

NAXOS

BRAHMS

Complete Organ Works

Eleven Chorale Preludes • Preludes and Fugues

Konstantin Volostnov, Organ



Johannes
BRAHMS
(1833–1897)

	Prelude and Fugue in A minor, WoO 9 (1856)	5:58
1	Prelude	2:10
2	Fugue	3:48
3	Fugue in A flat minor, WoO 8 (1856)	6:44
	Prelude and Fugue in G minor, WoO 10 (1857)	7:26
4	Prelude	3:30
5	Fugue	3:56
	Chorale Prelude and Fugue on <i>O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid</i>, WoO 7 (comp. <i>Prelude</i> by 1858, <i>Fugue</i> by 1873, pub. 1882)	7:00
6	Chorale Prelude	2:02
7	Fugue	4:58
	Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. 122 (1896)	33:52
8	No. 1. Mein Jesu, der du mich ('My Jesus calls to me')	4:20
9	No. 2. Herzliebster Jesu ('O blessed Jesus')	2:39
10	No. 3. O Welt, ich muss dich lassen ('O world, I now must leave thee')	2:37
11	No. 4. Herzlich tut mich erfreuen ('My faithful heart rejoices')	2:10
12	No. 5. Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele ('Deck thyself, my soul')	2:21
13	No. 6. O wie selig seid ihr doch ('Blessed are ye')	1:34
14	No. 7. O Gott, du frommer Gott ('O God, Thou faithful God')	5:20
15	No. 8. Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen ('Behold, a rose is blooming')	2:55
16	No. 9. Herzlich tut mich verlangen ('I do desire dearly')	2:05
17	No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen ('I do desire dearly')	3:42
18	No. 11. O Welt, ich muss dich lassen ('O world, I now must leave thee')	3:34
19	No. 5. Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele (alternative registration)	2:25
20	No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen (alternative ending)	3:48

Recorded: 28 3–5 8 9 11 14 17 20 and 29 1 2 6 7 10 12 13 15 16 18 19 August 2020
at the Moscow Central Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Russia

Producer and engineer: Alexander Volkov • Editor: Grigory Vasiliev

Organist assistants: Fedor Morozov, Andrey Sheyko

Konstantin Volostnov expresses his thanks to Alexander Baranyuk, Kirill Goncharenko,
Dmitry Maslyakov and Dmitry Lotov.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Complete Organ Works

Performer's Note

On this recording, we tried to convey the spirit of the late-19th century with its late-Romantic musical aesthetics; somewhat gloomy, and fully reflecting the feelings and thoughts of Brahms. The organ of the Central Church of Evangelical Christian-Baptists in Moscow matches this aesthetic in an extraordinary way, both in terms of the time of its construction and its artistic capabilities. When choosing the registration for the music of Brahms on this organ, we had to, to some extent, limit ourselves to the most logical version of the sound of each piece, which nevertheless perfectly suits the overall sound and overarching dramatic concept of the release.

This album contains recordings of the complete organ works of Brahms alongside two bonus tracks – the chorale *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* with an alternative registration and the second (quiet) chorale *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* with a minor ending. This version appeared as a result of an error when it was republished, but it managed to gain a foothold in performing practice and became familiar to a certain number of music lovers.

Konstantin Volostnov

For Johannes Brahms, the organ remained an instrument 'for home use' throughout his life, the one he confided only his most intimate and dear feelings to. He gave up his ambitions as a concert organist quite early and did not agree to even provide accompaniment on the organ publicly. 'Why such experiments? You have a very good organist, and I don't really know how to deal with either the pedal or the stops,' he replied in 1858 to the invitation of his friend Julius Otto Grimm to perform with his choir. Although he certainly knew this instrument very well and used it as an accompaniment in a number of vocal and instrumental works, including *Ein deutsches Requiem*, he relied on it as a solo instrument just twice: when he was young and kept company with his close friends, virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann, he devoted himself to studying the old masters' art of counterpoint, and then in the twilight of his life, when he was losing his dear ones and anticipating the approach of his own end, he turned to the musical catechism of his faith – the Protestant chorale.

A native of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Brahms could hear the organ in his parish church of St Michael, one of the most beautiful churches of the city. Although Brahms attended services rarely and only when it was necessary, he nevertheless remained a deeply religious person until the very end. At first, the then characteristic ideas of the positivists, who defended the idea of a mystical 'religion of the heart', coexisted quite harmoniously in his soul with the rationality of 'natural religion'. However, over the years, he leaned more and more towards a cognitive explanation of his own faith. Hidden from prying eyes, this side of his personality most likely played a leading part in his self-identification.

