

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



The Elizabethan Age Draws to a Close

When Queen Elizabeth died in September we were suddenly confronted with a great moment in history, not least because the record length of her reign had encompassed the lives of most people in the country today. Queen Elizabeth had been at the focus of national life as long as we could remember. At some time or other, usually on TV, we had all witnessed her part in the pageantry of jubilees, royal weddings, trooping of the colour and so on. More locally, throughout her reign, the Queen visited numerous towns and cities, and Derby was no exception; altogether she visited the city and county seven times, most recently in 2010 when she opened the new Derby Royal

Hospital and presided at the Royal Maundy service at Derby Cathedral.

As we all know, Queen Elizabeth was a devout Christian and was no stranger to the church music that we all love so much. With such wonderful choirs, organs and musicians at her command, she was privileged to experience the finest treasures of our choral tradition. For the world to observe, the uplifting music offered at her memorial service at St Paul's, the state funeral at Westminster Abbey and the committal service at St George's Chapel, Windsor provided a showcase of these great treasures. Similarly, thousands of our local

DDOA Events 2022

Saturday 26th November

St Matthew's, Darley Abbey **at 2.00pm**
AGM followed by social and refreshments.
(See page 12)

DDOA Events 2022

Plans include visits to Shrewsbury, Shropshire, Sheffield and Yorkshire.

Other Events

RBC Organ Festival 14-18 November

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Concerts and Masterclasses on the new Flentrop organ (after Arp Schnitger).
Daniel Moulton, Nicholas Wearne,
Martin Schmeding, Nathan Laube
[Details and booking](#)

Saturday 12th November 2.30pm & 6.00pm

St John the Evangelist Church, DE1 3HZ
A Choral Flourish - Music of Vaughan Williams, Schmitt, Howells and Britten
Sitwell Singers. Conductor: Dexter Drown,
Organ: Tom Corfield
[Tickets: £10, Students £3](#)

Saturday 19th November 7.30pm

Derby Cathedral. Verdi - *Requiem*
Derby Bach Choir. Conductor: Richard Roddis
[Tickets £10 - £24](#)

Saturday 26th November 8.00pm

St Mary's Church Bridgegate DE1 3AX
Rachmaninoff - *Vespers*
Derwent Singers. Conductor: Dexter Drown
[Tickets £15](#)

Saturday 10th December 7.00pm

St Alkmund's Church, Kedleston Road
Handel - *Messiah* Derby Choral Union.
Conductor: Paul Provost
[Tickets £20](#)

Thursday 15th December 7.30pm

All Saints Church, Aston on Trent, DE72 2DH
Christmas Concert Derwent Singers
Conductor: Dexter Drown
[Tickets](#)

Photo: The memorial to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at All Saints Church, Ashover.
Click on the photo to hear Simon Nieder's musical tribute.

churches and choirs have offered of their best at special memorial services. Simon Nieder has published a simple but sincere video tribute on his *Twitter* feed. You can see this by clicking on the main photo on the front page.

As this moment in history passes, it is natural to recall those events when we might have experienced the presence of the Queen. Your Editor recalls the privilege of singing in a 'stand-in' choir at Westminster Abbey when the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were present at a service celebrating the International YMCA. It was in August 1994 when the Abbey choir was on vacation. In its place, my choir was composed of choir trainers who happened to be attending an RSCM course at Addington Palace that week. To be told on Day 1 that they would be singing for the Queen on Day 5 was a complete surprise, never forgotten.

Laurence Rogers

Our Chairman, Tony Westerman recalls the time when the Queen visited his school:

Meeting Queen Elizabeth II

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School (QEGS), Ashbourne, first chartered in 1585 during the reign of Elizabeth I, was privileged to receive a visit from her distant successor, Queen Elizabeth II in 1985 to celebrate the school's 400th anniversary. At that time it was thought that QEGS was the first state secondary school that the monarch had visited.

Local landowners and worthies in the period immediately preceding 1585 petitioned their monarch for permission to create a Grammar School for local children. The original petition to the monarch in 1585 indicated that: '... *For want of Scholes they know not God or her Majesty's Lawes, but are given over to wickedness and vyces as swearing, drunckedness, whordome, idleness and such lyke to the great displeasure of God, contempt of Her Heighness and to the great damage and hurte of the common wealthe*'. The original charter (costing £28.10s - an enormous sum in 1585) was still kept in the music room store at the top of the tower when I arrived as Head of Department in 1977; it was later transferred to the Derbyshire Records Office.

The sixteenth century school building, Usher's House and



The Queens unveils a plaque commemorating her visit to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne in 1985.

Master's House, still stand in Church Street opposite the ancient parish church of St Oswald; the Georgian mansion that later became the Headmaster's house in 1947 and, somewhat later, the girls' boarding establishment, is across the road.

The late Queen's visit in 1985 created great excitement as well as a host of events to mark the anniversary: a concert of Elizabethan music in the panelled refectory of the original school building, with suitable Elizabethan fare and music provided by singers, harpsichord, a broken consort of cornamuse (*pl. cornamusen*) and bass rackett; a pageant through the streets of Ashbourne (sadly in pouring rain, perhaps reminiscent of the Queen's coronation in 1953), and an evening of Elizabethan music provided by a local group in Elizabethan dress, *Sarabande*

The tour began in Old Hall in the Edwardian building on The Green Road with a group of rather

apprehensive young musicians waiting for the monarch to notice them. Her majesty was rather more musical than people might imagine. Initially, she asked the pupils to play something on each of the instruments, though it was the bass rackett that brought the famous smile and an chuckle of delight, 'Such a deep sound from such a small instrument'. Fortunately, the pupil playing the rackett was musical, very intelligent, very polite and quite unfazed by direct contact with Her Majesty, answering all of her perceptive questions.

