

Gustav Holst

**DUO CONCERTANTE FOR
TROMBONE & ORGAN**
World Premiere Recording

**& WORKS BY ELGAR, GUILMANT,
LISZT, ROPARTZ,
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS & EBEN**

THE CIVIL SERVANT DUO OF 1984

**ULRIK SPANG-HANSEN, ORGAN
NIELS-OLE BO JOHANSEN, TROMBONE**



THE CIVIL SERVANT DUO

Embedsmandsduoen, the Civil Servant Duo, was founded in 1984 by the trombonist Niels-Ole Bo Johansen and the organist Ulrik Spang-Hanssen. Over the years the duo has been particularly active concert players in a repertoire embracing everything composers have written and will write (?) for the two instruments in combination; but the best transcriptions are also included as regular features of the concerts, which are held anywhere an organ is available. The Civil Servant Duo has prevailed on several Danish composers to write for the two instruments, and some of these works were included on their first CD "Alpha & Omega" (Paula, PACD 87 (1994)).

NIELS-OLE BO JOHANSEN

Niels-Ole Bo Johansen (born 1961) began his musical career in the Viborg FDF Orchestra as a trombonist. In 1980 he was engaged by the Prince's Lifeguard Regiment, and in 1984 he played his way into Funen Lifeguard Regiment in Odense as solo trombonist. In 1986 he came to the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, from 1993 as co-principal trombonist. Besides his orchestral work he is a very active participant in Danish musical life. Among other things he is a co-founder of Århus Sinfonietta and trombonist in the same ensemble and teaches at the academe-

mies of music in Århus and Kristianssand, Norway. Niels-Ole Bo Johansen, who has been studying since 1988 with Benny Sluchin of IRCAM in Paris, played bass trombone in The New Music Orchestra in 1985, 1986 and 1992. He has done extensive work as a soloist, chamber musician and instructor. In 1990 he was awarded the Thomas Jensen Scholarship and in 1992 the Music Critic's Prize as a member of the Århus Sinfonietta.

ULRIK SPANG-HANSEN

Ulrik Spang-Hanssen (born 1953) trained with Anders Riber at the Royal Academy of Music in Århus with his solo class debut in 1981. He has also studied with Gaston Litaize in Paris and Jacques von Oortmerssen, as well as studying performance practice with Jesper Bøje Christensen in Basel. Ulrik Spang-Hanssen has given numerous concerts both in Denmark and abroad, and has recorded the complete organ works of Carl Nielsen and Buxtehude, as well as Bach's organ concertos, on CD for Paula Records. Since 1983 he has been organist at Our Lady's Church in Assens on Funen. As assistant professor on The Funen Academy of Music he has held many master classes abroad. Ulrik Spang-Hanssen is also an enthusiastic jazz pianist and Hammond organist, a role in which he has appeared in many recordings.

THE WORLD OF YESTERDAY

Our great-grandfathers stare purposefully out at us from yellowed daguerreotypes and photographs from the attic, and we can listen to their music on ageing recordings made in the beginning of this century. The pictures are faded and the records crackle, but nevertheless we get the distinct impression of a time when everything was *more*: the citizens were more august, the women more dressed up, virtuosos were more virtuosic, strings more sweeping, artists more artistic, nationalism more blazoning, and confidence in progress more golden. Fin de siècle.

Some pessimism and fear of the future did steal in as the First World War drew nearer, but none of this is apparent in Gustav Holst's "Duo Concertante for Trombone and Organ". This recently discovered work was written in 1894 when Holst was 20 years old and it is recorded here for the first time. Holst was a delicate and asthmatic child, and to strengthen his lungs he took trombone-lessons. It is true that he started his studies at the Royal College

of Music as a pianist and composer, but increasing problems with his right arm quickly forced him to return to the trombone to earn a living.

The first performance of the "Duet" was arranged by his father, Adolph Holst, to celebrate Gustav's finally getting the grant that would enable him to finish his composition studies. The concert took place on 8 May 1895 at the Highbury Congregation Church in Cheltenham, where the family lived. It achieved a great success. A local musician, John Boyce, played the trombone and papa Adolph himself performed on the organ; from the look of the organ part, he must have had nimble fingers. The trombone on the other hand, utilises the vocal more than the virtuoso aspect of the instrument.