'I just can't get rid of the theologian!' Brahms wrote in 1882 to Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, one of his former and most talented students. Not only did he have an excellent knowledge of the Bible, but he also voiced far more biblical texts than many of his contemporaries. The evidence of how carefully he handled them is the fact that the fragments he selected for *Ein deutsches Requiem* had a deep inner connection that made his contemporaries suspect the composer of the inability to compile them on his own, without resorting to the help of a professional theologian. However, there is evidence in defence of Brahms. Once, when he spoke about Schumann's health with one of his friends, Rudolf von der Leyen (at which time Schumann was already in a mental hospital), Brahms learned that the doctors refused to bring Schumann the Bible, seeing it as a new symptom of his disease. Brahms exclaimed that they did not understand anything at all: '... we North Germans crave the Bible and do not let a day go by without it. In my study, I can pick out my Bible even in the dark'.

It goes without saying that the organ, which is inextricably linked with the Protestant spiritual tradition, was the embodiment of sober prudence, rigour and objectivity to Brahms. He clearly tried to realise these qualities that were invariably inherent in the organ music of the past not only in the few organ pieces he created – all featured on this release – but also, from a young age, in his chamber and then symphonic works. He sought moral support and ideals of beauty in the seasoned musical forms of 'pure style'.

There was another, personal reason why Brahms became interested in the organ in the early 1850s. In 1853, he met Joseph Joachim, who became a friend for many years and introduced Brahms to Robert Schumann. Shortly before that, Robert and Clara Schumann became interested in exercises in counterpoint and playing the so-called pedal piano – with an attachment that imitated an organ pedal. Brahms stayed in Düsseldorf, where they lived, during

October 1853, visited their home every day taking morning walks with Robert and coming to their evening home concerts. When Robert Schumann attempted suicide in February 1854 and ended up in a clinic where he spent the last two years of his life, Brahms was the only support for Clara and her eight children.

As her husband's mental health deteriorated, Clara was forced to make a living by playing concerts. During one of her long tours of England, Brahms, still thinking of a career as an organist, sent her an organ fugue, most likely in A minor, and wrote: 'I am practicing it just now, things are going considerably better with the organ! By the time you return, not a bit sooner, I will have progressed enough to play it for you. Is organ playing so hard for you, too? Probably not.'

In addition to dreaming of a joint concert tour of England with Clara (unlike Germany, many English concert venues had been equipped with large organs by that time), Brahms' excitement was encouraged by Joachim. They agreed to exchange completed exercises in contrapuntal technique weekly: the one who skipped a week had to pay one thaler to the common fund established to buy books. As Brahms was developing his organ playing skills and mastering counterpoint, he began to try his hand at writing organ fugues. He sent the A flat minor piece to Clara on Robert's birthday, and when she returned, he played the fugue to her, as well as the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, although it is not known whether he played it on the organ or the piano.

Only two compositions were published in Brahms' lifetime, both in supplements to music magazines. So, in 1864, the second version of the *Fugue in A flat minor*, WoO 8 appeared in the supplement to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, and in 1882, the second version of the *Chorale Prelude and Fugue on O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid*, WoO 7 was published in *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*. The editions appeared under the guidance of the composer and can be considered authorised.

Eleven Chorale Preludes was published posthumously in 1902 by the Berlin publishing house N. Simrock and received the number *Op. posth. 122*. The *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, WoO 9 and the *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, WoO 10 were first published only in the complete Brahms works in 1926–27 and edited by Eusebius Mandyczewski, one of Brahms' students, and Hans Gál, one of Mandyczewski's students and Brahms researcher. Prior to that, they were kept in the archives of Clara Schumann and probably were not known to anyone except her. Republished in 1965 in Wiesbaden, the complete works contained numerous errors that were corrected in the latest Brahms complete edition published in 2015 in Munich.

Prelude and Fugue in A minor, WoO 9 (1856)

Like the *Fugue in A flat minor*, WoO 8, the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, WoO 9 was most likely written in April 1856 in Düsseldorf. Before his 23rd birthday on May 7, Brahms sent a copy to Clara with a postcard as a postscript: 'So, dear Clara, while away the time on my birthday, maybe later as well. Let me know how they impressed you. Scold me mercilessly. I have another, better [fugue] in my coffers [probably the *Fugue in A flat minor*, WoO 8]. Would you like it better?' Clara and Joachim soon received a second version of the fugue. Brahms took into account his friends' advice and inserted a revised excerpt of the prelude in a letter to Joachim. This excerpt and the first copy sent to Clara are now the only surviving autographs.

