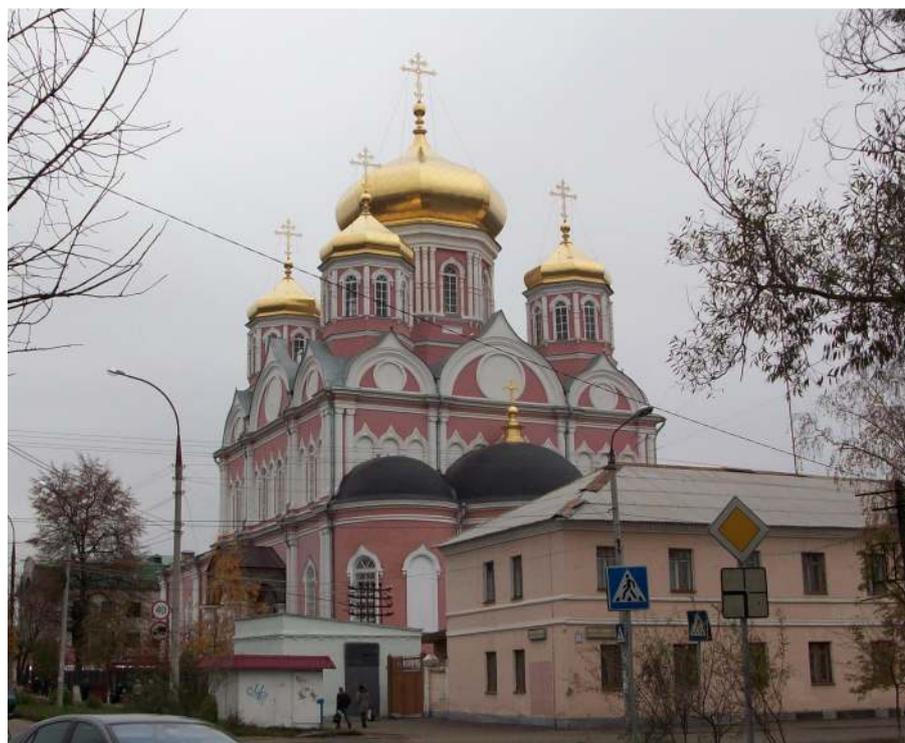


# Derby & District Organists'

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Association



*Church of the Icon of The Mother of God, Smolensk*

### Music of the Orthodox Russian Church – A Layman's Guide

It may seem odd to offer an article to an organists' association on the music of a church in which organs and all other musical instruments are banned. However, we are nearly all of us choir leaders or singers, and we are often looking for new repertoire with which to wow our congregations (to the glory of God, it must be said). Moreover, several members of DDOA have told me they are interested in Russian Orthodox music.

I am an enthusiast, not an expert, but I offer these lines to those who may know less than I do. I shall mention the names of several composers you have heard of and several you probably have not. As always, the Internet is a great source of information - if you read Russian, but many will not have this skill. (If you *do* have the Russian language, try [www.google.ru](http://www.google.ru).) For all readers I hope these remarks may help you to find your way into a glorious world of ecclesiastical

which is much neglected by us in the west.

The language of the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) is *Church Slavonic*, not Russian. This language has a history of its own: it derives from *Old Church Slavonic*, which was the dialect of Old Bulgarian into which Greek missionaries translated the Bible in the ninth century. It was the only Slavonic language they knew, and it fortunately resembled all the others.

Modern Church Slavonic is close enough to Russian for ordinary worshippers to follow it well enough, as we all used to do with Cranmer's prayer book. Russian Christians hold it in similar esteem. Expatriate congregations may sing the service in the local language: if you go to the ROC Cathedral in Ennismore Gardens, London, you may hear the clergy chanting and praying in English, while the choir responds in Slavonic. (Continued on page 2.)

