

Sternstunde

(Toccata)

for organ

Anthony Skilbeck

for Marianne von Einsiedel,
who gave first performances during the Autumn of 1997
in Dresden and London:-
Dreikonigskirche; Versöhnungskirche; Kreuzkirche;
Southwark Cathedral

Material for a programme note

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.

Bound for an exciting destination, features of the scenery through which one passes (bars 1 to 83) remain in the memory.

As the journey progresses, these memories are integrated with those of additional features seen (bars 84 to 170). On arrival at the destination, there is a feeling of elation (bars 171 to 186) followed by the journey's prominent memories being recalled (bars 187 to the end).

Alternatively, one can imagine the gradual coming to fruition of a project, or the growth of something in the natural world.

Sternstunde ("star-hour"), a word introduced to me by Marianne von Einsiedel, can be taken to mean "insight" or "moment of inspiration." The composition aims to justify the word as its title by using the organ in sprightly unusual ways. I hope that eccentricities in the piece will be reminiscent of (though not copied from) the style of C.P.E. Bach.

Registration guidelines are given throughout the score. It will be helpful to have Generals at the following places:

Gen. 1 bar 32; **Gen. 2** bar 50; **Gen. 3** bar 59; **Gen. 4** bar 141; **Gen. 5** bar 144; **Gen. 6** bar 157; **Gen. 7** bar 169 and **Gen. 8** bar 178.

The work may be played on an instrument without a swell box, but use may be made of such in bars 160 - 167 (close the box at bar 145) and 191 - 195 (close the box at bar 186).

For Marianne von Einsiedel

Sternstunde

(Toccata)

I 8' & 4' II 8', 4' & 2' Pedal 16' 8' & 4'

If available, Solo reed 8' with II/Solo (for bar 209 to the end).

See Gen. 7 at bar 169.

Anthony Skilbeck

♩ = 132 Duration ca. 6'25"

energico I *legato*
mf
II 4
non legato
legato
mf ^ ^ ^ ^
non legato
non legato
11
non legato
non legato
non legato
U V ^ U V V U
non legato ^ U

20 **II** (D^b) *tr* *legato* **II** **I Add 2'**

mf *f* *non legato*

GEN. 1
I Add Mixture
Ped. Add reeds 8' & 4'

29 **I** *non legato* *f* *ff* *sempre energico*

35 *sopra* *sopra* *sopra*

41 II Add 8' (& 4') reed(s)

Add II/I

ff pesante

II *f*

m.s.

I *ff*

ff pesante

GEN. 2
I Off Mixture
II Off reeds; add mutation (Larigot preferred)
Ped. Off reeds Off II/I

48

II *mp legato ma scintillante*

mp legato ma scintillante

Pedal B

53

I *f non legato energico*

II *mp legato ma scintillante*

f non legato energico

mp legato ma scintillante

V/0

f non legato

GEN. 3 I Add Mixture II Off mutation
Ped. Add (*con umore*) reeds 8' & 4' (for bar 71)

58 *non leg.*

I { *f* *sempre energico*

II { *mf*

non leg. *non legato*

f *non leg.*

63

non leg. *f*

I { *ff*

non leg. *non legato*

f *non leg.*

sopra

II Add mutation

70 *comodo* *a tempo*

comodo *a tempo*

I { *mp*

non leg. *non legato*

f *con umore*

78

I Add 8' reed
Ped. Add 16' reed ↓

tr G
mp

No turn

I

ff

f cantabile (legato)

ff

85 non legato

I Off reed
II Off mutation ↓

mf

sempre energico

non legato

legato

91

non legato

1 2 3 2 1

2 5

95

I { *ff*

non legato

ff *pesante*

99

II { *mf* *m.s.* *non legato*

sempre energico

f

I Off Mixture
Ped. Off reeds

GEN. 5 II Off mutation ?Add II/P Ped. quasi jazz bass, so no reeds or mixture.

(Close box if being used)

Perhaps change the colour of the flues if II/P is unsuitable. Use Pedal mutation(s) if available.

143

mp

f

con agilita (quasi jazz bass)

149

(sf)

155 GEN. 6 II Add Mixture & reed 8' Ped. 16' 8' 4' No II/P

f

sempre energico

non legato

non legato

non legato

Add II/P

180

As at bar 169 (Gen. 7) + Ped. reeds 16' & 8'
Close box (If being used)

184

189

195

..... I } *ff*

non legato

ff pesante

200

I Add reeds

fff *legato sempre energico*

legato

non legato

Add reed 32' *fff*

208

Solo

legato

(?) Add

non legato

brillante

non legato

215

Add Solo/I

I

bravura

Add I/P

Add Solo/P

senza rall.

March 1995