

FLOURISHES, TALES AND SYMPHONIES, Music for Brass and Organ

CHICAGO GARGOYLE BRASS AND ORGAN ENSEMBLE

RODNEY HOLMES, conductor

Lev Garbar, trumpet; Andrew Hunter, trumpet and flugelhorn; Amy Krueger, horn; Kathryn Swope, horn; John Grodrian, trombone; Graham Middleton, trombone; Ryan Miller, trombone; Andrew van Devender, tuba; Paul Ramsier, tuba; Joshua Wirt, tuba; Michael Schraft, timpani and drum set; Mark Sudeith, piano; Jared Stellmacher, organ.

MSR CLASSICS MS1598 (8 Dover Cir, Newtown, CT 06470, USA; Tel: +1 (203) 304-2486; info@msrcd.com; <http://www.msrcd.com/>).

Carlyle Sharpe: *Flourishes*. Carlyle Sharpe: *Prelude, Elegy and Scherzo*. Giuseppe Verdi arr. Craig Garner: *Libiamo Ne' Lieti Calici from La Traviata*. William White: *The Dwarf Planets*. David Marlatt: *Earthscape*. Jaromír Weinberger arr. Craig Garner: *Polka and Fugue from Schwanda, the Bagpiper*. Camille Saint-Saëns arr. Craig Garner: *Adagio and Maestoso from Symphony No.3 "Organ"*. Peter Meechan: *Velvet Blue*.

The Chicago Gargoyle Brass and Organ Ensemble's first recording, *Flourishes, Tales and Symphonies*, is a sonic adventure into the forays of brass quintet, percussion and organ repertoire. From humble beginnings in 1992, the ensemble, originally comprised of faculty and students at the University of Chicago, eventually formed into a professional organization and has established themselves as one of the leading brass and organ ensembles over the last three decades. The mixture of beautifully-blended quintet playing, a new and varied repertoire, and fantastic organ and percussion sounds, provide for an extremely enjoyable listening experience.

The album boasts an eclectic and fun array of new and old material presented in an uncommon setting, performed marvelously well. The quintet plays with considerable blend and fantastic dynamic range, and they handle virtuosity with flair and poise. The sound of the brass is round and uniform, which matches nicely with the warmth and beauty of the organ. It is punctuated by the clear, articulated playing of the percussion. Dark at times and brilliant at others, the ensemble plays with a chameleon-like nature, constantly changing the mood and immersing themselves fully into the character of each piece with exquisite attention to all of the musical details.

The recording features a fantastic selection of repertoire arranged and composed specifically for the group. In particular, a set of pieces entitled *The Dwarf Planets*, by William White (said by the composer to be inspired by Gustav Holst's set of tone poems, *The Planets*) and a stunning arrangement of "Allegro and Maestoso" from the famous *Symphony No. 3* (Organ Symphony) by Camille Saint-Saëns, which take the listener on a musical journey to outer-space and then straight to heaven.

-Evan Conroy
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra