



Florence Beatrice  
**PRICE**

## Organ Works

First Sonata • Suite No. 1 • Passacaglia and Fugue

Tom Winpenny, Organ



Florence Beatrice  
**PRICE**  
(1887–1953)

	<b>First Sonata for Organ in D minor (1927)</b>	<b>17:26</b>
1	I. Introduction: Maestoso – Allegro – Adagio – Tempo Primo	10:31
2	II. Andantino	3:18
3	III. Finale: Allegro – Andante – Allegro assai	3:37
4	<b>Adoration in D major (version for organ, pub. 1951)</b>	<b>3:05</b>
5	<b>Caprice in F major (date unknown)</b>	<b>2:24</b>
	<b>Passacaglia and Fugue in A minor (1927)</b>	<b>14:23</b>
6	Passacaglia: Andante non tanto	8:23
7	Fugue: Andantino	6:00
8	<b>Hour of Peace (1951)</b> <i>(or Hour of Contentment or Gentle Heart)</i>	<b>2:49</b>
9	<b>Variations on a Folksong (<i>Peter, go ring dem bells</i>)</b> in G major (by 1949)	<b>11:30</b>
10	<b>Retrospection (<i>An Elf on a Moonbeam</i>) (date unknown)</b>	<b>3:05</b>
	<b>Suite No. 1 for Organ (by 1942)</b>	<b>12:45</b>
11	I. Fantasy: Tempo moderato	3:45
12	II. Fughetta: Allegretto	2:52
13	III. Air: Andante cantabile	3:01
14	IV. Toccato: Allegro	3:07

## Florence Beatrice Price (1887–1953)

### Organ Works

Florence Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. Her father, the city's first Black dentist, had been politically active during the Reconstruction era, and her mother, formerly a teacher, pursued a number of successful local business ventures. Price began her musical training with her mother, and as a child gave public piano performances and demonstrated considerable aptitude for composition. She enrolled in 1903, aged 15, at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, studying composition and counterpoint with Wallace Goodrich and Frederick Converse, graduating three years later with diplomas in organ performance and piano teaching. The Conservatory's director, the eminent composer George Whitefield Chadwick, was so impressed with her composition that she received a scholarship for additional private tutelage under him.

Price returned to her home state on graduation and taught in local music schools before directing the music department at Clark University, Atlanta from 1910 until 1912. That year, on marrying her first husband, Thomas Price (a distinguished lawyer), she returned to now racially segregated Little Rock, where she raised her two daughters. She wrote educational music to support her burgeoning role as a private piano teacher, but was otherwise unable to find work in the increasingly intolerant environment.

The family relocated to Chicago in 1927 where Price's musical career was reinvigorated: she enrolled in courses at various music colleges and studied with composers Carl Busch and Wesley LaViolette, and knew the eminent organist and composer Leo Sowerby. She undertook work as a silent film organist, pianist, and teacher, and in 1932 gained national recognition for her *Symphony in E minor* which won the Wanamaker Music Competition. With its premiere the following year by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra she became the first African American woman to have a work performed by a leading orchestra. She composed prolifically in the final two decades of her life: many of her works were issued by major publishers and she was at the forefront of the artistic movement known as the Chicago Black Renaissance.

Price's high level of attainment on the organ while studying in Boston suggests some prior experience on church instruments in Little Rock. Among the opportunities she received at the New England Conservatory was her performance of Alexandre Guilmant's *Sonata in D minor* at the age of 17 in the presence of the composer, whom she met (he attended her performance of his *First Sonata* and praised her rendition). Price's organ teacher, Henry M. Dunham, taught from his own organ tutor which contained invaluable advice on organ registration – the selection and combination of different stops – which Price would pragmatically apply to her own organ works. Aside from her orchestral *oeuvre* (which encompasses four symphonies, two violin concertos, and two concertante works for piano), Price's organ music forms one of the largest parts of her output. She was a lifelong Presbyterian, and although her extant organ works do not draw on hymns, they include many beautifully crafted character pieces which would have appealed to church congregations. Price is not known to have held a permanent church organist position in Chicago, but would have been familiar with a number of important instruments in the city through concerts sponsored by the city's African American community and the Chicago Club of Women Organists. Another aspect of her experience as an organist arose in the early 1930s when, in order to support her family after her separation from her first husband, Price gained experience accompanying silent movies in local theaters.

