

The Cornopean

July 2024

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



THE ENRAGED MUSICIAN.

The tiny inscription reads:

THE ENRAGED MUSICIAN.

Design'd, Engrav'd & Publish'd by W^m Hogarth
Nov^{br} the 30th 1741.

According to Act of Parliament

An engraving by William Hogarth (1697-1764)
best known for his series of paintings of 'modern moral subjects';
from which he sold engravings on subscription.



EDOA Newsletter

July 2024



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Forthcoming events

September- Saturday 14th, day visit to Bristol

to hear/play organs in the City. Details to follow, churches within easy distance of Temple Meads station as parking will not be easy.

October- Saturday 12th, Master Class for Young Players

given by David Davies (newly appointed Director of Music at Sidmouth Parish Church), venue- St Peter's Budleigh Salterton, 2.30pm.

November – Wednesday 6th, Annual Dinner (please note change of date) The Devon Hotel, Exeter, 7 for 7.30 pm, speaker the Dean of Exeter, Very Rev Jonathan Greener.

The EDOA Committee

Andrew Millington (President), Nigel Guthrie (Vice-President),
Paula Taylor (General Secretary), Peter Johnson (Treasurer),
Peter Johnstone (Membership Secretary, corresponding member only),
Tim Noon, Neil Page, Gerald Hird,
Graham Willson (Webmaster, corresponding member only),
Piers Howell (Newsletter Editor)

The EDOA Website:

<http://www.exeterorganists.net>

Administrator Graham Willson. The website includes EDOA events, Find an Organist, Newsletters, Gallery, Links, Opportunities, Contact Us, Committee. Graham is always looking for new content, including text and photos. The post of Deputy Webmaster is also currently vacant, and Graham would be delighted to hear from any potential volunteers.

Stop Press!

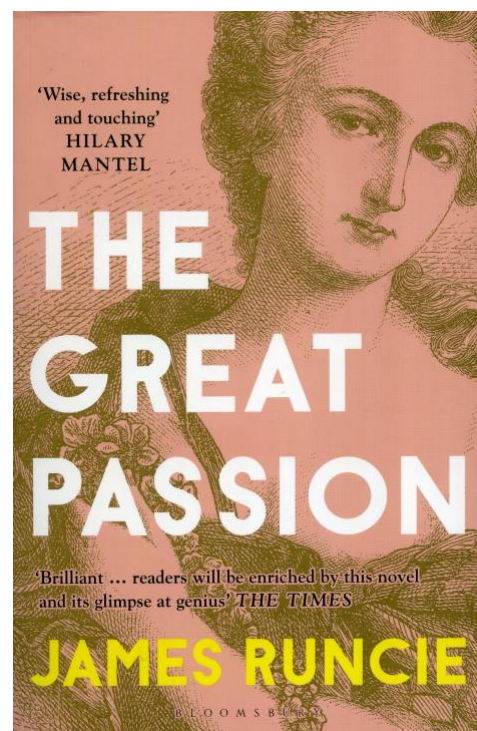
Details may change! Follow bulletins closer to the time from our Secretary for more up-to-date information.

Editor's letter

In recent weeks, we have received the sad news of the deaths of two EDOA members, former President Jock Smith, and organ-builder Geoffrey Archer; further details in this newsletter.

Book "review"

Recently, a friend lent me a book called *The Great Passion*, by James Runcie. Having no preconceptions about this book, nevertheless I was very quickly drawn into the narrative, which of necessity contains much conjecture. A young boy, son of one of the famous Silbermann organ builders, was sent away to boarding school in Leipzig following the death of his mother. There, he was noticed by the Cantor at St Thomas Church, Johann Sebastian Bach, no less, and quickly progressed at both singing and playing the organ. The resulting bullying at school caused him to run away from school, but he was rescued by kind local people, and taken into JSB's household as one of the family. There he also came under the wing of Anna Magdalena, who whilst bringing up a large family, was also a talented musician and singer in her own right; but because of the customs of the time was not allowed to sing in the church choir or perform in public. Eventually, the young Silbermann witnessed the creation of one of the finest choral compositions ever, *The St Matthew Passion*. An extraordinary account for anyone who has an interest in the music of JSB, and perhaps the organ-building of the period.



Reading this book reminded me of William Hogarth's 1741 engraving of his painting entitled "The Enraged Musician", contemporary with JSB, which has been in my family since before I was born, and currently hangs above my new house organ. The Hogarth paintings are an incredibly satirical view on the social and political events of the era, full of humorous details. There is nothing new about satire.