An Aide suggested that the consort might play together, which we did. The Queen asked about the wind instruments, which I had made from a kit purchased from *The Early Music Shop*, though she joked that the harpsichord probably hadn't come as a kit - it hadn't. The famous smile, the clear delight taken in the playing of a group of young musicians who had prepared music from the first Elizabethan Age, the subtlety with which HM put the players at ease (including me) set the tone for the rest of the visit.

The easy charm and smile with which Her Majesty treated everyone was a very special gift shared with an easy grace that won hearts and minds. Certainly, those of us involved in the day in any way recall it with great affection as we were left with the impression that we were making a valued contribution to something much greater than the ancient Grammar School; our simple contribution had been acknowledged by no less a person than our Queen, our Head of State.

Tony Westerman



The Queen visit Derby Cathedral for the 800th Service of the Royal Maundy in 2010.

Derby's Day of Superlatives

After months of planning by the DDOA Chairman and Committee, a wonderful programme beckoned participants attending the Midlands Organ Day in Derby Cathedral on 3rd September. We were treated with presentations by tip-top organ builders, performers and soloists, all masters of their art.



Robin Jennings

First on the programme for the morning session was **Robin Jennings** who built the new chamber organ for the DDOA endowed by the Edmund Stow Legacy. Robin told us how he learnt to love Baroque music as a student at the London Furniture College and in his final year he built a two-manual harpsichord, a vital tool for Baroque accompaniment. After a spell working for N.P.Mander Ltd, the famous firm of organ builders, he set up his own business and took commissions to build house and [church organs](#). At a certain stage he decided to specialise in building [chamber organs](#) and so far has completed 36. All the examples he showed us in photographs were beautiful pieces of furniture as well as practical instruments. He took inspiration from the craftsmanship he discovered whilst dismantling a 17th century 'Father' Smith chamber organ during his time at Manders. For his own designs, he declared that none of them could be described as 'authentic'; a prime aspect of design was that they should be practical working instruments capable of easy

Programme

Building a Modern Chamber Organ - Robin Jennings

The Evolution of H&H Tonal Architecture - Andrew Scott (Harrison & Harrison)

Transcription Master Class with Jonathan Scott

The Art of Baroque Accompaniment - The Apollon Duo - Dora Chatzigeorgiou and Alexander Binns

Organ Recital - Jonathan Scott

movement and transportation. He estimated that an instrument he built for John Eliot Gardiner travelled thousands of miles during the musician's Bach Cantata recording project.

Robin went on to explain the creation process for his chamber organs, beginning with the design in computer software used by architects but proceeding to a completely hand-made fabrication process. He showed [videos](#) using various electrically driven tools, like a band-saw and turning lathe, but automation was totally absent; each component, be it structural, the keyboard or a wooden pipe, was hand-crafted. Different components used different types of wood: English box wood and ebony for the keys, Scandinavian pine for pipes, oak for the structure and so on. The manner in which Robin described the qualities of the wood or a process for hand-finishing a component left us in no doubt that

here was a man who had intricate knowledge of his materials and loved his craft which he had refined through experience; in short, a master craftsman. It was fascinating to discover what had contributed to the pedigree of our instrument in Derby Cathedral, already an object of our admiration and which became a honey-pot for members of the audience after the conclusion of the talk and questions.

After lunch it was the turn of **Andrew Scott** to take the platform. Andrew joined Harrison & Harrison, organ builders, as an apprentice in 1994. He was appointed Head Voicer in 2012 and most recently became Managing Director, just six days before the Derby event. His subject "The Evolution of H&H Tonal Architecture" carried the sub-title "To nick or not to nick – that is the question". As we discovered, the process of nicking is one of several



After his talk, Robin waxes lyrical with a curious and attentive audience.



Andrew Scott



An attentive audience for Andrew Scott's talk

that can be applied to pipe to modify the sound it makes.

By way of context, Andrew first gave a potted history of the firm. Originally founded by Thomas Harrison in Rochdale in 1861, the firm moved to Durham in 1872, so this year marks the 150th anniversary of that move. Thomas' two sons, Arthur and Harry, joined the firm in the 1880s as apprentices, later to become partners when Thomas retired in 1895. Hence the two brothers gave the name by which the firm has been known ever since. Arthur's skills as a voicer of vision and perfectionism achieved widespread acclaim, whereas Harry excelled behind the scenes leading all the technical aspects of construction. Arthur died in 1936 during the finishing of the organ in Westminster Abbey.

Andrew described the character of organs built between 1900 and 1940 with the title 'Imperial Voicing Period'. Under Arthur's influence, the general voicing style was 'romantic', characterised by very controlled and even pipe speech. Herein lies the context of 'nicking' the pipe languids and lips, a process which suppresses the transient 'chiff' which occurs as a pipe begins to speak. Wind pressures tended to be high, especially for reeds, and the power of the chorus ranks was attenuated as one moved up through the higher pitched ranks.

During the period from about 1936 to about 1980, the 'Organ Reform Movement' (ORM) grew in influence on the continent of Europe and the USA. The

inspiration of this movement was to recover the voicing style of 'classical' organs of the 18th century. With lower wind pressures, open-tip voicing* (see footnote), little or no nicking, the speech was much more free and the upper harmonics were more prominent. Similarly reeds tended to be voiced in a French-style which sounded more flamboyant. Upper chorus ranks tended to be of equal power to lower ones. All this challenged the smoothness and refinement of the Arthur Harrison tradition.

