



Recorded on 14–15 April 2014 in the Dome Church Tallinn
Producer-engineer: Tanel Klesment

Booklet notes: Ines Maidre
Cover design: David M. Baker
Design and layout: Paul Brooks, paulmbrooks@virginmedia.com

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

TOCC 0288

© 2015, Toccata Classics, London

© 2015, Toccata Classics, London

Come and explore unknown music with us by joining the Toccata Discovery Club. Membership brings you two free CDs, big discounts on all Toccata Classics recordings and Toccata Press books, early ordering on all Toccata releases and a host of other benefits, for a modest annual fee of £20. You start saving as soon as you join. You can sign up online at the Toccata Classics website at www.toccataclassics.com.

Toccata Classics CDs are also available in the shops and can be ordered from our distributors around the world, a list of whom can be found at www.toccataclassics.com. If we have no representation in your country, please contact: Toccata Classics, 16 Dalkeith Court, Vincent Street, London SW1P 4HH, UK
Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com



Rudolf TOBIAS

COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS

DES JONA SENDUNG: CHORUS MYSTICUS AND SANCTUS
LARGO (PFINGSTGESANG): WISSET IHR NICHT
LOBT GOTT IHR CHRISTEN ALLZUGLEICH
PRELUDE AND FUGHETTA IN C MINOR
CHACONNE: MACHT' HOCH DIE TÜR
KLEINE CHORALVORSPIELE
ZWÖLF CHORALVORSPIELE
PRELUDE IN D MAJOR
FUGUE IN D MINOR
AGNUS DEI

Ines Maidre, organ
Arete Teemets, soprano

FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

RUDOLF TOBIAS, FOUNDING FATHER OF ESTONIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Martin Anderson

Estonian folk-music has one of the oldest pedigrees in European culture: runo-song was first mentioned in the twelfth-century *Gesta Danorum* by the Danish scholar Saxo Grammaticus, but the traditions he described were already ancient by then. Estonian classical music, by contrast, was a late starter: centuries of domination by Swedes, Russians and Baltic Germans had served to suppress the development of Estonian culture as an artistic phenomenon. The beginnings of what is called the 'Estonian national awakening' can be found in the first publications of books in Estonian in the second half of the eighteenth century. A major milestone was the appearance in 1857–61 of *Kalevipoeg*, the Estonian national epic collated from folk-sources by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–82); it is considered to mark the birth of Estonian literature as a *genre*. And Estonian classical music lagged even further behind Estonian literature, to the point where one man could initiate what is now, barely a century late, an astonishingly rich tradition.

Rudolf Tobias was born on 29 May 1873 on the island of Hiiumaa, off the north-west coast of Estonia, in the village of Selja, where his father was the parish clerk. (Since the centenary of his birth the large wooden thatched cottage in which he first saw day has housed the Rudolf Tobias Museum.) He had his first musical instruction from his father and began to compose at the age of nine. His later childhood was spent in western Estonia, attending school in Haapsalu on the coast from 1885; there he took piano lessons with a local teacher. His early schooling finished, he moved to Kullamaa, a little inland, when his father took up the post of village clerk there. In 1889 Tobias enrolled in the Nikolai High School in Tallinn, taking a teaching qualification and also studying organ and music theory with Ernest Reinicke, the organist of Tallinn Cathedral.

There then being no music academy in Estonia, many Estonian musicians travelled to St Petersburg to complete their musical education, and so in 1893 Tobias enrolled at the Conservatoire there, studying composition with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and organ with Louis Homilius. Four years later he presented the cantata *Johannes Damascenus* – the first cantata to be written by an Estonian composer – as his graduation work.