No sign yet of "The Planets", whose composer was called "a British ultra-modern" by "The Musical Mirror" in 1923 at the time of his first visit to America. The first part of the work is a solemn march in C minor. The second part a quicker move-

ment in C major 6/4, where the trombone and the organ each present its broad sustained cantilena over an accompaniment of whirling sixteenths, and where especially the soul-stirring canon in waltz time in the middle and, to put it mildly, the spirited conclusion call forth a gratified smile at being in the presence of so much youthfulness.

The organ solos on this record were composed by Holst's acquaintances, and all at some time in their existence appeared in a brass band version. *Edward Elgar's Sonata No. 2 for organ* was written in 1930 as a piece for "The Crystal Palace Brass Band Festival" competition held in the same year and the title was "Severn Suite". Oddly enough, Holst had composed the competition piece for the festival two years earlier. Elgar's piece was dedicated to George Bernard Shaw, who attended the first performance; the composer himself later arranged it for symphony orchestra, but it was his close friend, *Ivor Atkins*, organist at Worcester Cathedral who, with the composer's permission,

transcribed four of the movements of the original work for organ. These movements are called: *Worcester Castle*, *Tournament*, *Cathedral* and *Coda* - a real piece of imperial music that, in spite of its relatively late date, would make great-grandfather on the wall smile appreciatively.

Nationalism in composers like Holst and *Vaughan Williams*, who were half a generation younger than Elgar was expressed in growing interest for the motherland's folk music, in which both gentlemen also took an active part. Two Welsh folk melodies were the source of Vaughan William's two organ preludes written in the 1920's. Vaughan Williams was an organist for a time and the pieces were dedicated to his organ teacher. Later, in the 1950's, he used the same melodies in a brass band composition commissioned by the Salvation Army.

From England we then jump to the distant continent to the Breton composer, *Guy Ropartz*. The extremely productive Ropartz

started out as a lawyer until at a relatively late age (according to the standards of the time) he decided on a musical career and began to study composition at the Conservatory in Paris under Dubois and others. Later, Vincent d'Indy's work made such an impression that he decided to study at the same place as that gentleman and he subsequently joined César Franck's circle, seconding in his attempts to create a French symphonic tradition. He ended his active career as director of the Strasbourg conservatory, after which he moved back to Brittany where he lived to be very old, composing to the end. His "Pièce" for trombone and (originally) piano is undoubtedly a commissioned work from his old alma mater in Paris, where a competition is held annually for each instrument.

Both in this and in other respects, the piece resembles that by the older *Guilmant*, who at the time was organist at the Trinité church and as a leader of the organ class at the Paris conservatory stood at the peak of his fame. Both pieces are in the relatively rare key of E flat minor, both start

adagio and both end with sweeping scales in E flat major. There can't be much doubt that Ropartz has looked over the celebrated old master's shoulder. Not that he was inferior, on the contrary, it could be said that his childhood training in a Jesuit school, where he learned to play the cornet, gave him a greater awareness of the possibilities of the instrument, and his solo part is therefore even more virtuosic.

It was no doubt his acquaintance with the trombonist, Carl Eduard Grosse, that prompted *Franz Liszt* to compose for this rare combination of instruments. Germany has a long tradition for trombone performances in church, of the so-called "Posaunenchor", and Liszt himself called his "*Hosiannah!*" a "nice little Sunday piece", in which the trombone is for once more of an accompaniment, forms so to say one of the organ stops. The trombone voice therefore is "ad libitum".

The first reaction on hearing Liszt's version of *Rossini's* well-known "*Cujus Animam*" is probably "How could he!". Because the march-like tenor aria be-

comes undeniably no less spirited by being played on a trombone and the Italian "combah" bass no less barrel-organish on the organ. But the whole aria is so well-turned from Rossini's hand and the transcription so successful from Liszts that quite quickly one experiences a sort of guilty thrill of of pleasure, rather like the feeling you get when you see that an old John Wayne film is on the TV programme. You have seen it three times already, but none the less you know very well that you will spend the evening watching it instead of preparing for the next day.