The firm came face to face with impact of the ORM when it was awarded the prestigious contract to build the brand new organ for the Royal Festival Hall (RFH). Ralph Downes was in charge of the tonal concept which generated numerous conflicts with the firm's traditions, not least the unfamiliar voicing methods advocated by the ORM. The *coup de grâce* occurred when a



An example of the 'nicking' of pipes giving a dog-tooth effect at the mouths. Sometimes the density of nicks is less than shown here.

Frenchman was brought in to voice the reeds. "That didn't go down well!"

In subsequent rebuilding contracts, like those at King's College, Cambridge and St Alban's Abbey, under the leadership of Cuthbert Harrison, the firm exercised more restraint. The main influence of the ORM was to add more upperwork without thinning out the foundation tone. When it came to the new organ for Coventry Cathedral, it was possible to apply lessons learned at the RFH, resulting in what might be described as a hybrid of tradition with reform. In the eyes of many, the Coventry organ remains one of the finest in the country.

Andrew went on to present a selection of new Harrison organs built since 1980. This reflected how the hybrid approach continued to evolve as the extremes of the ORM fell out of fashion in the UK and the organ community began to reassess the needs of a wider repertoire and range of uses. In his concluding remarks, it was clear that Andrew felt very comfortable with the balanced approach to tonal matters that prevails at present.

* Andrew demonstrated the difference between open-tip and closed-tip voicing at the Royal Festival Hall at the time of the organ's restoration in 2013. It was captured on a video by Laurence Rogers in the audience. You can see it [here](#). It has had over 19,000 viewings.



Richard Syner, Jonathan Scott, Paul Hodgetts



Dora Chatzigeorgiou



Alexander Binns

The fashion for transcriptions of orchestral works for organ was at its height in the late 19th century when great virtuosos like Edwin Lemare would thrill audiences which had no access to live orchestras. By the middle of the 20th century the fashion of organ repertoire had drifted away from transcription, focusing in the main on pure organ music. However, in recent decades we have witnessed a gradual *rapprochement* with the art and **Jonathan Scott** has been at the forefront of its revival not only as a virtuoso himself but as a prolific arranger of great orchestral works. So it was a great privilege to welcome him to Derby for a masterclass with two local organists.

Our first volunteer was **Paul Hodgetts** who played Lemare's transcription of the *Meistersinger Overture* by Wagner. We admired Paul's accomplished performance, but as we expected, Jonathan gave many ideas for elaborating the principle of recreating the sound-world of an orchestra. For the opening section with prominent brass, this meant experimenting with the texture and articulation of the chords trying to feel how brass players would not just play the notes but shape and phrase them. Experimenting with the registration, use of pedals and the swell box was a key part of emulating the sound of instruments. This was particularly so in the quieter passages for violins and oboes. Pure organ music doesn't normally involve so much active expression with the swell pedal but here it was a vital element.

Second on the stool was **Richard Syner** who had brought along his own transcription of *Scene* from *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky. Richard's piece of work was impressive, especially as the orchestral score employs such a diverse range of instrumental sounds, often the case in Tchaikovsky's music. Jonathan's discussion focused on how to make this expressive music as expressive as possible; the *sforzandos*, rapid diminuendos and crescendos, the dramatic build-ups, the big tunes and so on, all need special attention to registration. For the opening violin *tremolos*, he recommended adding a trumpet under close control of the swell pedal to achieve the sudden *sforzandi*. He was quite prepared to use the Tuba for the big tune. Once again it is necessary to experiment to find out what works with the particular organ, remembering also that the acoustic plays a part. The guiding principle to find the best way of playing, is to think of the original instrument.

There was much to think about in this fascinating session. Our thanks to Paul and Richard for their fine contributions, and of course to Jonathan for his encouragement.

The final session of the afternoon brought us back to Baroque and the chamber organ which has a major role as a continuo instrument.

Alexander Binns, the Derby Cathedral Director of Music, presented his talk in two halves, each concluding with a performance with his wife, **Dora Chatzigeorgiou**, playing violin.

To begin, he considered the role of continuo performance in Baroque music. One can identify a variety of contexts for this, ranging from the accompaniment of choral settings

where the organ is the sole accompanying instrument to the large ensembles used by Handel and Bach. In the latter, the main focus is on elaborating the bass line, but, according to availability, the work of continuo can be also provided by a variety of stringed or wind instruments such as bass viol or bassoon. A large element of continuo playing leaves much to the discretion of the player. It is entwined with improvisation and adaptability to the context; the number of instruments or singers, how sombre or spirited is the music, tempi, texture and so on. The degree of extravagance must match the mood of the music. The improvisatory character means that art of continuo playing is often left to the final rehearsal and performance.

In Baroque times the only instruction to the continuo player was a 'figured bass', a single bass line annotated with numbers and accidentals. Alex explained the conventions of this system and demonstrated the freedom that it offers the player; a 'realisation' could take a variety of forms from simple chords to florid elaboration. In conclusion Alex and Dora played a lovely *Sonata in D* by Handel.

In the second half of his talk Alex discussed the duo format in which the two instruments perform as equal partners or as twin soloists. Beyond the Baroque, the repertoire for the combination of violin and organ may seem rather limited. Not so; Alex listed romantic works from the 19th century, 20th century and contemporary pieces from living composers. He and Dora then played some examples: *Benedictus* by William Lloyd-Webber and David Bednall's *Marian Suite*.

