

**The Wanamaker Legacy: The 6/461 Wanamaker Grand Court Organ,
Macy's in Center City Philadelphia – Peter Richard Conte, organist.
Gothic Records G49240**

Pure academic restraint is all that keeps one from overworking superlatives in describing everything about this issue from Gothic. There is nothing here that is short of “fabulous” in its original sense of “coming from a fable.” This instrument is unbelievable, either in concept or in execution; there is, for example, no such thing as a six-manual console. Yet there it sits, the stuff of fable. *There is no organ of 461 ranks, yet “hear” it is, and you feel the power.* There is no technique well developed enough to play it, yet there is Peter Richard Conte. Dupre, Bach, Guilmant, and Vierne cannot be played accurately on such a beast, yet it is here. And all of this must have happened in a divine spot, not a temple of commerce. *Oh, yes – and it could not possibly be accurately recorded if all of the above happened. But it is!* Conte's brilliance in registration is incredible, his playing credibly, refreshingly excellent. Buyer's note: this is not a “shatter the chandeliers” production. Conte shows as much restraint as he does integrity. Even Virgil Fox's arrangement of “Come Sweet Death” cannot persuade him to unleash every Celeste and Vox Humana. Possibly the only thing that should be consistently re-thought is the major chime usage: some of the overtones don't mesh. *But wait until you hear the live recording of Dupre “Crucifixion” fade away to level 6. No, don't wait, Get it now. Fabulous!*

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