More than 20 years after meeting Guilmant, Price completed her own *Sonata* ①–③ in 1927 during a period of study with Carl Busch, Wesley LaViolette and Arthur Olaf Anderson at Chicago Musical College. The work amply displays Price's virtuosic command of the organ and as a presumably didactic task it pays tribute to the Parisian master's first essay for the instrument in the same key of D minor; equally Price's designation of it as the "First" sonata indicates further intended sonatas. Imposing dotted-note chords and triplet figures begin the first movement's opening *Maestoso* ①; the forthright *Allegro* starts with an extended pedal solo which demonstrates an insistent melodic line which is developed extensively. Continuing to echo Guilmant's work's structure, a gentle hymn-like second subject is later introduced gently, but returns triumphantly in D major at the movement's conclusion. The following movement, *Andantino* ②, is in triple time unlike Guilmant's own slow movement. It explores the quieter flute and oboe registers of the organ's tonal palette and is a fine vehicle for Price's expressive lyricism and beautiful part-writing. The incandescent concluding *Finale* ③, which closely resembles Guilmant's, is a toccata in all but name: a constant stream of energetic sixteenth notes propels the music through to another D major restatement of the "triumphal hymn" figure from the opening movement, and is capped by an exhilarating coda.

The endearing melodic enchantment of *Adoration* [4] reflects Price's experience in the realm of lighter music as a theater organist or accompanying on the radio. Its heartfelt melody is matched by an accompaniment of tender harmonies and presents opportunity for exploring the instrument's delicate tone colors. On account of its immediate appeal and technical accessibility, it was one of a small number of Price's organ works published in her lifetime, and remains among her best known. *Caprice* [5] is another example of Price's gift for writing miniatures. The dainty manner of this work – perhaps the composer's furthest foray into "light" organ music – is exhibited in the staccato outer sections, in contrast with the left-hand melody in the central section.

*Passacaglia and Fugue* [6]–[7] dates, like the *Sonata*, from 1927, and again reflects Price's intense period of compositional study after her relocation to Chicago. Here the model is J.S. Bach's own peerless *Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582* – a series of elaborate variations over a ground bass melody. Price's thorough understanding of Bach's own motivic techniques indicate that she must have performed his work. Price's work, in A minor, closely mirrors Bach's at first, but by the fourteenth variation her deft introduction of chromatic harmonies sets the *Passacaglia* on a different course: via pedal scales and virtuosic passagework the movement builds to an overwhelming *tutti*. The ensuing *Fugue* is less closely indebted to Bach, but nevertheless follows many of his contrapuntal procedures: this skillfully builds to a majestic conclusion, though not before a pedal cadenza. Price is known to have performed this – perhaps her magnum opus for organ – in 1936, in a performance in Evanston promoted by the Chicago Club of Women Organists.

*Hour of Peace* (1951) [8] and *Retrospection* (formerly *An Elf on a Moonbeam*) [10] are two more of the many evocative miniatures for which Price exhibited a particular gift. A captivating melody sings through the works' outer sections, accompanied by a gentle chordal figure, while each characterful central section presents opportunities for contrasting tone colors.

Although Spirituals (and more general African American characteristics of pentatonic melodies) often found an important role in Price's music, *Variations on a Folksong* [9] is Price's only organ work to be based on an existing melody. *Peter, go ring dem bells* provides the theme for this tour-de-force – a virtuosic series of 15 variations which demonstrates the composer's versatility. The work calls for the full tonal resources of the instrument and concludes, appropriately, with the inclusion of chiming bells.

Price is known to have given a concert performance of her *Suite No. 1* [11]–[14] in Grace Episcopal Church, Chicago in 1942. It comprises a number of short movements, each of a different character but nonetheless creating an effective and coherent sequence. The opening quicksilver *Fantasy* [11] is reminiscent of the prevailing style of theater organ film accompaniment which Price may herself have improvised: fleeting chromatic progressions, sudden pauses and changes of tempo, texture, and color all serve to underline the movement's fantastical nature. Elements of the central movements' melodies appear to echo Spirituals: the opening phrase of the tightly contrapuntal but lilting *Fughetta* [12] echoes *Sometimes I feel like a motherless child*, while the reflective *Air* [13] perhaps momentarily recalls *Were you there when they crucified my Lord*.