### Forthcoming Events

- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May** 8.00am  
**Annual Outing – Liverpool**  
(See Page 6.)
- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June** 7.30pm  
**Members' Recital, St James, Riddings**  
(See Page 6.)
- Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July** 7.30pm  
**Evening Visit to Tibshelf and Somercotes**
- Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September** 2.30pm  
**Chairman's Event – Repton**
- Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October** 7.30pm  
**Mendelssohn Event at St Mary, Ilkeston**
- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November** 7.30pm  
**Annual General Meeting – St Werburgh, Spondon.**

### Recital Diary

#### Derby Cathedral

Ben Bloor 1.00pm 12<sup>th</sup> June

The summer series of recitals will be on Wednesdays at 7.45pm and will feature the music of Mendelssohn. Admission will be £10 for the Thomas Trotter recital and £5 for the others. Season tickets are £35 and are available in advance

Thomas Trotter	1 <sup>st</sup> July
Matthew Owens	8 <sup>th</sup> July
Peter Williams	15 <sup>th</sup> July
Robert Sharpe	22 <sup>nd</sup> July
Ian Tracey	29 <sup>th</sup> July
Peter Gould	5 <sup>th</sup> August
Tom Corfield	12 <sup>th</sup> August
Paul Hale	19 <sup>th</sup> August

#### Southwell Minster Mondays 3.30pm

James Davey	4 <sup>th</sup> May
Paul Or Eni	25 <sup>th</sup> May

#### Wednesdays 7.30pm

Robert Sharpe	17 <sup>th</sup> June
Gabriel Dessauer	15 <sup>th</sup> July
Johann Hermanns	12 <sup>th</sup> August

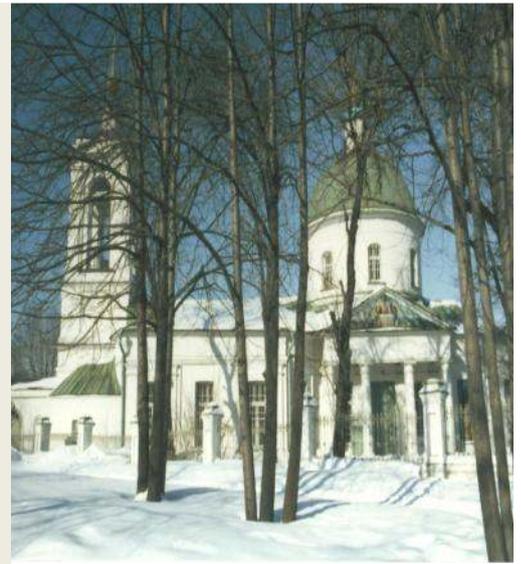
#### Victoria Hall Hanley

<b>Saturdays 12 noon</b>	
Jonathan & Tom Scott	23 <sup>rd</sup> May
Ian Tracey	20 <sup>th</sup> June
Michael Rhodes	11 <sup>th</sup> July
Clive Driskill-Smith	22 <sup>nd</sup> August
Cameron Carpenter	12 <sup>th</sup> Sept.
Paul Prieto Ramirez	17 <sup>th</sup> October
Donald Mackenzie	21 <sup>st</sup> Nov.



Left: Church of the Resurrection, Moscow.

Right: Church on the Sparrow Hills, Moscow.



The Eucharist is contained within a longer service known as the *Divine Liturgy*, and the most usual version of this is the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, which you will hear sung in ROCs all over Russia and the world. The Divine Liturgy (it is not called the 'mass') is published in a little booklet by the Orthodox Church in America, ISBN 0-9623598-0-7, which prints the Russian (i.e. a *translation* from Church Slavonic) on one side and an English version on the opposite page. The bookshop at the London cathedral sells copies. This liturgy is not the same as the Roman Catholic mass or Anglican communion service, though many of the words of our service can be found in places within it.

Services are sung. There is no concept of a 'said service' in the Orthodox Church. If those present consist of no more than the priest and a couple of old babushkas, they have to do their best. Think of the consequences for any choir in a busy church! And the services go on for hours. I am pretty sure that the choirs of all the churches I have attended in Moscow and elsewhere are professionals: a wonderful source of income for poor music students, but they have to earn it.

