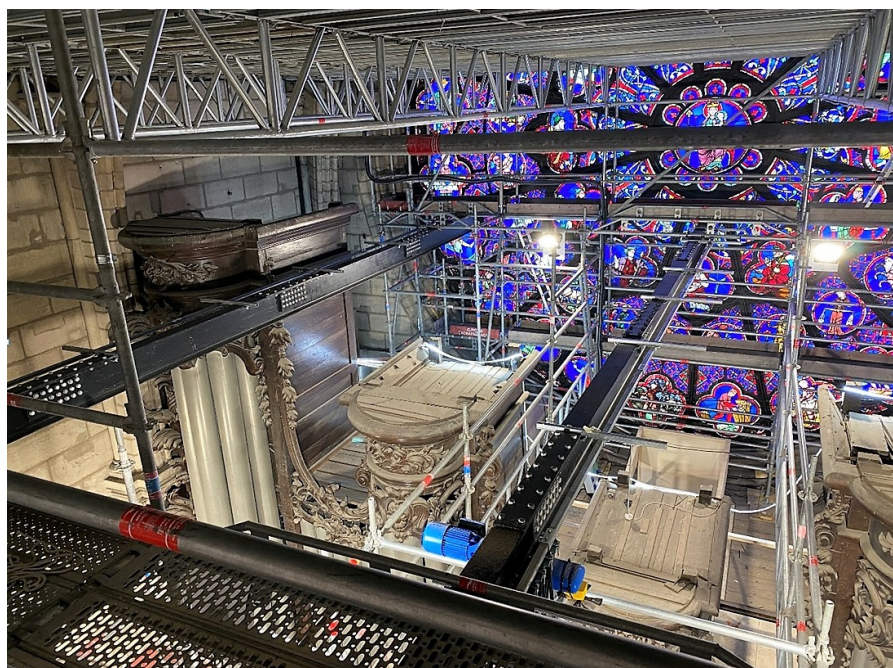


Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



Restoration at Notre Dame - John Maxwell-Jones

The fire that caused so much destruction to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris shocked the world on 15th April 2019. Two years later, people around the globe are still inspired and united by the efforts to reconstruct and clean all that was devastated by flame, smoke, and dust. This article is a precis of an interview with Olivier Latry, one of the three *organistes titulaires* at the Cathedral and professor of organ at the *Conservatoire de Paris* and *Vox Humana* Associate Editor Katelyn Emerson.

The role of the organiste titulaire

Generally speaking, the distribution of services between the three organists at the Notre-Dame Cathedral is scheduled three years in advance. This allows them to plan their other activities (concerts, courses, classes, etc.) around their responsibilities at Notre-Dame. However, it is of course always possible to exchange with a colleague if necessary. The process of organizing these services so long in advance has also allowed them to distribute the major holidays as well as possible: in a span of three

years, each of them has played the major church feasts, including Christmas, Easter, Assumption, etc., once. In addition to the usual round of services some national services will also be scheduled, for example, state funerals and thanksgivings. Latry explained the problems of playing at a console so far from the high altar and the system of including telephone, lights and CCTV. However some "events" cannot be foreseen, as when a priest of the Basque country who was a bull-fighting enthusiast was preaching at Notre-Dame, some objectors wanted to bring a cow into the Cathedral! In this case, the recommendations were quite clear: the organist in the tribune needed to be ready to play loudly for a long time if something did happen. The organ, which can produce sound up to 110 decibels, could drown out any and all other noise!

The reconstruction

It wasn't only the pipes, but nearly everything has been removed and taken down: the console, the windchests, the wind trunks, actions, pipe conveyances,

DDOA Events 2021

Monday 5th July at 7.30pm

Talk by Richard Brice. 'Music of René Becker' St Peter's Belper. (See page 8)

Saturday 25th September

Visit to Lincoln Cathedral and St Peter & St Paul Church, Lincoln.

Plans for other events, such as the evening visit to St Edmund's, Allestree, will be confirmed as health restrictions become lifted.

Do visit our social media pages:

www.facebook.com/derbyorganists

www.twitter.com/derbyorganists

Concerts & Recitals

Wednesday Lunchtime Recitals 12.30 - 1.10pm

at St Modwen's, Burton-upon-Trent
2nd June Ben Bloor (London Oratory)
9th June Tom Corfield (Derby)
16th June Liam Condon (Lichfield)
23rd June Karen Thompson (Burton)
7th July Ben Mills (London)
14th July Matthew Gibson (London)

Editor's note

I encourage members to send questions to the **Young Organists' Corner** column on page 8. I hope this will be a regular feature, and ideas from experienced members will be most welcome. Better still, please offer some answers, in a paragraph or an article.