The final movement, unconventionally entitled *Toccato* [14], is a nimble and sunny excursion around the manuals, its dexterous passagework regularly enlivened by an uplifting syncopated rhythm. The shifts in the movement's closing stages recall the kaleidoscopic harmonies of the opening *Fantasy*, and the *Suite* concludes emphatically and optimistically.

**Tom Winpenny**

*With special thanks to Carsten Lenz and Professor Calvert Johnson for their kind assistance with this recording.*

## **The Skinner Organ of Saalkirche Ingelheim**

Ernest M. Skinner's four-manual organ (opus 823), built for First Presbyterian Church, Passaic, New Jersey, USA is one of the best-preserved examples of the renowned organ-builder's work. When the worshipping community moved to a new church building, the organ became redundant, but through the swift action of Carsten Lenz, organist of Saalkirche Ingelheim, Germany, the instrument secured a new home across the Atlantic Ocean. The organ is important for its impressive and unaltered range of orchestral tone colors and for its rich principal choruses.

In 2013 Klais Orgelbau of Bonn undertook the work of transporting, rebuilding, and restoring the instrument. A new case and façade pipes were provided because the listed originals were required to remain in situ in Passaic. The opportunity was taken to enlarge the instrument in accordance with Skinner's original intentions, using contemporaneous pipework which had become available from some of the original builder's other instruments.

In 1952 the organ had been enlarged by the incorporation of an Antiphonal division, built by the successor company Aeolian-Skinner, at the opposite end of the church. This division will in due course be installed in a transept of the Carolingian Saalkirche. For the organ's installation in Ingelheim, a newly built mobile organ console was commissioned. It includes the prepared-for stops of the Antiphonal division and reflects the classic American symphonic organ aesthetic, consisting of 119 stops which comprise 52 individual ranks with a further 18 combined stops and 49 "borrowed" stops (extended from other ranks).

**Tom Winpenny**

*For further information please see [www.skinner-orgel.de](http://www.skinner-orgel.de)*

## The West Gallery Organ of Saalkirche Ingelheim

**Ernest Martin Skinner, Op. 823 (1930), built for First Presbyterian Church of Passaic  
(New Jersey, USA); installed in 2013 in Saalkirche Ingelheim by Klais Orgelbau**

<p><b>I Choir</b> (enclosed)</p> <p>16' Gamba 8' Diapason 8' Gamba 8' Dulciana 8' Concert Flute 8' Unda Maris 4' Flute d'Amore 4' Gambetta 2 2/3' Nazard 2' Piccolo 1 3/5' Tierce 1 1/3' Larigot 8' Corno di Bassetto Tremolo Celesta Harp</p> <p><b>II Great</b> (*enclosed)</p> <p>16' Diapason 16' Bourdon 8' First Diapason 8' Second Diapason 8' Third Diapason 8' Principal Flute* 8' Erzähler* 8' Erzähler Celeste* 4' Octave 4' Harmonic Flute* 2' Fifteenth* II Grave Mixture IV Chorus Mixture* 8' Tromba*</p>	<p><b>III Swell</b> (enclosed)</p> <p>16' Bourdon 8' Diapason 8' Rohrflöte 8' Flauto Dolce 8' Flute Celeste 8' Salicional 8' Voix Celeste 8' Echo Viole 8' Viole Celeste 4' Octave 4' Flute Triangulaire 2' Flautino III Mixture 16' Waldhorn 8' Trumpet 8' Oboe 8' Vox Humana 4' Clarion Tremolo</p> <p><b>IV Solo</b> (enclosed)</p> <p>8' Gamba 8' Gamba Celeste 8' Flauto Mirabilis 4' Orchestral Flute 16' Fagotto 8' English Horn 8' French Horn 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' Tuba Mirabilis Tremolo Chimes</p> <p><b>Orchestral</b> (floating)</p> <p>8' Flauto Mirabilis 4' Orchestral Flute 16' Fagotto 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' Tuba Mirabilis</p>	<p><b>Pedal</b></p> <p>64' Gravissima 32' Contra Bourdon 32' Resultant 16' Diapason 16' Diapason (Gt) 16' Bourdon 16' Gamba (Ch) 16' Echo Lieblich (Sw) 8' Octave 8' Third Diapason (Gt) 8' Gedeckt 8' Still Gedeckt (Sw) 8' Cello (Ch) 8' Flute (So) 4' Super Octave 4' Diapason (Gt) 4' Flute (So) 32' Bombarde 16' Trombone 16' Waldhorn (Sw) 16' Fagotto (So) 8' Tuba Mirabilis (So) 8' Tromba 8' Orchestral Oboe (So) 4' Oboe Clarion (Sw)</p> <p>Compass: manuals C–c<sup>4</sup> (61 notes) pedals C–g<sup>1</sup> (32 notes)</p> <p>Full complement of couplers, octave couplers and transfers.</p> <p>Concave and radiating pedalboard Electric key and stop action Temperament: equal</p>
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Photo: Dieter Bender