Two cycles – the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, WoO 9 and the *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, WoO 10 – rest upon the examples of the organ art of Bach and North German masters of the 17th and 18th centuries. Bach's opuses in the same keys – the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, BWV 543 and the *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, BWV 535 – could be prototypes for both cycles.

In his preludes, Brahms relies on the Bach type of development: the transition from dual rhythms to triplets, from semiquavers to demisemiquavers and back, creating the illusion of free acceleration and deceleration. However, the fugues, with their bold simultaneous combination of dual and triplet rhythms, give Brahms away as a 19th-century composer. And yet, in terms of dramatic concept, he follows nothing but Bach's guidance: the swift whirlwinds of passages bursting before the final chord of the A minor fugue increase the degree of drama even when it, as it seems, has hit its highest.

Fugue in A flat minor, WoO 8 (1856)

The *Fugue in A flat minor*, as well as the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor* WoO 9, was performed as one of the stylistic exercises that Joachim and Brahms exchanged weekly. It did not get any opus number, but researchers believe that Brahms concealed a certain important message in it. The last line of the autograph has a dedication to Clara, and it gives the key to deciphering it. The Brahms fugue bears a resemblance to Schumann's fourth fugue on B–A–C–H for organ, *Op. 60*, and even the B–A–C–H motif itself (bar three onwards) and a chromatic motion reminiscent of the theme of Bach's *Musical Offering* (bar twenty-nine) can be traced in a transposed form. If it all was really a code, the young Brahms could encipher several meanings at the same time: his endless admiration for the great masters of the past, his readiness to continue their cause and sacrifice himself on the altar of the great art and the Schumann family, and denying

personal happiness for the sake of fulfilling a knightly duty to Clara. Whether Clara managed to read all these codes we do not know. 'I was deeply touched by the *Fugue in A flat minor*, what a wonderful atmosphere, what a wonderful pious meaning ...' she wrote on 21 July 1856 to Joachim.

Joachim was also very impressed with this music, which was 'amazingly deep' from start to finish, and appreciated its expressiveness even more than its polyphonic art. '[...] any counterpoint, no matter how important, becomes secondary here,' he wrote. 'I know only a few works that give me such an impression of unity, beauty and blissful tranquillity like this fugue does.'

The friends' opinions were very important to Brahms, and in the following months he sent the fugue to his friend Adolf Schubring and Clara's half-brother Woldemar Bargiel. The comparison of the autographs received by Clara in July and by Woldemar in December shows that Brahms finalised the first version of the fugue, taking into account Joachim's comments, and the second version of the fugue published by the composer was made around 1860.

Prelude and Fugue in G minor, WoO 10 (1857)

This cycle was probably written in the first few weeks of 1857 in Düsseldorf when Brahms was actively working on *Piano Concerto No. 1* and the *Variations on an Original Theme*. The surviving autograph given to Clara is dated February 1857. Brahms considered this cycle, as well as the previous one, educational, and did not think about publishing it.

The similarity with the Bach cycle (*BWV 535*) can be traced mainly in the prelude. As is the case with Bach, it is built on the principle of juxtaposition of sections with contrasting textures: a short introduction based on figurations is followed by a section based on a passage of improvisational motion, and then they alternate. Brahms also introduces the free chromatic sliding, which is very characteristic of the prelude movements, into the fugue, maintaining the ending in a rhetorical key of the Baroque – on the figures associated exclusively with tears and suffering: the opposing melodies gradually 'straighten' to the descending chromatic voices merging in a polyphonic choir.

Chorale Prelude and Fugue on *O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid*, WoO 7 (comp. *Prelude* by 1858, *Fugue* by 1873, pub. 1882)

In his works, Brahms could not ignore the central genre of the North German organ tradition – the chorale arrangement (*Choralbearbeitung*). The melodies of the chorales that he sang as a boy in church would later be taken by him as the basis of his last work, the cycle of chorale preludes. However, he honed his skills of contrapuntal arrangement of chorale themes even when he was young.

