

# The Music of **Richard Pantcheff**

**Volume 3: Organ Concerto  
Music for Choir and Orchestra**

London Choral Sinfonia  
Michael Waldron



ORCHID CLASSICS

### THE MUSIC OF RICHARD PANTCHEFF: VOLUME 3

1	Fantasia 150	4.56
	Organ Concerto	
2	I Allegro	10.44
3	II Largo	12.16
4	III Moto Perpetuo	11.30
	<i>James Orford, organ</i>	
5	Come, my beloved	5.21
6	Chorale Prelude - Jesu, sei nun gepreiset	4.55
	<i>James Orford, organ</i>	
7	For lo, the days come	5.26
8	Chorale Prelude - Jesu meine Freude	5.06
	<i>James Orford, organ</i>	
9	Te lucis ante terminum	3.37
10	Fantasia 'Haec Dies'	4.48
	<b>Total time</b>	<b>68.41</b>

London Choral Sinfonia  
Michael Waldron, *conductor*  
James Orford, *organ*

This, the third volume of the London Choral Sinfonia's pioneering CD recordings of Richard Pantcheff's compositions, once again presents a wide range of inter-connected works, centred around the genres for which the composer has achieved the most notable success: music for Organ, instrumental ensembles, and choirs.

Book-ending the disc are two **Fantasias**, originally composed for Organ solo, here specially arranged by the composer for String Orchestra and Trumpets. Both works use a chant melody as their basis.

**Fantasia 150** (Op.82, No.1) uses the Anglican Chant written by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) for Psalm 150. This is a melody that will surely be familiar to many listeners, and those who have sung in a church or cathedral choir. The outer sections of the work project bright and syncopated versions of the chant. In between, the theme appears first as a cello solo, against restrained underlying string chords, and then in a graceful central section for full strings. The final transition to the recapitulation sees the theme disaggregated still further, in hesitant short phrases in the double basses, against a backdrop of string chords and spiky trumpet quaver runs. The work was premiered by the work's dedicatee, South African organist Professor Theo van Wyk, on the organ of St. George's Anglican Church, Johannesburg, South Africa, on 5th August 2012.

The **Concerto for Organ, String Orchestra, and Trumpets** (Op.111) is a major new work commissioned by the London Choral Sinfonia, and its Director, Michael Waldron. The idea for the work came about as a result of a suggestion that the composer combine in a single work two of the genres in which he had been most successful hitherto: string ensembles (amply demonstrated by **Nocturnus I** and **Nocturnus VI** which appear on Volume 2 of this CD series), and solo organ.

The new concerto was written in the early months of 2022 and sees the composer working on a large-scale canvas. The structure of the work follows

the classical form for a concerto and includes cadenzas for the solo instrument in the first and third movements, the latter using highly concentrated thematic material in an extended solo for the pedals, sometimes in two parts, (in a way reminiscent of the composer's earlier **Sonata for Organ**, Op.67).

The first movement contains highly linear, contrapuntal string writing, with huge rhythmic variation between the instruments, and constantly shifting tonal centres. It begins with three seismic chords on the organ, interspersed with agitated scalic passagework for the strings and trumpets. Already by figure D, the development section starts, in which first the strings, and then the solo organ combine the thematic materials heard in the exposition. This leads to the cadenza for the solo organ. The rhythmic and thematic counterpoint eventually subsides, and there follows a more languid section in which the trumpets exchange fragments of the core thematic material between them.

The ensuing bridge passage re-introduces material heard at the beginning of the development section, and this leads, via increasing rhythmic and tonal complexity, to the recapitulation. Here, however, the solo instrument and the orchestra have exchanged the thematic roles they formerly adopted.