There is a lovely little church on the Sparrow (formerly 'Lenin') Hills, South Moscow, near the University, which I used to visit when I was working there in 1988: it seemed to be one voice to a part, total five or six at most. The priests and deacons tended strongly to lose pitch, and I remember the

characteristic sound of the service was the choir leader (a woman) frantically retuning the choir to try to restore some sense of regularity to the proceedings. A central Moscow church, the Church of the Resurrection, a beautiful but very small place from which one of our television companies broadcast 'Songs of Praise' some years ago, has a similar tiny ensemble.

On the other hand, the Alexander Nevsky monastery cathedral at the far end of the Nevsky Prospekt in St Petersburg boasts a couple of dozen singers in its choir loft. Then in October 2008 in the provincial city of Orel I heard an exclusively male voice group of four or five singers.

And the voices themselves? Russian singers are not inhibited. Women and men sing out strongly, and competent musicians can easily hold a line on their own. Particularly famous are the Russian bassi *profundi*, the 'deacon's bass', subject of many anecdotes. Listen to CDs of Russian choirs and you will hear the basses doubling bottom A flats - and I really mean doubling an octave below. When I taught in a Moscow comprehensive school in 1988, the fifteen-year old lead guitar in the school pop group could sing amazingly deep notes. It must surely be in the genes of Russian males.

### Repertoire

Russian composers have ever been called upon or inspired to supply settings for the Liturgy and for elements within it. If we look at famous names from nineteenth and twentieth-century Russian music:

Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev, Ippolitov-Ivanov (he of the *Caucasian Sketches*), Grechaninov, Taneev, Lyadov, Rakhmaninov, Prokofiev, even Stravinsky have all contributed to the literature of Orthodox music.

Now that Sovietism is dead, the works of earlier composers are re-emerging, but only very slowly. On a visit to Petersburg in 2003 I bought everything the central music shop had, and that was not very much: quite a bit of what they had for sale I had already collected. It seems likely that church choirs throughout the Soviet period used the old nineteenth-century editions of Jurgenson (Tchaikovsky's publisher), which by the 1980s must have become hopelessly tattered. Indeed, clumsily Xeroxed copies given to me by Russian friends indicate the desperation to which choirmasters must have descended.

Photocopiers were politically highly suspect devices in Soviet days. Russian enthusiasts for liturgical music were reduced to the duplicating 'skins' we used in earlier times.

There are other composers with unfamiliar (to us) names who composed liturgical music. They all composed other music too, even operas, for some of which they are remembered as well as for their church pieces. Arkhangel'sky, Ivanov, Smolensky, Kastal'sky, Sviridov, L'vov - how many of these nineteenth-twentieth-century names do you know? Never forget Chesnokov (1877-1944), composer of the fabulous six-part 'Great Gloria',

(Continued on page 6, column 1.)



Fig. 1

## *Nicholson Organs of Malvern*

Some years ago the Association visited the old Nicholson factory in its quaint Victorian buildings near Malvern where the tools of the pipe-makers craft – or should one call it an art – blended into the surroundings with comparative ease. In the new, spacious Nicholson premises in the undulating lowland of the Malvern countryside, organ building, with its arcane tools, forms an odd juxtaposition of ancient and modern, which is pleasing to anyone who approves of the continuation of centuries of tradition and skill.

The tools shown in fig. 1 are used by the Nicholson pipe maker, Richard Sanders (fig. 2), to form the feet of the metal pipes, hence the variety of sizes. Many of the metal pipes of the new organ for Llandaff Cathedral will be made at the Nicholson factory by Richard, shown here in his workshop with part of the Great Mixture for the Llandaff organ. Richard has worked for Nicholson for over 30 years during which time he has manufactured pipes for dozens of new organs as well as repairing pipes from older instruments.

