

THOMAS HEYWOOD

Press Notices

“That the words ‘organ recital’ and ‘fun’ could appear in the same sentence probably wouldn’t occur to many people ... But Thomas Heywood’s recital had the audience grinning from ear to ear. Mr. Heywood isn’t just a brilliant organist. He’s a first-class musician, with technique to burn, a visceral sense of rhythm and a virtuoso command of complicated registration changes. Add his ebullient commentary ... and it’s hard not to think of him as the Crocodile Hunter of the organ. Mr. Heywood is unsurpassed today as a player of transcriptions. No opera orchestra has played ... with more dash, or more irresistible a spring in its waltz rhythms. Mr. Heywood’s own Bach transcription ... danced along at a tempo that would press a fine period-instruments orchestra. He gave a spectacularly ‘orchestrated’ performance of Sibelius ... He was as compelling ... as he was charming. His performances of Rossini and Brahms were beyond brilliant.”

The Dallas Morning News, USA

“Thomas Heywood stands out among other organists before he even plays a note. His selection of repertoire is one thing that sets him apart ... an inspiring concert ... the organ has such a diverse color palate and a huge dynamic range. This served Heywood perfectly. His program ranged from symphonic works transcribed for organ to compositions specifically composed for the organ. His dramatic styling of the introduction immediately pulled the audience in. The sprightly sounds he gleaned from the instrument ... and the massive crescendo ... showed his mastery of his craft. Heywood also made great use of the resonant space ... Heywood skillfully milked the reverberation at every rest ... Heywood showed off his transcribing ability with his own transcription ... He effortlessly recreated the variety of sounds available to a full orchestra on the organ. His sensitive touch and thoughtful phrasing left unsuspecting audience members in awe at the expressive capability of the instrument. Heywood held a concert to remember.”

Lincoln Journal Star, USA

“Thomas Heywood delighted the audience ... a child prodigy at five ... full of technical feats ... mesmeric fingering and dancing feet. But it is the virtuoso playing that picks you up on a current of music that fills your heart and delights the spirit, the soul. Heywood spoke from the organ loft and he was witty, knowledgeable and full of interesting anecdotes and stories about the music he was playing. I just love it when musicians talk to their audience and establish a rapport. Heywood has a rapport that a rapper would envy. His bubbly personality led you into Bach, Brahms and Haydn ... splendid, showy and difficult. The second half was equally impressive ... a wow of keyboard and footwork virtuosity ... the selection was superb and brought the audience to a noisy standing ovation. What a concert!”

The Munster Express, Ireland

“A consummate player who exudes musicianship, a breathtakingly accurate virtuoso technique and an imaginative and colourful approach to registration, for whom a huge organ such as this holds no terrors ... 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

“A cheerfully named and exuberantly played program ... his chosen works demanded as thorough a test of the organ's colouristic resources as I've heard, and the results were dazzling ... Heywood coaxed both a shimmering, pianissimo string sound and a robust mix of full-throttle string, woodwind and brass textures from the organ ... but what made Heywood's readings work was his sometimes straightforward, sometimes idiosyncratic, interpretive sensibility ... Heywood kept you waiting to hear what he would do next, and what light his phrasing would throw on the work as a whole ... a virtuoso technique.”

The Portland Press Herald, USA

“Internationally renowned organist Thomas Heywood laughs often ... his easygoing and down-to-earth personality is automatically apparent as he speaks enthusiastically about his instrument and his career ... he is unstoppable ... Heywood warns that the biggest challenge in playing the organ is developing an ear for the instrument: ‘The organ, as well as being an incredibly exciting musical instrument, is also a very, very large machine and you're basically controlling thousands of different components ... You know you mustn't lose sense of the music when you're doing all that. It's all in terms of shaping phrases and you've got to really listen carefully to the end result.’ ... The public is entertained and educated at the same time ... an engaging show does not necessarily have to be in a big, famous venue.”

La Scena Musicale, Canada

“An international reputation ... bravura performances ... a feast of virtuoso playing ... tremendous foundational power and rhythmic intensity ... astounding displays of rapid finger work ... beautifully judged ... an acknowledged master.”

Piping the News, Organists' Review, UK

“Superhuman gifts ... brilliant technique, riveting rhythm, an amazing ear for color ... All that, and he paid more attention to the composer's metronome markings than most orchestra conductors ... Mr. Heywood brought it off magnificently. In fact, this was some of the most compelling music making of any kind I've heard in ages. Start to finish, this was drop dead music making, with flair and expressivity to burn ... even if you think you don't like organ recitals, don't even think of missing him.”

The Dallas Morning News, USA