

*The "Crusaders" of Music*  
*From Jazz to Classical & from Classical to Jazz*

**WILLIAM PATRICK GOWERS**

**(05.05.1936 - 30.12.2014)**

***Music, Wisdom and Open-mindedness***



(Photo: The Telegraph)



*Maurice Creuven 2019*

*Talking about music is good; listening to it is better!*

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## THE MAN

During his frequent travels in Europe and, in particular, during his various stays in London in 1963, William Bill Russo had, in addition to Richard Peaslee, the precious collaboration of a young English musician, Patrick Gowers (26 years old), who, with his wife, gave him and his wife very useful and much appreciated professional help.

William Patrick Gowers was born on 5 May 1936 in Islington (London). He is the son of the lawyer William Richard Gowers and Stella Elizabeth Mary Pelly. His sister, Ann Elizabeth Mary Gowers was born on October 25, 1938.

Young Patrick studied at Radley College in Abingdon (Oxfordshire), where he did not like the rigid rules, and then at Clare College, Cambridge University, where he obtained a Master of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Music.



Patrick and Caroline  
(Photo: Caroline Gowers)

On September 23, 1961, he married pianist, organist and teacher Caroline Molesworth Maurice, born November 13, 1940, daughter of Timothy Kindersley Maurice and Philippa Mary Sharp.

Patrick and Caroline will have three children.



Timothy                      Rebecca                      Katharine  
(Photos: Univ. Cambridge / United Agents / Discogs)

The brilliant mathematician William Timothy (November 20, 1963), an eminent

professor at Cambridge University and the recipient of numerous awards, including the Fields Medal in 1998 for his research in functional analysis and combinatorics. In 1988, he married Emily Joanna Thomas and they had three children : John, Richard and Madeline.

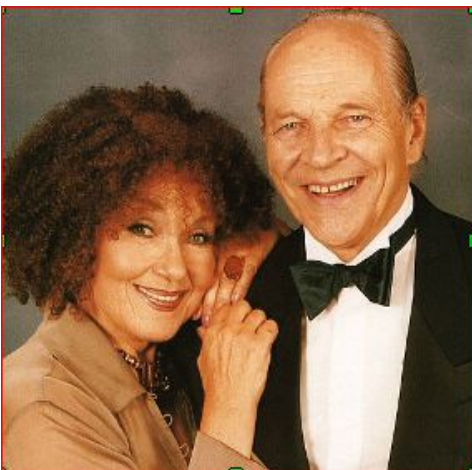
Rebecca Mary (October 27, 1965), freelance writer and journalist for numerous newspapers and magazines including The Guardian and The Independent; two of her short stories are selected for the Orange Prize for Fiction but one of her most important works is to have revised and updated, in 2014, the famous treaty "Plain Words : A Guide To The Use of English" written by her great-grandfather, Sir Ernest Gowers, in 1948; in 2016, Rebecca publishes her own "Horrible Words: A Guide To The Misuse of English"; the release of her new book "Scoundrel: The Astonishing True Story of Harry Larkins" is scheduled for August 2019.

The Gowers family is immersed in music, but of the three children, Katharine Laura (April 4, 1970), a talented violinist, is the only one who has really made it her profession.

Among the seven grandchildren, Richard, Timothy's youngest son, is already leading a magnificent international career as an organist, pianist and conductor.

## THE MUSICIAN

While studying at Cambridge, Patrick also wrote music for a student theatre, the Cambridge Footlights, whose musical "Share My Lettuce" was seen in London in 1957 for 300 performances. He teaches, on a part-time basis, the art of composition.



Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine, his wife.  
(Photo: Daily Mail)



Marty Paich  
(Photo: Marc Myers)

Patrick Gowers has a passion for jazz, including two wonderful musicians,

instrumentalists, conductors, composers and arrangers : One is the prolific and exciting English saxophonist Johnny Dankworth (1927 - 2010), the other is the excellent American pianist Marty Paich (1925 - 1995) who, with his immense talent and great originality, marked the West Coast school of the 1950s in California, especially with his astonishing dek-tette (10 musicians) which, thanks to an art of orchestration that Marty had the secret to, sounded like a real big band.

In 1964, Patrick was the musical director of Peter Brook's production of Richard Peaslee's "Marat/Sade". Against his will, but with some salary compensation, he accompanied the troupe to Broadway performances.

The same year, he participated as co-producer in the recording of Bill Russo's "The English Concerto", of which he became assistant.

Patrick is also a Doctor of Philosophy; in 1966 he completed his doctorate on the music of Erik Satie: "Erik Satie: His Studies, Notebook and Critics" a two-volume dissertation (University of Cambridge).

In the same year, he composed a "Jazz Concerto" for pianist Dudley Moore and worked as a jazz critic for the Financial Times.

In 1969, he wrote the music for Tony Richardson's "Hamlet"; in 1970, it was "The Virgin and the Gypsy"; in 1973, it was "A Bigger Splash. »

In 1970, he runs the electronic music studio in Dartington Hall (Devon). Later, he will introduce, very discreetly, electronics in some film music or classical music.

One of his former students, Kevin Mallon, is full of admiration and gratitude for the quality of his teaching:

*"In the 80s, I was one of his composition students at Dartington, and one exercise he submitted to us was a tape he had recorded himself on which he played a 12-bar blues in all the keys on the piano. The more the keys changed, the more complex the examples became and the idea of the exercise was that we had to improvise on this tape. Fantastic! I am sincerely honoured to have lived, for a time, in his entourage. »*

On a professional level, the 70s are very quiet for Patrick but, in 1978, he is in charge of writing the music for the television series "Thérèse Raquin", after Emile Zola.

At the request of director Simon Langton, he continued with "I Remember Nelson" and "Smiley's People", starring Alec Guinness, in 1982.

For these last two productions and an adaptation of "The Woman in White", he received the BAFTA award for *"best original television music"* in 1983. »

## BAFTA

BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) is an independent philanthropic body that encourages, develops and promotes the moving image art forms by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspired practitioners and public benefit.

In addition to the annual Awards Ceremony, BAFTA has an international programme of cultural training initiatives and events through workshops, masterclasses, scholarships, conferences, etc... connecting audiences of all ages and cultures across the UK, as well as in Los Angeles and New York.

Financially, BAFTA depends on membership fees, individual donations, sponsorships, foundations and various partnerships to enable it to carry out all its activities and fulfill its mission.



Patrick Gowers and Anita Harris  
(Photo: The Independent)

In 1983, Patrick received the BAFTA Award for Best Original Television Music for his participation in 1982 in "The Woman in White", "I Remember Nelson" and "Smiley's People / La taupe". »

The award was presented to her by Anita Harris, the huge and sympathetic English star of the sixties: actress, singer, dancer, born on June 3, 1942, and who was, at the time, the best paid variety artist in the world. Unfortunately, Anita and her husband, TV Director Mike Margolis, lost everything - their savings and their house - in the huge bankruptcy of their bank in 1985, which put them out of business.

Anita's vocal artistry, her magnificent voice, her dynamism and the astonishing diversity of her repertoire can be seen in two CD reissues: "The Essential Anita Harris" by Right Recordings (RIGHT 021) and "Anita Harris in Jumbleland" by Strike Force Entertainment (SFE 036).

Let's specify that each of these two CDs contains Anita's magnificent recreation of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", totally different from the legendary Judy Garland's version but which has absolutely nothing to envy her.



(Photo: Anita Harris)

His personal website [www.anita-harris.com](http://www.anita-harris.com) offers brilliant excerpts from his most famous shows, including the famous "Talk of the Town" from 1981 in London.

## CAROLINE

After her studies at Cheltenham Ladies College (Gloucestershire/England), Caroline studied piano and organ at the Royal College of Music in London, class of 1958.

In 1979, she took part in the training courses of the BSI (British Standards Institution).

In 1986, Caroline spent three months in Japan at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto (Nagano) and in 1988, she directed the training courses for piano teachers in London. She also teaches privately and in other countries in Europe and North America.



Caroline  
(Photo: LSG Bryanston)

For the past 12 years, Caroline has been a member of the prestigious European Suzuki Association (Quality Suzuki Teacher Training) in Cambridge, one of whose objectives is to produce, in the master classes format, continuing professional development courses for Suzuki teachers around the world.

Let's listen to Caroline confide in Melissa Viney of The Guardian on May 19, 2007:

*"We teach children first with their senses, not their intellect. We don't start by reading music because we have to flood them with information. We take the children very young and they learn to play by imitation; this is exactly how children discover and speak their mother tongue, by imitating other people. When they start reading, they already know how to speak.*

*After my musical studies in college, I taught according to tradition but the discovery of the method due to Shinichi Suzuki completely changed my life. »*

Caroline's enthusiasm for the Suzuki Method is easily understandable when one considers the impressive number of Asian candidates who, for many years now, have been competing, often successfully, in major music competitions around the world, even if not all of them are graduates of this type of teaching; some have even gained international fame and have a brilliant solo career, while others are members of the best symphony orchestras or chamber ensembles.

## **KATHARINE**

Their daughter, Katharine Gowers, is David Takeno's pupil at the Yehudi Menuhin School and at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music in central London, where



David Takeno holds the *Eugene Ysaye International Chair of Violin*. She studied with Roland and Almita Vamos at the Oberlin Conservatory (Ohio), attended masterclasses with Denes Zsigmondy in Germany and Joey Corpus in New York, the man some of her students call *The Underground Guru* or *The Secret Weapon*. Joey Corpus lost the use of both legs in a car accident at the age of 11 (which killed his mother), but he is still able to get around easily in a wheelchair in Manhattan, where, he says, *"everything is designed to make life easier for people with disabilities, even public transportation."* »

By all accounts, Katharine is a wonderful musician who likes to take risks, whose sound is splendid and whose technique is constantly under control.

A very active person, her concert career has led her to the best English orchestras; she can be heard on BBC Radio 3 and other European stations.

In chamber music, she has played with Imogen Cooper, Steven Kovacevich, Steven Isserlis, Denes Varjon, Lars Vogt and Alfred Brendel, the latter on a world tour as a piano quartet. She takes part in most of the major European festivals as well as in the Open Chamber Music seminar organised each year by the International Musicians Seminar Prussia Cove (Cornwall, South West England) created in 1972 on the initiative of the Hungarian violinist Sándor Végh.