The crowning glory of Derby's Organ Day came in the evening with **Jonathan Scott's recital**. At the masterclass in the afternoon we had gained a taste of his exuberant manner. He clearly loves his music and does a wonderful job in persuading his audience to share the deep feeling he has for it. "The Orchestral Organ", his title for the recital, ushered a complete programme of transcriptions. Opening with Lemare's arrangement of Wagner's *Overture to Tannhäuser*, we knew that we were in for a treat. He conveyed the dramatic crescendos of this piece using the full dynamic range of the Compton organ. To quote him from the masterclass, he gave us the full "sound-world of the orchestra". The big screen allowed us to see how he played three manuals simultaneously with two hands, his left-hand thumb doing the work on the solo tune. (Visit [here](#) to see his previous performance of the work at Rochdale Town Hall).

Wagner was followed by Purcell; This was Jonathan's own arrangement of *Dido's Lament*, such a poignant piece, and, as it happened, became a portent of the mood of the nation in the week following. The performance was poignantly expressive and again we

witnessed thumb solos picking out the theme on a second manual. For my taste, the dynamic range, using loud reeds, was a bit too great for this sombre piece, but one cannot deny the dramatic effect of the performance which you can hear [here](#).



Jonathan Scott at Derby Cathedral

Then we were charmed by Mozart; a Scott arrangement of *Allegro con brio* from *Symphony No. 25*. Clearly Jonathan was very taken by the Compton reeds, this time using a prominent reed soloing the main theme in the pedal. This achieved essential clarity for the rapid semi-quaver ornaments recurring throughout the whole movement. The reeds were on fine form and this was a bright and breezy performance which you can hear [here](#).

The grand finale comprised Saint-Saëns *Symphony No.3 in C minor*. Nick-named the "Organ" symphony, in organ transcriptions we often only hear the final *Maestoso*. Not so in Jonathan's arrangement; this was the whole symphony, and what a mighty one! Hearing all the orchestral

movements on the organ was a thrilling experience. It felt as if a full symphony orchestra was out in force. From the wistful beginning, travelling through massive crescendos and diminuendos, other-worldly modulations, it was an incredible symphonic journey. The Compton reed choruses sounded magnificent in the final *Maestoso*. This was a virtuoso performance *par excellence* making a triumphant conclusion to a unique day for organ lovers.

Hearty thanks to all our speakers and performers for a wonderful day and full marks to Tony Westerman and the DDOA committee for making it happen!

Laurence Rogers

If readers would like a copy of the souvenir programme, there are still a few copies available. Please contact the [Editor](#).

You can hear Jonathan's performance of the Saint-Saëns Symphony at the Victoria Hall Hanley in 2019 [here](#).

Members' Notes

Daniel Roth's visit to Derby and Sandiacre

Daniel Roth, *Organiste Titulaire* at St Sulpice, Paris, recently celebrated his 80th birthday and the September issue of the *Organists' Review* carried an interesting interview with him.

How many of our members remember his visit to Derby many years ago when he gave a recital in the cathedral? Stuart Bassett remembers well, volunteering to convey Monsieur Roth from his hotel in Risley to the cathedral for a rehearsal and then for the recital. Although memory of the programme has faded, Stuart does recall that as an encore he played Widor's *Toccata* from memory.

After the recital Stuart had supper with Daniel in the course of which Daniel enquired of what Stuart was doing tomorrow, Sunday. Stuart replied that he would play for the Eucharist in the morning at St Giles, Sandiacre (a neighbouring village to Risley). Daniel suggested that he would like to come along, before he returned to Paris. "What will you play?" asked Daniel. Terrified Stuart replied "I couldn't possibly play in your presence!" After some negotiation, Stuart persuaded Daniel to play for the whole service! That he did, filling in the gaps with wonderful improvisations. Oh, what rapture! And for a voluntary he played Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in D major* (BWV 532, with the opening pedal scales) from memory. Stuart describes Daniel Roth as "a generous charming genius".



Daniel Roth at Sandiacre Church c.1990

Recent Events

Recitals by two young performers, both still in their twenties and brilliant ambassadors for the organ

Anna Lapwood at the 2022 Southwell Music Festival

What an energetic way to launch the 2022 Southwell Music Festival on 24th August! From my seat in the Quire I was impressed at the speed at which Anna Lapwood ran up and down the stairs to the Minster's screen organ between each piece and how she spoke so enthusiastically to the audience. Yet she played an unusual, but most convincing programme beautifully and with perfect composure and clarity.

Anna has a passion to support women in music, and the recital began with *Star Fantasy* by Kristina Arakelyan and also included *In Paradisum* by Ghislaine Reece-Trapp and *Taking your Leave* by Cheryl Frances-Hoad. There was also a brilliant performance of *Franck's Chorale in A minor*, which she played ten years ago at her audition to become the first woman organ scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford. The first performance of Anna's own arrangement of Debussy's *Clair de Lune* then received its first performance and it was particularly effective in its use of the nave triforium pipework as the music faded into the distance.

She is well known for her undergraduate and girls' choirs at Pembroke College, Cambridge, for her live broadcasts, for her recordings, for her work in musical education and performance in Zambia, for her [Bach-a-thons](#) on YouTube, for her television and radio presenting, for chairing the judging panels for the BBC Young



Anna Lapwood



Southwell Minster

Musician 2022, for her work as an Associate Artist of the Royal Albert Hall, and for so many other things. I cannot imagine how she has the time and energy for everything, but after the performance Anna was relaxed as she chatted amiably to members of the audience in the transept until a rehearsal for the evening's concert began. She was then off to the airport to fly to Zambia!