After all the *Sturm und Drang* of the first movement, the second movement comes as a complete contrast. Here the intense and elevated musical language of the Chorale Preludes for Organ (see later) is foreshadowed. The movement follows an apex shape, commencing with pianissimo double bass pizzicati, and similarly quiet and intense string and organ solos. The texture slowly builds, to the point where the double basses enter with a mournful, dotted, almost grinding movement, over which the organ begins its more agitated passage-work, interspersed with a short duet for violin and trumpet solos. The organ then takes over the double bass dotted motif in the pedal, and the movement reaches its climax in a solo organ passage. The strings and solo trumpets gradually ease the movement to a close, a passage in which

the organ pedals have a solo of an altogether different character from the cadenzas of the outer movements.

The respite is not, however, sustained. The third movement, in 12/8 tempo, is characterised by highly rhythmic string writing interspersed with *marcato* chords on the organ. The trumpets enter, sometimes supporting the syncopated and *marcato* string writing, and on other occasions, seemingly attempting to introduce a more legato feel. Strong, upward-driving string semi-quavers eventually lead to the solo cadenza. Ultimately, the organist's feet take over the action, as the pedals drive towards the end of the cadenza in a flurry of downward glissandi. At that point, the orchestra re-enters with the *moto perpetuo* themes and rhythms, and these lead, via a form of recapitulation, to the closing climax in which all instruments participate.

There then follow three unaccompanied choral anthems, in between which two of the composer's recent **Six Chorale Preludes for Solo Organ** feature.

**Come, my beloved** (Op.64), for unaccompanied SATB choir, is a setting of words from the Old Testament's *The Song of Solomon*. The anthem was commissioned by Paul Wingfield and the Choir of Lincoln College, Oxford, and was composed in October 2004. It was premiered by the choir of Lincoln College, Oxford, on its tour of Italy in Summer 2006. The harmonic language is modal, energizing the text, in which, of course the famous phrase 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine' appears. In fact the whole work is devoted to the beauty of love, both in its human and divine aspects.

Given that this anthem focuses upon the nature of the loving relationship between God and humankind, it perhaps entirely fitting that the next work should be the **Chorale Prelude - 'Jesu, sei nun gepreiset'** based upon the 1609 chorale tune of the same name. Here, the writing for the solo organ is paired down to an extreme of intensity and elevation. It is a work of the utmost simplicity and devotion.

**For lo, the days come** (Op.59), for unaccompanied SATB choir, was a commission from another of Oxford University's top undergraduate choirs: this time the Arcadian Singers of Oxford University, and its then Director, Matthew O'Donovan. The text is from the Old Testament *Book of Jeremiah*.

The emphasis is upon a yearning for the day of deliverance, when the divine promise of 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people' will be fulfilled. Again, the music here is bold, modal, and highly rhythmic, settling ultimately into a concentrated, and very quiet, Amen.

The anthem was composed in October 2002, and was premiered by the Arcadian Singers in December of the same year, in the chapel of Merton College, Oxford.

The second of the Chorale Preludes for solo organ featured here is the **Chorale Prelude – 'Jesu, meine Freude'**. Here, the 1653 chorale tune appears in distant harmonizations in the manuals, and in intervening pedal passages. Again, the atmosphere is elevated and remote.

The **Chorale Preludes for Organ** (Catalogue Reference 2021/No.2) were written in December 2021, during the Covid pandemic. The first of them was premiered by the composer on 25th May 2022, at the organ of the City Church of St.Michael at the Northgate, Oxford.

For many years, the composer has been a Patron of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, and has written several new works for the festival over the last decade. The Covid pandemic disrupted the customary schedule of the festival, and so the work commissioned for the 2020 festival - **Te lucis ante terminum** (Op.108) - was premiered at Evensong at St. Pancras Church, London, only on 23rd May 2021. The Latin text is of uncertain origin, although it is contained within the Roman Breviary for Compline. Much-beloved musical

settings over the years, by Tallis and Balfour Gardiner amongst others, have featured frequently at cathedral and parish church Evensongs.

In this setting, the work is presented as a small-scale triptych. The first section focuses upon imploring God to be our protector; the second section specifies the things from which God's protection, through the night, is sought; and the final section (similar in musical language to the first) thanks God for his mercy towards us.