Home organs

Since the mention in the previous newsletter, my Hauptwerk home organ has arrived, made to exacting standards by the local Devon firm Renuus Limited. The standard of construction and attention to detail is first-class. A local success story, the company constructs organ consoles, and other cabinet and woodworking projects, not only across the UK, but internationally as well.

Piers Howell, Editor.

[all photos in this newsletter are by the editor, unless otherwise stated]

Events since the last newsletter

Saturday 27th April, AGM, see page 4

Wednesday 29th May, Devon Organ Book event, at St Margaret's Church, Topsham. Composers of contributions to the book played their own pieces.

Saturday 15th June, Plymouth trip, 10am Emmanuel & St Paul's Church, 11.40am St Peter's, lunch at St Peter's, 2.30pm St Simon's, Organiser Gerald Hird

Sunday 7th July, President's Evening, see page 5



Matt & Marco, Plymouth, photo by Paula Taylor

AGM

This year the AGM was held on Saturday 27th April, at St. John the Baptist Church, Broadclyst. Members were able to play the west-end gallery organ (1987 Michael Farley, from Exeter South St Unitarian Church). Members were then treated to a recital by Peter King, playing music suitable to the era of the organ.



Broadclyst Parish Church



Vice-President Nigel Guthrie playing the organ

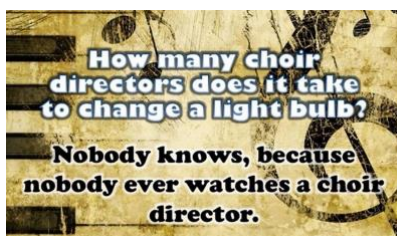


Peter King

There then followed the AGM, at which Andrew Millington was formally elected as President, and the Presidential regalia were presented to him by the Past-President Ian Carson. Afterwards, a sociable pub lunch at the nearby Red Lion pub.



Ian passes the regalia to Andrew, Paula watching



(from the internet)

PRESIDENT'S EVENING

“An Afternoon with Mendelssohn”

The President's “Evening” took place at Sidmouth Parish Church at 3pm on Sunday 7th July. This event was arranged by our President, Andrew Millington, and featured the music of Felix Mendelssohn, and of his sister Fanny Mendelssohn.



Sidmouth Parish Church

The organ music was performed by Andrew on the 4-manual organ. Tina Guthrie played the flute, and sang songs, accompanied on the piano by her husband, our Vice-President Nigel Guthrie.

Organ music, played by Andrew:

War March of the Priests
Sonata No 4 in B flat major
Fantasia and Fugue in G minor
Theme with variations
Sonata No 3 in A major



Members of the large audience were treated to refreshments after the concert, which were kindly provided by the church, tea and coffee, with cakes provided by kind ladies from EDOA.

Editor's comment:

The concert ended with Andrew's performance of the A major sonata. This stirring composition, contains the following instruction on the 3rd page: “At this point, $\text{crochet}=72$. From here to two bars before the major increase the pace gradually to $\text{crochet}=100$ ”. Not many organists are able to carry out this terrifying instruction smoothly and effectively, with the complex music that follows, but in an inspiring way Andrew demonstrated the chasm that separates cathedral organists of his calibre from the rest of us “ordinary” organists.

Music played by Tina and Nigel Guthrie

All works by Felix Mendelssohn unless marked

First Group:

Song Without Words Op 30 no 3,
arr. for flute and piano
Venetianisches Gondellied Op 30 no 6,
arr. for flute and piano
Minnelied for voice and piano
Schwanenlied for voice and piano,
by Fanny Mendelssohn

Second Group:

The Shepherd's Song for flute and piano
Frühlingslied Op 62 no 6 arr. for flute and piano
O for the Wings of a Dove from “Hear my Prayer” arr. for voice and piano



Nigel and Tina Guthrie



Andrew, with a copy of A Devon Organ Book



Nigel and Tina Guthrie, seated, with Andrew Millington



(from the internet)



Andrew, with Bob Millington assisting

JOCK SMITH

Archibald Isbister Smith, always known as “Jock”, died peacefully on 3rd May 2024, at the age of 90. His funeral was at St Martin’s Church, Exminster on 31st May.



Jock, EDOA York trip 2011

Over a period of about 30 years, Jock was a regular attender of EDOA events, and always accompanied by his wife Eileen. We generally referred to “Jock and Eileen”, rather than just “Jock”; they were always cheerful, smiling and enthusiastic in the doings of the EDOA. My first recollection of Jock and Eileen was on a multi-day trip to Liverpool, and many times after that through the 1990s onwards. Jock was President of the EDOA for 3 separate terms, the last ending in 2013, when he was succeeded as President by David Davies.