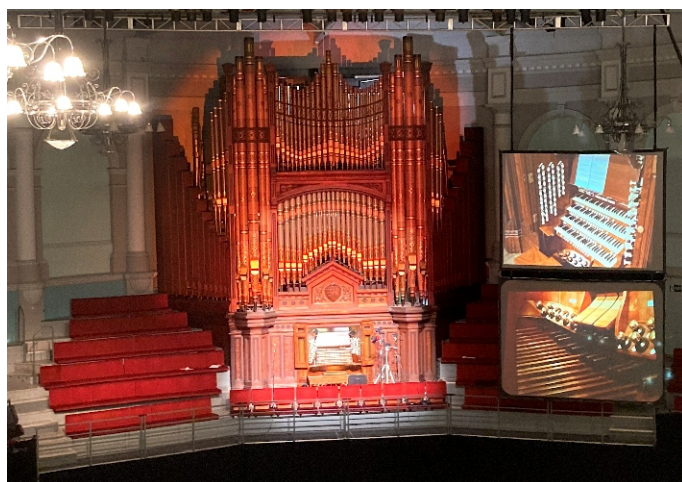
Gert van Hoef at the Victoria Hall

Gert van Hoef, the well known Dutch organist, made his long-awaited return to the Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent on Saturday 20th August, sponsored by Alan Dronsfield's Trust. It was his fourth visit, having previously been in 2015, 2017 and 2019. With a large audience, Gert played a popular programme that included Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G (BWV 541)*, the *Allegro* from Widor's *Sixth Symphony*, a transcription of the final movement of Dvorák's *New World Symphony*, and two of his own compositions. After the recital, he and his wife and console assistant, Marjolein, generously spent much time greeting the audience in the foyer, before making their way across the road to give an afternoon recital at the Bethesda Chapel. There, the organ and the chapel are very much work in progress. Michael Rhodes explained how the occasion marked the inauguration of two new stops for the organ, an 8' Oboe and an 8' Cornopean, both Norman & Beard and both dating from 1901 from a Methodist church in Norwich.

Geoff Howell



Alan Dronsfield, Gert and Marjolein van Hoef



Victoria Hall, Hanley

Recent Event

Playing Bach – A seminar with Alex Binns 24th September

The pretext for this seminar was an awareness that styles of Bach performance have changed considerably since most of us received lessons as novices. Many ideas about keyboard touch, pedalling technique, registration, tempi and teaching approaches in general have perhaps shifted so much, they are worthy of exploration. Accordingly Tom Corfield invited Alex Binns from Derby Cathedral to lead a discussion in an afternoon session at St Anne's, Derby. As a member of the younger generation of professional players and teachers, Alex's personal perspective promised a fresh look at the subject.

Alex began with a thumbnail sketch of his own introduction to Bach's organ music, weekly all-Bach recitals at Halifax Parish Church and lessons using the old Novello edition. When he subsequently attended an Oundle course for young organists, he soon discovered that more modern editions were in vogue, ones which gave no editorial guidance on tempi, registration, phrasing and fingering. These so-called *urtext* editions attempt to reproduce the original intention of the composer as exactly as possible, without any added or changed material. In the case of Bach's autograph scores, instructional markings for performance are so scarce, that the field for personal interpretation is wide open. Alex illustrated some extremes of interpretation to be found on recordings of Bach's D major Prelude BWV 532; *molto legato* playing in a ponderous acoustic by Marcel Dupré, needle-sharp *detaché* playing at breath-taking speed by Simon Preston, flamboyant French registration with Jean Guillou, dignified but spirited playing by Stephen Cleobury at King's College and the 'all guns blazing' approach by Cameron Carpenter.

Any attempt to identify the elements of an 'authentic' performance are fraught with uncertainty. For one factor, the many instruments that Bach performed upon were varied in terms of size and specification. The need to adapt to the resources presented by a particular instrument



Alex demonstrates possibilities for articulation technique.

was as true in Bach's time as it is for us today. Alex especially highlighted the importance of choosing stops that suit the character of the particular piece concerned. Since counterpoint is such a dominant style in Bach's music, this demands clarity. For preludes, toccatas and fugues, a version of *organo pleno* should be chosen according to the tempo and complexity of the piece; let the ear decide how best to render the texture. For chorale preludes, let the text inform the choice of stops and don't be afraid to experiment and be inventive. For trio sonatas, regard these as chamber music in which the voices are independent and unobscured. Regarding changes of registration, bearing in mind the rarity of Bach's directions and the practical difficulties of handling the large door-handle style draw stops of his time, the mood of our discussion was that modern consoles with registration accessories legitimised a flexible approach today. There was much to discuss about registration.

In contrast, the old chestnut debate about pedalling with or without heels was fairly brief. Alex reminded us that historical instruments from Bach's time have short length pedalboards with sharps almost vertically below the manuals, making it virtually impossible to use heels. Such limitation is unusual in modern consoles, so again, a more flexible approach might be justified, but no doubt the debate will continue!

For the topics of phrasing, articulation, fingering and touch,

these are closely intertwined, frequently informing each other. They lie at the heart of interpretation, but so much will also depend upon the type of manual action, be it tracker, pneumatic or electrical, and the required weight of touch. Alex proposed the overarching principle that "the music should always sing", a laudable musical approach. Defying the inherent constancy of tone of organ pipes, a player's mental feeling for a vocal line, accents, slurs and the beat are sure to provide a musical insight for structured legato and measured *detaché*.

Summing up, Alex offered some general principles for Bach performance:

- Ensure that you make your decision based on the repertoire and instrument.
- The instrument generally informs the way you play.
- Always play musically.
- Be consistent in style and approach.
- Don't be afraid to experiment.

And a final thought:

Bach was a revolutionary in many ways. What would he have made of modern instruments with their playing aids? Would he have wanted to use them if this technology were available?