One end of each pipe body is flattened slightly to form the upper lip of the pipe mouth; the body is then soldered to the foot and languid – a process which Richard has repeated on quite a



Fig. 2

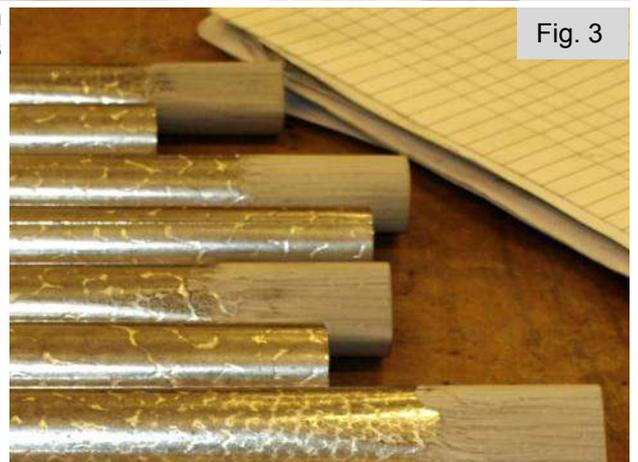


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

number of times during the preparation of the 76 stop instrument for Llandaff. The gauge of the metal used increases for the large scale pipes though even on those Richard's soldering presents as the work of a craftsman who takes great pride in his work; the pipes are beautifully finished. In fig. 3 the flattened ends of the pipe body can be seen; on the fourth pipe from the top the fine join can just be discerned. The other feature to note is the marbled effect of the spotted metal, a mixture of tin and lead: too much tin will result in a shrill 'penny-whistle' sound; too much lead will produce a dull,



Fig. 5

Guy demonstrated the effect of 'nicking' the speaking part of the pipe and the effect on the attack and speech of each pipe. Larger pipes, such as the Pedal Principal, which was on the large voicing chest, have only a token nicking – not simply a sign that the voicer has taken care with each pipe but a subtle change to the attack and speech of each pipe (fig. 5). (Note the cling film used to protect the pipes from finger marks during transit and installation.)

solid sound which will not blend well with other ranks.

After manufacture the pipes pass to Guy Russell (fig. 4), Nicholson's Tonal Director, who has been with the firm for many years. Guy places the pipes on a chest that is a working platform for the voicing of the pipes; there is a limited number of sliders – sufficient to allow mixtures and sections of choruses to be sounded simultaneously or individually. Wind is supplied by a small blower with the pressure regulated by adding or subtracting weights from the small reservoir that feeds the two chests.

The voicing of an organ is a fine art, one which either makes or breaks an instrument and hence, the reputation of the firm. During my visit Guy was working on the Great Principal of the Llandaff organ and had just completed his voicing of the rank; he took pride in demonstrating the fruits of his labours. The sound, in the relatively enclosed space of the flue voicing shop, was bright and somewhat overpowering. Guy has to hear the context of their final setting, whilst voicing them to match all of the other ranks: each has to

contribute without being strident or too weak. This was a man who was clearly comfortable with his work and had a vision of the role that each element, each rank and pipe, would play in the sound of a great cathedral organ to give that marvellous intangible, the tingling of the flesh that we all hope for.

Woodworking is clearly a significant part of the organ builder's trade, whether it be casework or the making of pipes and chests. (Andrew Moyes' comments in last month's article about the sourcing and sustainability of wood need not be repeated.) The well equipped machine shop was not in use during my visit; the staff were working on re-leathering and refurbishing the Great chest of the Rye Parish Church organ. This chest was huge! The instrument was built by Norman & Beard in 1901 with an exhaust pneumatic action, which, like many pneumatic actions of the period had become unreliable. Fig. 6 shows the Great soundboard table: the bearers, which support the weight of the upper boards and consequently some of the weight of the pipes, show in white.



Fig. 6

Fig. 7

The sliders fit in between the full length bearers; the short bearers are there to reduce friction on the slider and thus ease the movement of the stop action, which is mechanical. The table is grooved to allow any air leaking from a particular note to bleed away from adjacent pipes.

In fig. 7 the secondary action or power motors operating on the pallets can be seen; the last seven motors are still to be connected to the pallets. The chamber containing the secondary action is under pressure and



Fig. 8

in operation will be covered by a sealed panel. The power motors are in the raised position and the pallets closed: when a key is pressed, the primary action allows the power motor to collapse, opening the pallet which in turn allows air to the pipes.