It is impossible to determine the exact time when he wrote the *Chorale Prelude and Fugue*. The only surviving autograph of the first version of the chorale prelude *O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid* ('O sorrow, o suffering') is Clara Schumann's copy that she made for her landlord in Wiesbaden. Clara could have got the autograph in 1858 when she was in Hamburg from late May to early June. Brahms sent a version of the fugue that corresponded to the one published in 1882 to Philipp Spitta, a J.S. Bach researcher, who classified it as a chorale fantasia. The other versions that circulated in the late 1870s among Brahms' circle of friends have not survived. Brahms combined both chorale arrangements into one cycle for the 1882 publication.

Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. 122

One may say that the cycle of chorale preludes that appeared at the end of Brahms' life is an autobiographical work. It is no coincidence that it combines themes of suffering and death. Brahms experienced the loss of many dear ones from 1892 on: first his sister passed away, then Elisabeth von Herzogenberg was gone. Within three months of 1894, he lost three of his oldest friends – Philipp Spitta, Hans von Bülow and Theodor Billroth. The death of Clara Schumann in May 1896 was probably the hardest blow. Around the same time, he began to show the first signs of what was possibly progressive liver carcinoma, from which he died a year later.

In that difficult time of his life, he again turned to the organ, with which the emotional experiences of his youth were associated, and to the Protestant chorale, in which Brahms looked for spiritual strength. The very fact of writing these pieces refers to Bach's *Great 18 Chorale Preludes*. Brahms deliberately likened his work to the Bach chorales, not only the Leipzig ones. They can be seen in the use of the chorale *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* ('I do desire dearly'), which was included in many of Bach's cantatas, the *St Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*. It is highly symbolic here that Brahms actually renders verbatim with semiquavers the initial motif from Bach's chorale *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 639* in the accompanying counterpoint. Just like Bach, who



Photo: Elena Anosova



Photos: Elena Anosova

completed his earthly journey with the chorale *Vor deinen Thron tret' ich hiermit* ('Before Thy throne I now appear'), Brahms says farewell to the world with the chorale *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* ('O world, I now must leave thee').

The form of most of the preludes, the type of arrangement, sees continuous development of the chorale melody, and an allusion of using musical-rhetorical figures in the counterpoint, which is quite reminiscent of Bach's model used in the *Little Organ Book* (Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9). However, several more detailed preludes, with their extraction of the accompanying voices from the melody (mainly found in Nos. 1, 7 and 10, but also in some little fragments of Nos. 3 and 5 as well) also inherit more complex ways as to how a chorale can be treated (more typical for the 'Leipzig Chorales'): No. 1 is executed as a fugue upon a chorale, No. 7 is a chorale with interludes, and Nos. 1 and 10 have a chorale as a *cantus firmus* in the lower voice. Each phrase is present twice in chorale No. 4: with no pedal in the quieter version and with the pedal in the louder one. This could be a reflection of responsory singing, or even a choral formula of soloist/ensemble alternation, which is closer to Brahms. The eleventh chorale is entirely built on the double echo effect.

The group of three preludes – No. 1. *Mein Jesu, der du mich zum Lustspiel ewiglich* ('My Jesus calls to me, holds out eternal bliss'), No. 5. *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* ('Deck thyself, my soul'), and No. 2. *Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen* ('O blessed Jesus, how hast Thou offended') – was composed first with the indication on the last page 'Ischl. I Mai 96' (after Clara's funeral, Brahms played several preludes, including *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, for a small number of people). Then Brahms expanded the cycle to seven preludes, adding No. 6. *O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen* ('Blessed are ye faithful souls'), No. 7. *O Gott, du frommer Gott* ('O God, Thou faithful God'), No. 3. *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* ('O world, I now must leave thee') and No. 4. *Herzlich tut mich erfreuen* ('My faithful heart rejoices'), on which he also indicated 'Ischl. I Mai 96.' He entrusted the autographs to his copyist William Kupfer without pre-numbering the preludes. After an exchange of letters, the order of the preludes changed, and it is not known for certain what could have influenced that decision. However, they are present in the cycle in this particular order framed by larger preludes at the beginning and at the end. The figure of seven that symbolises completeness and perfection in the Christian faith also indirectly indicates the end of the cycle (it is worth recalling that two years earlier Brahms published a cycle of forty-nine German folk songs in seven volumes, each comprising seven songs).

The remaining four preludes were probably written in June 1896. It is not known whether Brahms wanted to compose another series of seven preludes or make them standalone pieces. Perhaps, after he received the news of Clara Schumann's passing, he could not help but respond to it by arranging the only Christmas chorale from the cycle, the heart-warming *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* ('Behold, a rose is blooming'), a hymn to the Virgin Mary. Brahms colours the melody of the chorale only once, putting it in the upper voice and accompanying it with a song texture, which, together with the emphatically lyrical intonation and atmosphere of the piece, is reminiscent of the tradition of the German Lied.