Jock was organist and choirmaster at St Martin’s Church, Exminster, where for a while his assistant organist was Michael “Pags” Pagliero.

Member Keith Wadlan writes:

“ ... I do remember that whether he [Jock] was acting in the capacity of an ordinary member of the EDOA committee or as the President of the Association, he always conducted himself in a very personable and efficient manner, making every effort to promote the EDOA in the process; and as President in particular, he was always a good 'front man' for the Association. “I daresay that you remember that some years ago he entered himself for (and passed) the Archbishop’s Certificate in Church Music (A. Cert. C.M.) I remember him relaying to some of us that one choir practice night at Exminster Church was interrupted, just after it had started, by one or more people (it may have been Paul Morgan) who advised him that they had arrived to carry out an 'on the spot' practical examination of his choir mastering capabilities to complete the qualification process! How nerve-wracking that must have been, but he obviously triumphed!”



Jock & Eileen, EDOA Cambridge trip 2013



Jock & Eileen & EDOA members, Cambridge trip 2013



Jock, Devon County Show, 2010

BOOK REVIEW, BY ROBERT MANNING

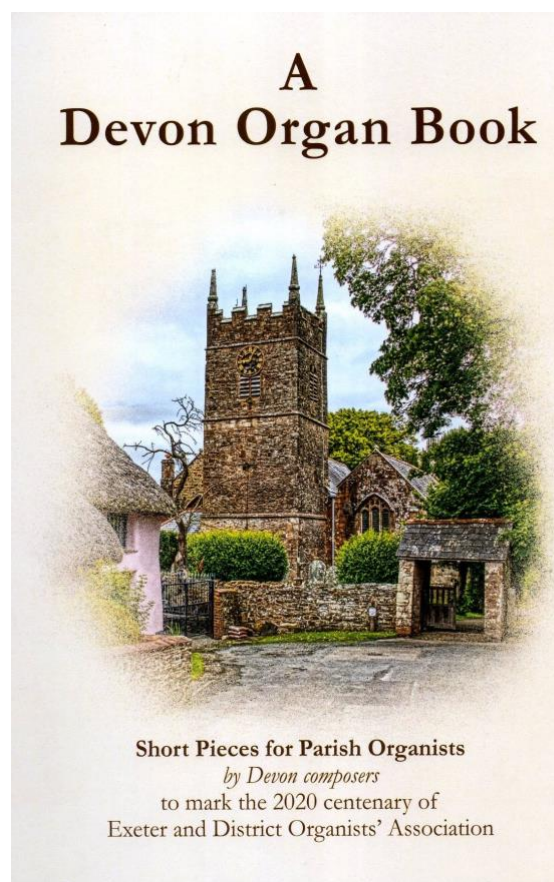
A Devon Organ Book: Short Pieces for Parish Organists by Devon composers to mark the 2020 centenary of Exeter and District Organists' Association

Published by the Exeter and District Organists' Association (2023) <http://www.exeterorganists.net>

The volume under review is a collection of 19 newly commissioned works by 14 organist/composers associated with Devon, nine of the composers being members of the EDOA. The pieces are intended for use in church services, though a number might also be suitable for concert performance. The majority of the contributions are written for an organ with two manuals and pedals, though Ian Carson's 'Postlude: Concertino for the Trumpet Stop' really needs a third manual (and a large organ), while Ian Curror's 'Gospel Fanfare No.1' and Andrew Daldorph's 'Processional' require only a single manual and pedals. Nicholas M. Brown's 'Prelude on "Picardy"', written for manuals alone, can be played on a single keyboard, while his 'Across in Soay', based on a Scottish folksong, would work equally well on organ or piano. Peter Lea-Cox's 'Fantasia on "Gelobt sei Gott"', though calling for two manuals and pedals, is easily manageable on a pedal organ with a single manual.

