

Great Organ Classics

Virtuoso sounds from the King of Instruments! Famous toccatas by Bach and Widor frame an album of fast and furious organ music interspersed with gentle melodies from great organists of the past. Martin Souter presents the magnificent organ of Winchester cathedral in a thrilling sonic spectacular.

- 1 Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
- 2 The Ride of the Valkyries Richard Wagner (1813–1883) *arranged E Lemare*
- 3 Royal Fireworks Music – Finale George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
arranged M Souter
- 4 Pomp and Circumstance March No1 Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934) *arranged E Lemare*
- 5 March on a Theme of Handel Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911)
- 6 Moonlight and Roses Edwin Lemare (1865–1934)
- 7 Carillon de Westminster Louis Vierne (1870–1937)
- 8 Nimrod Sir Edward Elgar *arranged WH Harris*
- 9 In the Hall of the Mountain King Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) *arranged M Souter*
- 10 The Stars and Stripes Forever John Philip Sousa (1854–1932) *arranged M Souter*
- 11 Battle Hymn of the Republic Traditional *arranged M Souter*
- 12 Toccata from Symphony No 5 Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)

Martin Souter
The organ of Winchester cathedral
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CCL CDG1233

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The organ in Winchester cathedral is one of a kind. Its layout, on the North side of the chancel of that great and massive building, is basically that of a classical European instrument, with divisions of pipes (played by the four keyboards) in vertical layers from floor to ceiling, the larger pipes for the pedals (the low notes played by the feet) being spread around them as space permits. However: this is no ordinary European organ, it is an English Romantic organ crafted and honed over many decades by two of the most famous firms in English organ building, Henry Willis and Harrison & Harrison. Between them these two illustrious names have developed this romantic instrument into a Titan amongst lesser organs, creating an instrument capable of addressing the musical needs of a vast and wide-ranging repertoire.

And this is what we have on this disc – music from the Baroque Era to the modern age, an eclectic mix of original works for organ plus exciting arrangements of orchestral music. The pieces chosen allow the organ to shine in all the areas in which it excels, from the famous but very different toccatas of Bach and Widor to the virtuoso showpieces such as Lemare's arrangement of 'The Ride of the Valkyries'. Baroque brilliance – it's there. Classical restraint – it's there too, plus oodles of Romantic eloquence, along with the sheer panache of the high pressure reeds and colourful flutes which are the hallmark of all the finest English organs of the twentieth century.

This collection is a tribute to the organ virtuosi of the past, particularly of the early twentieth century. Widor, Guilmant and Vierne were Parisian, from a musical tradition traceable back to JS Bach himself. The first two in particular were enthusiastic and successful remodellers of music from their own past, but Vierne was more maverick and forward-looking. His organ music has more in common with the sound-world of Debussy than of Couperin, and he considerably extended the range of colours and musical textures of the organ repertoire through a series of brilliant organ symphonies and 'free-form' works such as the 'Carillon de Westminster' which is based on a variant of the famous chimes of 'Big Ben'. Edwin Lemare may have been the most famous of all in his day. During his long career he played for tens of thousands of listeners in town halls and concert venues throughout Britain and the United States. He was a brilliant arranger for the organ of vast amounts of orchestral music, although his best-known piece is almost certainly the 'Andantino in D flat' which was turned into an international hit when the words 'Moonlight and Roses' were added. Despite its beguiling simplicity (sentimentality, even) it is actually quite technically demanding to play. The organist is at times required to play on three keyboards at once (a technique known as 'thumbing-down') in order to create a melody and countermelody on two different stops against the quiet accompaniment and pedal.