The choice of two more chorales – Nos. 9 and 10, *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* ('I do desire dearly'), and No. 11. *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* ('O world, I now must leave thee') – is certainly connected with the knowledge of the approaching end. While the former conjures up associations of the composer's painful farewell to the earthly world, the latter, like the last communion, solemnly opens the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven before him. It is in this chorale where Brahms again turns his thoughts to Clara, placing the intonation of the coloured *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* as an opposition. Even the coinciding 'F-dur' key is not accidental: when Brahms was young, his motto was *'frei, aber einsam'* ('Free, but Alone'), the initialism of which (F–A–E) became the intonational source and tonal plan of many compositions. Now, in the firmament, he was really free and hardly alone any more.

Olga Ardeleanu

Ernst Röver and his Organ (1898) of the Moscow Central Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

Friedrich Wilhelm Ernst Röver (1857–1923) was born in the city of Stade to the family of the organ builder Johann Hinrich Röver (1812–1895), who taught him and his older brother Carl Johann Heinrich (1851–1929) organ making. In 1877, both brothers joined their father's business as partners, and the company became known as Johann Hinrich Röver & Söhne OHG. In 1884, Ernst bought a workshop in Hausneindorf, a village in the Quedlinburg district, from the heirs of the late organ builder Emil Reubke, and established his own company.

Just like their father, both sons actively experimented with the *Kastenlade* – that is, a windchest that has no separate tone and rank channels. This system, which does not allow sound subsidence due to limited air, incomparably better met the requirements for the sound of the Romantic organ than the simple slider system. While they were experimenting with a mechanical *Kastenlade*, Emil Reubke developed a pneumatic action *Kastenlade*, thus becoming

one of the pioneers in the field of organ pneumatics. Obviously, Reubke's developments were a powerful motivation for Ernst Röver to get hold of his workshop in Hausneindorf along with the know-how of pneumatic organ building. However, as soon as he got what he wanted, Röver didn't stop at what Reubke had achieved and went to even greater lengths, eventually achieving a technical breakthrough by creating a windchest based on air injection rather than air discharge. This system proved to be remarkably responsive. The patented windchest was Ernst Röver's most ambitious, but not the only invention. There was also the free combinations system and much more. The source of Röver's success was made up of remarkable creativity, organisational abilities, big-picture thinking, specification and voicing design, and the priority of longevity and reliability. All these virtues were revealed from the very beginning, from the very first 46-stop organ in the Church of St Gertrude in Hamburg-Uhlenhorst, which immediately attracted attention and laid the foundation for the amazing career of Ernst Röver. Commissions began to flood in. Over 39 years of independent work and about two hundred organs of different sizes – from a four-stop one for a private house to the hundred-stop instruments for the Church of St Nicholas in Hamburg and the Magdeburg Cathedral – were the outcome. In 1988, the meeting of the Magdeburg society Organ and Organ Music described Röver's enterprise as 'one of Germany's most outstanding organ-building companies in terms of quality and productivity.'

After 1910, the company gradually fell into decay primarily because of the First World War, and the resulting crisis that ruined many industries. In addition, after 1910, the world saw a change in sound ideals: Romanticism was gradually supplanted by the ideas of the *Orgelbewegung* (the 'Organ Reform Movement'). Against that background, a personal tragedy occurred – in 1917, Ernst's son, pilot Hans Röver, died in plane crash. Ernst Röver sank into depression and began to withdraw from business. He built his last organ in 1919. The workshop operated until 1921, but was no longer engaged in building new instruments – just maintenance and repairs. In 1921, after a stroke, Ernst Röver finally retired and died on 22 March 1923 at the age of 66.

Many of the organs he built perished during the Second World War, including the two that featured a hundred-stops. Many have been rebuilt in the spirit of new-fangled trends or simply replaced with new ones. About 50 instruments have survived, the largest of which is the organ of the Marktkirche St Benedikti in Quedlinburg (III/52). Unfortunately, like many others, it isn't entirely original. Therefore, the fully intact instrument in Moscow is of great importance for the history of organ-building.

