



BACH•BEETHOVEN• SAINT-SAËNS ET AL

Organ Works

Anthony Halliday o

Move MCD452

★★★★★

Few Australian musicians come close to matching Anthony Halliday's versatile splendour. An admirable pianist who has recorded all of Beethoven's piano sonatas, he is also a formidable organist. His latest album emphasises his gifts in transcribing orchestral works.

Those who some months back, in Melbourne's Town Hall, heard Halliday's burn-the-floor *solo* arrangement of the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony's finale might well wonder if a CD can do it justice. Fear not: it does. From the ferocious C Major opening to the dazzling flourishes at the end, Halliday is, in effect, his own orchestra. He reveals a colouristic range that far too many non-French organists seem incapable of achieving. For this we can partly credit the instrument at his disposal (made by Québec's Casavant firm).

Equally effective in its quiet way is his version of the *Emperor* Concerto's middle movement. Beethoven, who admitted the role of chorales in his inspiration for this music, would have approved. Also included is a tiny Beethoven minuet – originally not for organ but for *Spieluhr* (musical clock) – which suggests Haydn rather than the *Emperor's* creator. Halliday gives it a delightful variety of tone.

It should go without saying that he has mastered Bach's stupendous C Minor *Passacaglia and Fugue*, taking a daringly slow tempo for the former, and avoiding the faintest hint of anticlimax in the latter. The Maurice Duruflé *Suite* suits Halliday's timbral strengths, and above all in the suite's toccata – often heard in isolation – he transports listeners from the Yarra to the Seine. Excellent engineering and well-written notes complete a pretty wonderful package. **RJ Stove**

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