The anthology also includes short biographies of all the composers. Six of its pieces are based on hymn tunes, while Frank Chandler's 'Evensong: On a Chant Long-remembered' is inspired by an Anglican chant of Percy Buck, and David Davies' 'Reflection on "Gabriel's Message"' is based on plainsong. Ian Curror's three short Gospel Fanfares have a liturgical function; the other eight contributions are freer in content, with titles such as 'Elegy', 'Paeon' and 'Scherzo'. None of the pieces occupies more than five pages of musical text, and some are quite short. The amount of performance detail provided for the pieces varies from contribution to contribution. Timothy Noon, in his 'Chorale Prelude on "Breslau"' (apart from his initial 'Adagio', metronome marking and suggestions for registration), is happy to leave the interpretative details to the performer; the style of the piece, with the tune decorated melismatically in the right hand above two contrapuntal parts in the left hand and almost continuous quaver movement in the pedals, only requires from the performer such interpretative decisions as initial dynamics plus some details of phrasing and articulation. Peter Lea-Cox, in his 'Fantasia on "Gelobt sei Gott"', is likewise happy to leave much to the performer. In other pieces, such as Ian Carson's 'Postlude' and David Davies' 'Reflection', a larger amount of interpretative detail is provided. Overall within the anthology, it is clear that the composers have not forgotten that every organ is unique, and that organists may have to adapt any suggestions made about registration etc. to suit their particular instrument. While the technical difficulty of the different pieces varies, none requires a virtuosic technique, and most will be within the capacity of a reasonably competent organist.

This anthology has been beautifully and carefully produced; Peter Nickol is credited for the proof reading and page layouts, Tanya Urushchak for the cover graphics, and Rockwell Print and Sign, Taunton for the printing. While I have not checked every note, I have not identified any inaccuracies during the time I have been getting acquainted with the pieces. At the time of writing, I have already played eight of the contributions in the context of church services, while the performance of three more is in my immediate pipeline (pun unintentional!). Ian Curror's gentle 'Prelude on "Down Ampney"' is currently a personal



favourite. As an Anglican who works in a United Reformed Church, within a tradition rich in congregational hymnody, I have so far been especially motivated to learn the pieces based on hymn tunes: but there is plenty of variety here for everyone.

Nicholas Brown	<i>Prelude on 'Picardy'</i>	5
Nicholas Brown	<i>Across in Soay</i>	6
Ian Carson	<i>Postlude: Concertino for the Trumpet Stop</i>	8
Frank Chandler	<i>Evensong: On a Chant Long-remembered</i>	13
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 1</i>	18
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 2</i>	18
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 3</i>	19
Ian Curror	<i>Prelude on 'Down Ampney'</i>	20
Andrew Daldorph	<i>Processional</i>	22
David Davies	<i>Reflection on 'Gabriel's Message'</i>	27
Peter Lea-Cox	<i>Fantasia on 'Gelobt sei Gott'</i>	31
Peter King	<i>Two Hymn Improvisations: I 'Luckington'</i>	36
Peter King	<i>Two Hymn Improvisations: II 'St Columba'</i>	38
Robert Millington	<i>Intrada</i>	40
Andrew Millington	<i>Elegy</i>	44
Paul Morgan	<i>Postlude in D</i>	47
Timothy Noon	<i>Chorale Prelude on 'Breslau'</i>	52
Timothy Parsons	<i>Scherzo</i>	54
Stephen Tanner	<i>Paeon</i>	58

The musical texts are clearly - almost appetisingly - laid out. A rare reservation I have is with the direction of some of the stems of the pedal part in bars 44-9 of Peter Lea-Cox's 'Fantasia'. Additionally, I found some of the left-hand leger-line notes in bars 14-16 of Timothy Noon's composition slightly difficult to read, though the presentation here seems to be dictated by the computer program. The pieces are presented in alphabetical order of composers, except that the two Millingtons - Andrew and Robert - have had their compositions placed the wrong way round. That is a rare and insignificant editorial lapse; and the fact that all the instances described above are so trivial emphasises the high overall standard of the editing.

At the time of writing this, the Exeter and District Organists' Association has a membership of about a hundred people - quite an achievement when so many other associations, both musical and otherwise, appear to be failing. The world of organists is still dominated by men (there are no contributions by women to this anthology): so it is good to report that nearly a quarter of the Association's members are women - a minority, admittedly, but one that is, nonetheless, fairly substantial.

This anthology - whose completion was delayed for three years because of the pandemic - is a fine, creative celebration of the 100th anniversary of a vibrant, seemingly enduring organisation. Everyone involved with the volume deserves the highest praise; and its contents will enrich church services in Devon and elsewhere considerably over the months and years to come. ROBERT MANNING

From our treasurer, Peter Johnson:

The initial print run having recently sold out, we have commissioned a further 50 copies to be printed and can continue to offer these at a selling price of £12.50 (Postage and envelope, if appropriate, is currently £2.80). Copies of "A Devon Organ Book" are excellent value and can be obtained by contacting me either by telephone or by e-mail: 01297-599086, peteraj@talktalk.net



(from the internet)

GEOFFREY ARCHER

Geoffrey died on 24th June, and his funeral took place on 12th July at St Andrew's Parish Church, Colyton. The service was conducted by The Reverend Dr Steven Martin, and the organ was played by Richard Stephens, both EDOA members.