The eminent contemporary Czech composer *Petr Eben's "Invocation"* has been placed where it is as a sop to good taste - to give our ears a breathing space.

Otherwise - welcome to *The Civil Servant Duo of 1984's* world of sumptuous melodies, sweetly whispering trombones, and splendidly roaring organs, a world where no patriotism has since been so brave, no prayer so devout, and no love so tender (though naturally seemly and decorous).

Enjoy!

Ulrik Spang-Hanssen

*Recorded and produced by
Karin Jürgensen
at Mariae Namen Church,
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DISPOSITION

I. Manual Grand Orgue

Montre	16'
Bourdon	16'
Montre	8'
Bourdon	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Gambe	8'
Prestant	4'
Flûte	4'
Doublette	2'
Cornet V	8'
Fourniture IV	2 2/3'
Mixture V	1 1/3'
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

II. Manual positif

Bourdon	8'
Salicional	8'
Prestant	4'
Flûte	4'
Nasard	2 2/3'
Doublette	2'
Tierce	1 3/5'
Larigot	1 1/3'
Cymbale IV	1'
Trompette	8'
Cromorne	8'

Tremulant

Chamade

Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

Koppeln

Grand Orgue-Pédale

Positif-Pédale

Récit-Pédale

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III. Manual Récit

Bourdon	16'
Principal	8'
Bourdon	8'
Gambe	8'
Voix céleste	8'
Prestant	4'
Octaviane	4'
Octavin	2'
Cornet III	2 2/3'
Plein-Jeu V	2'
Basson	16'
Trompette harmonique	8'
Hautbois	8'
Voix humaine	8'
Clairon	4'

Tremulant

Pédale

Soubasse	32'
Montre	16'
Violon	16'
Soubasse	16'
Flûte	8'
Violoncelle	8'
Bourdon	8'
Prestant	4'
Flûte	4'
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

Positif-grand Orgue

Récit-Grand Orgue

Récit-Positif

Elektrische registertraktur

Disposition: regionalcantor Raimond Murch

Orgelbaumeister Ernst Oberlinger

Intonation: Christoph Raab

Entwurf: Dipl.-Ing. Wolfgang Oberlinger in Verbindung

mit dem Bauamt der Diözese Fulda



The Oberlinger-organ at The Mariae Namen Church, Hanau, Germany

CLASSCD 122

Track 1: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Duet or Duo Concertante for Trombone & Organ (1894) 9:34

Track 2-4: Edward-William Elgar (1857-1934)

Sonata No. 2 for Organ in Bb major op. 87 A. Transcribed by Ivor Atkins from "The Severn Suite" for brassband, op. 87 (2. Introduction 2:45 / 3. Toccata 4:07 / 4. Fugue 6:49) 13:41

Track 5: Félix Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

"Morceau Symphonique pour Trombone ténor et Piano", op. 88.

Organ transcription by Ulrik Spang-Hanssen 7:06

Track 6: Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

"Hosannah!" Choral für Orgel und Posaune (ad libitum) 1862 5:07

Track 7: Joseph Guy (Marie) Ropartz (1864-1955)

"Pièce en mi-bémol mineur pour trombone ténor avec accompagnement de piano". Concours du Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris (1908) Organ transcription by U S-H. 7:26

Track 8: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Toccata "St. Davids Day" from "Two Organ Preludes based on Welsh Folk Songs" 1:45

Track 9: Petr Eben (Born 1929)

"Invocation No. 1" from "Two Invocations for Trombone and Organ" (1988) 5:40

Track 10: Gioacchino-Antonio Rossini (1792-1868)

Aria "Cujus Animam" from "Stabat Mater", transcribed for trombone and organ by Franz Liszt 5:47

Track 11: R. Vaughan Williams

Romanza "The White Rock" from "Two Organ Preludes based on Welsh Folk Songs" 2:13

THE CIVIL SERVANT DUO OF 1984:

Ulrik Spang-Hanssen, organ

Niels-Ole Bo Johansen, trombone



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CLASSICO

Recorded on The Oberlinger-organ at
Mariae Namen Church, Hanau, Germany



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