Alex was thanked for a most interesting session. The absence of dogma was most welcome and discussion of his guidance could have continued for at least another hour.

Laurence Rogers

The Pop Up Organist - Dr Simon Nieder

We are very fortunate to live in an age when digital technologies and the Internet give us unprecedented access to the world of the pipe organ. Performances of the greatest organ works on the world's most impressive organs, by the leading exponents of the art of organ playing are there for all. "Wow", "wow" and more "wow"! Meanwhile, languishing in many churches and elsewhere are those not so impressive, and less well-loved instruments sitting silent and under-played. It seemed to me quite a stark contrast and one that needed remedying.

After inheriting a considerable collection of organ music & books from the late William Madin, I one day came across this gem entitled "Historic Organs in Derbyshire - A Survey for the Millennium" by Rodney Tomkins. It then also languished, unread and unappreciated on my bookshelf for several years. We've all had a lot more time on our hands during these Covid years and so during lockdown I started browsing through this book and wondered at what was possible.

What state are these instruments all in now? Certainly, during those silent 18 months when in-person church services ceased, none of them were getting much use or attention.

It was during this arid time for all our music-making that I discovered a few remarkable *YouTube*

channels. In no order, I was regularly able to hear Jonathan Scott, Richard McVeigh, Paul Fey and many others giving exceptional performances on virtual pipe organs. These became my companionable treats to pass those long days away. I wondered about these remarkable digital consoles, *Hauptwerk* and the ever more convincing sample sets being played. I wondered too "who will play the many, many organs that aren't featuring on these channels?". Were we in danger of having an "Indian summer of organ music" followed by a rather bleak winter when many pipe organs would become defunct or at least head that way?

Playing the organ is one of those great joys in life. I've no idea what it feels like to paraglide or ride the white water rapids, but I'll settle for the thrill of making music on a pipe organ every time! I was 'umming' and 'ahhing' about whether I was good enough as an organist to put my own recordings of pieces 'out there' on the Internet for all the world to see and hear. An opportunity fell in to my lap when Richard McVeigh put out the call for organists to participate in an [International Organ Recital](#). He simply asked that interested organists submit the clip of their performance to a certain recipe and then introduce themselves and their piece in an additional clip. He would then produce, host and broadcast the recital.

It was too good an opportunity to pass by so I took the plunge graciously supported by Richard. My recording eventually submitted was a short piece called "Souvenir" by Marcel Dupré. It was a great experience! Playing alongside other organists of every age, calibre and locale on all manner of organs - real, virtual and hybrid - was a privilege. What a buzz that evening to sit for those 6.5 hours enthralled by every performance during this unique event.

So what next to do? Should I try and keep going with a *YouTube* channel of my own playing on my local pipe organ. How would it fare, and who would be my audience I

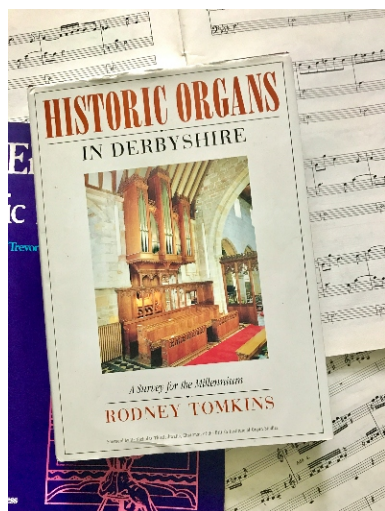


wondered? Certainly I have nowhere near the capabilities and experience levels of the Messrs Scott, McVeigh, and Fey et al in the organ world!

The penny dropped that there was an opening in this space. Without the actual real physical instruments to play on, even with capable new players, the vast repertoire and the superlative digital pipe organs, we would have less and less opportunity to hear live organ music being produced in the same physical technology that both music and instruments have evolved on. Tomkins' tome became a source of fascination and one day the idea of being a "Pop Up Organist" crystallised.

Now, I'm on a journey of exploration of the instruments Tomkins surveyed as the focus of my organ playing for a season. I intend to 'pop up' at churches (with permission and prior arrangement) to semi-spontaneously play/practise the instrument there. The information from Tomkins is my starting point and I aim to play as many of these instruments as is possible. I hope that the resulting fruit will include :-

1. A follow up survey of some of the instruments in "Historic Organs in Derbyshire".
2. High quality audio and video recordings of suitable repertoire "for the record".
3. Tweets on Twitter, where possible, as short clips for those who'd like to hear these instruments.
4. Raised awareness locally and further afield of the organs and their musical possibilities.



Continued on next page...

To widen it further, where appropriate, I plan to Tweet a 'window of opportunity' and location/postcode for the church I'll be visiting the night beforehand so that folks could come to listen if they wish. It would not be a recital but a simple event to hear that organ being played, hopefully to a good musical standard!

So there you have my project - the "Pop Up Organist". You can view my Twitter account here: <https://twitter.com/popuporganist>. The clips will start growing as I spend more time editing down my prior recordings for places where I've already been. Click [here](#) to see my visit to All Saints, Ashover, in our community. I also invite

other DDOA members who might like to be involved to get in touch with me. The more the merrier! No previous technical AV skills are required, just a willingness to enter into the spirit of discovery and playing more of these wonderful, lesser known pipe organs!
Simon Nieder

"What's the Point of a Cathedral Choir" asks Christopher Ouvry-Johns

It was at the DDOA Annual Lunch in October that Christopher Ouvry-Johns, Director of Music at Leicester Cathedral, startled his audience by posing this question. It came after a splendid meal, again this year at Horsley Lodge where the usual friendly atmosphere prevailed amongst members. Chris was this year's Guest of Honour and, as a former Head Chorister at Derby Cathedral, he was well known to many of us and certainly could feel amongst friends; indeed he expressed his pleasure at "returning to his home turf". In answering his question, Chris gave a powerful and inspiring speech which gave us much food for thought. His arguments were so persuasive, they deserve a full account here.