The first organ of the Evangelical Reformed Church dates back to 1855 (the organ builder is unknown). The fire in the church on 16 January 1868 consumed the instrument. On 16 October 1871 a new 18-stop instrument built by Friedrich Ladegast was inaugurated. After 25 years of operation, the organ fell into an unsatisfactory state, and on 27 April 1897 the community meeting approved the decision to build a new organ. The Röver instrument made for the Moscow Evangelical Reformed Church was the company's only foreign project. Apparently, personal relations of one of the influential members of the community were the reason for commissioning it from Hausneindorf. Given its massive size (38 stops) and the time for transportation, the commission was completed very quickly. As soon as the following year 'the organ, which was a success in all respects, a real work of art, equipped with all the technical achievements of the new time, out of the workshop of the organ builder Röver in Hausneindorf, Harz, Saxony' was installed in the Reformed Church (quote taken from the report of the Reformed Church Council: *Kirche Ev.-Reformierte zu Moskau. Bericht über das Jahr 1901. Rechenschaftsbericht des Kirchenrathes. M.: 1902*).

What kind of instrument is it? It's a real 'German Romanticist' with predominant 23 (out of a total of 38) 8-foot stops, i.e. 60.5 percent. In addition, there are seven 16' stops, six 4', a 2', and one mixture. In his 1981 book on the history of organ building, Emil Rupp mentions this Moscow instrument and specifies its specification as 'extremely basic-tonal'. Despite the variety of timbres, all voices, including the reeds, sound very soft and unified. In this organ, Röver used the windchest invented by him, which has a very high rate of response. In addition, since all the pipes stand on a joint wind case, there is neither sound subsidence, nor shaking even with a quick change of large chords.

The instrument has been repaired several times. In 1903, there was some interference due to the church's heating system, which caused damage later eliminated by a representative of the company. In 1910, some preventive maintenance was carried out by Richard Scheitzle from Baden. It is worth noting that on 27 October 1911 Jacques Handschin, a renowned Swiss musician who worked in Russia at that time, accompanied on the organ in a vocal recital. This suggests that the instrument was part of Moscow's musical life.

Due to the First World War, the number of all German-speaking communities began to decline rapidly. The Reformed community existed until the mid-1930s. Although it eventually ceased its activities, the church was not closed down and continued to be used, albeit by the community of evangelical Christians, who later united with the Baptists. This led to the fact that the organ continued to function, becoming the only church instrument in Moscow that not just survived, but also was not transported anywhere else. It was Nikolai Sapozhnikov who took care of it in those years. Under the supervision of Professor



Photo: Elena Anosova



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and voicing design, and the priority of longevity and reliability. All these virtues were revealed from the very beginning, from the very first 46-stop organ in the Church of St Gertrude in Hamburg-Uhlenhorst, which immediately attracted attention and laid the foundation for the amazing career of Ernst Röver. Commissions began to flood in. Over 39 years of independent work and about two hundred organs of different sizes – from a four-stop one for a private house to the hundred-stop instruments for the Church of St Nicholas in Hamburg and the Magdeburg Cathedral – were the outcome. In 1988, the meeting of the Magdeburg society Organ and Organ Music described Röver's enterprise as 'one of Germany's most outstanding organ-building companies in terms of quality and productivity.'

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The first organ of the Evangelical Reformed Church dates back to 1855 (the organ builder is unknown). The fire in the church on 16 January 1868 consumed the instrument. On 16 October 1871 a new 18-stop instrument built by Friedrich Ladegast was inaugurated. After 25 years of operation, the organ fell into an unsatisfactory state, and on 27 April 1897 the community meeting approved the decision to build a new organ. The Röver instrument made for the Moscow Evangelical Reformed Church was the company's only foreign project. Apparently, personal relations of one of the influential members of the community were the reason for commissioning it from Hausneindorf. Given its massive size (38 stops) and the time for transportation, the commission was completed very quickly. As soon as the following year 'the organ, which was a success in all respects, a real work of art, equipped with all the technical achievements of the new time, out of the workshop of the organ builder Röver in Hausneindorf, Harz, Saxony' was installed in the Reformed Church (quote taken from the report of the Reformed Church Council: *Kirche Ev.-Reformierte zu Moskau. Bericht über das Jahr 1901. Rechenschaft-bericht des Kirchenrathes. M.: 1902*).

What kind of instrument is it? It's a real 'German Romanticist' with predominant 23 (out of a total of 38) 8-foot stops, i.e. 60.5 percent. In addition, there are seven 16' stops, six 4', a 2', and one mixture. In his 1981 book on the history of organ building, Emil Rupp mentions this Moscow instrument and specifies its specification as 'extremely basic-tonal'. Despite the variety of timbres, all voices, including the reeds, sound very soft and unified. In this organ, Röver used the windchest invented by him, which has a very high rate of response. In addition, since all the pipes stand on a joint wind case, there is neither sound subsidence, nor shaking even with a quick change of large chords.

