Each stop on the console corresponds with a complete rank of pipes (61 pipes for the manuals and 30 pipes for the pedals). The pipes range in speaking length from 32 feet (about 10 metres) to about 1 cm. The organ has an electronic piston capture system with 40 memory channels to allow the organist to preset hundreds of combinations of stops. This allows for quick changes of registration during the playing of the music, just by pressing one of the thumb pistons located below the keyboards, or one of the toe pistons near the pedalboard.

Specification

PEDAL ORGAN

32'	Double Open Bass
32'	Contra Violone
16'	Open Bass
16'	Contra Bass
16'	Open Diapason
16'	Violone
16'	Bourdon
16'	Viole
8'	Octave
8'	Principal
8'	Violon Cello
8'	Flute
4'	Fifteenth
III	Mixture 10-12-15

IV	Mixture 15-19-22-26
32'	Contra Ophicleide
16'	Ophicleide
16'	Cor Anglais
8'	Clarion
4'	Octave Clarion

Solo to Pedal
Choir to Pedal
Choir to Pedal 4'
Swell to Pedal
Swell to Pedal 4'
Great to Pedal

GREAT ORGAN

16'	Double Open Diapason
8'	Open Diapason No 1
8'	Open Diapason No 2
8'	Open Diapason No 3
8'	Claribel Flute
4'	Principal
4'	Flute Harmonic
2 2/3'	Twelfth
2'	Fifteenth
III	Sesquialtera 17-19-22
IV	Furniture 19-22-26-29
16'	Contra Tromba
8'	Tromba
4'	Clarion

Solo to Great
Choir to Great
Swell to Great Sub
Swell to Great Octave
Orchestral to Great

SWELL ORGAN

16'	Lieblich Bourdon
8'	Geigen Diapason
8'	Lieblich Gedackt
8'	Salicional
8'	Vox Angelica
4'	Gemshorn
4'	Lieblich Flute
2'	Flageolet
III	Mixture 17-19-22
8'	Hautboy
8'	Vox Humana
16'	Double Trumpet
8'	Trumpet
4'	Clarion

Tremolo
Swell Sub Octave
Swell Unison Off

CHOIR ORGAN

8' Viola da Gamba
8' Lieblich Gedackt
8' Dulciana
4' Flute d'Amour
2' Harmonic Piccolo
11 Sesquialtera 12-17
8' Corno di Bassetto

Choir Sub Octave
Choir Octave
Choir Unison Off
Solo to Choir
Orchestral to Pedal
Orchestral to Pedal 4'

SOLO ORGAN

8' Flute Harmonique
4' Concert Flute
16' Double Clarinet
8' Orchestral Oboe Tremolo
8' Diapason Stentor
8' Cathedral Chimes
16' Tuba
8' Tuba
4' Tuba Clarion

ORCHESTRAL ORGAN

16' Violon
8' Violoncello
8' Cello Celestes
8' Orchestral Flute
8' Tibia Clausa
8' Sylvestrina
4' Viola
4' Flute Ouverte
2 2/3' Nazard
2' Piccolo
1 3/5' Tierce
16' Cor Anglais
8' Clarinet
8' French Horn
8' Orchestral Trumpet

Tremolo
Orchestral Sub Octave
Orchestral Octave
Orchestral Unison Off
Solo to Orchestral

ACCESSORIES

5 Thumb Pistons to Solo Organ
7 Thumb Pistons to Orchestral Organ
7 Thumb Pistons to Swell Organ
7 Thumb Pistons to Great Organ
5 Thumb Pistons to Choir Organ
7 Toe Pistons to Pedal Organ
7 Toe Pistons to Swell Organ (duplicating)
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Solo to Choir
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Solo to Orchestral
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Solo to Great
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir to Great
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir to Pedal
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Choir
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Great
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Pedal
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Great to Pedal
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Orchestral to Swell
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Orchestral to Great
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Orchestral to Choir
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Orchestral to Pedal
1 Reversible Thumb Piston Full Organ
1 General Cancel thumb piston
1 Thumb Piston for "Set"
1 Thumb Piston for "Neutral Set"
Great and Pedal Combinations coupled
1 General Crescendo Pedal
Swell Expression Pedal
Choir Expression Pedal
Solo Expression Pedal
Orchestral Expression Pedal
1 lever pedal (kick-down)
Swell Pedal selection switches
40 memory channels for Piston Capture system



Compere

Dr Steven Nisbet
President Organ Society of Queensland

Organists

Christopher Wrench
Director of Music / Organist at St Mary's Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point
Organ Lecturer, Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University

Rupert Jeffcoat

Organist at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane

Organ-Builder & Tuner

Simon Pierce

Narrator

Howard Ainsworth
Radio 4MBS Classic FM

Researcher

Erik Roberts
Author of *An Organ Worthy of the City*

Audiovisual Production

Moreton Hire

SAVING CITY HALL

In 2010, City Hall will close for around three years for critical restoration work so its unique architecture and history can be preserved for future generations.

Brisbane City Council has partnered with the National Trust of Queensland to form the **National Trust Brisbane City Hall Appeal** to raise funds for the restoration and upgrade of this iconic heritage building. Find out more about how you can be involved at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/cityhall or contact Council on (07) 3403 8888.

“It is fervently to be hoped that this great manifestation of Victorian art, one of the few which does not seem to date with time, will be skilfully and sympathetically preserved to delight the ears of future generations. Those who have the custody of these old organs carry a great responsibility... A Father Willis organ is a part of our artistic heritage: it should be jealously preserved.”

(W L Sumner, *Father Henry Willis & His Successors*, Musical Opinion, London, 1955)