Katharine Gowers was in Chicago for the big "Mardi Gras" concert in February 1997, where she performed William Russo's remarkable "English Concerto" for violin and jazz orchestra with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble, conducted by the composer. A triumph!

On May 14, 2016, Katharine plays Max Bruch's "Concerto No. 1 Op. 26" at the Bushey Academy (East of England) accompanied by the Bushey Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Vass.

In the fall of 2018, she spends two months in La Paz, Bolivia to teach at the Bolivia Clásica School, a non-profit organization created in January 2014 by pianist Ana-Maria Vera to provide quality music education to children and beginners.

## **THE RESONANCES FESTIVAL IN BELGIUM**

For several years now, Katharine Gowers has been invited to participate in the prestigious and friendly music festival that has been organised every spring since 2010 in the Condroz region of Namur.

The introductory page on the festival's website (<http://www.festival-resonances.be/>) presents it in these terms:

*"Festival Resonances is an international chamber music festival. About twenty*

*musicians perform there every year in various formations during a series of concerts lasting three or four consecutive days. This year (2019), the Festival is already celebrating its tenth anniversary! Seven concerts are on offer and will all be given at Halloy Castle, near Ciney, from 30 May to 2 June.*

*The Festival brings together musicians of the highest level. In residence at Halloy Castle, they devote a whole week to the rehearsal of major works from the chamber music repertoire. These internationally renowned performers will seduce you with the freshness, intensity and passion of their interpretations of a very rich repertoire that is sometimes little known or rarely played. From their concerts and master classes, a unique energy emerges! The atmosphere is very festive and the gourmet side of the Festival will enchant you from the first note to the last bite! »*



Halloy Castle (Braibant/Ciney)  
(Photo: Festival Resonances)

The Festival is directed by its creator (with Florence Gillon), the talented and much sought-after English cellist Amy Norrington, who will take part in several concerts: Haydn, on 30/5; Beethoven, on 31/5; R. Schumann, on 1/6; Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky, on 2/6.

As for Katharine, her performances are:

- the 30/5: the Octet in F major D.803 by Franz Schubert, with: Tim Crawford (violin), Yura Lee (viola), Roel Dieltiens (cello), Olivier Thiery (double bass), Matthew Hunt (clarinet), Alain Cremers (bassoon) and Jean-Pierre Dassonville (horn);

- on 1/6: the String Quartet n° 1 'Kreutzer Sonata' by Leos Janáček,  
with: Jonian Ilias Kadesha (violin), Yura Lee (viola) and Martijn Vink (cello);
- on 2/6: Felix Mendelssohn's Keyboard Trio No. 1 in D minor op. 49,  
with: Steven Isserlis (cello) and Dénes Várjan (piano);
- two pieces for string octet op. 11 by Dmitri Shostakovich,  
with: Yura Lee, Jonian Ilias Kadesha, Natalia Kotarba (violins), Guy Ben-Ziony,  
Diede Verpoest (violas), Han Bin Yoon and Martijn Vink (cellos);
- the sonata for two violins in C major op. 56 by Serguei Prokofiev,  
with: Matthew Truscott (violin).



Katharine Gowers (centre) in 2016.  
(Photo: Festival Resonances in Belgium)

The concerts are usually followed by a moment of restoration, sometimes even in the company of the musicians.

Can we hope that, in the context of such an organisation, concerts will in the future be recorded on CD or even DVD?

### **KATHARINE GOWERS' RECORDINGS**

Katharine Gowers' records have already become rare, if not impossible to find. A recital CD on SOMM New Horizons (SOMMCD 064) with Charles Owen (piano) was for a long time the only one available.

Recorded in London in March 2004 and published in 2007, it features fourteen short pieces by various composers: Vittorio Monti: "Czardas"; Gabriel Fauré (arr. Casals): "Après un Rêve"; Maurice Ravel: "Pièce en forme de Habanera"; George Gershwin (arr. Heifetz): "It Ain't Necessarily So"; Claude Debussy (arr. Heifetz): "Beau Soir";

Ernest Bloch: "Nigun" (Improvisation); Manuel Ponce (Heifetz arr.): "Estrellita"; Yasha Krein: "Gipsy Carnival"; Josef Suk: "Ballad"; Fritz Kreisler: "La Gitana"; Richard Heuberger (Heifetz arr.): "La Gitana" (Improvisation); Richard Heuberger (Heifetz arr.): "La Gitana" (Improvisation). Kreisler: "Midnight Bells"; Joseph Achron (arr. Auer): "Hebrew Melody"; Jeno Hubay: "Hejre Kati"; Traditional (arr. Read/Gowers): "Orange Blossom Special".



(Photo: Somm Recordings)

In June 2007, this recording was named "Record of the Month" by The Strad magazine, which has specialized in music for string instruments since 1890. The prolific English musicologist, Julian Haylock, analyses it and shows how happy he is to listen to this recording:

*"Gowers' refreshingly personal approach to these violin miniatures ensures that her recital will not be added to the already long list of purely technical festivals. Her playing is particularly impressive in the passages with very moderate dynamics, a challenge dreaded by most violinists, but which she overcomes with remarkable ease. No nervous tension is noticeable in the most delicate pieces by Ponce, Ravel, Heuberger and Fauré, while Monti's irresistible Czardas captures the attention here, as much for its technique as for the sensitivity and breath that Katharine puts into her interpretation, which avoids making it sub-Sarasate. Gershwin is fun. The programme also features two rarities, one by Krein, the other by Hubay. Finally, there is the traditional 'Orange Blossom Special', in an arrangement by Sophie Read and Patrick Gowers. Charles Owen produces a sensitive and attentive accompaniment. »*

Katharine also recorded two very beautiful live CDs by Avi-music (in collaboration with Deutschlandfunk), in which she participates, in part, within the framework of the Heimbach Chamber Music Festival, which has been held every year in June since 1998 in Heimbach, in the Eifel region (Düren, Germany), in the setting of the

impressive hydroelectric station built in 1904 in the Art Nouveau style, typical of the time.



(Photo: Heimbach hydropower plant)

The first CD (Avi 8553163), devoted to two String Octets, was recorded on 11 and 12 June 2008.

It includes, first of all, Felix Mendelssohn's Octet op. 20, which is performed by Christian Tetzlaff, Isabelle Faust, Lisa Batiashvili and Antje Weithaas (violins), Rachel Roberts and Ori Kam (violas), Tanja Tetzlaff and Quirine Viersen (cellos). Next is George Enesco's Octet op. 7, with Christian Tetzlaff, Antje Weithaas, Isabelle Faust and Katharine (violins), Antoine Tamestit and Rachel Roberts (violas), Gustav Rivinius and Quirine Viersen (cellos).

The second CD (Avi 8553358) features two String Quartets and is recorded on 11 and 14 June 2015.

The Giuseppe Verdi Quartet played by Christian Tetzlaff and Florian Donderer (violins), Hartmut Rohde (viola) and Maximilian Hornung (cello).

Then it is Antonin Dvorák's Quartet No. 10 op. 51 with Yura Lee and Katharine (violins), Florian Donderer (viola) and Frans Helmerson (cello).

So Katharine Gowers does not intervene, neither in Mendelssohn nor in Verdi.

Although the ensembles are formed only for the festival, the performances are very homogeneous under the guidance of real talents such as Christian Tetzlaff, Isabelle Faust, Lisa Batiashvili and, of course, Katharine. There is an enormous amount of energy, determination, rhythm, but also a lot of sensitivity; in short, very nuanced performances that spontaneously carry the enthusiasm of the audience. The recording technique reproduces, with a beautiful presence, the atmosphere of each concert.

## **RICHARD**

Born in 1995, Richard Gowers is the younger of Timothy's two sons. He studied piano, organ, harpsichord, conducting and singing. He is a countertenor but almost lost his voice when he participated in antibrexit singing in front of Parliament on December 10, 2018.

He began studying the piano at an early age, sang in the King's College Choir from 2004 to 2008 and turned to the organ and violin. Thanks to a generous scholarship, he entered, as did his illustrious father, for five years, from 2008 to 2013, the costly Eton College, more exactly called: the King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor (Berkshire) founded in 1440.

He continued his studies in various musical disciplines and began to take an interest in harpsichord and conducting. He was taught by Nigel Kerry, David Goode and Douglas Tang, among others.

In 2013, he spent a year in Leipzig (Germany) where he studied piano with Alexander Meinel and organ with Stefan Engels and Daniel Beilschmidt.

A 16 ans, il devient prize-winning Associate du Royal College of Organists et, un an plus tard, il est prize-winning Fellow.

He can be seen and heard, already in 2011 on You Tube, in an impressive interpretation of his grandfather Patrick Gowers' dreaded "Toccata and Fugue", played on the organ of King's College Chapel during a christening ceremony.

The amateur video recording is done by a few members of his family: the camera is lent by Timothy, it is handled by Madeline, it is John who turns the pages and Caroline takes care of the sound recording; the slight technical hesitations are justified with a very British humour. See you on You Tube :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ud4jfFcRP0>

In 2013, Richard won the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition and participated in some 50 concerts: he conducted Johannes Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem, was at the piano in Maurice Ravel's Concerto in G and gave organ recitals in St. Paul's Cathedral and at the St. Albans International Organ Festival. His tours take him not only to Great Britain but also to Germany (Dresden and Leipzig) and the USA (Washington and Princeton).

In Australia, our young "organ prodigy" opens The Inaugural Brisbane Baroque Festival of 2015 by performing pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach on the great organ of the City Hall.



(Photo: King's College Recordings/Cambridge)

During his 2016 U.S.A. tour, on September 4, he plays Patrick Gowers' "Toccata" at Trinity Cathedral in Miami, Florida, as well as an excerpt from Gustav Holst's "The Planets" in a duo arrangement with Matthew Steynor, the Cathedral's titular organist.

At the beginning of May 2017, Richard conducts Sibelius' Symphony No. 1 and then gives an organ recital in Cambridge.