Organ of the Dome Church, Tallinn

W. Sauer 1913–14, Op. 1171, restored 1998: Orgelwerkstatt Christian Scheffler

I Manual (C–g3)		II Manual (C–g3)		III Manual (C–g3)	
Principal 16'	L	Salicional 16'	S	Gedackt 16'	L
Bordun 16'	L	Gedackt 16'	S	Gamba 16'	S
Principal 8'	L	Principal 8'	L	Geigenprincipal 8'	L
Gamba 8'	S	Flauto traverso 8'	L	Schalmei 8'	S
Doppelflöte 8'	L	Viola 8'	C	Portunalflöte 8'	L
Flauto amabile 8'	L	Koncertflöte 8'	S	Flauto amabile 8'	L
Quintatön 8'	S	Salicional 8'	L	Quintatön 8'	S
Gemshorn 8'	S	Rohrflöte 8'	L	Viola d'amour 8'	S
Gedackt 8'	S	Dulciana 8'	S	Gedackt 8'	G
Dolce 8'	S	Principal 4'	L	Gemshorn 8'	S
Nasard 5 1/3'	L	Flauto amabile 4'	L	Voix celeste 8'	S
Octave 4'	S	Dolce 4'	S	Aeoline 8'	S
Gemshorn 4'	L	Nasard 2 2/3'	L	Fugara 4'	S
Rohrflöte 4'	S	Piccolo 2'	L	Salicet 4'	L
Waldflöte 2'	L	Progressiv 2-3f	L	Flauto dolce 4'	L
Mixtur 3f	L	Zimbel 3-4f	L	Flautino 2'	S
Cornett 3f	L	Klarinette 8'	S	Harmonia aethERICA 3f	L
Trompete 8'	S	Manualekoppel III-I		Oboe 8'	S
		Manualekoppel III-II		Trompete 8'	S
		Manualekoppel II-I		Aelodicon 8'	L
Pedal					
Untersatz 32'	L				
Principal 16'	L				
Viola 16'	S				
Quintatön 16'	K				
Subbass 16'	L				
Gemshorn 16'	S	Suboctavkoppel II-I			
Liebl Gedackt 16'	Tr. III	Superoctavkoppel II-I			
Quinte 10 2/3'	S	Pedalkoppel III-P			
Principal 8'	L	Pedalkoppel II-P			
Cello 8'	S	Pedalkoppel I-P			
Bassflöte 8'	L	Manualekoppel III-II			
Gemshorn 8'	K	Manualekoppel III-I			
Dulciana 8'	Tr. III	Manualekoppel II-I			
Principal 4'	K	Handreg.ab			
Flauto 4'	L	Piano			
Posaune 16'	S	MForte			
Trompet 8'	S	Forte			
Clairon 4'	S	Fr.Comb. I			
Pedalkoppel	III-P	Fr. Comb. II			
Pedalkoppel	II-P	Fr. Comb. III			
Pedalkoppel	I-P	Rohr.w.ab			
				Generalkoppel (Tutti)	
				Pedalkoppel ab	
				Pedalkoppel III-P	
				Pedalkoppel II-P	
				Pedalkoppel I-P	
				Walze	
				Walze ab	
				Schweller III man.	
				Piano Ped.	
				M.For. Ped.	
				For. Ped.	
				Pipework	
				S = Wilhelm Sauer	
				L = Friedrich Ladegast	
				C = Chr. Scheffler	
				K = Kangasala Firland	
				G = Joh.Fr. Graebner	