Figure 8 shows three of the Pedal chests for the 32' Open Wood; the chests are actually upside down to allow the electro magnets operating the large pallets to be fitted. The weight of the pipes requires a very solid chest, hence the 2" thick ply. (Plywood is made of thin sheets of wood with the grain laid at 90° and glued. This creates a material in which any stresses in the material pull in different directions, thus creating a very stable material that is unlikely to warp or split.) The black units on the upper surface are the electro magnets; as the pallets are so large, several are required to open each one.

Michael Lane is the company's draftsman and produces all of the working drawings on the CAD (Computer Aided Design) system, and it is Michael's expertise in the building and construction of organs which underpins the drawings he produces: the computer does not tell Michael where to position the pipes – he tells the machine where each one is to be placed. During a visit by a group of students Michael showed them the computer-generated three-dimensional designs for the Llandaff organ: one of the students, perhaps more familiar with using a computer for games than as a design tool, said, 'Go on – play it, then.'

I was shown some case designs for the three manual nave organ which is to be the next part of the development of the organs in Worcester Cathedral. The striking case, designed by Didier Grassin, who also designed the nave case for Portsmouth Cathedral, brings to mind the mediaeval cases which grace the galleries of a few continental cathedrals: however, the case, like the new Tickell organ in Worcester cathedral, will excite comment and will not be to everyone's taste.

My sincere thanks to Andrew Moyes, Guy Russell and the Nicholson staff for providing a warm welcome and so much material for these articles - there is so much more one could have written about but space does not permit.

TW

*Behind the Facade*  
**St. John's, Bridge Street, Derby**



The dismantling of the Willis/Adkins/Johnson organ in St John's was begun on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April – a fascinating exercise in musical archaeology for those of us working

under Ed Stow's direction as we unearthed the work of the three builders. Those of us more used to sitting at a desk discovered that at the end of the first day we had muscles in places where previously we had only had places!

The north gallery of St John's now looks somewhat different with its collection of pipes, casework and swell shutters apparently scattered at random – a mad musician's collection of flotsam and jetsam – though Ed knows where it should all go. The height of the case and the façade pipes is masked by the height of the gallery and nave ceilings though most of the pipes are heavily cut out to make them sound at a higher pitch; Willis needed height in the façade to hide the Swell and larger Pedal pipes.

The pipework was generally in good condition though some of the pipes from the extensive façade showed the signs of removal on several occasions. Much of the façade is made of working pipes for the Great Open Diapason 8 and Geigen 8 with spaghetti-like conveyancing linking them to the Great chest. The conveyancing is in surprisingly good condition and reflects the ingenuity of the Willis design and the quality of construction (see photo); the conveyancing was not glued in place but fitted like a glove.



Conveyancing from the 'C' side of the Great chest feeding the casework pipes

David Roome's anecdotes and David Wells' shafts of dry wit entertained us; Andy provided plenty of information from his extensive research while we worked. A further session removed the swell box, the Swell and Great chests and the frame. The reservoir was removed from the frame and set on the floor of the chamber leaving the space free for decorators who will take the opportunity to complete the painting of the church.

During the period when the Willis organ is out of action Andy Storer will use the one manual Clatworthy organ which Ed has recently erected in the church. It is a fine looking instrument and at present is voiced to suit the (Continued on page 6, column 2.)

(Continued from page 2.)

which is bound to bring the house down at the end of any virtuoso choir concert. There are earlier eighteenth-century composers, Vedel, Berezovsky and my favourite Bortnyansky (1751-1825), about whom I should like to write at length at a later date.

### Can we use this music?

Very, very little of it is available with English text. A volume entitled *The Divine Liturgy* which I found in the Angel Row music library in Nottingham contains hundreds of pages of items, but most of them are liturgical chants of no relevance to Anglican, Catholic, Methodist or any other western worship. A few of these works are useful as introits or anthems. Other than this I have made my own translations and adaptations of material found in Russian-language anthologies or on the internet. For example, a beautiful short piece by Balakirev, intended for the induction of a bishop, was eminently usable as a *Kyrie eleison*. The Greek words fitted like a glove. I hope Balakirev would not have minded.