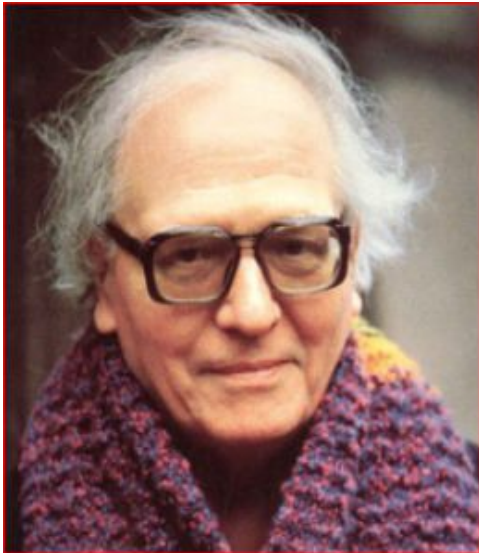
In June, he accompanies baritone Andrew Hammond at the piano in lieder by Wagner and Mahler and continues, with Henry Websdale, with transcriptions of Debussy and Stravinsky for two organs.

From July 11th to 16th, he was part of the King's Men Tour (King's College), which offered concerts in several towns in the north of England.

Follow his agenda on the website: <https://www.richardgowers.com/>

## **RICHARD GOWERS AND OLIVIER MESSIAEN**

Numerous other trips, which he is used to, will still lead young Richard to perform in a multitude of British cities but also in France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Spain, Finland, Belgium, Liechtenstein, Austria, India, Japan, etc..



Olivier Messiaen  
(Photo: C.E.R.C.)



Beginning of the score  
(Photo: Classical 20)

But, having just returned from this English tour, he devoted two days, on July 17 and 18, 2017, to the recording of his first CD: "La Nativité du Seigneur" by Olivier Messiaen on the organ of the Chapel of King's College in Cambridge.

In September 2018, the college will be producing the record (KGS0025) on its own website: <https://www.kingscollegerecordings.com/shop/>.

We should no longer present Olivier Messiaen (Avignon 1908 - Clichy 1992), this giant of 20th Century French music whose work is mainly inspired by themes from the Catholic religion, such as, for example : "The Eucharistic Banquet", "Apparition of the Eternal Church", "Hymn to the Blessed Sacrament", "The Ascension", "Three Little Liturgies of the Divine Presence", "Twenty Views of the Child Jesus", "Pentecost Mass", "The Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ", "Meditations on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity", "The Book of the Blessed Sacrament" and his opera "Saint Francis of Assisi".

The same is true of "La Nativité", a great organ piece that he composed at the age of 27 and which reveals him as an important author of contemporary music.

Most of the great organists make a point of including it in their repertoire: Marie-Claire Alain, Gaston Litaize, Jennifer Bate, Simon Preston, Louis Thiry, Jean Guillou, Marcel Dupré, Pierre Cochereau, Michel Chapuis, Olivier Latry, Susan Landale and many others, including Olivier Messiaen himself!

It is, arguably, his most played work. The recordings (in vinyl, CD, DVD or Streaming) are also very numerous, some of them even under the direct supervision of the composer, who was astonished, it is said, by the success of his score, admitting that it was a huge change from the organ pieces of the time.

The first performance took place on 27 February 1936 at the Sainte-Trinité church in Paris, where Olivier Messiaen was titular organist for 61 years (from 1931 to 1992).

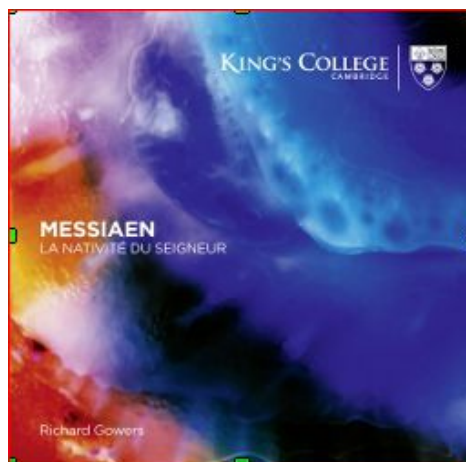


The performance is entrusted to three young organists of his friends who each take three meditations, namely, in order: Daniel-Lesur, Jean Langlais and Jean-Jacques Grunenwald.

"The Nativity of the Lord" consists of nine organ meditations:

1. The Virgin and the Child; 2. the Shepherds; 3. eternal purposes; 4. The Word; 5. The Children of God; 6. The Angels; 7. Jesus accepts suffering; 8. The Magi; 9. God among us.

Duration of the Richard Gowers version: 67 min. 40 sec.



(Photo: King's College label)

In harmony with the subject matter, Olivier Messiaen's music has a serious, introspective, mystical, even mysterious character.

One can logically consider that each organist marks the work with his or her own qualities, his or her personal vision, which allows for interesting comparisons both at the level of the performers and the instruments, not to mention the acoustics of the place.

Richard's execution is calm, deep, well thought-out and technically serene. He leaves it up to the music to express, by itself, all the spirituality that Olivier Messiaen has put into it.

Francis O'Gorman says:

*"For his first recording as principal organist, Richard Gowers chose 'The Nativity of the Lord', which he interprets in a very lively and noble way; it is a true revelation. What more could one ask for? »*

According to Marc Rochester:

*"Richard Gowers conveys the fundamental musicality of the work. You get the feeling*

*that he has a deep understanding of the message of the music, that he shares Messiaen's vision perfectly, and that he knows exactly what he wants the music to say to the listener, even if the (English) instrument does not quite produce the kind of sound the composer originally intended. »*

For Dan Morgan:

*"La Nativité' is not only the most astonishing of Olivier Messiaen's creations, but is also one of the greatest pieces for solo organ ever written. In this version, 'Le Verbe' is very dramatic but, as always, it is the meditative aspect of this music that delights the ear and the heart. I would say that the recording takes on its full value, if only because of this one movement which reaches a peak in the inspiration expressed by both the composer and the organist. »*

For his part, John Quinn says:

*"Richard Gowers justifies the confidence placed in him by producing a splendid performance that I greatly appreciated. Of course, the organ at King's College is essentially an English Romantic instrument, but Richard Gowers is so judicious and imaginative in his choice of registrations that he makes it perfectly suited to the music of Olivier Messiaen. Thus, in 'Jesus Accepts', one wonders what stop he uses to obtain such a sound! This young organist not only develops great virtuosity but also a considerable sensitivity, understanding and empathy for the work of Olivier Messiaen. The impressive work of the sound engineer Benjamin Sheen and the interesting booklet accompanying the CD are also worth mentioning. »*

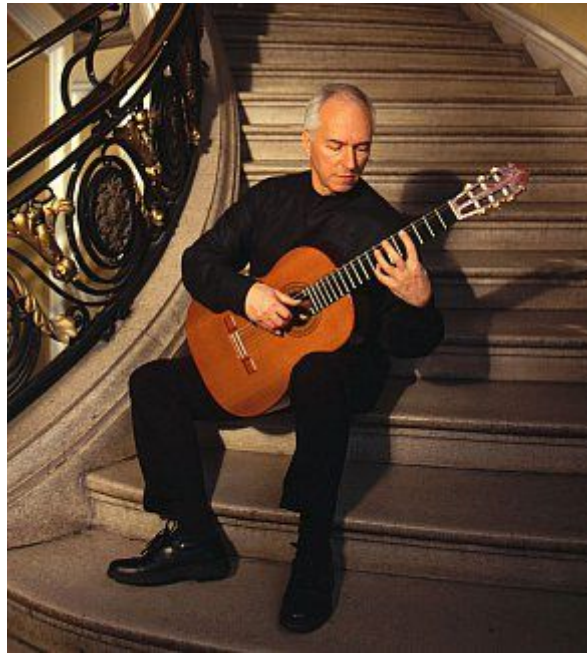
And, finally, the last word is for Jacques Bonnaure:

*"The young English organist Richard Gowers recorded this disc at the end of his studies at King's College Cambridge on the organ of the Chapel Royal. It is a recently rebuilt Harrison & Harrison instrument of 1934 (IV/79), originally Romantic in conception but also adapted to Baroque music, in the manner of the Cavallé-Coll of the Trinity, with a slightly less 'symphonic' and more shimmering sound, which allows Richard Gowers subtle registration effects. It is therefore suitable for Messiaen's music in the most visionary moments as well as in the most intimate and meditative passages. The interpretation shows a beautiful maturity, a perfect mastery of construction and, above all, a real affinity with the mystical climates of the young Messiaen. »*

The recording technique, in its various forms, offers the possibility of preserving and re-listening to the great works of the musical repertoire in historical reference versions, but also of discovering valuable young performers capable of putting a strong personality at the service of very well known or even new scores.

This is the case of Richard Gowers, from whom we hope to expect other engravings of a level comparable to the one he reached in "The Nativity" and places him as a worthy heir to his illustrious elders. And, why not, a recital devoted to the organ pages of grandpa Patrick?

## MUSIC FOR JOHN WILLIAMS



John Williams  
(Photo: Elsewhere)

In 1971, Patrick Gowers wrote a "Chamber Concerto for Guitar" for the virtuoso guitarist John Williams, who was born on April 24, 1941 in Melbourne (Australia) but lives in England. In 1973, he wrote a "Rhapsody for Guitar, Electric Guitars and Electric Organ" commissioned for the St. Albans International Organ Festival and premiered on Saturday, September 29 of the same year at the St. Albans Cathedral (Hertfordshire, 35 km north of London).

*Not to be confused with the other John Williams, the famous American film music composer, born in 1932, whose scores are sometimes even included in the classical concert programme and who was, during the fifties, in California, a fantastic jazz pianist; another "crusader" of music.*

According to Allan Kozinn of The New York Times:

*"The Rhapsody is a bit of a risky venture, as John Williams is playing a double role, playing both classical and electric guitar with all the possibilities of sound and timbre modification that it allows. This is interesting, but of the two scores, the Chamber Concerto is clearly superior. Composed for classical guitar, alto saxophone, flute, violin, viola, cello, bass guitar, organ and drums, it is a rather jazzy piece, full of energy and very attractive. »*

Technically speaking, the "Rhapsody" is a composition that requires quite a lot of preparation work.

