

For Gerard Brooks and Jeremy Filsell

Toccata

(1991)

Francis Pott

Introduzione:

Gt, Sw., Ch., full

Ped. full, no 32'

Poco largo e marcato

ff sempre poco liberamente

veloce

di nuovo poco largo

poco rit., accel. ad lib.

non veloce

The score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a 14/16 time signature. The first system (measures 1-2) features a piano introduction with a forte dynamic and a tempo of 'poco largo e marcato'. The piano part consists of chords and moving lines, while the bass part has a simple rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (measures 3-4) continues the introduction, with a tempo change to 'di nuovo poco largo'. The piano part includes triplets and a 'veloce' section. The third system (measures 5-6) shows a further tempo change to 'poco rit., accel. ad lib.' and ends with a 'non veloce' section. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics, articulation marks, and time signatures.

Allegro

accel. sempre

attacca

19

Toccatà:

Sw: 8' 4' 2' (mixture); Gt: 8' 4' (2'); Ch: 8' 4' (2'); manuals coupled

Ped: 16' 8' (4'), coupled

Vivace

21

24

27

The Toccata originated as a much shorter piece, written – it must be admitted – under some friendly duress for a wedding (and a severely limited instrument). A year earlier I had completed the two-hour cyclic Passion Symphony *Christus*, and it had seemed reasonable to assume that I had said my piece in terms of the organ for some time to come. However, later freedom from the constraints of the wedding organ lent the embryonic toccata a more willing life of its own, resulting eventually in the present work, which perhaps understandably revisits some of the rhythmic features of *Christus* but generally lends them a more straightforward optimism.

The Toccata's broad introduction consists of a declamatory statement followed by a quieter passage. The dynamic level suddenly escalates to launch the toccata 'proper' (originally the opening of the piece). Employing irregular rhythms, a rhapsodic exposition leads to a more melodious secondary subject which shares its material with the introduction. Subsequent free development leads through a series of rhythmic paragraphs, sometimes punctuated by brief silences, to an energetic recapitulation. The second subject is heard again in the pedal part beneath fairly conventional toccata figuration before a headlong coda. Despite a mildly idiosyncratic approach to tonality and chromatic harmony, the listener may feel B minor as the prevailing tonic. However, the conclusion reveals the introduction's hints of another key to have been significant, and the piece ends on an unequivocal chord of F sharp, like its more imposing cousin, *Christus*.

In its definitive form the Toccata received its first London performance from Gerard Brooks. It has been played widely since in the UK, the USA, Scandinavia, Australia and the Czech Republic by James O'Donnell, Matthew Martin, Jeremy Filsell, Graham Barber, Robert Quinney, Christian Wilson, Gerard Brooks and a number of other distinguished organists.

Francis Pott, 2017