The Estonian soprano **Arete Teemets** studied singing at the Estonian Music Academy with Nadia Kurem and at the Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia with Rebecca Berg, taking Masters with the maximum grade. Over the next few years she garnered an impressive number of prizes in singing competitions in Estonia, France and Italy. She has participated in the master-classes of, Renato Bruson, Joanna Kozlovska, Ines Salazar, Elisabeth Norberg-Schulz and Gabriella Tucci. In 2012 she had a solo concert at the largest Estonian opera festival, 'Saaremaa Opera Days'. In summer 2014 she performed with the Belgian Baroque ensemble Ausonia at the Festival de l'Abbaye de Saint-Michel en Thiérache in France. She has also performed at the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto, Estonian National Opera, Estonian Music Academy Opera Studio and elsewhere. She has sung solo parts in Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat* and Bach's 'Coffee Cantata'. In addition, she has collaborated with the with the renowned Italian baritone Renato Bruson in celebrating his 50 years on the operatic stage. This season she is giving solo recitals in Greece, Italy, Poland and Switzerland, as well, as in Estonia. Her operatic roles include Madama Vezzosa (in Ciampi's *Le Favola dei Tre Gobbi*), Lisetta (Leo's *La Zingaretta*), Kate Pinkerton (Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*), Rosina (Mozart's *La Finta Semplice*), Genovieffa (Puccini's *Suor Angelica*), Nella (Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*) and Sandrina (Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*).



During his time as a student in St Petersburg he produced other Estonian 'firsts': his overture *Julius Caesar* (1893) was the first orchestral work by an Estonian composer, and his Piano Concerto of 1897 was the first Estonian piano concerto. Tobias also composed the first Estonian piano sonata, in 1897; unfortunately, only the finale has been preserved.

His first post, held for six years from 1898, was as choir-master and organist of St John's, the Estonian church in St Petersburg. His next 'first' dates from this period: he wrote the first Estonian string quartet in 1899. In 1904 he moved to Tartu, the intellectual capital of Estonia at the time, working as a music-teacher and tutor. He led a full life there: he helped organise concerts, conducted, performed as both organist and pianist, and took up his pen also as a musical journalist, taking his writing earnestly enough to join the literary group Noor Estonia ('Young Estonia') – and thereby achieving another first: no one before him had written on music in Estonian using the critical standards becoming established elsewhere.

After four years in Tartu, in 1908 Tobias looked west, moving in brief succession to Paris, Munich, Dresden, Prague and Dubí (also in the present-day Czech Republic), and settling in Leipzig at the end of the year. Another move, this time to Berlin, followed in 1910 and proved to be permanent. There he was active as organist and musical journalist; from 1912 he taught theory at the Königliche Akademische Hochschule der Musik. In 1914 he took German nationality and achieved full professorship at the Hochschule – a major distinction in the socially conscious Germany of the day. His change of nationality was ill-timed, though: after the outbreak of World War I he was called up, avoiding the worst of the slaughter since he worked as an interpreter. But his health began to fail, and in 1916 he was discharged on medical grounds. He returned to teaching at the Hochschule but his days were now numbered, and he died, from pneumonia, on 29 October 1918. He was 45 years old.

He left many works unfinished: the oratorio *Jenseits von Jordan*, the cantata *Ecclesia*, a third string quartet. But what he achieved in his brief lifetime is enough to admit him to the pantheon of great composers. Although an individual voice is present from the very first of Tobias' mature compositions, his towering achievement is the oratorio *Des Jona Sendung*, perhaps begun as early as 1902 but composed for the large part in 1907–9. A massive summation of the oratorio tradition, with its roots in Bach and synthesising the soundworlds of Mendelssohn's Second Symphony and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, *Des Jona Sendung* is a work of blazing power and energy, almost rivalling Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in intensity and strength of purpose. But even now much of Tobias' music remains in manuscript, unperformed and unrecorded – a lamentable state of affairs for a composer of such national importance and international appeal.

Martin Anderson writes for a variety of publications, including *International Record Review*, *International Piano and Tempo in the UK*, *Fanfare in the USA*, *Klassisk Musikmagasin in Norway* and *Finnish Music Quarterly*. He publishes books on music as *Toccata Press* and runs *Toccata Classics*.

THE ORGAN WORKS OF RUDOLF TOBIAS

by Ines Maidre

The organ meant much to Rudolf Tobias. He started playing it when still a child, studied the instrument at the St Petersburg Conservatoire in 1893–97, held the post of organist at the Estonian St John's Church (Jaani kirik) in St Petersburg from 1898 from 1904, and performed on the organ throughout his life; while he was living in Berlin, he substituted for organists in churches there. He knew the instrument thoroughly and had a reputation as a brilliant improviser.

