

2016 – 2017

# SATURDAY ORGAN CONCERT PROGRAMME



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International  
Organ Festival

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Programme Notes © David Gammie 2016

## Welcome from the Artistic Director, David Titterington

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 2016/17 season of Saturday Organ Concerts promoted by St Albans International Organ Festival.

We are especially delighted to be welcoming back to St Albans two recent IOF prizewinners, **Martin Sturm** winner of the 2013 *Tournemire Prize* and **Johannes Zeinler**, *1st Prize and Gold Medal* in 2015. Please do make a special point of coming along to support Martin and Johannes as they return to St Albans. In March 2017, one of our competition partners' prizewinners, **Dexter Kennedy**, winner of the 2014 *Grand Prix de Chartres* Competition will perform on the IOF organ in St Saviour's Church.

**Gerard Brooks**, **Richard Pinel** and trumpet virtuoso *extraordinaire* **Crispian Steele-Perkins** with **Anne Page** all make a welcome return to St Albans, as does the widely

admired and hugely popular Danish organist, **Bine Bryndorf** who launches the season. **Franz Josef Stoiber**, organist of Regensburg Cathedral who memorably played for us during the 2013 Festival is an outstanding improviser – if you missed him last time, do make a note in your diary not to miss him on this occasion.

You can keep in touch with us throughout the year by visiting the IOF website where you will also find interviews with our recitalists – click on 'Recitals' and go to 'Concert Artists Meeting Point' and discover more about them, the music they listen to and the books they recommend to read. Also, Facebook and Twitter will give up to the minute news on upcoming events.

The IOF continues to promote these concerts, programmes and receptions

**free of charge** so that they can be open to everyone. However, we rely entirely on your donations to sustain and develop this long-running series. Your donation, preferably Gift-Aided, really counts, so please be as generous as possible.

Earlier this year, the IOF Board launched a new **Supporters' Scheme** with the primary intention of securing the festival's long-term future. We are very grateful that the patronage and support to date is immensely encouraging and details of the scheme can be found on pages 22 & 23 of this programme booklet. Please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the IOF Board if you would like to discuss any potential giving either by becoming a Member of the IOFS, a Supporter or by means of a legacy.

Wishing you a year of happy and inspirational listening.

## ST ALBANS INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL AND COMPETITIONS 10-22 JULY 2017

### ● THE CONCERTO FINAL AND PRESENTATION OF PRIZES 22nd July, 7.30pm

Concerto Final at St John's Smith Square, with the Royal Academy of Music Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Sian Edwards

### ● 2017 IOF Prizewinners' Gala Concert, St Albans Cathedral, Saturday 23 September 2017, 5.30pm

The programme for the 29th St Albans International Organ Competitions is online at [organfestival.com](http://organfestival.com)

**24 September 2016**

**BINE BRYNDORF**

*Denmark*

St Albans Cathedral, 5.30pm

**Niels la Cour** from *Vesper Organi*:  
b 1944 Preludio – Lauda – Preghiera – Fuga

**Franck** Pastorale

1822-90

**Vierne** from Symphony no.2 in E minor:  
1870-1937 Allegro – Choral

**Reger** from Six Trios op.47:  
1873-1916 Scherzo – Siciliano

**J.S.Bach** Passacaglia BWV 582  
1685-1750

**Bine Bryndorf** is universally regarded as one of today's most charismatic organists whose recordings of Buxtehude and his contemporaries have garnered many international awards. Since 2001, she has been Professor of Organ at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen and is a Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London

*Recital sponsored by Colin Innes-Hopkins*



Danish composer **Niels la Cour** is particularly renowned for the depth and sincerity of his church music. Following the great French tradition of the Organ Mass, the nine movements of his *Vesper Organi* (2003) were conceived as a musical counterpart to the evening service of Vespers; conventional genres of organ music, like the fugue, suggest the Protestant celebration of Evensong, while other pieces evoke the prayerful atmosphere of the Catholic monastic service. These first four movements begin in improvisatory style with the rippling flutes of the *Prelude*, the exultant exclamatory chords of *Praise*, and the rhapsodic melodic lines of *Prayer*, with echoes of Alain and Messiaen. In complete contrast, the fourth piece is a magisterial contrapuntal essay in the form of a triple *Fugue* with three subjects.