## Tom Winpenny



Tom Winpenny is a freelance organist and choral director. His previous posts include assistant master of the music at St Albans Cathedral and sub-organist at St Paul's Cathedral, London. He is currently a trustee of the Royal College of Organists. Winpenny has broadcast frequently on BBC radio and featured on American Public Media's *Pipedreams*. He was an organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, twice accompanying *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*. As a soloist, he has performed internationally, with recent engagements in Sweden, Germany, Italy and the US. His wide-ranging discography includes music by Mozart, Liszt, Lutyens, McCabe, Joubert and Francis Grier. For Naxos, his solo recordings include critically acclaimed recordings of Elgar (8.574366), Schumann (8.574432), Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* (8.573332) and *L'Ascension* (8.573471), music by Judith Bingham (8.572687 and 8.574251), Williamson (8.571375–76), and Francis Pott's monumental Passion symphony *Christus* (8.574252–53). Winpenny has also directed St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir in recordings of music by Mendelssohn (8.572836), Mathias (8.573523), Michael Haydn (8.574163) and Poston (8.574576). [www.tomwinpenny.org](http://www.tomwinpenny.org)

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|--|--------------|
| <b>1–3</b> First Sonata for Organ (1927)   | <b>17:26</b> |
| <b>4</b> Adoration (version for organ, pub. 1951)                                  | <b>3:05</b>  |
| <b>5</b> Caprice (date unknown)*   | <b>2:24</b>  |
| <b>6–7</b> Passacaglia and Fugue (1927)  | <b>14:23</b> |
| <b>8</b> Hour of Peace (1951)*   | <b>2:49</b>  |
| <b>9</b> Variations on a Folksong<br>( <i>Peter, go ring dem bells</i> ) (by 1949) | <b>11:30</b> |
| <b>10</b> Retrospection (date unknown)   | <b>3:05</b>  |
| <b>11–14</b> Suite No. 1 for Organ (by 1942)                                       | <b>12:45</b> |

\*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

**Tom Winpenny**

**on the Skinner Organ of the Saalkirche Ingelheim**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 1 **1–4** **6–7** **9** and 2 **5** **8** **10–14** September 2024  
at the Saalkirche Ingelheim, Ingelheim am Rhein, Germany

Producers: Christoph Martin Frommen, Ulrich Lorscheider

Engineer and editor: Christoph Martin Frommen

Assistant engineer: Christoph W. Hilser

Booklet notes: Tom Winpenny

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Cover photograph by Dieter Bender



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Florence Price had worked for some years as a silent film organist before she won admiration in 1932 for her *Symphony No. 1 in E minor*. Works for organ form one of the largest parts of her output; the *Sonata* attests to her virtuosic command, as does the *Passacaglia and Fugue* which, while clearly indebted to Bach, reveals personal ideas of her own. Price's gift for writing miniatures is also obvious – *Adoration* has heartfelt melodic beauty, and the dainty *Caprice* exemplifies light music at its best. *Variations on a Folksong* is a tour-de-force and her only organ work to be based on a pre-existing melody, a spiritual. A digital EP featuring four additional miniatures for organ is also available for streaming and download (9.70389).

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Playing  
Time:  
**67:55**