He began with a thought experiment: Suppose you find yourself on a train speaking to a devout atheist who has no inclination towards religion, or perhaps to someone from the evangelical wing of the church with a different musical tradition who might not see the value of cathedral music. What arguments can you offer? In a general context how can we justify funding cathedral choirs, which happens to be quite an expensive business?

One argument might be that the choir's singing uplifts the congregation, it enriches worship, it enhances our experience of the divine, it gives a glimpse of heaven. In recent weeks the various ceremonies all over the country surrounding the death of the late Queen have made it obvious that without music they would have been much poorer. Also, the televising of the great services at Westminster Abbey and St Georges, Windsor, exposed cathedral music to a vast audience not normally found in churches and offered the potential to bring home the argument for its inherent value.



For such great services that might be very well, but how do we justify a mid-week Evensong when there may be just a handful of people in the congregation? It is worth reflecting that the congregation for a weekday said service of Evening Prayer is often even smaller! The power of music to draw people in and bring people back into church and reconnect to something earlier in their life is not to be underestimated. One might argue that it doesn't matter how many people are there, we are doing it for God. Our worship joins with 'angels and archangels and all the company of heaven'. However, this is a difficult argument to put to your treasurer when, even in a comparatively inexpensive department such as Leicester's, the costs of two full-time staff members, choristers' singing lessons, robes, music etc. will clearly not be covered by the contributions on the collection plate at weekday evensongs. At older foundations, where the Cathedral often subsidises choristers' school fees, these costs can be orders of magnitude higher. It is great to be able to do all that we can for God but, if we don't have the money for it, it's really hard to sell that to the finance department, however favourably disposed that may be towards the choral tradition.

Actually the most cost effective way of providing a choir would be to use professional adults who can all read music, know the repertoire or can sight-read new repertoire. This would cut down on rehearsal time and you wouldn't need a full time Director of Music! Chris hastened to add that this is not a model that he would wish to commend; on the contrary, he places a children's choir high on his list of priorities for justifying a cathedral choir. He sees the experience that choristers gain to be an important aspect of the cathedral's ministry and spiritual mission. In so doing, a children's choir carries a burden of responsibility to ensure that the experience is available to as many children as possible, regardless of their background and "regardless of the cards that life has dealt them".

This inevitably leads to a consideration of 'diversity' which is often equated with racial diversity, but the issue goes deeper than that. Chris tells the story of a black boy in Peckham, south London, who won a place in the National Youth Theatre. He came away from the first session saying "There's nobody like me there. It's all rich white kids." In common with those white kids he had a love of theatre, but he didn't feel that he fitted in. "There was nobody like me". Making children feel that they belong is a challenge. This is perhaps less so in Leicester where racial diversity is well established, and at the Cathedral this is reflected in the ranks of boys and junior girls choirs. However the bigger challenge is 'socio-economic' diversity. Notice that the boy remarked "rich white kids"; that was an important part of what made him feel that he didn't belong there. A former colleague of Chris's with a diocesan brief for engagement with people of global majority heritage once commented that, in terms of opportunities available to them, a middle class black child has much

more in common with a middle class white child than they do with a black child from a less affluent background. So the challenge is that, although black and white have had the same educational opportunities, the bigger challenge is to make these opportunities available to children who otherwise can't afford it.

How does diversity play out at Leicester Cathedral? Chris asserts that Leicester was the first English Anglican Cathedral to have a girls choir. (While Salisbury was the first of the old foundations to take this 'historic' step in 1991, Leicester Cathedral initiated its girls' choir in 1974.) As is well-known, Leicester schools reflect the city's racial diversity and in the past decade the cathedral has forged links with those local schools. The Assistant Director of Music, Rosie Vinter, also has the title Head of Music Outreach. She oversees a programme of ongoing

relationships with a growing number of city primary schools as well as being responsible for probationer training. From one inner city school where English is not the first language of 70% of the children, Rosie has recruited three choristers. With the recent general decline of the numbers of specialist music teachers in state primary schools, for many children, the cathedral contact is the only one they will experience with a professional musician.

In tackling socio-economic diversity, Chris strives to fulfil his belief that the opportunity of becoming a cathedral chorister is open to children of all backgrounds. A recent grant to Leicester from the Cathedral Music Trust includes a significant sum to cover travel costs for choristers whose family circumstances would not otherwise enable them to sing with the Cathedral Choir. In one example he

explains that, due to their pattern of shift-work, the parents are unable to bring their children to weekday practices; the cathedral pays for taxis to transport them. With all the pressure on the cost of living, he expects a greater proportion of children will need financial support to have the cathedral choir opportunity.

In summing up, Chris declares that the choir's music will continue to uplift congregations. He hopes that it will continue to be worthy of joining the music going on in heaven. "Most importantly, it will be as truly all embracing and universally accessible as the universal church that it seeks to serve."

After rapturous applause Chris was thanked for his inspired speech presenting deep insights and uplifting ideas for these uncertain times.