Member's news

Growing family

Congratulations to Alex Binns and his wife Dora on the birth of their second child, a daughter, Chloe Eleni Chatzigeorgiou-Binns. For the DDOA committee this might be a record breaker; it is certainly many years since a serving committee member had a child!

Photos, this page and next: Organ organ remaining after removal of soundboards etc.
© Christian Lutz and the Etablissement public chargé de la conservation et de la restauration de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris.



Lead monoxide dust can be seen on the case and inside the organ.



Reinforced feet of the facade pipes which twisted under their weight (1.9 tons for the front pipes).

etc. This took the organ builders almost five months. The treatment of each component will be different according to the element and material to be restored: cleaning and decontamination of the metal pieces (pipes, conveyances, wind trunks), application of a layer of paint to the wooden parts, and replacement of all leather parts, even those that are new. Leather cannot be cleaned except through the simple application of water, which is obviously not ideal for the material. The plan is that the organ will be completely reinstalled for the reopening of the Cathedral in April 2024.

The elements of the organ too massive to be removed remained at Notre-Dame, particularly the two windchests of the basses of the 32', the wooden pipes of the pedal, the large bellows, and the case. These parts will be cleaned and restored in place. The console was removed and will be restored offsite. It is not yet known what may need to be replaced in the electronics of the

organ. A big restoration and modernisation of the *Grand Orgue* was completed in 2014, including this console. The *Eltec* organ relay system already performs very well, and updates had taken place regularly so it is not anticipated that much work will be necessary.

In reply to a question about the builders involved Latry replied that the companies Cattiaux and Quoirin, which carried out the restoration in 2014, and the company Sarélot were each chosen for contributing a particular expertise to the restoration. (This is similar to the case for the work on the stained-glass windows). Most of the companies that were invited suspended all of their "work-in-progress" to come to Notre-Dame. As the goal of completing everything by 2024 is still very much the target, everything is being done to meet the deadline. Fortunately the pandemic has had virtually no effect on the work on the Cathedral;

everything is continuing on schedule.

The "orgue de chœur"

Sadly only the metal pipes of this instrument were saved, as the rest had taken on too much water. The plan for the new organ has not yet been finalized, but many options have been discussed and decisions will have to be made when the time comes.

The National Heritage Institute has launched a series of events on the restoration of the cathedral:

<https://notre-dame-de-paris.culture.gouv.fr/fr>

John Maxwell-Jones

Olivier Latry is one of three titular organists at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. His [YouTube channel](#) showcases music from the Notre-Dame *grand orgue*, with works such as the *Trois chorals* of César Franck and a transcription of *Clair de lune* of Debussy recorded only six months prior to the fire.

Member's letter

Margaret Eades writes:

The priest at the church where I am organist indicated recently two funerals where he thought I might be asked to play the organ.

A few days later, in a further conversation, I was slightly taken aback when he informed me that the funeral directors had told him that they had recently purchased a new electronic device which could reproduce to a very high quality any piece of music, including hymns sung by cathedral choirs. The funeral mourners in this case particularly wanted the hymns sung rather than

just played, which has been the norm recently. The funeral directors were offering the use of this device to their clients, which in both cases they had accepted, so there was now no need for my services. The priest further added that he thought that this situation would now be the norm, at least until congregations were allowed to sing again!

Although the use of CDs of favourite music of the deceased has been growing in frequency, I wonder if this most recent practice is possibly making the organist completely redundant? I have always regarded my position of church organist as an important, privileged, pastoral and professional vocation and role in

church services, including weddings and funerals. The remuneration, although very welcome, is of secondary consideration. Perhaps it seems only a matter of time when all the funeral directors will assume their clients will want their device and organists will be involved in fewer and fewer funerals?

I was wondering if any other organists have had similar experiences? What are the feelings of the readership in this matter? I realise that people are free to make their own choices, but, I for one will be sorry to lose the opportunity to contribute my musical offering at these occasions.

Recent Events

RCO Winter Conference

As an inveterate attender of conferences over the years, it was an unusual experience indeed to participate in a 'virtual' version of this type of event via the Internet in February. It was also a first for the Royal College of Organists in mounting their winter conference in this format. Before the event I was curious to discover how the experience would compare with the well-tested conventional one. Now, in hindsight, I am confident that this format has a valuable role. Predictably, no time was spent in journeying to the meeting, navigating an unfamiliar campus or waiting in coffee queues! But what was the effect of the absence of direct human contact, meeting friends, making new contacts, quizzing the experts?