Patrick Gowers explains:

*"At that time, John Williams was wondering what could be achieved by applying the technique of the classical guitar to the electric guitar. 'Rhapsody' aims to achieve this by bringing together the two types of guitar in a single work and to exploit both their similarities and differences. In practice, it works like a trio for a classical guitar and two electric guitars accompanied by an electronic organ prepared in 16 tracks. For the concert, all the electric instruments are pre-recorded on magnetic tape while the classical guitar is played live by the soloist. Needless to say, it is difficult to establish the right sound balance between all these elements. »*

The St. Albans Festival had to publish a notice in the programme for the evening of September 28, 1973 :

*"To our great regret and due to technical problems encountered in the preparation of the tapes, we are unable to present tonight the 'Rhapsody' commissioned from Patrick Gowers. This work will receive its first performance by John Williams at the concert to be given at the St. Albans Cathedral on Saturday, September 29th at 8 pm. »*



John Williams and Patrick Gowers  
(Photo: John Williams)

As for the "Concerto":

*"The instrumentation used finds its source in the Baroque Concerto Grosso, where a group of soloists, the concertino, plays alternately with an ensemble performing only in tutti. Here, the passages corresponding to the ensembles are those during which the guitar plays and the solos of the concertino are produced by the violin, viola, cello and alto saxophone or flute. The continuo is reserved for the organ, bass guitar and percussion. »*

Recorded by CBS in 1971 (published in 1972), the "Chamber Concerto" exists, on CD, in the big box of 59 discs (about 100€) that Sony Classical (88843092942) dedicates to guitarist John Williams.

With a bit of luck, one can still acquire, in vinyl, the LP reissued in 1977 by CBS Records (61790) " John Williams plays Patrick Gowers " which includes both compositions: the "Rhapsody", with John Williams on guitars and Patrick Gowers on electric organ, as well as the "Concerto", performed by an ensemble composed of John Williams, guitar; John Scott, alto saxophone and flute; Pat Halling, violin; Stephen Shingles, viola; Denis Vigay, cello; Herbie Flowers, bass guitar; Patrick Gowers, organ and Tristan Fry, drums.

Godfrey Salmon is in charge of management and Paul Myers of production.

In 1978, Patrick composed the music for "Stevie", a biographical film about the English poet and novelist Stevie Smith (1902 - 1971).

The guitar solos are performed by John Williams, who will also be the soloist in the very beautiful three-movement "Stevie Concerto", taken from the film music and which can be heard on [www.geraldgarcia.com/wordpress](http://www.geraldgarcia.com/wordpress), but in unfortunately rather poor sound conditions, the first performance of which was presented in 1987. John Williams is accompanied by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jeffrey Tate (1943 - 2017).

### **A LITTLE JAZZY**

In 1975, Patrick Gowers was the pianist of the vocal group The New Swingle Singers (II) for the recording of "Rags & All That Jazz" re-released by Sony, with other recordings from 1976 and 1979, under the title "The Swingle Singers / Swingle II - Swing Sing" (CD 88697 552462).

Needless to say, the Swingle Singers of the moment are, vocally, as exceptional as ever, both in sound and virtuosity in interpretations that combine fantasy, intelligence and good taste.



(Photo : Sony Music)

The voices are those of: Olive Simpson and Catherine Bott or Mary Beverley, sopranos; Carol Hall and Linda Hirst, mezzo-sopranos; John Potter and Ward Swingle, tenors; John Lubbock and David Beavan, basses.

Patrick is on keyboards (tracks 1 to 12) and is very comfortable with the arrangements that Ward Swingle (1927 - 2015) wrote on themes by Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll' Morton, Bix Beiderbecke, Fats Waller and also the Bee Gees.

Tony McVey is on drums and Allen Walley on double bass and electric bass.

Originally, the Swingle Singers are a French vocal group (8 singers plus double bass and drums) created in 1962 and led by the American Ward Swingle (1927 - 2015), a former member of Blossom Dearie's Blue Stars and the Double Six led by Mimi Perrin.

The training at the beginning includes : Anne and Claude Germain, Jeanette Baucomont, Christiane Legrand (Michel's sister), Claudine Meunier, Jean-Claude Briodin, Jean Cussac and Ward but underwent many changes over the years as well as different denominations; today: The Swingles.



Ward Swingle  
(Photo: The Swingles)

The original idea was to interpret, in scat jazz, pages of Johann Sebastian Bach adapted by Ward Swingle. From their first LP, "Jazz Sébastien Bach" ("Bach's Greatest Hits" in the USA), the Swingle Singers won two Awards, the Charles Cros Academy Award and became internationally popular. Their interpretations show great musicality and dazzling virtuosity.

They will record about sixty albums and cover many other baroque, classical, romantic, modern and jazz composers, namely : Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Handel, Telemann, Mozart, but also Irving Berlin, Luciano Berio and others.

In 1966, they published "Place Vendôme" with the Modern Jazz Quartet on compositions or arrangements by John Lewis.

In 1974, Ward Swingle moved to London and created a brand new band that continues the adventure today under the name The Swingles in increasingly diverse repertoires: <http://www.theswingles.co.uk/about> .

The systematic jazzy interpretation of classical music is not, however, reserved for Ward Swingle alone; the French pianist Jacques Loussier (1934 - 2019) also brilliantly applied the formula to his trio (piano/organ, double bass, drums) in numerous recordings covering Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Debussy, Satie, etc.

Other musicians from the world of jazz have made it a more ad hoc experience.

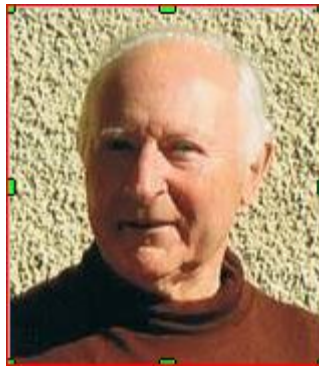
Thus, the pianist Raymond Fol (1928 - 1979) who recorded, in July 1965, his own arrangement of the "Four Seasons In Jazz", after Antonio Vivaldi, with his big band which included the soloists Johnny Griffin, Sadi, Jimmy Woode and Arthur Taylor. A very tasteful success!

In May 1966, Oliver Nelson (1932 - 1975) made a fantastic recording of "Peter & The Wolf" based on Serge Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" which he translated into a great dialogue between his orchestra and the incredible organist Jimmy Smith. Great!

The music from Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" was arranged for his orchestra by Duke Ellington (1899 - 1974), "The Nutcracker Suite", who recorded it in 1960, assisted, as often, by Billy Strayhorn (1915 - 1967). Brilliant and indispensable!

Another arranger, and not the least, Shorty Rogers (1924 - 1994), published, in May 1960, his version of The Nutcracker under the title "The Swingin' Nutcracker" for his Saxophone Quintet and Big Band. Indeed, it swings loud!

In his copious and fascinating biography (the only one, I believe), "Shorty Rogers Story" (Editions Opéra - 163 p.), our friend, the late Michel Prodeau, a great humanist, prolific writer (17 books), musicologist and musician, tells us (p.85/86) :



Michel Prodeau (1930-2019)  
(Photo: Amicale des écrivains)

*"Shorty doesn't interpret 'The Nutcracker', he recomposes it in his own way, shaking up the order of the paintings, rewriting them, while remaining faithful to the melody ... Priority is given to the subtly worked orchestration, the choruses, although numerous, The tempo changes are also frequent, far from the original work ... The titles are also subject to Shorty's chronic humour ... But these small liberties cannot hide the qualities of the company, both in terms of arrangements and the generous atmosphere of the ensemble.... and, as this kind of adaptation is not in her habits, this makes her sympathetic and even more precious. »*

Michel Prodeau has also published, with Editions Boutik Pro, a brilliant biography (200 p.) of Don Ellis: "La Musique de Don Ellis. »

Let's also remember the very jazz adaptations of the music of "Carmen" that the prolific Barney Kessel (1923 - 2004) recorded in 1958 with a great team of excellent Wescoasters supported by The Rhythm Section: André Previn, Joe Mondragon and Shelly Manne. Captivating!

Finally, one cannot ignore the arrangements that Stan Kenton (1911 - 1979) wrote in 1964 on several of Richard Wagner's major themes while he was preparing a reflection on the influence that classical music had had on his conception of jazz. The album "Kenton - Wagner" concretizes the approach of two giants in their will, each in their own century, to promote the evolution of an art which is their whole life. Historical!

## **THE GREAT TV SERIES**

Between 1984 and 1988, and again from 1991 to 1994, Patrick Gowers composed the music for several series (39 episodes) devoted to Sherlock Holmes and, from 1989 to 1992, the score for "Forever Green" (18 episodes), which, thanks to sufficient royalties, enabled him to devote himself essentially to choral singing and organ music in the 1990s.

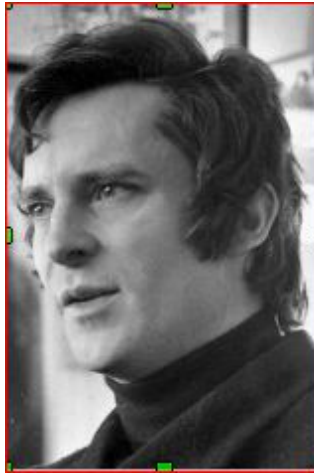


As a composer, Patrick Gowers' filmography is really impressive. It includes nearly forty films, documentaries and series, the latter totalling about a hundred episodes.

In addition to the Sherlock Holmes: "Hamlet" (1969); "The Virgin and the Gypsy" (1970); "The Boy Who Turned Yellow" (1972); "A Bigger Splash" (1973 - documentary); "Children of Rage" (1975); "Stevie" (1978); "Black Island" (1979); "Thérèse Raquin" (1980 - 3 episodes); "Bread or Blood" (1981 - 5 episodes.); " I Remember Nelson " (1982 - 4 ep.) ; " The Woman in White " (1982 - 5 ep.) ; " Smiley's People / La taupe " (1982 - 6 ep.) ; " The Spanish Civil War " (1983 - doc., with John Williams, guitar); "My Cousin Rachel" (1983 - 4 ep.); "Sorrell and Son" (1984 - 6 ep.); "Anna Karenina" (1985); "Whoops Apocalypse" (1988); "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (1988); "Headhunters" (1994), "Comic Act" (1998), etc.

## SHERLOCK HOLMES

In 2000, JAY Productions released an exciting CD (CDJAY 1334) which features the original music written by Patrick for the hit series "Sherlock Holmes" but whose themes he adapted and completed for this recording.



