

The cover of 'the WholeNote' magazine features a portrait of Trichy Sankaran, a prominent Carnatic musician. He is seated, wearing a light blue kurta and a green and gold shawl. He has white tilak on his forehead and is resting his hands on a mridangam (drum) covered in a purple velvet cloth with gold stripes. The background is a textured blue fabric. The magazine title 'the WholeNote' is prominently displayed at the top in white, with 'the' in a smaller font. To the right, the volume and issue information is provided, along with a list of content highlights in yellow and white text. At the bottom, the musician's name and the website are listed.

the  
**WholeNote**

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Trichy Sankaran

[thewholenote.com](http://thewholenote.com)

**Cantius**  
**Gail Archer**  
**Swan Studios MM22051**  
**(meyer-media.com)**



▶ The pipe organ has been a vital part of musical history for centuries, and there are a small number of countries that have made tremendously impactful

contributions to its physical construction and musical lineage, including the German Baroque composers (culminating in the works of J.S. Bach) and the 19th- and 20th-century French school, which led to the development of the organ symphony. With a heritage dominated by musical monoliths, it is easy to forget that there is worthwhile organ music written by composers in other countries not immediately considered synonymous with the pipe organ, including the Baltic States, Russia and Poland.

It is this latter country that receives organist Gail Archer's full focus on *Cantius*, a recording which presents highlights from two centuries of Polish composers and their works, ranging from Romantic symphonies to avant-garde masterpieces. Highlights include Felix Nowowiejski's *Symphony No.8* which, although written in one movement, is in three distinct sections, including a solemn funeral march, and Henryk Górecki's *Kantata*. Górecki is perhaps Poland's most famous 20th-century composer, whose *Third Symphony - "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs"* achieved international recognition and established his place as one of the most important contemporary composers of the time.

Although many consider the pipe organ to be an old instrument that plays old music, there is still new material being written today, and it is wonderful to encounter a variety of 20th- and 21st-century composers and their works on *Cantius*, expertly interpreted by Archer. It is not an easy feat to achieve convincing performances of high-density modern scores, but she does so with apparent ease and undeniable success.

*Matthew Whitfield*