



Widor

Organ Symphonies Nos 5-6

Joseph Nolan o

SIGNUM CLASSICS SIGCD292



Breathtaking performances on one of the world's great organs

I'm not sure Charles-Marie Widor would have liked to be remembered simply as the man whose Toccata provides happy couples with the second most popular wedding recessional in history. But there's not much danger of that with organists the calibre of UK-born Joseph Nolan (currently Organist and Master of the Choristers at St George's Cathedral, Perth) keeping the sacred flame burning.

Nolan here offers the first fruits of seven nocturnal recording sessions in a row, during which he put down all ten of Widor's organ symphonies at the console of the superb four-manual, 60-stop, 4426-pipe Cavaillé-Coll organ of La Madeleine, Paris. The first two symphonies of Widor's Opus 42 are grandly Romantic, five-movement behemoths that balance huge multicoloured edifices of devilish complexity with softer-lit landscapes populated by angelic choirs of varying dimensions. Nolan hovers over all like some musical demiurge, fleet of feet and fingers as he negotiates the massive chords and filigree passagework of faster movements such as the closing *Vivace* of Symphony No 6; thoughtful and sensitive yet smouldering with creative tension in slower movements such as the multi-faceted *Andantino quasi allegretto* and mellifluous Fifth Symphony Adagio. And "that" Toccata, with which the Fifth Symphony and the disc end? An absolute ripper of a performance that will have you positively skipping down the aisle. **WY**