The final work – **Fantasia on 'Haec Dies'** (Op.82, No.2) was also a commission from the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, in 2017. The composer wrote the work in the February of that year, whilst living in South Africa.

The theme for this joyous Fantasia derives from the plainsong setting for Psalm 118 (verse 24, which, in Latin, begins with the words 'Haec dies...' : 'This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it'). The theme goes through a number of permutations, starting with declamatory statements against a backdrop of cello and double bass *marcato* quavers. The slower central section sees the trumpets, solo violins, and solo viola passing the theme between them, until finally the full strings take us back to a recapitulation of the faster, dynamic, tempo of the beginning.

The work was premiered at Choral Evensong at the Church of St. Pancras, London, on 10th May 2017, and was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3.

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## **Richard Pantcheff**

Richard Pantcheff is internationally renowned as one of the finest contemporary British composers of choral, organ, chamber and instrumental music. He studied music at Christ Church, Oxford, under Simon Preston and Francis Grier, and was mentored in composition by Benjamin Britten in the last years of Britten's life.

Since then he has been commissioned to write new works for many leading performers, including Benjamin Luxon, Stephen Layton, Grayston Ives, David Hill, Jane Parker-Smith, John Scott, Stephen Darlington, Clive Driskill-Smith, and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, amongst many others.

His substantial output of compositions has been commissioned, performed, recorded, and broadcast all over the world. This includes at least thirteen of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge universities in the UK, as well as in many cathedrals and churches in Britain, major concert venues and radio/TV broadcasts in the USA, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, across Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, and South Africa.

Highlights include *King Henry VIII's Apologia*, a festival anthem commissioned by Christ Church, Oxford, in honour of the 450th anniversary of its foundation, (which was also performed in London as part of the 80th birthday celebrations of the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies in 2014).

All of his music has been commercially published, and features in major international music festivals, including the Tanglewood Festival (USA); the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music (UK); the Cape Festival of Voices (South Africa); the National Arts Festival (South Africa); Britten 100; and the English Music Festival.







There are currently eighteen commercially released CDs and EPs in the catalogue featuring his music, many containing only his work, receiving excellent reviews. Upon its release on the Orchid Classics label in October 2021, his most recent CD with the London Choral Sinfonia (***The Music of Richard Pantcheff, Volume 2***) went straight to number five in the *Gramophone Magazine's* Classical Charts and received a 5-star rating from *Choir and Organ* magazine. Several new CDs are in preparation.

His compositions have received wide acclaim from performers, critics, and audiences for their originality and technical brilliance, combined with intellectual and emotional depth.

More information can be found on his website: [www.richardpantcheff.com](http://www.richardpantcheff.com)

### **London Choral Sinfonia**

The London Choral Sinfonia was formed for a concert in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 2008. Since then the LCS has secured a reputation as one of the highest-regarded and critically-acclaimed chamber choir and orchestral ensembles, performing a broad repertoire throughout the season. A busy performance schedule throughout the year sees the group appearing at venues including Cadogan Hall, St Paul's Cathedral, Kings Place and St John's Smith Square.

Aside from championing many of the major cornerstones of the repertoire, the LCS seeks to champion new music, having premiered new works and recordings with numerous composers including Tarik O'Regan, Owain Park, Richard Pantcheff and Ian Assersohn. Recent premieres include former Composer-in-Residence Oliver Rudland's *Christmas Truce*, with a libretto by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy. The group's realisation of Francis Grier's epic *Sword in the Soul* was premiered in 2010 and featured poet Sir Geoffrey Hill and librettist Alice Goodman.

Performance highlights include Bach *Jauchzet Gott* with Katherine Watson (soprano) and Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpet), Bach Motets and Cello Suites with Guy Johnston (cello), Mozart *Requiem* with Duncan Rock (bass), Mozart *Exsultate Jubilate* with Mary Bevan (soprano), Britten *St Nicolas* with Nick Pritchard (tenor), and Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Matthew Brook (baritone).