The programme continues on more familiar ground, with masterpieces from the French romantic repertoire. Reflecting **César Franck's** famous comment that his new Cavaillé-Coll organ was just like an orchestra, the lovely *Pastorale* employs the delicate textures of chamber music,

and shows off the beauty of the soft tone-colours in which the organ-builder excelled – oboe and flutes in the gentle opening and closing pages, and the precise articulation of the trumpet in the rapid staccato chords of the central section. Franck's pupil **Vierne** was the great romantic among the French organ composers, but he also had a strictly logical mind; he enjoyed working within the conventional forms of the German classics, and it is this perfect marriage of emotional warmth and formal clarity that gives his six symphonies their special place in the repertoire. The Second Symphony opens with a majestic *Allegro* in classic sonata form, based on two contrasting themes. The second theme is then transformed into a noble hymn-like *Choral*, disturbed by darker, more agitated interludes, but finally building up to a triumphant conclusion.

**Max Reger's** centenary year is drawing to a close, and three of his major works will be heard later in the season. But Reger's reputation as the creator of colossal contrapuntal works has tended to overshadow his talent as a miniaturist;

today we hear him in his most attractive and approachable mood in the lightly dancing *Scherzo* (a trio of keyboards, but not of notes...) and the *Siciliano*, a beautiful Bach-like duet above a delicate pizzicato bass. And it is **Bach** who ends the programme, with one of his three great masterpieces in variation form, the monumental *Passacaglia*. The 8-bar pedal theme, with its elegant and inexorable rise and fall, forms the foundation of a sequence of 20 variations; each one introduces its own little figure or motif, and Bach organises and develops these with inimitable artistry to give the music a compelling sense of direction and forward momentum. The final chord leads into a tightly-woven Fugue full of complex triple counterpoint, providing a wonderfully satisfying conclusion to a work in which, as the late Peter Williams so memorably put it, 'tension rises and falls in waves before working towards a climax worthy of many a Romantic symphony.'

22 October 2016

## MARTIN STURM

Germany

St Peter's Church, St Albans, 5.30pm

### 'Variations on Time'

Jazz Improvisation on a submitted theme

**Brahms** *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen* op.122/11  
1833-97

Symphonic Improvisation: Variations and Triple Fugue  
on two chorales and a submitted theme

**J.S. Bach** *Canon à 2 'quaerendo invenietis'*  
1685-1750 *from Musical Offering BWV 1079*

**Schoenberg** *Two Fragments of a Sonata for Organ*  
1874-1951

**J.S. Bach** *Contrapunctus XIV*  
*from Art of Fugue BWV 1080*

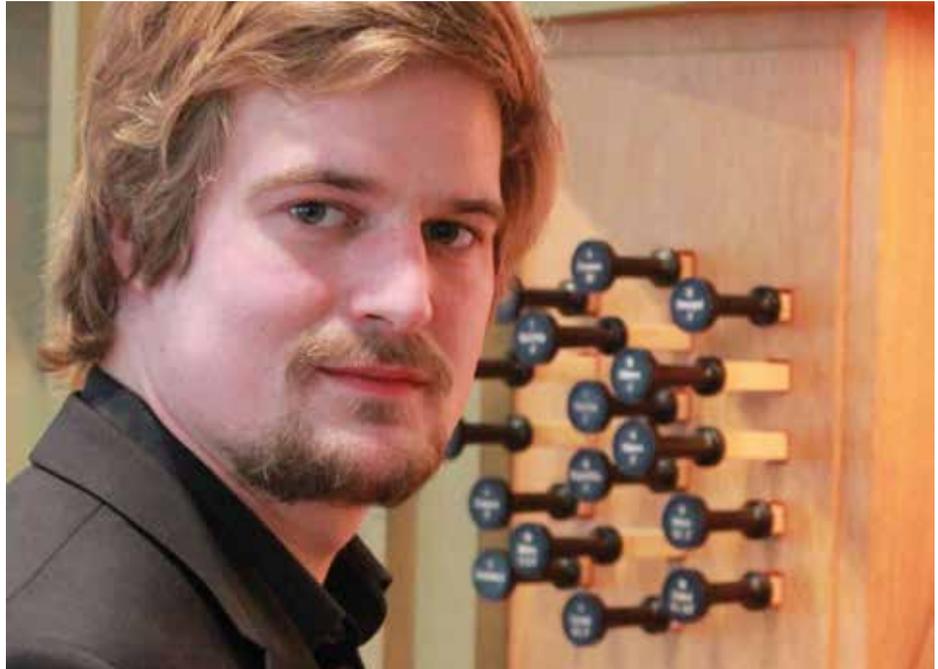
**Martin Sturm** *Credo II and Fuga*  
b 1992

**Mendelssohn** *Prelude and Fugue in B flat* op.35/6  
1809-47 (arr. C. Bossert)

Improvisation: *Chorale prelude on*  
*O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*

**John Cage** *Organ/ASLSP: Part One*  
1912-92

**Reger** *Fantasia on the chorale*  
1873-1916 *Alle Menschen müssen sterben* op. 52/1



Returning to St Albans is **Martin Sturm** winner of the *Tournemire Prize* for Improvisation at the 50th anniversary IOF competitions in 2013. His career as a performer/composer now takes him

to many important venues throughout Europe, combining it with teaching at the International Organ Academy Max Reger and the University of Würzburg.

'As a musician,' says Martin Sturm, 'time is a very important subject to me, because music is nothing else but the artistic structuring of time by sound, a dialogue of created sounds and silence... Dealing with the demands of time is also one of the most important basics for every composer and musician. But also for the audience: how do we experience tempo, fast or slow, and how do we react to silence, or to separated sounds that give the impression that time has stopped completely? Fascinated by these questions I conceived this programme of **Variations on Time...**'

Meditations on the brevity of human life add another layer of significance and poignancy to this journey through the mysteries of time, and the agitated, swinging rhythm of the opening *Jazz Improvisation* will be stilled by the gentle echoing cadences of **Brahms'** valedictory prelude, 'O world, I now must leave thee'. In the succeeding *Symphonic Improvisation* the composer/performer challenges the tyranny of time in a spontaneous moment of instant creativity. It is followed by one of the abstruse canonic puzzles of **Bach's** *Musical Offering*, a little 'canon ad

infinitem' which theoretically could be repeated forever. This is confronted by two unfinished works that leave us abruptly suspended in mid-air: the two haunting fragments of **Schoenberg's** *Organ Sonata* (abandoned in 1941), and the monumental torso of the concluding *Fugue with 3 subjects* from Bach's *Art of Fugue*, which, after the introduction of the third theme (his own musical signature, BACH), stutters to a halt just at the climactic point where the three subjects are about to be combined, when (or so we are told) the dying composer became too ill to continue. 'This spectacular ending', says Martin, 'opens the entrance to silence. I decided to let this silence be structured by my own small organ piece *Credo II und Fuga*, and then dispelled by the slowly growing solemnity of **Mendelssohn's** *Prelude & Fugue*, ending with a furious, ascending fugue.'

Time caught up with Mendelssohn when he was just 38, and the last part of the concert begins with an improvised prelude on 'O world, I now must leave thee', followed by the first part of **John Cage's** notorious *Organ<sup>2</sup>/ASLSP* (as slow and softly as

possible). With 'possible' performance times ranging from a few minutes into infinity, this asks some interesting questions. And knowing the piece starts with a rest, will we ever hear the first note? All these connections lead up to the final piece, **Reger's** visionary *Chorale Fantasia*, 'Hark! a voice saith, all are mortal, Yea, all flesh must fade as grass' - 'A fantasy', says Martin, 'on the last few seconds of a life, ending beyond all time in a glorious song of praise.' The theme is the joy of heaven, not the pain of death, but Reger refuses to go quietly ('Do not go gentle into that good night! Rage, rage against the dying of the light'); the four verses of the chorale are often submerged beneath jagged melodic lines and tortuous harmonies, until the radiant conclusion in Jerusalem the golden, where the risen soul dwells forever in eternal light.

**26 November 2016**

**GERARD BROOKS**

UK

St Albans Cathedral, 5.30pm

At 3pm, in the **Cathedral Crypt**, Gerard Brooks will introduce a screening of excerpts from the film *Widor: Master of the Organ Symphony*. Tea will follow at 4.45pm.

Tickets £5, IOFS Members free.

To book, email [administrator@organfestival.com](mailto:administrator@organfestival.com)

**Ernest MacMillan**

Cortège Académique

1893-1973

**Frank Bridge**

Three Pieces:

1879-1941

Andante moderato

Adagio

Allegro con spirito

**Widor**

from *Bach's Memento*:

1844-1937

Pastorale

Aria

Marche du Veilleur de Nuit

from *Symphony no.7 in A minor*:

Moderato

Choral

Finale



**Gerard Brooks** is Organist Curator of Christ Church, Spitalfields and Director of Music at Methodist Central Hall, London. The performance of French organ music has been a hallmark of his distinguished career, most recently appearing as

presenter/organist in Fugue State Films DVD *The Genius of Cavallé-Coll* which won a BBC Music Magazine Award in 2014 and in a subsequent film, *Widor: Master of the Organ Symphony* (2015).

The commanding figure of Charles-Marie Widor dominates this afternoon's concert, but the programme begins with music from the British tradition. The son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister and a Canadian mother, **Ernest MacMillan** spent some of his formative years in Edinburgh, where he was a favourite pupil of the blind organist Alfred Hollins, but Canada was his true home, and here, as conductor and educator, he became a figurehead of national musical life, receiving a knighthood in 1935. Despite the title, there is nothing funereal or academic about his *Cortège*; with echoes of the ceremonial music of William Walton, this is a splendid processional march, written for the centenary of Toronto University in 1953. **Frank Bridge** was one of the most advanced and forward-looking English composers of the inter-war years, but in his youth he also wrote many tuneful miniatures for the popular market, in a much more approachable style. Published in 1905, when he was 25, the early set of three organ pieces contains his best-loved work, the haunting elegiac *Adagio in E*. It is prefaced by a sombre, lyrical and

darkly dramatic prelude, and followed by a bright, spirited postlude.

**Widor** enjoyed an amazingly active old age; he married at the age of 76, and in 1923, in his 80th year, he took on another responsibility as Director of the American Conservatoire at the Palace of Fontainebleau. In June 1925 'the ancient composer' - as one of the students (young Aaron Copland) described him - inaugurated the Conservatoire's new organ with a curious new work entitled *Bach's Memento*, a suite of transcriptions and 'orchestrations' of pieces by Bach, all elaborated and re-composed by Widor to a greater or lesser extent. The *Pastorale* is based on the third movement of Bach's own *Pastorale* for organ, and the *Aria* on the first page of the E minor Prelude from Book 1 of the '48'. In the *March of the Night-watchman* Widor uses the tune and chorale of Bach's *Wachet auf* as the basis of an imaginative improvisation, which, it must be said, doesn't really sound like Bach at all!

Dating from almost forty years earlier, in the late 1880s, Widor's Seventh and

Eighth Symphonies represent the summit of his writing for the organ as a serious concert instrument. No. 7 begins with a powerful, granitic prelude in A minor, based on a motif of bold plunging octaves, and also hinting at the motto theme which will inspire some of the succeeding movements. This is clearly heard in the *Choral* that follows (which incidentally pre-dates the *Chorals* of Franck by three years); the tune (now in A major) alternates and combines with a more agitated second idea in a dense and wholly original orchestral texture, before its final appearance beneath a florid arabesque of semiquaver decoration. A new version of the motto theme inspires the Symphony's fiery finale, boldly declaimed on the pedals and then striding through a succession of distant keys in music of relentless energy and fierce virtuosity.

**14 January 2017**

**JOHANNES ZEINLER**

*Austria*

St Albans Cathedral, 5.30pm

**J.S. Bach** Toccata, Adagio and Fugue BWV 564  
1685-1750

**Fauré (arr. Robilliard)** from *Pelléas et Mélisande*:  
1845-1924 Prélude – Fileuse

**Messiaen** from *Livre d'Orgue*:  
1908-92 Chants d'oiseaux

Les yeux dans les roues

**Alain** Intermezzo  
1911-40

**Reger** Fantasia and Fugue in D minor op.135b  
1873-1916

In July 2015, **Johannes Zeinler** won First Prize and the Gold Medal in Interpretation at the 28th St Albans International Organ Competition and thus became one of the youngest competitors, and the only Austrian to receive this distinction since the festival was founded in 1963. His recent performances include the Carinthian Summer Festival, Wiesbaden Bach Wochen, Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, and Jeunesse Festival in Vienna. We warmly welcome him back to St Albans.



This colourful programme of music from Germany and France begins with one of **Bach's** most popular organ works. In BWV 564 he combines German and Italian influences to create a work of breathtaking novelty and originality - a virtuoso introduction for the fingers, and then for the feet, leading into the antiphonal phrases of the brilliant concerto-style Toccata, the exquisite Italianate solo of the *Adagio*, and finally a sparkling Fugue that bursts in like a breath of fresh air, and ends as abruptly as it began.

Maeterlinck's iconic symbolist drama *Pelléas et Mélisande* was an inspiration to many composers (especially, of course, Debussy), but **Fauré** was the first. His incidental music was commissioned by Mrs Patrick Campbell for an early production in London in 1898. Her *Mélisande* was described as 'pure Burne-Jones', and this mysterious, melancholy, pre-Raphaelite atmosphere is beautifully reflected in the music. The sound of the organ emphasises the darker shadows of Fauré's delicate orchestration in the evocative *Prelude*, followed today by the

sinuous *Spinning Song* (from a scene that Debussy's opera omits).

Dating from the heart of his 'experimental' period in the early Fifties, the *Livre d'Orgue* of 1951 is the most uncompromising of all **Messiaen's** organ works. But this rarefied intellectual world is full of poetry and emotion too. *Birdsongs* ('for Easter') takes us into the forest late in the afternoon; blackbird, robin and song thrush, are followed, as night falls, by the song of the nightingale, 'tender and mysterious'. In *The eyes in the wheels* ('for Pentecost') the full organ erupts in turbulent circling permutations of twelve-tone rows, inspired by the surreal vision of the prophet Ezekiel: '*And the rims of the four wheels were full of eyes round about them. For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels*'.

Messiaen's young colleague **Jehan Alain** was another musical rebel, but Alain was suspicious of anything too grandiose, of music that 'tried to say everything'; his own unique sound-world is touchingly human, full of elusive sensations, colours and dreams. The texture of his *Intermezzo*

is extremely complex, but the underlying harmony is almost static - a simple alternation of two unresolved chords. Expressive melodic lines emerge from the murmuring haze of sound, rise to a climax, and fade gently into silence.

**Reger's** last major organ work, the *Fantasia & Fugue in D minor*, is a masterpiece of motivic concentration; the generating motif of two paired, falling semitones is concealed in the figuration of the first bar, and gradually becomes more evident as the *Fantasia* proceeds. In the double Fugue Reger re-arranges the semitones to form a mysterious new theme that includes 11 of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale; in a long exposition of hushed, mystical intensity, it imperceptibly increases in volume with each entry. For the second subject he inverts the first three notes and extends them into a new, lightly dancing theme; this builds up inexorably towards a supremely majestic conclusion, in which the two subjects are finally slotted together to form a single and inseparable whole.

**25 February 2017**

**RICHARD PINEL**

UK

St Albans Cathedral, 5.30pm

**Francis Pott** Laudes

b 1957

from the Orgelbüchlein Project:

**Grayston Ives** *Es steh'n vor Gottes Thron*

**Jacques van Oortmersen** *Nun ruhen alle Wälder*

1950-2015

**David Maw** *Allein nach dir, Herr Jesu Christ*

**Whitlock** Fantasie Choral no.2

1903-46

**Franck** Choral no.2 in B minor

1822-90

**Reger** Fantasia on the chorale

1873-1916 *Hallelujah! Gott zu loben op.52/3*

**Richard Pinel**, a former Organ Scholar at St Albans Cathedral and recently appointed Director of Music at Jesus College, Cambridge returns to perform for the IOFS. Winner of the Breda International Organ Competition, Richard Pinel is widely considered to be one of the UK's most gifted and engaging young organists.



Chorales of various kinds are the theme of this programme, with three big romantic works from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, prefaced by some shorter contemporary pieces. **Francis Pott's** latest work, *Laudes*, sets the scene; this vibrant, rhythmic hymn of praise was first performed after a broadcast Evensong from St. John's College, Cambridge in 2014. In recent years composers from all over Europe have been collaborating in an ambitious project to complete the 100 blank pages of Bach's unfinished **Orgelbüchlein**.

Originally written in memory of Marie-Claire Alain, van Oortmerssen's haunting minimalist-style setting of an old evening hymn now has a special poignancy, following his own sudden death last year. It is framed by two English pieces, Grayston Ives' gently lilting, meditative prelude (Bach-like in texture, if not in sound), and David Maw's more substantial setting of a very long (21 lines) Passiointide chorale, in which two different textures (decorative and contrapuntal) alternate and interact with increasing intensity.

**Percy Whitlock's** two *Fantasie Chorals* (1931) represent an Englishman's homage to the immortal *Chorals* of César Franck. No. 2 is an evocative pastoral work, a set of free rhapsodic variations on a folksong-like tune. Beginning with the solitary voice of a solo oboe, it explores a rich variety of soft organ colours, but a big explosion of sound on the third page suggests there will be some drama too along the way, and the music finally builds up to an extended and thrilling climax.

The second of **Franck's** *Chorals* is suffused with the same mood of yearning and ultimate fulfilment that characterises so many of his orchestral and chamber works. The anxious minor-key music of its opening pages, with a solemn ostinato in the bass, is answered by a consoling 'chorale' in B major, and the same process is repeated with even greater intensity in the second part of the piece. The rhythms and contours of the themes, and the two strongly contrasted moods, recall the third movement of Franck's *Beatitudes*, whose text seems equally appropriate here: 'Blessed are they that

*mourn, for they shall be comforted...'*

Although **Reger** was a Catholic, he was profoundly moved by the sublime poetry and dramatic power of the old Lutheran chorales. In his seven great *Chorale Fantasias* the technique owes much to Bach and the baroque period, but the spirit – the grand sweep of the whole, the rich sonority and texture, the vivid response to the poetic images of the text – owes much more to romantic masters like Liszt and Richard Strauss. Based on a paraphrase of Psalm 146 (*Praise the Lord, O my soul*), *Hallelujah! Gott zu loben* is Reger's most angst-free and optimistic work. A massive introduction leads into a sequence of six chorale variations, with varying moods and textures that precisely reflect the words of each verse. The hushed ending of verse 6 is followed by one of Reger's most tuneful and bouncy fugues, culminating in the dramatic entry of the final verse in a spectacular contrapuntal climax: '*The Lord shall reign for ever, Praise ye the Lord!*'

**25 March 2017**

**DEXTER KENNEDY**

USA

St Saviour's Church, 5.30pm

**Muffat** Toccata Septima

1653-1704

**Buxtehude** Passacaglia in D minor BuxWV 161

1637-1707

**Böhm** Partita *Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig*

1661-1733

**C.P.E. Bach** Fantasia and Fugue in C minor

1714-88

**J.G. Graun** Concerto in G minor

1703-71

*Animoso – Adagio – Allegro*

**J.S. Bach** *Dies sind die heil'gen zeh'n Gebot* BWV 678

1685-1750 Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV 547

**Dexter Kennedy** is the 2014 winner of the *Grand Prix d'Interprétation* at the 24th Concours International d'Orgue de Chartres. Performances have subsequently taken him to prestigious venues throughout North America and Europe and this evening makes his debut at the IOF. He currently teaches organ and harpsichord in the music faculty of the College of Wooster.



Born in France of Scottish ancestry, German by inclination, a student of Lully in Paris and Pasquini in Rome, **Georg Muffat**, Organist to the Archbishop of Salzburg, was the most cosmopolitan musician of his time. His *Apparatus Musico-organisticus* of 1690 contains 'Twelve Musical Pieces or long Toccatas, delicately arranged in a new way', reflecting his multi-cultural heritage in a sequence of episodes in different textures and styles. Lasting around ten minutes, the Seventh Toccata is the longest of them all, ending in a magisterial fugue that incorporates no less than four subjects.

After this grand prelude, music by two north-German masters who had a profound personal influence on the young J.S. Bach - **Buxtehude**, with whom Bach spent three months in 1705, and **Böhm**, his mentor for two years during his schooldays in Lüneburg. We know that Bach was especially impressed by Buxtehude's works in ostinato form, among them the unique *Passacaglia*, in which an expressive four-bar ostinato bass is developed through 28 variations in four symmetrical groups of seven, in different

keys. Böhm was particularly known for his *chorale partite*, sets of keyboard variations on devotional hymns. This set of eight variations was inspired by a contemporary German chorale published in 1652: *'Ah how fleeting, how insignificant is the life of man. Like a mist it quickly rises and then disappears... But he who fears God will live for ever.'*

The next two pieces take us forward two generations to the court of Frederick the Great in Berlin, where the music staff included a host of celebrities like Bach's son Emanuel, Quantz, and the two Graun brothers. **C.P.E. Bach** was highly regarded by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and during his lifetime he enjoyed much greater success than his father. Although he was not really interested in the organ, his hundreds of keyboard pieces include some fugues in which, he said, 'the pedal is not necessary, but can indeed be used with good effect'. And his majestic *Fantasia & Fugue* clearly cries out for the full tone of the organ. While his brother Carl specialised in opera, J.G. Graun was Berlin's master of instrumental music, and a virtuoso on the violin; the lively

style of his *Concerto* recalls Bach's earlier arrangements of Vivaldi's violin concertos.

This concert of German baroque music ends inevitably with Bach, and two contrasting works from his mature years in Leipzig. The *heil'gen zehn Gebot* are the holy Ten Commandments; in this beautiful chorale prelude, the chorale is played by the left hand in canon, symbolising the Law, while the two voices of the right hand entwine in a tender duet, reminding us perhaps that the greatest commandment of all is 'Love one another...' Finally, the great *Prelude & Fugue in C*: a festive processional Prelude, with glittering scales and arpeggios above a striding pedal theme, followed by an intricate and closely-wrought Fugue in which Bach subjects his short theme to every kind of academic device, reserving the entry of the pedals for a final climax of incomparable grandeur.

22 April 2017

**CRISPIAN STEELE-PERKINS**

(trumpet) UK

**ANNE PAGE**

(organ) UK

St Peter's Church, 5.30pm

**Handel** Sinfonia from Act 3 of *Floridante*

1685-1759

**Stradella** Trumpet Sonata

1639-82

**Howard Goodall** Shackleton's Cross

b 1958

**Alain** Aria (organ solo)

1911-40

**Haydn** Trumpet Concerto in E flat

1732-1809

*Allegro – Andante – Allegro*

**Carl Rütти** Veni Creator Spiritus (organ solo)

b 1949

**Mozart** Posthorn Sonata

1756-91

*Allegro – Grave – Minuet*

**Stanley** Trumpet Voluntary

1712-86



Internationally acclaimed trumpeter **Crispian Steele-Perkins** and organist **Anne Page** bring an exhilarating programme of music to St Albans.



A rare opportunity to hear these admired musicians in concert - one of the highlights of our concert season.

Spoken introductions are an integral part of this entertaining programme, and Crispian Steele-Perkins demonstrates his historic instruments in a variety of tuneful baroque music which he plays in his own inimitable arrangements. He begins with **Handel**, and a joyful *Sinfonia* from the closing scene of one of his most successful operas, celebrating the happy ending of typically involved and preposterous story of dynastic struggles, mistaken identities and tangled love affairs in ancient Persia. And affairs of the heart were the downfall of the next composer, who was assassinated in Genoa in 1682 in revenge for one of his liaisons with married aristocratic ladies; **Stradella's** splendid *Sonata in D* was originally scored for trumpet and eight-part strings, here reduced for a single keyboard-player. There are two more arrangements at the end of the concert. The **Mozart** 'Sonata' has been assembled from several different sources: the first movement comes from the fourth Horn Concerto, followed by a solemn march originally written for piano (K453a), and a little *Minuet* for Coach-horn (K320). Finally, **Stanley's** famous *Trumpet*

*Voluntary*, beloved by trumpeters the world over, but originally written, of course, for organ solo (from the *Voluntary in D*, Op. 6, no. 6).

The title of **Howard Goodall's** piece refers to the memorial that stands in South Georgia on the grave of the Polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, who died there during an Antarctic expedition in 1922. This evocative music was inspired by a painting in the Royal Collection by Edward Seago, who accompanied the Duke of Edinburgh on a visit to the South Atlantic in 1957, and it also exists in alternative versions for chamber orchestra and piano solo.

Unlike Mozart, **Haydn** wrote only a handful of concertos and they are of little significance compared to his magnificent collections of quartets and symphonies. But there is one important exception - the wonderful *Trumpet Concerto*, his last major concert work, composed in 1796, the year after his last Symphony. It was written for a new chromatic trumpet (with keys, rather than valves) devised by his friend August Weidinger, and provides

a perfect showpiece, ranging from the expressive melodic phrases of the *Andante* to the brilliance and virtuosity of the first movement's solo cadenza and the sparkling rondo finale.

Two organ solos complete the programme. Composer, artist, poet, dreamer... **Jehan Alain** was one of the rising young stars of French music in the 1930s, creating an elusive, surreal sound-world that was all his own, full of strange colours, tenderness and humour. The *Aria* was the last piece he completed before he was killed in June 1940, defending his country from the invading Nazis; a quirky rhythmic ostinato, a wisp of melody, a hint of jazz, and a mysterious, magical ending. Swiss composer **Carl Rütti** is best-known for his choral music. *Veni Creator Spiritus* (1983) was his first organ work; in these variations on the old Gregorian hymn the tune of the chant is combined with other melodic and rhythmic motifs in a dancing virtuoso display.

20 May 2017

## FRANZ JOSEF STOIBER

Germany

St Albans Cathedral, 5.30pm

### *Improvisations and Arrangements for organ*

Improvisation: Overture *Christus vincit*

**Vivaldi** Concerto in D minor op.3/11  
1678-1741 (arr. J. S. Bach, BWV 596)

*Allegro – Grave – Fuga – Largo e spiccato – Allegro*

Improvisation: Three chorale works

**Guilmant** March on a theme of Handel op.15  
1837-1911

Improvisation: Variations on an original theme

**Bruckner** Scherzo from Symphony no. '0'  
1824-96 (arr. Erwin Horn)

Improvisation: Symphonic Sketches on given themes

*Allegro – Andante – Scherzando – Adagio – Finale*

**Franz Josef Stoiber**, renowned organist of Regensburg Dom returns to St Albans with a programme of arrangements and improvisations. Acclaimed internationally as one of today's leading improvisors, Franz Josef Stoiber is also Professor of Organ and Improvisation at the University of Regensburg.



This unusual and stimulating programme of improvisations and arrangements begins with an improvised Overture on one of the most celebrated chants in the Catholic liturgy, which dates back to mediaeval times or earlier - the Royal Acclamations *Christus vincit*: 'Christ conquers, Christ is King, Christ is Lord of all'. The themes of the other improvisations will be announced during the concert.

It was around 1713, while he was employed at the Court of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, that Bach got to know the concertos of his Italian contemporary **Vivaldi**. This vibrant music from Southern Europe had a profound effect on his own creative personality, and inspired him to rewrite some of them as solo pieces for harpsichord and organ. Originally scored for two violins and strings, the *Concerto in D minor* begins with a lively canonic duet; a few full chords lead into an energetic fugue, followed by a lilting *siciliano* and an impulsive chromatic finale. In June 1712 work began on a major restoration of Bach's organ in the Court Chapel. It was not fully completed until May 1714, but long before this there were rumours

that he was preparing 'incomparable things' to play on the new organ, and it is tempting to think that this might have been one of them...

Virtuoso, teacher, composer, and concert promoter, **Guilmant** was also a pioneer of the rediscovery of baroque music in France. His Historical Organ Recitals were a feature of the musical life of Paris for twenty years, and he was the first Frenchman to play all of Handel's Organ Concertos. His popular March (1862) treats Handel's tune in a typically grand Victorian style, though the actual theme is minimal - just the first four notes of the chorus *Lift up your heads* from *Messiah*. This becomes the generating motif of a solemn march-tune, a brilliant fugue, and a thunderous reprise, richly harmonised in colossal chords with double pedal.

Organists have many regrets, and one of them is the sad fact that **Bruckner**, one of the greatest creative musical minds of the 19th century, never wrote down any serious organ music, although he played the instrument professionally all his life. Like Bach and Mozart, when he played

the organ he preferred to improvise; in his upper-Austrian dialect he is said to have remarked, 'Let them as has no imagination play Bach and Mendelssohn - I'd rather let go on my own.' The organ-loft became a creative workshop where he could mould and shape his musical thinking, and we know that he often used themes and motifs that would later appear in his symphonies. In recent years several organists have bravely attempted their own Bruckner transcriptions, but Erwin Horn's, published thirty years ago, were the first. The *Scherzo* from Symphony no. 0' (composed after no. 1, but later discarded and not published until long after Bruckner's death) makes a sensationally effective organ piece, with its insistent stomping rhythm, and a beautifully lyrical trio section in the middle.

# ORGANS

## ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL

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### **Harrison & Harrison (1962, 2009)**

The original plans for the organ, as completed in 1962, were drawn up by Ralph Downes in association with the cathedral organist, Peter Hurford, and in consultation with the organ builders. The organ incorporates pipework from the previous organ, together with the north and south organ cases designed by John Oldrid Scott, dating from 1908. However, all of the old pipework was revoiced and the tonal design was completely new. The Swell and Great Organs are housed in the north and south cases respectively, on either side of the quire screen. A new case was built in 1962 for the Choir Organ, designed by Cecil Brown, cathedral architect of the time, and placed centrally on the east side of the screen. The console is on the west side of the screen. Major restoration in 2007–09 included a new 4-manual console and the addition of several new stops, while the 1962 tonal scheme was preserved. A nave division is prepared for and will be added later.





Stephen Borrey

## ST PETER'S CHURCH, ST ALBANS

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### **Mander Organs (2006)**

The organ at St Peter's is a 3-manual mechanical (tracker) action instrument with 39 stops. The Great Organ is in the front of the case with the Choir Organ behind it and the Swell Organ at the rear. The swell box has an additional set of shutters facing west which the organist can choose to link to the swell pedal to improve the egress of the sound to the nave.

## ST SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, ST ALBANS

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### **Peter Collins (1989)**

The International Organ Festival Society's own organ stands in St Saviour's Church in St Albans, by kind permission of the Vicar and the Parochial Church Council. It was designed and built by Peter Collins in 1989, in the style developed by the German builder Andreas Silbermann (1678–1734) and the French branch of the Silbermanns, one of the great organ building families of the high baroque. The action is suspended in the true French manner, and the instrument is totally unenclosed.



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