

Organ Recital St Oswald's Church Norbury London SW16 3SB

Music for Holy Week

Wednesday 13th April 2022, 8pm

given by

Marilyn Harper

Programme

Introducing Musical Styles of the Organ

Toccatà - *Georgi Mushel (1909-1989)*

Song 13 - *Percy Whitlock (1903-1946)*

Fugue in C major (Gigue) BuxWV 174 - *Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)*

Music for Lent

O Mensch, beweine dein' Sunde Gross BWV 622 - *JS Bach (1685-1750)*

From 12 Choral Preludes: Stabat Mater - *Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968)*

Ach her, mich armen Sunder BuxWV 178- *Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)*

Ciacona in C minor BuxWV 159- *Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)*

Music for the Theatre:

Overture for Camilla

(Adagio)- Allegro- Largo- Allegro - *Giovanni Bononcini (1670-1747)*

Music for Contemplation:

Kyrie-Gebet- based on music by *Myroslav Skoryk (1938-2020)*

Arranged by Martin Dietze, adapted by David Chapman

Accompanied by Norman Harper

Elegie- *Louis Vierne (1870-1937)*

Finale:

Toccatà- *Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)*

Notes on the programme

This programme highlights musical styles popularly associated with the world of the church organ. Many church - based works find their way into recital programmes, and others are transcriptions of works which would be heard in more secular surroundings.

The first three pieces highlight late twentieth century, mid twentieth century and 17th century Baroque styles. All three are very easy on the ear. The first and third pieces of this set are dances. The middle piece by Whitlock uses a hymn tune for its inspiration and the composer showed his appreciation of JS Bach.

Music for Lent features four works, two of which are based on chorales sung in Europe and the second piece is based on plainsong. This is the legacy of the Reformation which desired that ordinary people should learn liturgy through singing, whereas in older Roman Catholic traditions, chant was sung by specially trained monks and nuns. 'O Mensch Bewein' is one of Bach's most celebrated chorale preludes. It features a florid melodic line for the right hand; this is the chorale in disguise. Demessieux's music is very contrasted, rather modern, slightly spiky and in a completely different world to that of Bach and of Buxtehude whose music concludes this section. Buxtehude was the Danish born organist at Lubeck whom Bach walked a long way to hear play and learn from. Buxtehude was one of the first to exploit the way organ pedals were used in a more virtuosic way. The chorale prelude is thoughtful, whereas the Ciacona is possibly a setting of the Creed. An English writer and organist has worked out the maths of the piece's construction, and the evidence is compelling.

Backed by the establishment in London, George Frederick Handel reigned supreme, almost stifling English musical talent, but enough published music survives to show that English composers also had the capacity to entertain. Bononcini was invited by the newly formed Royal Academy of Music to compose an opera for London audiences. Camilla was highly successful and performed often, but that did not stop Handel's backers from making life difficult for the Italian musician. Eventually, he returned to Italy to develop his career. The overture to the opera has four sections, slow-fast, slow-fast, and Handelian hallmarks of musical style are evident.

Music for contemplation features two works, one by the Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk, the other by the early twentieth century composer, Louis Vierne. Vierne is well known for large scale organ symphonies, but like Whitlock, there are some poignant, heartfelt shorter pieces such as the Elegie. Both Skoryk and Vierne used chromaticism as a feature of their musical language to great expressive effect.

Finale:

Sweelinck lived around the time of the Calvinist Revolution in Holland. On the death of his father, organist of the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, Jan Pieter, aged about 15, was invited to succeed his father, and held the post until his death. Known as a good extemporiser, his published keyboard works appeared in the last 15 years of his life, consisting of Toccatas, Chorale Settings, Fantasias, and Songs and Dances. All these works could be performed on both the organ and the harpsichord. Musicians flocked from all over Europe to seek music lessons with Sweelinck; he was a popular figure in the city. This Toccata is flamboyant, full of natty repeated patterns, rather than long, singable tunes.