## **Michael Waldron**

### *Conductor*

Michael Waldron began his musical training as a chorister at St Ambrose College, Hale Barns. After a gap year Organ Scholarship at Worcester Cathedral, he held the Organ Scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, for four years. Here he studied under Stephen Layton, during which time he was involved with the Choir's numerous international tours, concerts, broadcasts and recordings.

Since graduating, Michael has quickly established himself as one of the most dynamic and versatile conductors of his generation, enjoying a busy concert career. He has worked with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Polyphony, London Mozart Players and Tonbridge Philharmonic, including appearances at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Cadogan Hall, Wigmore Hall and BBC Proms.

Michael enjoys an extensive operatic career, including shows and projects for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Buxton International Festival, Opera Della Luna and West Green Opera.

He is currently Artistic Director of the London Choral Sinfonia, London Lyric Opera, Islington Choral Society, Epworth Choir, and has also held posts with Guildford Choral Society and University of West London Chamber Choir.

More information can be found on his website: [www.michael-waldron.com](http://www.michael-waldron.com)





## **James Orford**

### *Organ*

James Orford is currently the Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge and is establishing himself as one of the leading organists of his generation. His past positions include being Organist in Residence at Westminster Cathedral, before which Organ Scholar at St Paul's Cathedral. Previously, he held the Organ Scholarships at Truro Cathedral, the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and King's College, London. He studied with Bine Bryndorf and David Titterington at the Royal Academy of Music, obtaining top marks in both his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. He was awarded the Duchess of Gloucester's award for exemplary studentship upon completion of his undergraduate course, and was subsequently awarded one of the Academy's prestigious Bicentenary Scholarships for his Master's degree.

James enjoys a busy performing schedule and has given recitals and concerts in many of the UK's most notable venues and at a number of major festivals. In 2021, his debut solo album - a complete organ transcription of Vivaldi's *L'estro Armonico* - was released on the Linn Record Label. He appears on several other discs as both an organist and pianist. These include collaborations with the London Choral Sinfonia, and the Chapel Choirs of the Royal Hospital Chelsea and King's College, London.

**Violin I**

Ellie Consta  
Hazel Correa  
Melissa Reiner  
Anna Szabo  
Jaga Klimaszewska  
Willemijn Steenbakers  
Eulalie Charland  
Robin Martin

**Violin II**

Alicia Berendse  
Radhika De Saram  
Nicole Stokes  
Iryna Glyebova  
Akiko Ishikawa

**Viola**

Matthew Kettle  
Jordan Bergmans  
Amy Swain  
Simon Ballard  
Ronan MacManus

**Cello**

Sergio Serra  
Verity Evanson  
Rebecca Burden  
Hannah Schofield

**Double Bass**

Roger Linley  
Eloise Riddell  
Clare Larkman

**Trumpet**

Peter Mankarious  
Matt Wells

**Soprano**

Lucy Cronin  
Emily Dickens  
Alison Hill  
Katy Hill  
Eloise Irving  
Miranda Ostler  
Hannah King  
Ellie Sperling

**Alto**

Amy Blythe  
Eleanor Dann  
Lucy Goddard  
Ruth Kiang  
Emma Lewis  
Lissie Paul

**Tenor**

Will Davies  
Matt Howard  
Rob Jenkins  
Tom Kelly  
Tom Robson  
Gareth Treseder

**Bass**

Ed Ballard  
Mike Craddock  
Edmund Danon  
Frederick Long  
Gus Perkins-Ray  
Richard Savage  
Laurence Williams

Producer: Adrian Peacock

Engineer: David Hinit

Recording manager: Amy Hinds

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All of the works appearing on this recording have been published by Composers Edition. Scores and further information on each work can be obtained by visiting [www.composersedition.com](http://www.composersedition.com)

For more information on Orchid Classics please visit

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