Malcolm Arnold
Neil Brand
Matthew Taylor
Timothy Bowers
Robert Tucker

Theme and Variations
for organ

September 2021
PROGRAMME NOTE

Composers
Theme: Malcolm Arnold
Variation I: Neil Brand
Variation II: Matthew Taylor
Variation III: Timothy Bowers
Variation IV: Robert Tucker

Permission to reproduce the score granted by the composers.

The original theme tune by Malcolm Arnold was broadcast on Christmas Day, 1957, part of a programme called Crown and Commonwealth; the organ piece was a signature tune for a segment called ‘Christmas round the world’, played by the Australian organist William McKie. The four variations based on the tune were commissioned for the 2021 Malcolm Arnold Festival: ‘Malcolm’s 100th’ as a collaborative project. The first three variations are by Neil Brand, Matthew Taylor and Tim Bowers respectively. I followed with the fourth variation. This observes the imitative nature of Arnold’s theme, capturing Arnold’s style: his bravado rhythmic writing; the characteristic, witty piccolo writing (commenting here in dialogue with the quasi-Bach chorale), and an imposing pedal solo based on the theme to reflect the composer’s eccentricity. The first performance was recorded by Alex Berry in Bradford Cathedral for the online part of the Arnold festival, which he followed a month later with the second performance, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, London.
Theme

Malcolm Arnold
(1957)

Poco Lento ($j = 60$)
Variation No. 1

Triumphant \( (\text{d} = 138) \)

Neil Brand
Variation No.2 - Intrada

Andante sostenuto (\( \frac{J}{J} = c.66 \))

Matthew Taylor
Variation No. 3

Grazioso \((\text{♩} = 40)\)

\[\text{\textbf{Grazioso}} \quad \text{(♩} = 40)\]

78

\[\text{\textbf{Grazioso}} \quad \text{(♩} = 40)\]

83

\[\text{\textbf{Grazioso}} \quad \text{(♩} = 40)\]

\[\text{\textbf{Grazioso}} \quad \text{(♩} = 40)\]
Variation No. 4

Allegretto energico e ritmico ($j = 108$)

Robert Tucker