In the first instance one must say that the conference website which mediated all the events was superbly easy to understand and navigate; I would say it was a model of how this type of online event can be organised. The three-day programme consisted entirely of pre-recorded video presentations within a timetabled schedule which included breaks for 'tea'. For each afternoon and evening there was a one-hour recital by an eminent player and these were interspersed with lectures lasting 30 minutes each. A great feature of the schedule was that, if you missed an event, the videos remained available, so you could easily catch up later at your convenience. In fact the videos remained on the website for the following week, so, having prioritised what I wanted to listen to on the conference days, I was able to 'fill-in' other sessions and repeat-listen at leisure. The standard of presentation and playing throughout was impressively high and I was delighted to be introduced to some topics of which I had no previous experience. For the sake of sanity here, from the 29 programmed events, I shall highlight just a few which impressed me most.

Recitals

Without exception, the recitals contained stunning performances on a fantastic variety of instruments in Athens, Vienna, Netherlands, Coventry and New York. In a most impressive recital, Rachel Mahon gave an amazingly assured performance of *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue* by Healey

Willan on the wonderful organ in Coventry Cathedral. A personal favourite was Matthias Havinga who played three different organs in Holland, including the thrilling Bader/Timpe instrument in Zutphen which so impressed me when I visited it many years ago. A joy of the online format was that each was followed by a Question and Answer session on *Zoom*. All the performers came over as really warm and interesting people as they talked about the music and their lives as musicians.

Lectures

- William Saunders explained and performed each of the five movements of Whitlock's *Plymouth Suite* on the organ of St Edmundsbury Cathedral. So encouraged by his performing tips, I am now learning to play this suite.
- Gerard Brookes, President of the RCO, commended a selection of manageable pieces from the 19th century French repertoire. He demonstrated eighteen snippets from composers such as Chauvet, Salomé, Gigout, Saint Saens etc. (All the scores are downloadable for free. I can send the list to members who are interested.)
- Anne Marsden Thomas and Frederick Stocken presented their research behind their most recent publication *The New Oxford Organ Method*. The *Zoom* Q&A session afterwards revealed some questioning of some editorial decisions and teaching approaches. The volume deserves a full review in a future newsletter.
- I thoroughly enjoyed Mary Cobbold's presentation of *Praeludium in C* by Buxtehude. I have always enjoyed this piece, but Mary's authoritative analysis and explanation of its themes and structure have helped me appreciate and admire it even more.

The Keynote Talk was given by John Rutter. He gave it the title "Reflections of an ex-organist", explaining that, despite passing Grade 8 with distinction, he couldn't play Widor's Toccata and decided at an early stage of his career that he found composing easier than being an organist. So he was very respectful of organists and the diverse skills that their role often demands. He heaped praise on several friends who were famous freelance organists, but also acknowledged the outstanding merit of many church and cathedral organists who faced so many challenges in addition to playing the instrument. Not least amongst these was that of working harmoniously with



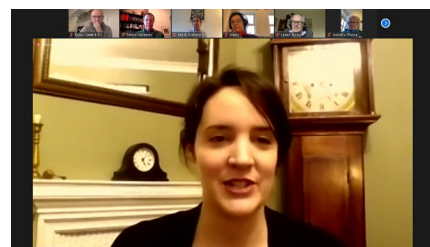
St Walburgis Church, Zutphen



Mary Cobbold analyses Buxtehude



Matthias Havinga introduces Sweelinck



Rachel Mahon talks about her move from Canada to Coventry Cathedral



John Rutter has a story for every occasion

the clergy and the need for outreach beyond the routine of enriching the liturgy. John's talk, and the Q & A *Zoom* session afterwards was packed with anecdotes, leaving no doubt that he is a master story-teller as well as a famous talent as a composer.

Laurence Rogers

Good Friday, 2 April 2021

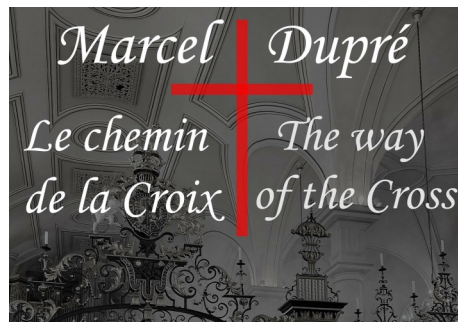
**Dupré, *Le chemin de la Croix*,
streamed from Derby Cathedral,**

**played by Edward Turner and
Alexander Binns,**

**with readings by Katherine
Dorrity, the Very Rev. Peter
Robinson and Canon Elizabeth
Thomson**

Marcel Dupré sometimes comes across as a rather severe composer: one to admire perhaps rather than one to love. There is less obvious warmth and colour in the harmony than in the case with Duruflé or Messiaen, for example, while, except in the pieces based on plainsong, there is little in the way of memorable melody. That said, *Le chemin de la Croix* is a masterpiece and this was an amazing performance. The evening was a long one (well over two hours from start to finish), but highly rewarding in every way.