Jeremy Brett/Sherlock Holmes  
(Photo: IMDb)

The series is produced by Granada Television and includes: "The Sign of Four", "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" and "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" starring the famous English actor Jeremy Brett (Peter Jeremy William Huggins) who many consider to be the definitive Sherlock Holmes.

The recording was made on July 23rd and 25th 1987 in the very famous Abbey Road Studios in London. Patrick Gowers conducts the St. Paul's Cathedral Choir, the Gabrieli String Quartet and the Wren Orchestra of London. Three soloists participate:

Kenneth Sillito, violin; Leslie Pearson, piano and Neil Black, English horn.

The 19 beaches, except for the first one, are representative of various episodes:

1 "221B Baker Street" (Opening Theme); 2 "Elsie Cubitt" (The Dancing Men); 3 "Libera Me" (The Priory School); 4 "North By Ten And By Ten" (The Musgrave Ritual); 5. "Old Sherman's Dog Toby" (The Sign Of Four); 6. "Sutton's Nightmare" (The Resident Patient); 7. "River Chase" (The Sign Of Four); 8. "The Death Of Sherlock Holmes" (The Final Problem); 9. "Irene Adler (A Scandal In Bohemia); 10. Holmes In Europe (The Final Problem); 11. John Hector McFarlane And His Mother (The Norwood Builder); 12. Setting Out (The Priory School); 13. "Lucretia Venucci And Her Family" (The Six Napoleons); 14 "Mr Henry Baker's Christmas" (The Blue Carbuncle); 15 "The Illustrious Lord Bellinger" (The Second Stain); 16". On The Trail"; 17." Neville St. Clair's Nostalgia" (The Twisted Lip); 18. "The Bar Of Gold, Upper Swandam Lane" (The Twisted Lip); 19. "Baker Street Reunion" (The Empty House).

Note that the disc contains, on track 8, the splendid theme " The Death of Sherlock Holmes ", from the episode " The Final Problem ". It has a very special meaning for Sherlock's fans because Katharine, the daughter of Patrick and Caroline Gowers, played it, on the violin, at the funeral of Jeremy Brett, who died of a heart attack, on September 12, 1995 at the age of 61, which brought tears to the eyes of the audience. This shows the immense popularity of the actor but also the power of the emotion that Katharine was able to put into her performance.

Equally remarkable for its accuracy and sensitivity is the interpretation given in the recording by the famous English violinist Kenneth Sillito; his other interventions are of the same level, notably on track 9 "Irene Adler".

The quality of the orchestra, quartet and choir is also noteworthy, as is Patrick Gowers' impeccable conducting, which perfectly emphasizes both the nuances and the relief of his score. A very great moment!

In his commentary for the AllMusic Review site, American musicologist Peter Ditzel states :

*"People who aren't particularly interested in the Sherlock Holmes character may very well appreciate this recording. Patrick Gowers' musical eloquence is richly deployed in its great diversity but also with perfect cohesion. And this is what is remarkable here because music can be at once energetic, mysterious, introspective, poignant, noble and surreal without ever leaving the elements that are the essential basis of Sherlock Holmes' investigations: the street lights of London, the dark, dark Thames and the docks shrouded in a heavy, disturbing fog. »*

From a simple musical point of view, one can very well consider, in all objectivity,

that the themes, as they are presented on the disc, constitute a great symphonic piece, a magnificent Suite for orchestra and choir in which Patrick has most probably put the best of his imagination and which would be perfectly worthy of a public performance in a concert hall.

The score of "Sherlock Holmes" is much more than just film music; it is a splendid fresco that echoes, with great finesse and intelligence, some of the great moments of 20th Century European and American music. But it is entirely authentic Patrick Gowers.

## **PATRICK AND SPIRITUALITY**

During the 90's, without completely abandoning TV series, Patrick changes his musical orientation and produces serious, deep, even meditative works, but also serene, calm and whose climate is sometimes even very airy, with clearly spiritual motivations. He had already written his admirable "Viri Galilaei", dramatic and mystical, for the consecration of Richard Harries as Bishop of Oxford, on May 28, 1987, Time of the Ascension, in Saint Paul's Cathedral.

His choral works, including "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (2000) with organ and his great "Cantata" (1991) with organ and orchestra, are very much appreciated and express Patrick's mystical approach to spirituality, that is, in the sense of an intense meditation of eternity.

The "Toccatà" was commissioned in 1970 by the organist Simon Preston, who wanted a brilliant piece to close a recital, with a few chords "à la Basie". Unfortunately, the person writing the program for the concert thought it was a mistake when he read "Basie chords" and wrote "Basic chords" in a totally inappropriate manner.

Simon Preston introduced the score as a test in organ competitions, making it known to a large number of organists.

Patrick hears it, by chance, 18 years later, at Worcester Cathedral, played by Adrian Partington. His conversations with the organist led him to add a "Fugue" and it was Adrian Partington who was the first to perform, in May 1988, the two movements of the "Toccatà & Fugue" together.

The equally remarkable organ piece "An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary" was commissioned by Nicholas Danby and quickly became very popular. It is a variation on Jeremiah Clarke's 'Trumpet Voluntary' while the rhythm is a slightly jazzy version of Charles-Marie Widor's 'Toccatà'.

As for the very meditative "Adagio" for organ, made of restraint, of distance even, it was commissioned by Christopher Nickol.

## CONCERT FOR THE QUEEN MOTHER

In 1990, the "Suite for Solo Violin and Chamber Orchestra" was commissioned from Patrick Gowers by Paul Sacher, a musician and great Swiss patron of the arts. It was performed at the concert organised by the Prince of Wales in honour of the 90th birthday of his grandmother, the Queen Mother (Queen Mum).

The concert takes place at Buckingham Palace on August 2nd and is recorded live by EMI on a CD (7 54164 2) under the title "A Birthday Concert For My Grandmother". Eminent English conductor Raymond Leppard conducts the English Chamber Orchestra.

The initiative taken on this occasion by Prince Charles is, of course, very sympathetic, but it also allows, on a musical level, to appreciate very beautiful scores in magnificent interpretations.



(Photo: Anthony Crickmay/EMI Records)

The evening begins with "The National Anthem" (God save the Queen) in a very personal arrangement by Raymond Leppard.

It is followed by Johann Strauss II's "Albion-Polka Op. 102", then by David Matthews' "Romanza For Cello and Small Orchestra Op. 49", commissioned and performed here by Mstislav Rostropovitch.

From Edward Elgar, we hear an excerpt from the "Nursery Suite": the fifth movement "The Wagon (Passes)".

José-Luis García is the soloist in Patrick Gowers' "Suite" which consists of four movements: Flourish - Pastoral - Nocturne and Réjouissance.

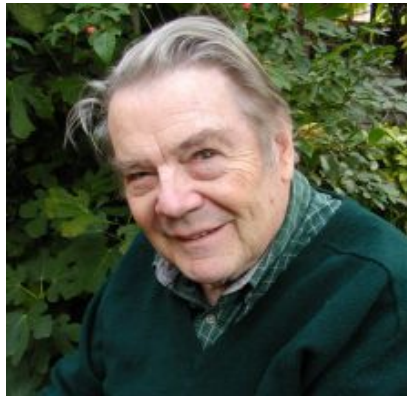
In 1944, Eric Coates composed a Suite "The Three Elizabeths" whose central part, played by the orchestra, is dedicated to the Queen Mother, the heroine of the day, recalling the time of her youth. On oboe: Neil Black.

The concert closes with the premiere of a work commissioned by Prince Charles from

the Scottish composer Patrick Doyle and recalling the life of the Queen Mother in Scotland. *The Thistle and the Rose*, for soprano, choir and orchestra, is in four parts: *O Happy Star* - *The Thistle and the Rose* - *The Commemoration* and *A New Year Gift to the Queen Mary*, when she came home for the first time, 1562.

The orchestrations are by Lawrence Ashmore; the Scottish poems, compiled by Kirsteen McCue, are sung, in the original dialect, by Marie McLaughlin and the Tallis Chamber Choir.

A very interesting analysis of the event is published in the November 1990 issue of the prestigious English music magazine *Gramophone*. The author is the famous musicologist Ivan March, initiator, with Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton and Paul Czajkowski, of the imposing *"The Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music"*, a reference on the subject.



Ivan March  
(Photo: Gramophone)

Let's hear him out:

*"The programme begins with Raymond Leppard's very attractive arrangement of 'God save the Queen', in the spirit of baroque music, with an elegant tempo and, surprisingly, a little reminiscent of Handel's operas (strangely enough, Ivan March does not mention Johann Strauss II's very pleasant 'Polka'; a slight oversight). Next comes David Mathews' 'Romanza', commissioned by Rostropovich and of a slightly nostalgic character. The atmosphere is well defined by a writing that places the cello mostly in the upper range of its range. Rostropovitch plays his score wonderfully well with a deliberately restrained intensity. Next is the delicious crescendo and decrescendo of Elgar's 'The Wagon passes', which so charmed the Duchess of York when it was first recorded in 1931 under the direction of the composer.*

*I was very impressed by Patrick Gowers' melodious and spontaneous 'Suite', a music that combines liveliness with a more positive lyricism than that offered by David Mathews' piece. Commissioned by Paul Sacher, the 'Suite' receives its first performance here and José-Luis Garcia is the excellent lawyer.*

*Then comes one of my favourite slow movements by Eric Coates, with its memorable oboe theme and delicate Scottish reference. Finally, we hear a perfect homage to a much-loved royal figure, perfectly in the tradition, if not the style, of Purcell, and who fully meets the musical wishes of the Prince of Wales. The four movements remind me a little of Elgar's 'Sea Songs' but they have their own individuality. Marie McLaughlin is a splendid soloist; she sings beautifully and the Tallis Chamber Choir makes a joyful and eloquent contribution. A beautiful concert and a very good recording, the proceeds of which go to the Prince's Foundation. »*

The Prince Charles Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous financial assistance of Lloyds Bank in the production of this recording.

### **A CLASSIC MASTER**

Patrick Gowers' purely classical scores reveal a perfectly assured compositional technique, whether orchestral, instrumental or vocal, a discourse that does not suffer the slightest hesitation and an inspiration that is essentially based on the composer's personal convictions and aspirations. Organ pages often require a high degree of power and virtuosity.