Tobias' very first compositional experiments date from 1882–84, when he was still a lad. His five *Kleine Choralvorspiele* ('Little chorale preludes') [2]–[6] from 1892, when he was nineteen, can be considered to be his first serious organ works. These miniatures are dedicated to his father and show a good command of polyphony and harmony. The most individual of them, 'Vom Himmel hoch' (which is dated 24 December 1892), suggests a gently rocking pastoral.

The exact date of composition of Tobias's most monumental organ piece, the Fugue in D minor, is not known. It was supposedly written during Tobias' St Petersburg period, after he had completed his studies at the Conservatoire and obtained the organist's post in St John's Church in 1898. There is a concert programme that proves it was played in a concert in the church of Rapla, in central Estonia, on 20 July 1903. The Fugue in D minor testifies to the degree to which Tobias took inspiration in Bach: the rhythm of the theme refers to Bach's G minor Fugue, BWV542, and the second part of the theme recalls that of Bach's Fugue in D minor, BWV565. Indeed, the frequent quotation of the BACH motif in combination with figures from Bach's own musical vocabulary suggests that the entire piece may have been intended as a tribute to Bach. The dramatic tension of the fugue expands gradually during its four sections, reaching a climax in the impressive final *tutti*. Its monumental, granite-like quality distinctly reveals Tobias' defiant character and points to the artistic *credo* he expressed in one of his articles:

Our character is ourselves. Be it whatever form, either symphony, song or opera – the eternal demon of our people is shaking its chains in prison everywhere: Beware of it when it breaks loose.¹

¹ 'The Characteristic of Estonian Music', *Eesti Kultura*, Vol. II, Tartu, 1913.

After her first recitals in Paris and London in 1990 Ines Maidre was acclaimed by *The Musical Times* as one of the most promising organists of her generation. Since then she has performed throughout Europe, appearing at prestigious international festivals in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia and Estonia and at cathedrals like Notre Dame, St Sulpice and the Madeleine in Paris and Westminster Abbey in London. Her concerto appearances have been under the batons of such conductors as Neeme Järvi, Martin Fischer-Dieskau, Tõnu Kaljuste, Fabio Ventura and Leo Krämer. In 2008 she went on her first concert tour to Latin America, performing in festivals in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, and in 2011 and 2013 she toured the USA, playing organ recitals in five states and giving lectures on Baltic organ music.



An excellent interpreter of early keyboard music as well as a virtuoso performer of Romantic and modern organ works she offers varied and exciting programmes for all types of organs from her vast repertoire. In her passion to introduce organ music to a broader audience, she has created several original programmes with a special thematic focus, such as *Bells in the Organ*, *Swan Songs for the Organ*, *Cathedral Windows*, *In Bach's Footsteps*, *Legends of St Nicholas*, *Litany of the Dance* and *Tangomania*, which have proved remarkably successful in increasing the size of the audiences at her recitals.

A graduate of the Estonian Academy of Music, Tallinn, Ines Maidre holds soloist diplomas of both piano and organ with the highest distinctions. In 1991 her postgraduate studies with Daniel Roth in Paris were crowned with a *Prix d'excellence avec les félicitations du jury* and at the Concours Musicale d'Île de France in 1991 she won the First Prize in organ-playing. Besides her performing career she has been teaching the organ at the Estonian Music Academy and is now an associate professor of organ at the Grieg Academy at the University of Bergen. As part of her scholarly activities she has given master classes and lectures at numerous universities and organist conferences. She has also written a book about the life and works of Peeter Süda (*Peeter Süda, Composer and Organist*, Estonian Music Information Centre, Tallinn, 2005) and completed a thesis on *New Horizons in Frescobaldi's Toccata Style*.