Le chemin de la Croix started its life as an improvisation. Readers of this *Newsletter* will know from a recent article by Stephen Johns about Dupré's powers as an improviser and this work amply bears that out, while also illustrating one possible relationship between improvisation and composition. In 1931 Dupré gave an organ recital in Brussels, during which someone read aloud a series of meditations by the French dramatist and poet Paul Claudel (1868-1955). Entitled *Le chemin de la Croix*, these meditations addressed in turn each of the fourteen stations of the cross, which trace Christ's journey from his trial before Pilate through to the crucifixion and burial. After each meditation Dupré improvised a short organ piece. The following year he enlarged and developed his ideas, committed them to paper and had them published. The result was a suite of fourteen movements which portray the events of that terrible journey in a highly dramatic form and with often frightening realism. Much of the music is appropriately violent and dissonant, but some of the fourteen stations encapsulate moments of great tenderness and these inspire some wonderfully expressive slow movements. *Le chemin de la Croix* is thus a work full of contrasts. There is also a symphonic element to the cycle, however, which is held together by thematic integration and a strong sense of development and progression. In fact, the composer called the work 'a vast symphonic



poem in which several leading themes recur'. Particularly striking in this regard are the three pieces where Jesus falls, in which similar material becomes increasingly anguished, culminating in a savage toccata. The final piece in the suite, depicting the burial, weaves together two ideas from earlier into a long funeral march. In the concluding *adagio* one of those themes is transformed into what one programme note describes as 'a song of eternal life, very soft, very far away, and finally fading imperceptibly into silence'. Played on manuals only with *voix celestes* and a 4' flute, this is a beautiful and profoundly moving close to this turbulent work.

Ed and Alex, who played seven movements each, made light of the technical difficulties in the fast movements and shaped the slow pieces with loving care. We had an excellent view of them and they conjured appropriate sounds from the organ at every point. One movement was briefly a duet when Ed appeared at the console to assist Alex with a couple of general pistons, but otherwise they both managed all page turns and registration unaided. Both musically and technically, it was a *tour de force*.

Tom Corfield

Paul Claudel's *Le chemin de la Croix*.

As a companion article to Tom Corfield's review of Alex Binns' and Ed Turner's excellent performance, which I too would describe as a *tour de force*, our editor asked me to comment on the other aspect of this singular event, the readings of Claudel's 14 poems alongside performances of Dupré's improvisations. Derby Cathedral chose to have the poems read in French and then a translation in English (I believe by Stephen Buzard and Carol Symes). All three readers read very well but I would single out Canon Elizabeth Thomson for her sensitive and poetic renditions.

Paul Claudel (1868-1955) was a career diplomat. An unbeliever in his teenage years, he experienced a sudden conversion listening to the choir sing Christmas Day vespers in *Notre Dame de Paris* in 1886. "In an instant my heart was touched and I believed." Although seriously considering entering a Benedictine monastery, he served in posts as far afield as Tokyo and Brazil, where one of his secretaries was a certain Darius Milhaud. As a diplomat, Claudel chose to publish either anonymously or under a pseudonym until later in life. Much of his work was devoutly Catholic and displayed his right-wing political views. Although his *Paroles au Maréchal* (poems to Marshal Pétain, the leader of the 1940 Vichy government) was criticised as collaborationist, his diaries show his consistent contempt for Nazism. Both T S Eliot and W H Auden acknowledged his importance.

Here, like Tom, I have to make a confession. I have difficulty in deciding where blank verse stops and prose begins. Claudel wrote in a unique verse style rejecting traditional metres in favour of long, luxuriant, unrhymed lines of free verse, influenced by the Latin psalms of the Vulgate translation of the Bible, which was actually named the *verset claudelien*. For me, therefore, the *poems* are reflections on the 14 stations of the cross, but both very powerful and poignant. Tom refers to the drama and realism which Dupré captures so well, as well as the tenderness and compassion. I have not managed to find out who or what inspired the first performance, given in the Royal Conservatory in Brussels in 1932 but the multi-media experiment was such a success that it was repeated and developed at the *Palais du Trocadéro, Paris* the following year and led to Dupré publishing them and performing them annually at *Saint Sulpice*. Bizarrely, Dupré does not acknowledge Claudel in his score for which various theories, including political differences, have been propounded.