Laurence Rogers

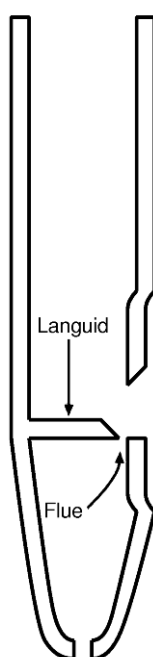
Your Association

Welcome to Thomas Howell

Thomas Howell is the newest member of the DDOA and is also the recipient of the Edmund Stow Bursary for 2022/2023 as a first year BMus. student at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. As well as his organ studies at the RBC Tom will be Organ Scholar at Birmingham Cathedral, following a year as Organ Scholar at Chichester. Having studied with Gerdi Troskie in Worcester, Tom has already taken the practical part of the FRCO examination and is very much looking forward to his period of study in Birmingham. Members of the DDOA will be able to hear Tom play in the St Modwen recital series next year.



YOUNG ORGANISTS' CORNER

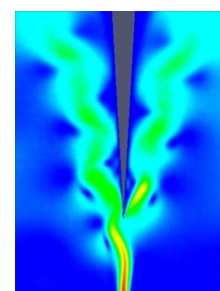


The language of organ pipes

Organ pipes like the one shown here have a *mouth* near the foot of the pipe. If you look inside the mouth you will see a flat surface called the *languid*. This defines the base of the column of air inside the pipe that resonates to give the sound. When the sound is made, strangely we describe the pipe as *speaking*, despite the reality that the sound is more like singing!

We know that all sounds start from vibrations, for example, when we speak, it is the vibration of our vocal chord that creates the sound. What makes the vibration in the organ pipe? The answer lies in the *flue*. This is the slot just behind the lower *lip* of the mouth. When *wind* is supplied through the *foot* of the pipe, the flue creates a 'ribbon-shaped' stream of air which hits the upper lip of the mouth. The result is that the stream breaks into swirls and flutters either side of the lip. You can see this effect in a computer simulation; just click on the image above to see the animation.

The majority of pipes create their sound by this method, which explains why they are generally known as the 'flues', in contrast with the 'reeds' which instead use vibrating metal tongues in the foot of the pipe. See page 4 to learn about the *nicking* of pipes and the *chiff* they make.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 26th November 2.00 pm at St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey DE22 1EF

Followed by Social and refreshments

Summary of the Minutes of the DDOA AGM 22nd November 2021

The full Minutes are available separately, and at this [link](#).

The meeting was attended by 14 Members.

1. Apologies Alex Binns, Tom Corfield, Jim Heading, Stephen Johns, Karen & Mike Thompson, Rodney Tomkins, John Forster

2. Minutes of Last AGM Proposed by John Maxwell-Jones and seconded by Denis Littleton, these were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

Due to lockdown in January the Committee's first meeting was held remotely via *Zoom*. It proved difficult to realise plans due to closed churches and the continuing impact of Covid.

Events: August: Richard Brice's presentation at St Peter's, Belper on the music of René Becker, followed by organ performances by several members.

September: The trip to Lincoln, organised by Margaret Eades, was cancelled by the cathedral – we await for them to propose a new date.

CATO events for schools continued to be suspended due to the COVID situation.

Dealing with the legacy from the estate of the late Ed Stow increased the amount of business for the Committee so small groups were set up to focus on particular aspects. The Chairman expressed thanks for their work:

Restoration grants scheme: After a visit to St Michael's, Kirk Langley it was agreed to hold £5,000 to be paid on completion of the restoration work. An application from a second church is being considered.

Organ Tuition programme: Our first pupil has now had three lessons. The scheme will be advertised further.

Student Bursary: On the recommendation of Daniel Moulton, the first beneficiary of the Bursary for Organ Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is Elli-Mae McGlone.

Chamber organ project: The building work by Robin Jennings is making excellent progress.

Organ Day for 2022. Plans are proceeding. Jonathan Scott has also been approached to give a Master Class and recital. Presentations have been agreed with Robin Jennings and Alex Binns with his wife Dora.

A talk by a leading international organ builder is to be agreed.

The Chairman thanked Gillian Chatto for her diligent management of our finances, to Laurence Rogers for his unrelenting work on the Newsletter, Margaret Eades for dealing with the website and Alex Binns who has created a presence in Social Media.

5. Treasurers Report The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 were presented two parts:

Stow Legacy Fund: received £100,000 from the legacy of the late Ed Stow.

General Fund: Expenditure increased for the website, due to many amendments during the pandemic, and the newsletter, due to increased printing and posting costs.

The bank account has been transferred from RBS to to the Co-operative Bank and received a £1250 incentive.

The Treasurer thanked Chris Darrall for auditing the accounts, and for completing additional paperwork for the Charities Commission. The Chairman added his thanks.

6. Secretary's Report Membership of the association currently stands at 77. There were 2 new members and sadly the death of James Muckle was reported.

7. Newsletter Editor's Report The Editor encouraged members to express more views and reaction to articles. A Young Organists column has been introduced but seeks more topic suggestions.

The costs of producing and posting hard copies of the newsletter and it was proposed to increase the annual subscription for recipients to £20. Proposed by Richard Brice and seconded by David Johnson.

Laurence paid tribute to the late James Muckle for his regular supply of articles. The Chairman thanked the Editor.

8. Website Manager's report Steps have been taken to improve the security of the website.

9. Election of Officers. Alex Binns will take over from John Maxwell-Jones as Vice Chairman. Otherwise the Committee was re-elected – proposed by John Maxwell-Jones and seconded by John Blackwall.

10. AOB

The memorial recital for James Muckle attracted an audience of 84 and raised £450.

It was generally agreed that the Annual lunch was preferable to an evening dinner.

Chairman Tony Westerman was thanked for his hard work particularly with so many extra projects with the legacy.

Items of news or articles for the January / February edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 17th December**, 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.