The instrument has been repaired several times. In 1903, there was some interference due to the church's heating system, which caused damage later eliminated by a representative of the company. In 1910, some preventive maintenance was carried out by Richard Scheitzle from Baden. It is worth noting that on 27 October 1911 Jacques Handschin, a renowned Swiss musician who worked in Russia at that time, accompanied on the organ in a vocal recital. This suggests that the instrument was part of Moscow's musical life.

Due to the First World War, the number of all German-speaking communities began to decline rapidly. The Reformed community existed until the mid-1930s. Although it eventually ceased its activities, the church was not closed down and continued to be used, albeit by the community of evangelical Christians, who later united with the Baptists. This led to the fact that the organ continued to function, becoming the only church instrument in Moscow that not just survived, but also was not transported anywhere else. It was Nikolai Sapozhnikov who took care of it in those years. Under the supervision of Professor Alexander Goedicke, he also was in charge of the famous Cavallé-Coll organ of the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory.

In 1946, the church hall saw some changes caused by the need to increase the number of seats. For that purpose, galleries were built along the walls, and the balcony in front of the organ was significantly lengthened to put up the choir. The changes significantly affected the acoustics of the hall and muffled the organ sound. At the same time, the original blowing bellows were eliminated and replaced by an electric motor.

In the post-war period, organ maintainer Vyacheslav Rastorguyev supervised the organ. Like his predecessor, he was also occupied with the conservatory organ. After he died, the instrument was left without proper care. The voicing was not maintained, and many of the pipes got clogged with dust so badly that they stopped sounding altogether. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the organ was flooded with hot water several times, which, among other things, led to deformation of the windchest topboards. However, thanks to the efforts of the regent Vasily Kroshkin, who renovated the bellows and some of the membranes, the instrument remained operational.

Despite all the damage, the organ retained its integrity. Over the years, only five of the smallest pipes from the mixtures and five treble pipes from the 4' fugara of the third manual disappeared.

My work with the Röver instrument began in 1987. Within a rather limited period of time, it was possible to put into operation all the stops and most of the tones that had not played before, and to patch up the bellows, which allowed the organist Alexey Parshin, in 1993, to record an album with Brahms' complete choral preludes and several small works by Bruckner, among other pieces. However, the need for an overhaul was obvious. The choice of a company was no issue at all as for a number of years I kept in touch with the company of Reinhard Hufcken from Halberstadt, who has repaired many Röver organs. After inspection, he made an estimate for 250,000 marks. It was completely unrealistic to collect such an amount at a time, and it was decided that the organ would be repaired in stages. That is why the work lasted several years, but eventually was completed to give the old instrument a new life.

Over the past 17 years the organ has been played not only during divine services, but also in monthly recitals.

Dmitry Lotov

About the Moscow Central Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

The Evangelical Christian Baptist Church dates back to 1882. Two colporteurs, Ivan Bocharov and Stepan Vasiliev, stood at its very origins. The heartfelt words of Alexander Karev, Billy Graham and many other outstanding preachers of the Gospel have sounded from the pulpit of the Moscow church. US president Richard Nixon, Liberian president William Tolbert, ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps from many countries were guests of the church. Astronauts James Irwin, Charles Duke and Jeffrey Williams, the man who completed four trips to the International Space Station, all delivered sermons and stories about their space and lunar missions. The ministers and members of the church met there with the great pianist Van Cliburn on several occasions.

Those who originally arranged the building for the particular church needs were members of the Reformed community. For worship, the leaders of the community rented a hall located at 3 Maly Trekhsvyatitelsky Lane, which belonged to Nikolai Voyenkov, a nobleman and second lieutenant. On 5 June 1834 the reconstruction of the building began upon the project of architect Hermann von Nissen. The hall was built in the manner of an early Christian basilica with elements of architectural styles that were typical of the time. A choir platform and an organ were placed above the entrance part.

During the Soviet decades, the Moscow Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists was the only officially functioning Protestant congregation in the capital with more than five thousand members in its ranks.

The Central Moscow Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists has been a living cultural space of the capital since the mid-1990s. The management of the sightseeing agency Moscow Museums includes the church at 3 Maly Trekhsvyatitelsky Lane in its programme *History of World Religions in Moscow* as part of the series *Ethnic Moscow*.

