

## Sonata:

Edmund Schulze builds an organ for the Church of St George, Doncaster

*1 A flight of ideas*

*2 Thuringian forest*

*3 The sea and river journey of the wooden pipes  
and the 32' metal Contra Posaune via Hull*

*4 Completion of the project (the music not yet written)*

Anthony Skilbeck

Born in Coventry (1947), Anthony Skilbeck's composing life has been supported by work as a teacher, pianist, organist and choir trainer. Musical studies were begun during Skilbeck's childhood in Bournemouth, where his principal musical mentor was Michael Peterson. First professional qualifications were obtained whilst studying at the Royal College of Music and London University Institute of Education. Since 1977 he has resided in Nottinghamshire. In 2000, composition studies with David Harold Cox and George Nicholson culminated in a Ph.D. degree for original composition being awarded by The University of Sheffield. During his time as a mature student, for a short period, Skilbeck also studied the interpretation of organ music with Nicolas Kynaston.

Of his compositional language (usually atonal, but "listener-friendly") Skilbeck writes:

The pianoforte music of Debussy and works from Schoenberg's 1908 to 1912 period have had a particular influence on my harmonic language, which is not based on and has not evolved into a text-book schema. Only comparatively rarely does my music find itself in a key, creation and release of tension in harmony and melody holding a greater interest for me than the use of keys and their relationships. This gives rise to compositions often starting in one area of harmony and ending in another. Justification for a language neither tonal nor serial was strengthened on the discovery of Liszt's *Bagatelle without Tonality*.

The tritone, whole tones and the bitter-sweet intervals of minor and major sevenths figure prominently. Practical knowledge of contrapuntal organ works has been significant, but I have not been drawn to overtly mathematical processes, though frequently changing and unusual time signatures are often employed.

Planning a structure, or letting one evolve, gives me much pleasure, as does finding that a passage of my music has an evocative quality. The expression of moods and human temperaments fascinates me.

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The Sonata's first movement, *A flight of ideas* is like an overture in that, sometimes hidden by surrounding toccata figuration, the seven themes to be used throughout the four movements (in some guise or other) are here presented.

The title refers to an aspect of the creative process, imagining the state of Schulze's mind having been asked to build an organ for the Church of St George. The word *flight* suggested the inclusion of a fugue, for "Fugue" in French ("Fuga" in Italian) means "flight". A fugal exposition therefore ends the movement (bars 30 to 51), the subject being Theme 6, which is derived from themes 2 and 3.

**The development of the subject (the exposition of which was in the first movement) takes place in the third movement in bars 113-123; 124-129; 133-144 and bars 147-152 (the "rainbow" section). Bar 286 to the end comprise the final section of the fugue.** There must have been a Dedication service for the new organ, so the last movement (*The completion of the project*) may have incorporated allusions and even quotes from music performed in that service. It is unlikely that my illness will allow me time to complete this task.

The concept of spreading the sections of a fugue over a number of movements is a structural idea first used in my Organ Concerto of 1979.

On the 17th June 2004, St George's was granted Minster status and is now known as Doncaster Minster.

It should be noted that there have been many additions to the 1862 Schulze instrument. This sonata was written for the organ as it was in 2004. A specification can be found on the Internet.

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The Schulze's family home and workshop was in Paulinzella, Thuringia, so it can be assumed that many of the wooden components of St George's instrument are made from Thuringian wood, hence the inspiration for the sonata's second movement. *Thuringian forest* is one of a number of my pieces deriving inspiration from trees:

For carillon

"Two pieces after Caspar David Friedrich": *Der Einsame Baum (The Lonely Tree)* and *Waldinneres bei Mondschein (Inside the Forest by Moonlight)*; *Autumn Branches* - no. 2 from "The Seasons on Pfaueninsel, Berlin"; *Woodland Echoes* (3 pieces); ..... *but the willow drank too much*;

For organ

*Adoration - The Budding Tree*; *Dawn in the Garden of the Resurrection* (organ); *Concert de flûtes* from "La résurrection du phénix"

To the title *Concert de flûtes*, I have appended the words "From the sweet, mysterious forest, wood for the flutes" which is also an appropriate thought for the playing of *Thuringian forest*.

For organ with other instruments

*Autumn Forest* (two performers - organ, electronic device and hammer dulcimer (or violin).

For pianoforte or clavichord

*Trees and Sky*

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## 2 Thuringian forest

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Gt. Stopped Diapason 8'

Sw. Terpodian 8', box open

Echo Harmonica 8', V.A. 8', Flauto Amabile 8', Dolcissimo 4'

Choir Lieblich Gedackt 8'

Ped. Sub Bass 32', Violone 16'

1  $\text{♩} = 52$  Duration ca. 3' 25"

Theme 4 in augmentation

Gt. Ch. *poco rit.*

Sw. *mf* *mp* *p (echo)*

Final chord of 1st movement

Open Sw. Box

7 *A tempo*

Theme 5 in augmentation, in treble clef, with a 3rd beat start

Gt. *mp*

Sw. *mf*

G thumbed on Ch.

13

*Echo pp legato*

18

*Solo/Gt.*

Theme 5 in augmentation with a 3rd beat start

*mp*

Theme 4 in augmentation

**poco rall.** .....

23

*Echo*

*poco rall.*

(- G./P.)

16

27 **A tempo**

..... using the 1st 4 notes, Theme 5

**poco rit.**

**Echo**  
*legato*

"calls and echoes in the forest"

**Gt.** **Ch.** **Sw.** (Sw.)

Sw. - Terpodian, + Oboe 8'  
Close box

- Violone 16'

- Violoncello 8', + Violone 16' & Sub Bass 32'

$\text{♩} = 48$  - slightly slower than previously

**Echo** *pp legato*  
Development of bars 13 to 17

45

**rallentando**

Chord from bar 2

*legato*

August 2004