Ines Maidre has released several CDs with organ music by Henry Mulet and Odile Pierre (*Hommage à la Cathédrale*, Carillon Music, 1997), Anti Marguste (Antes, 1997), Artur Kapp (Eres, 2003) and other Estonian composers Rudolf Tobias (Forte, 1995) in addition to CDs of her most successful programmes *Bells in the Organ* (Carillon Music, 1999) and *Cantus Nordicus* (Carillon Music, 2004). Her most recent CD, *Revived in Tango* (Simax Classics, 2013) presents Guy Bovet's *Tangos Ecclesiasticos* together with their historical inspirations from early Spanish, Italian and French keyboard music. This CD of music by Rudolf Tobias is the second of several CDs of Estonian organ composers she will record for Toccata Classics; the first, featuring the complete organ music of Peeter Süda (trcc 0056), was released in 2012.

familiar from his symphonic works: relinquishing the range of sound-colours essential for impressionists, he preferred to work with rhythm, structure and melodic design. This chaconne requires considerable inner fire from the player; with its extended form, dynamic energy and direct character, it strikingly reflects the title of the chorale: 'Macht hoch die Tür' ('Fling wide the gate').

Like 'Lobt Gott ihr Christen allzugleich', the Prelude and Fughetta in C minor is also dated 'Nov 2014'. The miniature form of this diptych seems almost too tight for Tobias' extravagant and monumental style. His musical ideas flash briefly past before everything is over. For the homophonic Prelude [8] Tobias chooses a decisive short theme, characteristic for its stubbornly repeated notes. The subject of the witty Fughetta [9] also contains repeated notes, bouncing lightly as in many classical themes. In the middle of this short fugue he suddenly introduces a new thematic element: a melodic inversion of the main theme with shortened rhythm. This inventive gesture gives the music courage and brings the fugue to its culmination. Tobias' style is heard in a nutshell here: intensely worked polyphony combined with rich, often sharp Romantic harmonies – a synthesis of Classicism and Late Romanticism. Its modest dimensions notwithstanding, this 'fugue in a nutshell' evinces masterly polyphony in buoyant mood.

The Prelude in D major [25] is an undated separate piece. Even the title is missing: this is a piece *sine nomine*. Stylistically it stands close to the chorale preludes of 1914 and evinces a Romantic tonal language; it has therefore been labelled a prelude. The four-part texture it is closely related to quartet-writing, where a peacefully flowing melody line is accompanied by vivid and figurative lower voices.

At the end of the nineteenth century, late Romanticism was the prevailing style in Europa, with the first flushes of Impressionism beginning to show through. But Tobias chose his examples from classical masters, primarily the German classics, Bach, Handel, Beethoven. Living at the beginning of the twentieth century, though, he was alert to contemporary means of expression and its new rhythms, harmonies and moods. His music melds Baroque, Classical and Romantic styles together.

Although Tobias started his musical activities in a soil much influenced by German music, he soon understood that he, as an Estonian, had to find something that genuinely originated from Estonians. His noble ideas and revolutionary spirit were the equivalent of the attitude characteristic of Kalevipoeg, the hero of the Estonian national epic: 'hit the rock with your fist'. His powerful personality and proud aims meant that he became an inspiring example, setting ambitious aims for those involved in the emerging musical life of Estonia.

The *Largo* (*Pfingstgesang*) is Tobias' most famous choral composition: for Estonians it has almost acquired the role of an alternative national anthem, not least because its quiet majesty is based on a beautiful melodic line. The choral original is based on the text of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians and starts with words 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God'. The initial motif of the melody is said to have been born during Tobias' improvisation during the 1900 Whitsunday service in St John's Church in St Petersburg. Tobias was obviously very fond of the piece, since he later made several arrangements of it, as have several other composers. The *Largo* is most often performed by male-voice (or mixed) choir and organ, although on several occasions heard in a version for organ and orchestra, and Tobias himself often played it as a solo piece for organ. Unfortunately, the original scores of these versions are lost, and so this recording uses an arrangement by August Topman,² with some modifications.