The church's musical life comprises monthly organ music recitals, as well as instrumental and choir programmes during church holidays.

Alexander Baranyuk

*English translation: Nikolai Kuznetsov
Texts edited by Konstantin Volostnov*

**The Röver organ (1898)
of the Moscow Central Church of Evangelical Christians-Baptists**

I Manual (C-g^{'''})

16' Bordun
8' Principal
8' Hohlflöte
8' Gamba
8' Gemshorn
8' Bourdon
8' Dolce
4' Octave
4' Rohrflöte
2' Octave
3f Mixtur
8' Corno

II Manual (C-g^{'''})

16' Gedackt
8' Principal
8' Salicional
8' Traversflöte
8' Lieblich gedackt
8' Viola d'amour
4' Gemshorn
4' Flöte
8' Clarinett

III Manual (C-g^{'''})

16' Lieblich Gedackt
8' Geigenprincipal
8' Concertflöte
8' Spitzflöte
8' Zartgedackt
8' Aeoline
8' Voix-celeste
4' Fugara
4' Flauto dolce
8' Oboe

Pedal (C-f')

16' Violon
16' Subbass
16' Harmonica
8' Principalbass
8' Cello
8' Flötenbass
16' Posaune

*Normalcoppeln,
Omnia copula
2 FK
mf, f, ff
Rohrwerk ausschalter
Rollschweller
Schweller III Man.*



Rildia Bee, Choir Director Leonid Tkachenko,
Van Cliburn at the console of the Röver Organ, 1962
Photo: Archive of the Central Moscow Church
of Evangelical Christians-Baptists



View of the pipes of the second manual
Photo: Dmitry Lotov

Konstantin Volostnov



Organist and professor Konstantin Volostnov (b. 1979) is a mentor for several international organ academies, an international jury member, and the founder of a number of festival projects. As an organist he has performed internationally, and has appeared under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy, Charles Dutoit, Mikhail Pletnev, Kent Nagano, Jean-Christophe Spinosi and Howard Griffiths. Volostnov was awarded First Prize at the 2009 St Albans International Organ Competition, the 2008 International E.F. Walcker Competition, Schramberg and the 2008 Alexander Goedicke International Competition for Organists. In 2013, he received a diploma with honours from the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Stuttgart, where he was under the tutelage of Ludger Lohmann, having previously graduated from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory where he studied organ with Alexey Parshin

and piano and historical keyboard performance with Yuri Martynov. Volostnov's discography spans 19 albums, including his best-selling triple album of Bach's complete toccatas, sonatas and concertos (Firma Melodia), as well as recordings made on the organs of the Moscow International Performing Arts Centre and Riga Cathedral, and the Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. www.volostnov.ru

In contrast to the grand scale and public profile of his orchestral and choral works, Johannes Brahms saw the organ as an instrument ‘for home use’, and one in which he confided his most intimate feelings. The earlier pieces were exercises in counterpoint inspired by Brahms’ friendship with Clara Schumann and, despite their academic titles, they are infused with distinctive musical ideas and lyrical expressiveness. The later *Chorale Preludes* with their themes of suffering and death can be seen as autobiographical, the elder Brahms seeking spiritual strength in the ‘pure style’ of the Protestant tradition.

Johannes
BRAHMS
(1833–1897)

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| 1–2 | Prelude and Fugue in A minor, WoO 9 (1856) | 5:58 |
| 3 | Fugue in A flat minor, WoO 8 (1856) | 6:44 |
| 4–5 | Prelude and Fugue in G minor, WoO 10 (1857) | 7:26 |
| 6–7 | Chorale Prelude and Fugue on
<i>O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid</i>, WoO 7
(<i>Prelude</i> composed by 1858, <i>Fugue</i> by 1873, pub. 1882) | 7:00 |
| 8–18 | Eleven Chorale Preludes, Op. 122 (1896) | 33:52 |
| 19 | Chorale Prelude No. 5. Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele
(alternative registration) (1896) | 2:25 |
| 20 | Chorale Prelude No. 10. Herzlich tut mich verlangen
(alternative ending) (1896) | 3:48 |

Konstantin Volostnov
**on the Röver organ (1898) of the Moscow Central Church
of Evangelical Christians-Baptists**

A detailed track list and full recording details can be found inside the booklet
Booklet notes: Olga Ardeleanu, Dmitry Lotov, Alexander Baranyuk, Konstantin Volostnov
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