What cannot be doubted is that the combination of Claudel's devout faith allied with that of Dupré combined to produce an intensely moving experience entirely fitting for a Good Friday reflection and exquisitely performed in Derby Cathedral.

John Maxwell-Jones

Music at the Funeral Service of Prince Philip

Since the death of Prince Philip, as well as his amazing record of public service, more and more has been revealed about the depth and breadth of his interests and intellect. Not least, judging from the funeral service, was his impeccable taste in church music. Here, Margaret Eades offers a personal reflection. Also included is an extract from a [blogpost](#) by the composer John Rutter.



One of my earliest childhood memories was being shown newspaper photographs of Princess Elizabeth's marriage to Prince Philip. Despite all the rationing and post wartime deprivations, this was the first occasion in my young life I remember it being a time to celebrate a national event!

Since those days, there have many times when Prince Philip has been the instigator of reforms or creator of new projects, and I remember, as a teenager being asked if I would like to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, but I declined, as I was about to go to University. Since then, I have tested a few of my piano and violin pupils who have been involved in taking this part of the award.

In his amazingly busy and creative life, he has left many legacies to people all over the world, and so it was not surprising that he compiled his own funeral service in great detail with characteristically many personal choices of texts and music, illustrating every aspect of his involvement in so many spheres of his remarkable life!

Prince Philip's close association with the military was reflected in the Royal Regiment of Scotland's marching band playing impeccably before and after the ceremony suitable remembrance reflective items, setting the scene for the service itself.

Inside the Chapel, organist, Luke Bond played Bach's *Schmucke dich O Liebe Seele, BWV 654*, together with pieces by Harris, Whitlock and Vaughan Williams as the royal mourners arrived.

The singing during the service itself was provided by a vocal quartet of three lay clerks and a professional soprano who, socially distanced in the empty nave, was conducted by resident Director of Music, James Vivian. They sang with impeccable taste and sensitivity. They, together with the clergy, delivered their contributions with a great dignity, which left me spellbound for the whole of the proceedings. It was so refreshing to hear the texts sung or spoken in such a way that the full meaning was easily conveyed with such reverence! Their input also reflected the Duke's love of simplicity, and the sound and blend of the quartet reverberated beautifully in the rich acoustic of the St George's Chapel.

The only hymn sung by the choir alone was the appropriate *Eternal Father, strong to save*, strongly reminiscent of the Duke's Navy days, followed by the joyous and contrasting Britten: *Jubilate*. Following this was *Psalm 104*, set by William Lovelady, commissioned for the Duke's seventy-fifth birthday. The Anglican liturgy's *Lesser Litany*, sung to the well-known William Smith setting, was followed by Robert Stone's setting of the *Lord's Prayer*. A tribute to his



Orthodox beginnings in life brought the service to a very fitting conclusion with the *Russian Kontakion of the departed*.

The congregation throughout reflected on the beautiful words and music chosen with the Duke's deep knowledge and spiritual understanding and faith. It was a personalised tribute of a great man, like his predecessor, Prince Albert who contributed so much to the cultural and personal lives of so many!

Margaret Eades

The music at a church service is generally not the work of a single composer, and the task of whoever plans the service – in this case with some required inclusions of music chosen by the Duke – is to make it all fit together and flow smoothly, which was triumphantly achieved at Windsor, working with the Covid constraints allowing only a solo quartet of voices rather than the full choir. If you have studied (say) the structure of a Beethoven symphony, you will know how important the key structure is in binding a whole work together. And at the funeral there was similarly meticulous planning of keys. It was all built around G, minor and major, which we were prepared for by the final pre-service organ voluntary, Vaughan Williams's *Rhosymedre* Prelude in the major, leading into a subdued improvisation in the minor. William Croft's timeless *Burial Sentences* followed (G minor) . . . and after the Bidding Prayer, Dykes's beloved *Eternal Father* (in the related key of the sub-dominant major, C) – in James Vivian's arrangement boldly leaving the first verse to an unaccompanied solo voice, rather like the lone trumpet at the start of *The Godfather* which makes you pay attention and listen. We stay in C major for Britten's *Jubilate* written at the Duke's request in 1961, brisk, concise and no-nonsense (qualities he would have encouraged, no doubt) . . . a return to G minor for William Lovelady's *Psalm 104* setting, its key and ground-bass structure echoing one of the greatest of all laments, Dido's from Purcell's opera . . . William Smith's Responses from the early 17th century bringing a shaft of sunlight in G major, then the *Russian Kontakion* returning to sombre G minor, a sidestep to G minor's relative major for the Last Post in B flat, its sub-dominant E flat for Reveille, and a sense of return and release with the National Anthem in G major. Beethoven couldn't have planned it better...