From this period, we appreciate, among other things, the publication of two discs devoted solely to compositions by the Master.

The first CD: "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" was recorded in May 2005 and January 2006 by Lammas Records (Lamm 196D) at Guildford Cathedral (Surrey) with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, the Guildford Camerata and the Guildford Cathedral Choir conducted alternately by David Hill and Stephen Farr; on the organ, David Davies and Stephen Farr.

The titles are: "Veni, Sancte Spiritus", "Cantata" (in five parts), "Adagio" (organ), "Chester Lullaby", "Toccata" (organ), "Fugue" (organ), "Libera me" and the dreaded but amusing "An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary" (organ).

Several members of the Camerata also appear as soloists: sopranos Katie Butler, Alison Hill, alto Kate Symonds and tenor Daniel Joy in "Cantata" and soprano Jennifer Snapes in "Chester Lullaby".

In his beautiful analysis of this CD for MusicWeb International, the English musicologist John Quinn ends by saying :

*"All the interpretations are excellent and the music deserves to be known. I guess most of the pieces here are getting their very first recording. I have enjoyed this collection of works by Patrick Gowers very much and I am pleased that such a generous selection of his music has been assembled on a single CD that can only be warmly recommended. »*

The other CD: "Patrick Gowers: Choral & Organ Music" dates from July 2006. The sessions take place in Sheffield Cathedral (South Yorkshire) with the Sheffield Cathedral Choir, conducted by Neil Taylor. On the organ: the impressive Anthony Gowing. John Keys is at the synthesizer in "Viri Galilaei". The CD is released in 2007 by Griffin Records (GCCD 4056).

The disc contains: 'Tocatta & Fugue' (organ), 'Libera, Me/II', 'Viri Galilaei', 'Advent Sequence' (in four parts), 'Holy, Holy, Holy', 'Balulalow' and 'An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary' (organ).

The appreciation of the American composer Blair Sanderson for AllMusic Review, is a little reserved as to the technical quality of the recording. On the other hand, musically speaking, here is his opinion:

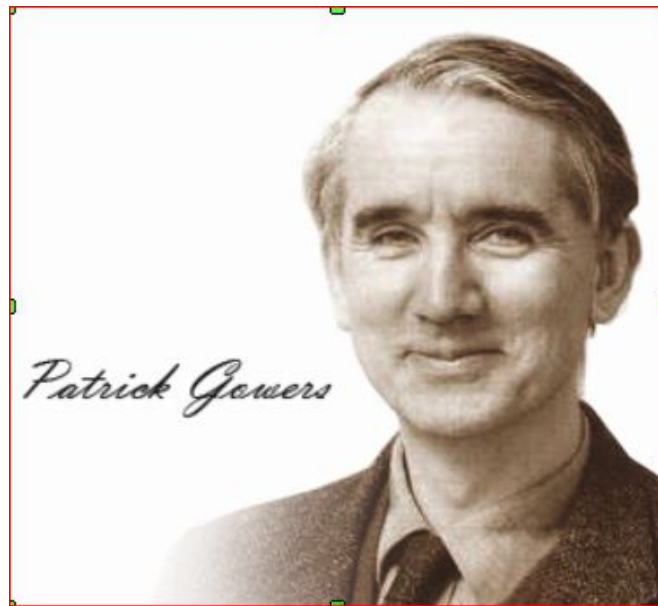
*"This record features Patrick Gowers' flamboyant 'Tocatta and Fugue' and 'An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary' in a masterful performance by Anthony Gowing. The choral pieces sometimes suffer from a somewhat approximate vocal level. The music of Patrick Gowers is of sufficient value to justify more and better recordings in the future. »*

We will leave the responsibility for her comment to Blair Sanderson, while admitting that the numerical inferiority of the male voices unfortunately does not place them on the level of the very beautiful female choir. That being said, we have there, in spite of everything, an important CD which offers the possibility to listen, even to discover, magnificent works of Patrick Gowers in excellent conditions. The very musicological notes of the libretto are signed Anthony Gowing and Patrick Gowers.

## **CHORAL WORKS**

There are also pages by Patrick Gowers, together with works by other composers, in various organ recitals and concerts by English choirs. Everyone knows, indeed, that the British have long loved singing in all its forms; this is demonstrated every summer by the enthusiasm with which they take part in the exciting concerts of the Proms, especially the last one: "*Last Night of the Proms*" whose finale, very patriotic, is particularly impressive.

Another example of English singing is the CD Hyperion (CDA67680) recorded in June 2007 and dedicated to "The Feast of the Ascension at Westminster Abbey". It contains, in particular, the "Viri Galilaei" sung by the prestigious Westminster Abbey Choir, which unites the voices of young boys and adults, and whose director, James O'Donnell, gives a very technical commentary on the score:



(Photo: Caroline Gowers)

*"Patrick Gowers' extensive production includes several sacred choral works, the most famous of which, 'Viri Galilaei', is an anthem for the Ascension, which is a dramatic and emotional Ascension of Jesus, conveying the literally out of this world side of the scene... The choral writing of the choir is gradually taking on a more solid character, Less disembodied, and the music becomes more biting, more rhythmic ... The rise in power continues inexorably, followed by a jazzy, propulsive, organizational part, interspersed with powerful 'Alleluias' ... Then the music fades, little by little, in the mysticism of the opening to finally evaporate into nothingness. "On the organ: Robert Quinney.*



The Westminster Abbey Choir  
(Photo: Westminster Abbey)

The disc also features pages by Charles Villiers Stanford, Bernard Rose, Joseph



Barnby, Benjamin Britten, Heinrich Schütz, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gerald Finzi, Peter Philips, George Macfarren, Francis Pott and William Walton, including his "Missa brevis", which, as its name suggests, is very compact.

The programme is divided into three main themes: Matins - Eucharist - Vespers. The CD is magnificent from beginning to end and the interpretation of "Viri Galilaei" is nothing less than grandiose. The highest level of choral singing is reached here: the sublime voices of the young boys, supported by strong male voices, are punctuated by the majestic, perfectly captured interventions of the Great Organs installed by Harrison and Harrison in 1937 for the Coronation of King George VI.

For his part, Simon Cummings, English composer of instrumental and electronic music, does not hesitate to make a subtle comparison between Patrick Gowers' music and the scores Olivier Messiaen and Charles Tournemire composed for Ascension Day on his Blog '5:4' dedicated to contemporary music:

*"Patrick Gowers' 'Viri Galilaei' is a wonderful alternative for the occasion and remains the most exciting new anthem of recent years. »*

Indeed, Patrick Gowers' score is very much appreciated by English choirs and is willingly included in their programmes.

This is the case of a Delphian CD (DCD 34174) whose title is simply "Viri Galilaei" and which is performed, with great generosity, by the thirty young singers of the Choir of Merton College of Oxford, under the direction of Benjamin Nicholas or Peter Phillips. This is the fifth CD; it will be recorded in June 2015 with, on the organ, Charles Warren or Peter Shepherd.

Patrick Gowers closes the programme, after Jonathan Dove, Thomas Tallis, Edward Elgar, Thomas Morley, John Rutter, Hubert Parry, William Byrd, Roger Quilter, Gerald Finzi and William H. Harris.

Created in 2008, the mixed choir quickly became one of the best in Great Britain.

Already in 2003, the Delphian company released a CD (DCD 34017) "Ascension" sung by the powerful Choir of St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh (Scotland) conducted by Matthew Owens.

It features pages by James Mac Millan, Kenneth Leighton, Richard Allain, various Hymns and Psalms, "Viri Galilaei" and a subtle yet energetic interpretation by Matthew Owens of Olivier Messiaen's "L'Ascension" (four movements) in its version for solo organ.

As for Patrick's composition, it is sung by the choir whose sublime, aerial accents of the soprano voices, boys and girls (here accepted since 1978), are highlighted. Also participating are tenor Ashley Turnell and bass Jamieson Sutherland accompanied by the duo of organists Simon Nieminsky - Adam Binks.

Built in 1326, Clare College is the second oldest, after Peterhouse, of the 31 colleges

that now make up the University of Cambridge (England) founded in 1209. But Clare College's renown is also due to the creation, in 1971, of the Choir of Clare College, an ensemble of some thirty singers directed by Graham Ross; it ranks among the best university choirs in the world and brilliantly continues the great English choral tradition. It has been distinguished by France Musique, Diapason and Gramophone for the quality of its recordings, of which there are many. Organist David Dunnett (see below), currently in Norwich, recalls his time at Clare College:

*"Studying the organ at Clare was a wonderful experience. I was fortunate to make music with so many gifted musicians, both in College and University. Practicing the organ every day was crucial to my development. The Clare Choir had a friendly, family atmosphere and was made up of a variety of talented individuals. »*

A CD Harmonia Mundi (HMU 907623) "Ascendit Deus" (Music for Ascension and Pentecost) offers an insight into the Choir of Clare College with The Dmitri Ensemble under the direction of Graham Ross, a young English conductor and composer, born in 1985, who, among other things, demands great diversity in programme design.

The sessions will take place in April, June and July 2014, simultaneously in St. Albans, Tonbridge and Gospel Oak.

The CD will be released in 2015 and actually includes pieces that cover five centuries of music. They are by Peter Philips, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Brett Dean, Nico Muhly, Gerald Finzi, Charles Villiers Stanford, Frank Martin, Graham Ross, Judith Weir, Jonathan Harvey, Edvard Grieg, Edward Elgar, Giles Swayne and Patrick Gowers' "Viri Galilaei" but this time in an orchestration by Graham Ross.



Choir of Clare College, Cambridge  
(Photo: Spitalfields Music)

The participation of the Dmitri Ensemble obviously modifies the score both in its structure and harmonically, but the integration is perfect. The arrangement is written with great taste and subtlety, which restores a musical work quite comparable to the original.

Soloists: Laurence Booth-Clibborn, tenor; Elliot Fitzgerald, bass.

On the organ: Peter Harrison and Matthew Jorysz.

As with the entire disc, the interpretation of "Viri Galilaei" is of the highest level of perfection: the beauty of the voices, the technique of the singing, the precision of the ensembles and the intelligence of the direction amply justify the Clare College Choir's reputation for excellence.

