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THOMAS HEYWOOD

Biography

The internationally acclaimed organ virtuoso Thomas Heywood enjoys an outstanding reputation as one of the world's finest concert organists.

“An acknowledged master,” Heywood has travelled over 750,000 miles or 1.2 million kilometers performing solo concerts on the most celebrated pipe organs across the globe. He has an ever-growing repertoire of over 5,000 works and was the first Australian musician in history to live as a professional concert organist.

Also a talented and prolific transcriber, Heywood's published solo concert organ arrangements of the most famous classical and romantic music are performed by organists around the world.

Heywood performs regular international solo tours in concert halls, town halls, cathedrals and churches throughout the UK, North America and Europe where German critics have hailed him as the “Ironman der Orgel. Der australische Starorganist Thomas Heywood.”

In December 2012 and January 2013, Heywood performed a sold-out solo tour of Russia from the Pacific Coast to Moscow. International touring in 2014 and 2015 included Hong Kong, the UK, Europe and New Zealand; 2016 includes South Korea, Europe, the UK and USA. Since 1994, Heywood has also performed more concerts in Australia than any other organist: to date over 1,700 concerts to over 600,000 people.

Heywood is committed to promoting and preserving Australasia's unique pipe organ heritage. In addition to his work as a concert artist, in 2011 he became the Founding President and Australian National Director of the Australian and New Zealand College of Organists.

As a teacher, he is on staff at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at the University of Melbourne. Heywood is also Organist and Director of Music of St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton – one of Australia's oldest and most famous churches.

Born into a Melbourne musical family in 1974, Heywood was acknowledged to be a child prodigy giving his first public performance at five after commencing musical studies at the age of four. "Australia's premier organist" has since performed on thousands of occasions ranging from a celebrated recital in the Sydney Opera House at the age of 17 to touring in venues reading like an encyclopaedia of the world's most famous organs from Windsor Castle to the largest pipe organ in New York City. Heywood has performed Mozart in Vienna, Tchaikovsky in Moscow, Handel in London and Beethoven in Bonn.

Heywood's solo concerts are managed in the USA and Canada by Karen McFarlane Artists and internationally by Concert Organ International – www.concertorgan.com – the company he founded in 1997 with his wife and manager Simone.

Regularly inaugurating new and restored organs since 1993, Heywood has opened many landmark instruments from the largest musical instrument in the southern hemisphere, the Melbourne Town Hall Grand Organ, in 2001 to Australia's newest concert organ in 2009.

Since 1992 when he released Australia's best-selling organ recording at only 18 years of age, Heywood has become "one of the world's most prolific organ recording artists" with over thirty popular sell-out recordings receiving extraordinary critical acclaim. In 2009 Heywood became the first, and remains the only, concert organist in the world to release three commercial recordings from three continents within seven months. His performances have been broadcast internationally on television and radio.

Not confined to the “organ world”, Heywood’s phenomenal success in reaching out to the vast concert-going public has made the critics boast that he “reincarnates Edwin H. Lemare,” the greatest concert organist of the twentieth century.

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“What a stunning player Thomas Heywood is. His flawless technique is just the platform from which truly artistic and memorable performances flow.”

The Editor’s Choice – Organists’ Review, UK