John Rutter (Reproduced by permission)

The Organ Show 18-24 April



If you follow *The One Show* on BBC Television, you will be familiar with the 'magazine' style of programme with a characteristic mix of studio interviews and location videos clips. Maybe this was the inspiration for *The Organ Show* organised by the Royal College of Organists (RCO) on seven successive evenings. Channel: the [RCO YouTube channel](#). Host venue: St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge; there were no plush red sofas for the socially-distanced presenters and their guests, just hard wooden pews! Presenting each hour-long show in the church were Andrew Parmley (Chief Executive RCO) and Cheryl Enever who provided continuity. Their commendable skill in keeping the show going was in frequent demand during the week as technical hitches cropped up most evenings (low sound levels, dim lighting, lost links with outside presenters, etc.). The roving interviewer was Anna Lapwood who has evolved as a friendly and insightful presenter on BBC music programmes in the past year or so. A regular feature of each show was a four-minute improvisation on a theme selected randomly from three options and presented to a different player on each day.

Kicking off on Sunday, we had a tour of organs in Westminster Abbey, the Palace of Westminster and Blenheim Palace. Gerard Brooks, President of the RCO, improvised on the given theme of *Love changes everything*. The show concluded with the first of several appearances during the week of *Organized Crime*, a Canadian duo, playing the organ very skilfully in a variety of crazy but entertaining poses. Their Toccata and Fugue duet was hilarious.



Rachel Mahon and Sarah Svendsen
Organized Crime Duo

Monday was billed as a showcase of the work of organists' associations around the country. We understood that the plan was for live interviews with IAO Chairman, David Saint, and President, John Kitchen, interspersed with videos submitted by associations, but in the event we were offered a short Zoom conversation with them; unfortunately the audio-visual quality was rather flaky and there were no videos apart from an IAO promotional. It transpires that there were technical problems which necessitated a last minute revamp of the programme. However, the DDOA video along with those of several other associations, were soon uploaded to the RCO YouTube channel for separate viewing. You can see the DDOA video [here](#).

The Tuesday show began with a tribute to Jennifer Bate, one of three outstanding women organists who died in 2020, the others being Jane Parker-Smith and Catherine Ennis. Jennifer was a leading exponent of Messiaen's organ music whose playing was revered by the composer himself. She pursued an international recital career and founded an organ academy that continues.



Jennifer Bate



Catherine Ennis

Most of the Tuesday show was devoted to the theatre and cinema organ world. Richard Hills, appeared in classic fashion at a Wurlitzer console in full Technicolor emerging from the floor at the Musical Museum in Kew. He went on to interview Donald MacKenzie at the Odeon, Leicester Square, who demonstrated improvised accompaniments to some silent movies on the unique 5-manual Compton organ, installed when the cinema was built in 1937. Following this Richard interviewed Phil Kelsall who has played the Wurlitzer at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom, accompanying ballroom dancing since 1977. Richard rounded off in superb style with the mandatory improvisation, having been given the theme of *Londonderry Air*.



Richard Hills interviews Donald MacKenzie

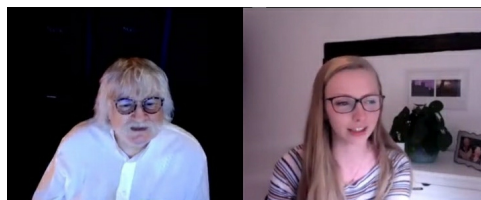
Much of the Wednesday show featured the organs at the Freemasons Hall, London. We were given a tour of the impressive Art Deco building and the organs. For my taste there was too much talking, and the tour of the pipework was tedious, so I was glad when we moved to the next item, a tribute to Catherine Ennis, former president of the RCO, who died on Christmas Eve 2020. She was regarded as a dynamic and energetic force in the organ world, especially in London.

Somewhat in contrast, there was plenty of music in Thursday's programme devoted to a recital by Stephen Farr at All Saints, Margaret Street. This included the premiere of *First Flight* by Cecilia McDowall, commissioned initially at the instance of the 50th anniversary last year of the first Moon landing.



Friday was 'education day' and a panel of RCO worthies discussed a range of challenges in engaging with children and training young organists. There was general optimism that the embracing of online technology forced upon music teachers during lockdown has opened their eyes to new opportunities for outreach to wider audiences; websites, online courses, webinars, organ days and so on, have been able to reach people outside the normal 'tent' of music making. Interleaved with the discussion were video reports of successful recruitment of organ students in schools. The examples were from privileged institutions rather than 'ordinary' state schools and one wonders if the RCO will be the agency to widen access to organ education in the broadest sense in the majority of the nations' schools. The potential is there - online media and relatively cheap portable digital organs are a reality ready to be exploited. It was refreshing to hear one speaker thinking about access, by cautioning against 'esoteric repertoire' in outreach activities.