In the exquisite *Agnus Dei* for mezzo soprano and organ Tobias skilfully integrates two disparate elements: a dynamic and expressive solo line, characterised by sighing motives and dramatic outbursts, is freely combined with the chorale 'O Lamm Gottes', the steady rhythm of which supports the melody as a whole. Bold harmonies emphasise the emotional drama and lead the listener through an intriguing harmonic labyrinth. The choice of tonality (C flat major) is surprising from a practising musician: it has six flats.

The *Agnus Dei* – intended as part of a Mass that Tobias never finished – was first heard in concert on the same evening in Rapla that saw the first documented performances of the Fugue in D minor. Another programme proves that it was performed in a version for choir and orchestra on 3 March 1904 in St John's Church, St Petersburg. The surviving manuscript is notated as a sort of piano redaction and has so far not appeared in print, although an organ arrangement is scheduled for publication for the first time in 2015.

Tobias' oratorio *Des Jona Sendung* ('The Mission of Jonah'; completed in 1909), was based on the Old Testament Book of Jonah. It is the most magnificent composition in all of Estonian music. The deeply philosophical theme perfectly suited Tobias' grandiose ambitions. The work is composed for soloists, two mixed choirs, children's choir, orchestra and organ. The powerful *Sanctus* here performed in my own transcription for solo organ, is the apotheosis of the whole oratorio. It is opened by a short introduction where the choir of angels (a 'Chorus mysticus') quietly announces God's mercifulness with a leitmotif. After a *fermata* stop on the dominant-seventh chord it directly leads into the brilliant *Sanctus* which pulls together these huge forces in massive invocations of 'Heilig, heilig, heilig!'

² Topmann (1882–1968) was an organist, composer, choral conductor and music-teacher. He, too, studied organ with Homilius in St Petersburg. He was organist of St John's Church in Tallinn and taught in the Conservatoire there. His best-known student is Veljo Tormis, but he also taught Helena Tobias (later Helena Tobias-Duesberg, 1919–2010), Tobias' daughter who was born seven months after his death and became a distinguished composer in her own right.

After the *Kleine Choralvorspiele* and the D minor Fugue, Tobias composed nothing more for the organ before 1914, by which time he was living in Berlin, working as a substitute organist. Although in the meantime he had expressed himself on a grand scale in music for choir and orchestra, he now took time to compose two sets of chorale-based music for the organ. The first of them contains *Zwölf Choralvorspiele* – The first three [13]–[15] are short, written in classical four-part form and follow the rules of counterpoint strictly. Undemanding in changes of dynamics or registration, they can easily be played also on a simple single-manual organ like the one to which the youthful Tobias had access in the church of Kullamaa. The chorale theme is here unadorned, mostly presented in canon between the bass and the soprano voices, and intertwined with an expressive motivic counterpoint which relates the music to the text (for example, a sighing figure in No. 1, ‘Ach, was soll ich Sünder machen’ [13], and continuous joy-motifs in No. 3, ‘Es ist gewisslich an der Zeit’ [15]).

In the other preludes Tobias uses a much wider dynamic range which requires a bigger organ, capable of swift changes of volume. Tobias often juxtaposes contrasting dynamics (*pp*–*mf*), bringing them to a powerful outburst in the middle of the piece and allowing them to calm down at the end. Such a structure is found in the chromatically tense No. 6, ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’ [18], in the beautifully decorated No. 7, ‘Jesu, meines Lebens Leben’ [19], and in the celestially tender No. 10, ‘Nun ruhen alle Wälder’, subtitled *Nachtstück* [22]. No. 11, the Christmas chorale ‘Fröhlich soll mein Herze springen (with the subtext ‘Et in terra pax’) [23], undergoes the biggest dynamic transformation in Tobias’ interpretation, growing from a peaceful opening to an emphatic finale where clearly audible ‘rejoicing heartbeats’ underline the title of the chorale.

