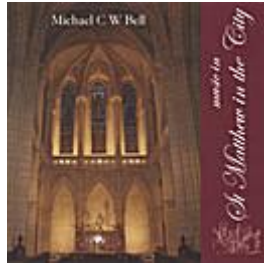


Mp3 Michael Bell - Music In St Matthew In The City



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This is a collection of unique classical improvisations by a foremost New Zealand organist and composer, Michael Bell on the historic Father Willis pipe organ in St Matthew-in-the-City Anglican Church, Auckland, New Zealand. 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Details: Biography (See Review below) Michael was born in Wanganui, NZ in 1975. He began playing piano at the age of two. From the music of J.S. Bach and W.A. Mozart, especially, Michael has established a unique art of classical improvisation in his keyboard playing. His style is self taught and through a strong memory for musical structure, Michael is able to create an improvisation around any theme. Tutored on the pipe organ at King's College, Auckland, in 1991 he toured with a school group around France and England. A highlight was a performance on the organ at Canterbury Cathedral. Michael completed a Bachelor of Music and Diploma of Teaching at Auckland University in 2002. He was appointed Organist at St Matthew-in-the-City in April 2002 and is presently teaching classroom music at Avondale and Baradene Colleges. This is Michael's first recording. See review below. Also featured on this album is St Matthew's Vocal Ensemble under the direction of Michael Bell and soprano Susan Elliott. The ensemble also includes Meg Broughton, soprano; Therese Turnock, alto; Andrew Marshall, tenor and Chris Karyiannis, Bass. A review by Roy Tankersley in the journal Music in the Air: Song Spirituality in Aotearoa/Australia/Pacific, Summer 2006 issue: The fine acoustics of St Matthews-in-the-City, coupled with superb sound engineering by Wayne Lied makes a fine backdrop for this unique CD with its four substantial contrasting improvisations for organ. Ever since he was a youngster, Michael has had a passion for the works of J S Bach and Mozart and improvisation and here records without musical scores. This compilation contains interludes of vocal a cappella and accompanied works surrounding organ music by Bach and improvisations. The music is played with sensitivity and panache on the fine Father Willis

organ. Occasionally the registrations are a little too full bodied for transparency in the works of Bach but despite this the playing is authoritative and convincing. A stunning final few bars greets the listener in Bachs Prelude in C. In the more reflective Bach pieces Bell uses lush strings and flutes choosing a more chordal accompaniment rather than Bachs polyphonic figurations. Michaels improvisations are fluent and logically structured are often are a pastiche of Bach and Mozart harmonic language with a few diversions and surprises on the way. His compositions for organ are represented by Dianas Song and Karangahapa Road Prelude whose opening and closing sections are conjured from the maddening influences of noise and traffic while crossing a busy road. St Matthews vocal ensemble is a quintet of young singers who do justice to the works they perform. They present small cameos composed by Michael -- a Kyrie canon and an Agnus Dei, part of the sung liturgy used St Matthews and Byrds Ave Verum Corpus. In the Brittens Jubilate, the lack of robustness of a larger group is compensated by fine subtle shading in the quieter sections. This is a well-conceived project featuring a talented and individual artist.

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