Friday's show also included a fascinating interview with the composer Karl Jenkins, whose organ piece *Celebratio* was used as the signature tune for the series of *The Organ Show* programmes. He described himself modestly as a "musical tourist" who loved working on different genres. His father, a chapel organist, influenced his early musical experience and he is very fond of jazz. When asked how he creates the emotional impact of his music, he explains that he "writes from the heart using intuition plus a lot of craft".



Karl Jenkins in conversation with Anna Lapwood

Saturday was 'International Organ Day' and the show soon took us on a world tour of organs and organists young and old. There were videos from San Francisco, Japan, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, France and Canada. The presentational styles varied enormously from the formal to the bizarre. One of the most entertaining was from Luzerne in which Wolfgang Sieber duetted with a partner, playing a waltz and simultaneously dancing to it. (Clever camera trickery strongly suspected!)



A double organ duet from Luzerne

Saturday's improvisation was by David Briggs from St John the Divine Cathedral, New York. On opening the envelope, the theme turned out to be *Mood Indigo* by Duke Ellington. (Ellington's funeral took place at the cathedral in 1974). We were then treated to a classic Briggs improvisation in the form of a passacaglia.

The festival show concluded with a live performance of Kodaly's *Laudes Organi* (In praise of organs) sung by the choir of St Paul's, Knightsbridge.

One can reflect upon a whole week of hour-long evening shows in which there was something for all tastes in organ music. A year ago, who could have envisaged such scope of the online format? Let's hope that it will continue to develop and prompt inspiration for our live meetings when they can resume fully.

Laurence Rogers

Member's letter

Richard Brice writes:

Martin Henshaw (musician, organ builder and historian) is very upset by the number and quality of organs which are being abandoned in Britain; the lucky ones are re-homed (invariably abroad) whilst some suffer dreadful fates - I'm sure we can all think of examples of the latter. He would like to provide emergency funding so that an organ which is unused, but could be put in working order for a small sum, has work done so that it is useable. This funding would be in the form of a loan with the expectation that it would be repaid out of profits made from the use of the organ, perhaps using it for concerts, recitals, being played during a flower festival, teaching or whatever the community decides to do. The idea behind the scheme is to generate interest in the instrument so that it becomes sustainable. if you know of an instrument which would qualify, or a community which would like to take advantage of this idea, please contact me via the Editor.

Richard Brice

Item from BBC News

House organ or Organ house?

Estate agents are famous for their flowery descriptions of properties, but this one takes some beating:

A four-bedroom "charismatic and eccentric" terraced house with a full organ built into the fabric of the building.

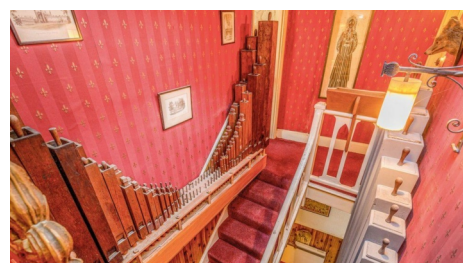
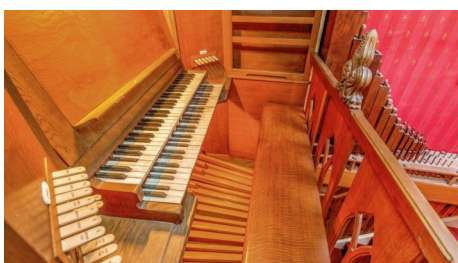
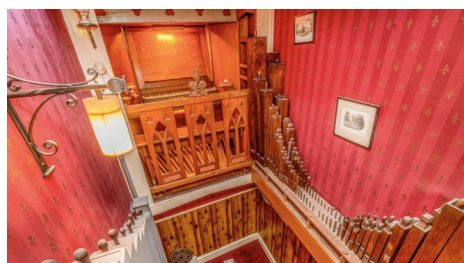
Before going on to the market at Cliftonwood, Bristol, the house belonged to the late Mrs Joan Baker, formerly organist at nearby Holy Trinity Church. After moving into the house in the 1940s when she was 21, her

husband, Ronald, and his brother built the instrument so that she could practise at home. Space was made for a two-manual and pedals console by knocking through two cupboards in the top rooms. The pipes go all around the stairwell and into one of the bedrooms. One might speculate that opening and closing the bedroom door might function as a swell!