To underline the competence of John Rutter, the sound engineer, which allows an audition of the highest quality, as well as the happy design of the accompanying booklet which contains all the comments, biographical elements and texts of the songs established in three languages: English, French and German.

Our latest illustration of "Viri Galilaei" takes us across the Atlantic and lands us in Boston, Massachusetts to listen to The Trinity Choir of Trinity Church in the City of Boston, conducted by Brian Jones, on a Dorian CD (DOR 93191 DDD) entitled "Radiant Light - Songs for the Millennium". The organists are H. Ross Wood and Geoffrey Wieting and the recordings were made in June 1999 at Trinity Church.

That said, we are once again hovering on the heights of choral art here. The Trinity Choir brings together about 70 singers (sopranos, altos, tenors, basses), including several professional soloists, and participates every Sunday in the 11 a.m. service.

Brian Jones builds ensemble tones that are a miracle of harmony, nuance, precision and even power when needed. Admirable!

The programme for the second millennium includes magnificent pages by Franz Biebl, John Tavener, Arvo Pärt, Richard Wayne Dirksen, Morten Lauridsen, Piotr Ilitch Tchaikovsky, Randall Thompson, Victor Kalinnikov, John Rutter and Patrick Gowers, whose "Viri Galilaei" receives remarkable treatment both in terms of the voices, which are at ease at all times, and in terms of the presence of the organ, which is perfectly recorded.

In addition, Trinity Church in Boston has several vocal ensembles: the Trinity Choir, the Trinity Choristers, the Trinity Schola Cantorum, the Trinity Evening Choir, the Compline Choir, the La Farge Ensemble and the Hallelu Singers.

Full details at <https://www.trinitychurchboston.org/worship/music/choirs> .

We will not leave Patrick Gowers' choral music without listening to his beautiful "Ad te levavi" (To You I lift my soul), the first of four songs commissioned in 1999 for the Advent celebrations by the Southern Cathedrals Festival. The atmosphere is calm, serene, meditative from the beginning to gradually reach a strong central and then return gently, in the finale, to the atmosphere of the beginning, as if in a kind of recollection.

A magnificent recording was released in 2006 by Griffin (GCCD 4052) under the title "Advent in Winchester - O Come, Emmanuel" performed by the Winchester

Cathedral Choir conducted by Adrew Lumsden with Sarah Baldock at the organ. The choir, which continues a thousand-year-old tradition of singing in Winchester, perfectly recreates the interiority that Patrick wanted for this first Sunday of Advent. The CD also features pieces by William Byrd, Paul Manz, J.S. Bach, Thomas Weelkes, James Macmillan, Herbert Howells, Franz Biebl, E W Naylor, Johannes Brahms and Charles V. Stanford.

## **ORGAN MUSIC**

Note the two CDs that OxRecs Digital has devoted to "The Organs of Eton College" Vol. 1 (OXCD-65) and Vol. 2 (OXCD-66) published in 1996.

The famous English college, which Timothy, son of Patrick Gowers, and Richard, his grandson, attended, has a set of four organs of very different types, very contrasting and which are the pride of the establishment.

Let us just remember Vol. 1 which contains Patrick's famous "Tocatta" performed, with brilliance and virtuosity, on the great Hill Organ in the College Chapel, by Christopher Hughes, one of the four organists participating in the various sessions, the others being Robert Quinney, Paul Plummer and Clive Driskill-Smith.

The critics declare both the recording and the production exemplary; they warmly recommend the two CDs, which contain a total of 23 tracks by various composers in performances that reflect the very high level of education, both general and musical, that the college offers.



(Photo: Eton College)



Eton College Chapel Hill Organ  
(Photo: Eton College)

It includes pieces by Byrd, Gibbons, Willan, Parry, Gowers, Whitlock, Ireland, Dupré, Grayston Ives, Vierne, von Paradis, Leighton, J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Sweelinck, Daquin, Bruna, Tunder, Dickinson and Dunhill performed on either the Snetzler Chamber Organ or the Hill Organ. A nap!

Vol. 2 features several performances by the four organists of Vol. 1 but also by a fifth performer: David Davies, in pages by J.S. Bach, Buxtehude, Sweelinck, Daquin, Bruna, Tunder, Parry, Dickinson and Dunhill played on the Flentrop Organ or on the Lewis/Hunter Organ.

Without claiming to be complete in the presentation of Patrick Gowers' works, the CD market and the favour given to some of his compositions offer us the possibility of discovering some very beautiful recordings that contain one or the other of his scores.

In a Regent CD (REGCD 175) devoted to "The English Cathedral Series", Volume VII was recorded in June 2002 by David Dunnett, who has been the organist and Master of Music at Norwich Cathedral (County Norfolk, North-East London) since January 1996. The Cathedral was built (1096-1145) in the Romanesque style and also received contributions from the Gothic period.

His recital features pieces by John Cook, Harold Darke, Alfred Hollins, Edward Bairstow, William Harris, Hearthcote Statham, Ronald Watson, York Bowen, Herbert Howells and Patrick Gowers' "An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary", which he cleverly personifies in a magnificent crescendo: a discreet opening, the middle assertive and an admirable strong finale.



Norwich Cathedral  
(Photo: Visit Norwich)

David Dunnett, talented classical organist, pianist and harpsichordist, also appreciates and practices jazz (another "Crusader"!).

His studies took him from Birmingham to Cambridge, from the Royal Academy of Music to Marylebone Parish Church (London, City of Westminster) and, after the Uppingham School (Rutland, East Midlands), as Assistant Director of Music, he was, for four years, assistant organist at the Winchester Cathedral where he gave numerous concerts. David participates in radio broadcasts, recording sessions and tours in Brazil, USA and Australia.

In 2013, the Priory firm publishes, under the title "The Grand Organ of Norwich Cathedral", a beautiful box set (PRDVD 11) - 15 £st - which contains a Blu-Ray HD and an all regions DVD as well as a bonus CD.

It features David Dunnett in pages by G.F. Handel, J.S. Bach, Heathcote Statham, Percy Whitlock, Camille Saint-Saëns, Jehan Alain, Alexandre Guilmant, William Walond, Ronald Watson, Percy Fletcher, Sir Edward Elgar and Iain Farrington.



David Dunnett  
(Photo: Ely Cathedral)

In his present position, he is called upon to work with the Norwich Philharmonic Society and the University of East Anglia in Norwich, a university created in 1963, specialising in advanced scientific research, and which has a student body of about 14,000.

We find the same score on Hyperion (CDA 68214) under the fingers and feet of Christopher Herrick, whose disc "Organ Fireworks - World Tour" is conceived in a rather original way in the sense that each work is interpreted on a different organ.



(Photo: Christopher Herrick)

It is, in fact, an album published in April 2017 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the musician and is a compilation of 14 tracks, each taken from one of the 14 volumes that make up the impressive "Organ Fireworks" published by Hyperion from 1984 to 2009 and seems to be still available according to the official website of the firm: [https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D\\_CDA68214](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA68214) .

Preceded by his broad smile, the friendly and charismatic English virtuoso invites us to accompany him on a wonderful musical journey that will last no less than a quarter of a century.

We start with Westminster Abbey, then it's the Royal Albert Hall, St Eustatius in Paris, St Bartholomew's Church in New York, Turku Cathedral in Finland, Wellington Town Hall in New Zealand, The Hallgrímskirkja in Reykjavík (Iceland), the Hong Kong Cultural Center, St. Vincent's Collegiate Church in Bern (Berner Münster) in Switzerland, the Winspear Centre in Edmonton (Canada), the Lay Family Concert Organ in Dallas (Texas), Haderslev Cathedral in Denmark, Västerås Cathedral in Sweden and the Great Organ in Melbourne Town Hall (Australia).

Hyperion has established the present selection with the intention of offering the music lover a pleasant listening experience by proposing relatively well-known pages, some of them amusing, even for some of them brilliantly interpreted by Christopher Herrick.

The 14 compositions are due to : David Johnson, Edwin Lemare, Marco Enrico Bossi, Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély, Jehan Alain, Norman Cocker, Julius Reubke, Franz Liszt, Joseph Bonnet, Mons Leidvin Takle, Petr Eben, Guy Weitz, Giuseppe Verdi and Patrick Gowers whose "An Occasional Trumpet Voluntary" was recorded in Switzerland in November 2000.

Christopher Herrick has chosen an energetic, dynamic interpretation with a clean sound and well asserted rhythms, a lively music.

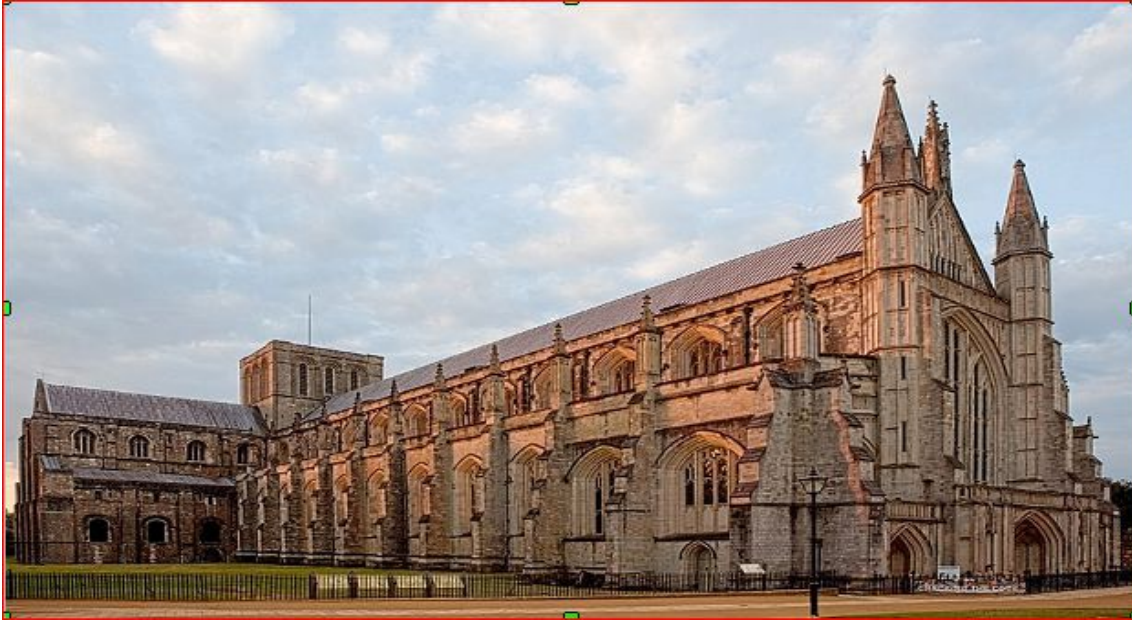
The 32-page booklet that accompanies the disc is also very rich. The multitude and relevance of the information it contains provides a detailed knowledge of each instrument used, the contents and date of the original album, a short biography of the selected composers, a few confidences from Christopher Herrick (more than 40 albums with Hyperion) and beautiful photos of the buildings that were used for the recordings.