### Yes, we must use this music

About fifteen years ago I was on a day trip to London, and I found in a shop a CD of Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, Op. 41 (1878). I did not know it, but it is a gem. On returning home, I did not intend to listen to it straight away, but put it on the CD player and was entranced. At that time I was deputy conductor of the Nottingham University Singers. Now, if you are deputy to someone who is an internationally famous musicologist, you look for some way of upstaging him. Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy* was my way. It may well have been the first such performance in the East Midlands. The Singers did it, and they did it in Slavonic. It came off, after a very fraught rehearsal period. They hated the language. At the interval in the concert, I buttonholed a Russian friend in the audience. 'How about their pronunciation?' I asked. 'Just like a Russian choir', he said. I took him by the scruff of his neck into the

room where they were. 'Now tell 'em!' I said. It did wonders for them, for me, and for the event. It just proves that singing in Slavonic is not beyond an English choir. We can return to the question of translation at another time.

James Muckle

(James is willing to write further on this subject if members would like to read more. TW)

(Continued from page 5.)

building; the five stops provide a surprisingly full sound in the good acoustic of St John's.



The casework, restored by Terry Bennett, looks elegant and the instrument, after its period in St John's, will make a fine addition either to a home or a small church. The organ dates from 1811, placing it between the Battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, and was in a parlous state when Ed and Terry rescued it.

Members are invited to contact Andy Storer if they would like to play the Clatworthy organ. Players will be pleased to know that an electric blower has been fitted

Ed expects the work on the main organ to be complete by the end of 2009.

TW

### New Member

Mr Trevor Morris of Kirk Ireton has joined the Association after attending the Roger Fisher Day at Ashbourne.

### Organ Day

Roger Fisher and his wife are hosting an Organ Workshop Day at their home in Trelogan on 4<sup>th</sup> July. For details please see the DDOA website.

### Music

Siann Hunt has three copies of the music used at the Ashbourne Organ Day. If you are interested in purchasing the music, please contact Siann at [mail@derbyorganists.co.uk](mailto:mail@derbyorganists.co.uk)

### Assistant Conductor

The Sitwell Singers require an Assistant conductor/singer. Details on the DDOA website [www.derbyorganists.co.uk](http://www.derbyorganists.co.uk)

### Liverpool Visit 16<sup>th</sup> May

If you are intending to go on the visit to Liverpool, please let Siann Hurt know. Friends can make use of the coach to visit galleries and shops whilst the organists visit St. George's Hall and the two cathedrals.

The cost per person for the coach is £15 and to cover the cost of the coach we need thirty people.

Specifications of the two organs will be distributed to players on the coach.

See the last issue of *Newsletter* for further information.

### Advertising

In longer issues of the Association *Newsletter* such as this one, I will try to make space available for advertising events or refer readers to the Association website for further information.

In shorter issues priority will be given to articles written by members and the Association calendar of events. A surprising number of requests for advertising arrive each month; it is not possible to accommodate all of them in the shorter issues. TW

### Mendelssohn

BBC Radio 3 are promoting performances of Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer* or at least *O for the Wings of a Dove*, on May 10<sup>th</sup> as part of the bicentenary of Mendelssohn's birth. Further details can be found at [www.bbc.co.uk/compers/mendelssohn](http://www.bbc.co.uk/compers/mendelssohn)

As part of the bicentenary the Longford Deanery Choir are hosting a Come and Sing performance of *St. Paul*, copies provided. Details on the website at [www.derbyorganists.co.uk](http://www.derbyorganists.co.uk)

### Members' Recital – St James, Riddings Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June

The performers will be: Gillian Chatto, David Bott, David Wells, Laurance Rogers and your Editor, with pieces ranging from Buxtehude to Langlais. The organ at St James' is a large three manual by Blackett & Howden (rebuilt by Groves in 1996) and is sited in the west gallery. In the generous acoustic of the church the instrument sounds very well.

Articles for the next *Newsletter* should reach me by Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May either via e-mail: [twes@fsmail.net](mailto:twes@fsmail.net) or by post: Tony Westerman, 44 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2PX. The Secretary, Mrs S Hurt, can be reached at: [mail@derbyorganists.co.uk](mailto:mail@derbyorganists.co.uk)