Joan died at the age of 98 last year. According to her neighbour, she was an extraordinary person; she would sit at the console and her husband would play a trumpet from the half landing below. Joan was very sociable and well known in the neighbourhood as the street granny, with a great sense of humour.

The estate agent suspects that the organ, with such a dominating presence, will not survive the new owner. It's a shame that there are too few extraordinary organists in the market.



Your Association

The Edmund Stow Legacy

During 2020 the DDOA Committee spent much time establishing criteria for the distribution of the funds given to the Association for the restoration of organs in the Derby area. The executors of Ed's estate - his sisters, Helen and Ros - wanted some of the money to be used for organ restoration in memory of the work done by Ed in the Derbyshire area over many years.

In order to support as many projects as possible by granting sensible sums to support restoration work, the Committee decided that a maximum of £5,000 or 25% of the contract price, whichever was lower, could be granted if all other criteria were met. The full details of grant criteria can be found on the DDOA website at:
<http://derbyorganists.co.uk/resources>

We are pleased to report that the first grant has been awarded to the Church of St Michael, Kirk Langley for Phase II of the restoration of their Wordsworth organ. Phase I of the work involved dealing with mechanical and winding problems and cleaning, all of which has been carried out to high standard by Mike Thompson and Simon Tipping. The reservoir, sited on top of the Swell box, has been re-leathered and is now able to rise effectively. Some work was also necessary to the wind trunks to provide an adequate wind supply to each division.

Like many organs in village churches, this instrument is small, having only nine stops and to describe the chests as 'compact' might be something of an understatement. However, the Wordsworth pipework is of good quality and is housed in a splendid case by Bodley which projects into the Chancel. Dating from 1894 the organ was positioned to support a Chancel choir which, in turn, lead the congregation. There is no longer a choir and the effect of the organ in the nave is somewhat limited, particularly when the building is full.

Phase II of the project will address this latter shortcoming with some tonal alterations that will make the instrument more flexible and able to lead a full church.

The PCC at Kirk Langley are to be congratulated on their fund-raising efforts, having arranged concerts and other events to support Phase I of the project. They are also to be congratulated on their vision of a secure future for their church and their desire to secure the future of the organ for the next hundred years.

As a teenager and young man I played so many organs like this one that had lost their sparkle, were dull, clumsy to manage and uninspiring. Working with Ed and seeing and hearing what can be achieved with a small instrument was something of a revelation. I very much look forward to hearing this organ when Phase II is complete.

Tony Westerman

YOUNG ORGANISTS' CORNER

Who is writing for the organ today?

This was one of the questions posed last month by one of our youngest members. The short answer is that recitalists, cathedral and church organists from all over the world are composing music. So perhaps it is better to ask how do we discover and select new music that we might want to play?

First I suggest that, best of all, listen out for a piece that excites you; you might hear it in a recital, after a service, on the radio, on *YouTube*, or so on. It is generally easy to find out the name of the piece and composer. Finding the publisher might be a bit trickier, but these days a quick surf on the Internet usually solves the problem. Repeatedly hearing the signature tune for *The Organ Show* last week made me think "I would like to play that". A bit of fishing around revealed it to be *Celebratio* by Karl Jenkins of *Adiemus* fame. There again you might hear people talking enthusiastically about a piece. This is how I recently discovered *Festive Bells* by John Rutter.

Secondly, look out for reviews of new publications. Reading the opinion of someone who has tried a piece is often more valuable than a publisher's advertisement. The *Organists' Review* is very good for this; every issue contains a section of reviews. Also, sometimes you might read a report of a concert or an article about a composer that prompts you to check out and try a particular piece.

Thirdly, have a look at publishers' websites for what's new. This is probably the least satisfactory of these suggestions since it is usually better to rely upon the word of someone you know and respect. The major publishers of organ music by contemporary composers are: [OUP](#), [RSCM](#), [Mayhew](#), [Banks](#), [Church Organ World](#).

Laurence Rogers

Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

Monday 5th July 2021 7.30 pm at St Peter's Church, Belper

The Music of René Becker – An Illustrated Talk by Richard Brice

Rene Becker (1882-1956) was a French-born American composer and organist who is little-known today. After a chance finding of a *Toccata* of his, Richard has spent some time researching his life and music and hopes to whet our appetites for discovering more of his music.

'Lockdown' pieces: For the second half of the meeting members are invited to play a piece they have learnt during lockdown. Don't be shy!

The meeting will be followed by refreshments.

Items of news or articles for the July / August edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 21st June**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Andy Storer, may be reached via mail@derbyorganists.co.uk. Please visit the DDOA Website www.derbyorganists.co.uk for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.