It should be added that, despite the diversity of the instruments and the spread of production over 25 years, the engravings are of excellent technical quality.

Another score by Patrick Gowers that also receives the favour of organists is his great "Toccata".



We find it on the program of a Priory CD (PRCD 329) "Antiphonies" recorded, on April 17 and 18, 1990, (and produced) by Timothy Byram-Wigfield (born in 1963) on the organ of Winchester Cathedral (Hampshire).



Winchester Cathedral  
(Photo: Antony McCallum/WyrdLight)



(Photo: Alamy Images)

It is the largest European Gothic cathedral (170 meters long) built between 1079 and 1093, a feat, but restored in Gothic mainly in the 14th Century and has the only diatonic bell tower of 14 bells in the world. It would also have been the first church to have a large organ.

Timothy Byram-Wigfield's programme contains pages by J. Brahms, J.S. Bach, F. Mendelssohn, J. Roger-Ducasse, W. Mathias, F. Peeters as well as the "Toccata" by Patrick Gowers.



Timothy Byram-Wigfield  
(Photo: Neil Collier/Priory Records)

Many of these pieces have a rather intimate character that Timothy is careful to render with intelligence and great delicacy. In the more majestic passages, he uses to the maximum, but with discernment, the enormous possibilities of his instrument. And this is the case with the "Tocatta" for which he offers a very contrasted performance: virtuoso in the central part and grandiose in the impressive finale.

Today Tim is Director of Music at All Saints' Margaret Street Church in London where he has a 1910 Harrison and Harrison organ.

His generous discography includes several works by Olivier Messiaen including "La Nativité du Seigneur" (Delphian Records DCD 34078).

At Nimbus Records, we have a 2 CD box set (NI 5580/81) published in 1999 and dedicated, by organist Kevin Bowyer, to several "Contemporary Works for Organ" which he plays on the famous Marcussen of Denmark organ (1995), one of the most beautiful in England, which is located in the Chapel of St. Augustine of Canterbury, at the Tonbridge School (Kent) founded in 1553 and reserved for boys.

The generous programme includes works by John Tavener, Brian Ferneyhough, Wilfrid Mellers, Janet Graham, James Iliff, Alan Ridout, Arvo Pärt, Diana Burrell and Patrick Gowers, whose "Tocatta and Fugue" we have the opportunity to hear here in its entirety.



Tonbridge School Chapel  
(Photo: Nigel Chadwick)

Kevin Bowyer offers a contrasting, vigorous and virtuosic interpretation, served, to perfection, by an instrument that was wonderfully restored in 1995 after the fire that ravaged the chapel. The sonorities are impressively clear, in the most subtle nuances as well as in the forte.



Kevin Bowyer  
(Photo: Mariinsky Theatre)

Brief biography based on the programme published by the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg for the "Stars of The White Nights 2019" festival:

*"Born in January 1961 in Southend-on-Sea (East Anglia), Kevin Bowyer studied with Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, David Sanger, Virginia Black and Paul Steinitz. He won five international organ competitions.*

*In 1987, after the world premiere of Kaikhosru Sorabji's (born Leon Dudley Sorabji) "Symphony for Organ", a two-hour work for solo organ, which was considered impossible to perform upon its publication in 1925, Kevin established a solid reputation as a brilliant interpreter of contemporary music, even of extreme technical complexity.*

*In June 2010, he premiered Sorabji's "Second Symphony for Organ" (1929 - 1932) in Glasgow and then in Amsterdam, which lasts nine hours.*

*He gives many concerts, participates in festivals, alone or with orchestra, tours in Europe, North America, Australia and Japan.*

*Several of his many recordings have received awards, both for contemporary and other music: Alkan, Brahms, Schumann, Reubke, Hindemith, Schoenberg, Messiaen or Alain. He has published the complete organ music of J.S. Bach on 29 Nimbus Records CDs.*

*Kevin teaches at St. Giles International Organ School, gives lectures and master classes. He is staff organist at the University of Glasgow. »*

## **THE GRAND SILENCE !**

In 2001, while actively working on a very large work (his best, he said) for the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, he suffered a stroke. He never wrote a single note of music again; the score, which was to be performed in the summer of 2001 at Gloucester Cathedral, was never finished!

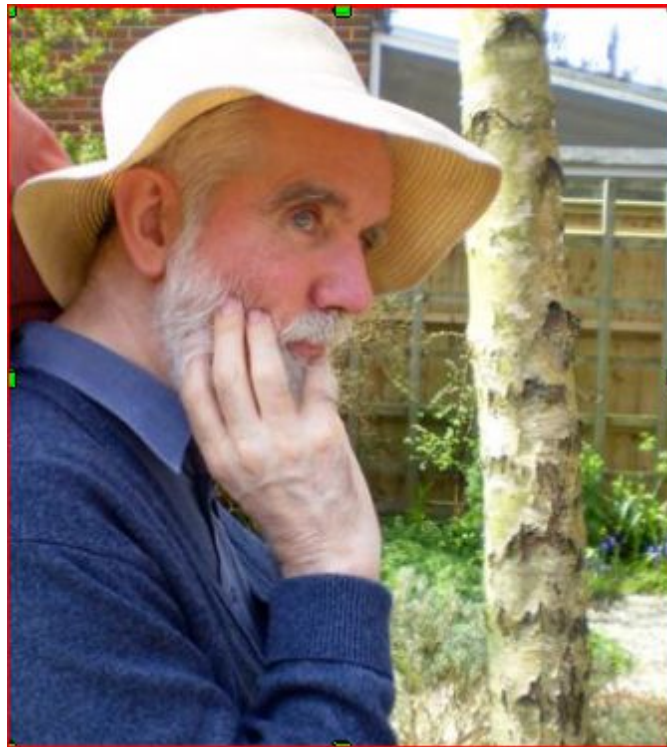
After several long and unsuccessful stints at St. Thomas's Hospital, Patrick Gowers died in London on 30 December 2014 at the age of 78.

A church service is being held in his honour at 2.30 p.m. on 21 February 2015 at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common (London).

The English composer, Christopher Gunning, draws a portrait of Patrick as he knew him well in "The Guardian":

*"A composer generally likes to surround himself with certain things that are his sources of inspiration, but it is difficult to find a composer whose environment is as*

*diverse as Patrick Gowers': musical scores from all eras, jazz CDs, Bach cantatas, pieces by Debussy and Ravel, mathematics books, computers, a Bechstein upright piano, etc....*



(Photo: Caroline Gowers)

*This very incomplete list reveals some of the passions that fuelled his eclectic thinking and enabled him to produce music of the greatest originality ...*

*Distrustful of atonality, he creates his own form, the extended tonality, developed from harmonies of jazz and 20th Century French music. The result is very apparent in his concert works and church music. His Toccata, composed in 1970, to which he added a Fugue in 1986, is one of the most flamboyant and difficult scores in the organ repertoire ...*

*During the 80's and 90's, Patrick put a lot of energy in the service of The Association of Professional Composers and The Performing Right Society where his intelligence and innate sense of justice enabled him to bring about much appreciated changes ...*

*To those who did not know him, Patrick could appear somewhat distant, but those who knew him well could not find a kinder, more benevolent, more sympathetic soul! »*

As for John Boyd, he sums up his admiration in "The Independent":

*"With the death of Patrick Gowers, England has lost a great composer and a remarkable spirit: impeccable in his logic, very clear in his intentions, modest and warm. His friends looked upon him with the respect and devotion due to a master, a wise man, which he really was. The questions he was asked did not always receive an immediate answer, but after the time of reflection, the answer was brilliant and*

*perfectly focused. His talents were exceptional, always used with rigour and imagination. He liked to take an interest in the activities he discovered in other people, but in a frank and positive approach, without condescension ...*

*He wrote a beautiful Toccata for organ at the request of Simon Preston and a Guitar Concerto for John Williams. In short, he was the musician of musicians! ...*

*The works from which he derived the greatest personal satisfaction are certainly part of his church music; his Ascension Day Anthem (St. Paul's Cathedral) has become a standard of the genre. »*

Patrick Gowers has gone but his music, with its multiple horizons, is still very much alive, as are the magnificent memories that still occupy the daily thoughts of all those who knew him.

***Bravo, Patrick, and thank you for stopping by!***

**THANK YOU.**

A first big thank you to Caroline for all the information and above all the many memories she was kind enough to share with us. Thanks also to Timothy for his very useful help.

My gratitude also goes to the many speakers quoted in the text, without whom this modest portrait of Patrick Gowers would have been much less lively:

Jacques Bonnaure (Classica), John Boyd (The Independent), Clare College, Simon Cummings (Blog 5:4), Peter Ditzel et Blair Sanderson (AllMusic Review), European Suzuki Association, Festival Resonances in Belgium, Christopher Gunning (The Guardian), Linda Hamling (St. Albans International Organ Festival), Julian Haylock (The Strad), Jessica Hinchliffe et Terri Begley (ABC Brisbane -Australie), King's College Cambridge, Allan Kozinn (The New York Times), M-Magazine, Ivan March, Marc Rochester et John B. Steane (Gramophone), Mariinsky Theatre, Dan Morgan, John Quinn (Music Web), My Genealogy, James O'Donnell (Hyperion Records), Francis O'Gorman (Catholic Herald), Michel Prodeau, Alain Tercinet (Le Nouveau Dictionnaire du Jazz), The Telegraph, Trinity College Choir Cambridge, Melissa Viney (The Guardian), Wikipedia,