The treatment of the *cantus firmus* in these preludes is highly individual. In Tobias’ bold use of the chorales, the melodies are often dissolved into fragments that appear spontaneously in different voices here and there in the texture. Sometimes only a short motif of two or three notes is recognisable. On this basis Tobias builds an almost symphonic development, with free structures and a quasi-improvisational generation and release of tension.

Several of Tobias’ chorale preludes break the boundaries of the genre in a revolutionary way, revealing his burning desire to reform the church music of his time. Instead of the monotony and sentimentally exaggerated piety that was then habitual, he wanted to introduce the entire range of human emotion into sacred music. That explains the sharp dissonances and almost secular intensity of several of his chorale preludes. Indeed, in both preludes on ‘Sollt’ ich nicht meinem Gott nicht singen’, No. 4 [16] and No. 8 [20], Tobias adds impetuously pulsating rhythmic figurations in the accompanying voices to the chorale melody, generating a tremendous exultation and outburst of energy.

One of the most surprising preludes of the set is the ninth, ‘Werde munter, mein Gemüte’ [21], which is shaped like a dance-like scherzo. A freely composed melody in the left hand (suggested by Tobias to be played with Gamba stop) is accompanied by a lightly bouncing chordal figure (with Flötenstimmen indicated) in the right hand. Fragmentary entrances of the *cantus firmus* in the pedal almost get lost in this vivid palette, except in two episodes where the chorale tune briefly emerges in upper voices (to be played on the Clarinet stop). Although Tobias was generally not interested in colour, in this piece he clearly indicates the organ timbres he wanted to hear. Harmonically, this prelude is one of the most startlingly modern works in his entire output.

The twelfth prelude, on ‘Komm heiliger Geist, o Herre’ [24], remained unfinished, in two lightly different versions, which suggest that Tobias was struggling to find the right ending. As in several of his other works, Tobias had no time to provide this piece with a final grooming. The last four bars are therefore my own.

It is worth mentioning that Tobias’ own organ-playing caused a fury in clerical circles. Although many of his contemporaries recalled his improvisations with rapture and compared his playing with ‘a crack of lightning and a gust of wind’, such ‘ungodly playing’ brought about a unholy rage in many pious observers; one local parson called it ‘the noise of hell.’³

The second ‘set’ of organ pieces dates from 1914: although all the works were written down in a single notebook, they are all in different forms. They begin with a prelude on a Christmas chorale ‘Lobt Gott ihr Christen allzugleich’ [10]. Again, it is not easy to recognise the *cantus firmus* which appears only halfway through the piece. Instead, Tobias focuses on the most characteristic motif of the chorale theme, four repeated notes, letting them bounce from voice to voice. This score, too, is not quite finished: only two voices continue into the last bars. Surprisingly, the prelude is in E minor, though the chorale is in G major, as a comment at the end of the manuscript confirm it: ‘Choral in G-dur/4.Nov’.

There are two versions of the *Ciaconna über Macht’ hoch die Tür* [7], one of them with a note ‘Advent 1914’. Although ostensibly different compositions, comparison of the two reveals that, despite of differences in detail (note-length and rhythmic structures, positions of chords, order of musical material, the concept of the opening, and so on), they are actually the same piece of music. There is good reason to believe that the cleanest surviving manuscript is the latest version and it is therefore the one that has been chosen for this recording. After the triumphal opening chords, the chorale melody first appears as a soft ostinato in the pedal, soon growing into a broad and high-spirited chordal texture. Gradually injecting more and more dramatic tension into his progressions, Tobias generates the kind of thematic development

³ Recollections by Jüri Valgma, quoted in Vardo Rumessen, *Rudolf Tobias Sõnas ja Pildis*, Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1973.