Peter Wycliffe-Jones writes:

Geoffrey Allan Archer 14.9.1961 – 24.6.2024

Members of the Exeter and District Organists Association and others who have affiliations with organs maintained by Michael Farley Organ Builders Ltd., or indeed cinema organs, will be saddened to learn of the death at the age of 62, of Geoffrey Archer ("Geoffers") in the early hours of Monday 24th June this year, at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, after a short illness.



[Photo provided by Michael Farley]

Born in Hemel Hempstead, on 14th September 1961, Geoffrey, who attended Hove Community College, was to spend most of his working life in the organ building profession initially in 1978 with Morgan and Smith Organ builders, based in Brighton. The appeal of the rapidly expanding British electronics industry took Geoffrey to Brighton College in 1982, where he studied computing and electronics for two years, before taking his new skills to circuit board manufacturing and electrical engineering. BY 1990, he had returned to the world of organ building, firstly with the then successful and expanding company of N P Mander in Bethnal Green, London from 1990 to 1992, before moving across to J.C. Bishop and Sons, where he remained for some six years. It was while working in London, that he developed not only a love both for St. Pauls Cathedral and its organ, but also for a young lady called Merrill who he met in the Congregational Church in Sanderstead, Croydon, after she reported a fault on the

organ which she was practising on. They were married on 14th June 1997. Geoffrey would tell you, with immense pride that he married Merrill in St Pauls Cathedral, but after a small pause to receive admiring comments, he would clarify the information and add that the ceremony actually took place in the

Chapel of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, in the crypt of St Pauls!

It was in 1998, that Geoffrey came to Devon and seeking work, joined the work force of Michael Farley Organbuilders in Budleigh Salterton, bringing with him his electronics skills which were rapidly becoming the norm for modern organ building. It was here that he affectionally acquired the name "Geoffers", apparently coined by a late member of the team, which has stuck to this day!

While the day job was classical organ building and tuning, Geoffrey had another job, and passion, namely the restoration and maintenance of the 1924 Wurlitzer organ originally built by Rudolph Wurlitzer in America for the Gaumont Picture House



Merril and Geoffrey at the EDOA Annual Dinner 2019

in Walsall. After a short stay in a private house in Sedgley, Staffordshire, this organ found a new home at the Congregational Chapel, in the seaside village of Beer near to his home in Seaton, where this year it celebrated its hundredth birthday. Its liturgical use on Sundays is complemented by an annual programme of monthly secular concerts using national artists, supported by Geoffrey and a dedicated team in the chapel. It is the oldest remaining Wurlitzer in the UK.

At the time of his passing, Geoffrey was a Council Member of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology.



Geoffrey with his workmates, EDOA Annual Dinner 2023

Peter Johnstone writes:

What a fitting service it was on Friday to remember and pay tribute to what Geoffrey had brought to all of our lives. What a lovely service that Geoffrey had planned himself, with hymns and music - and laughter - as he would have wished. What a wonderful organ there, too - its qualities displayed so well by Richard Stephens. I am so glad that I was able to be there, with so many others remembering him too.

Margaret Blackmore writes:

My last memory of Geoffrey was seeing him at my house when he came with Michael Farley to deliver a two manual organ, full pedal board for me to practice on at home ... Michael and Geoffrey were very good to deliver it as it was at a time when they were busy working on the organ of Nairobi Cathedral. I thought of Geoffrey when I went to church in Combe St Nicholas yesterday. As we were singing I thought how important the work Geoffrey had done was to our singing. I remember seeing Geoffrey at many of EDOA meetings.

Geoffrey was blessed with an acute sense of fun and actively participated in the gentle workshop ribbing that indicates a happy work force. A gentle and private man, he was renowned for being able to strike up a conversation with anyone who was passing – a conversation which invariably involved a mention of “Pauls” – his parlance for St Paul’s Cathedral and the Beer “Wurly”. He is survived by his wife Merrill.

Peter Wycliffe-Jones.



Geoffrey working on the organ at St Matthew's Church, Cheriton Fitzpaine, 2018

GUSTAV HOLST – 150TH ANNIVERSARY

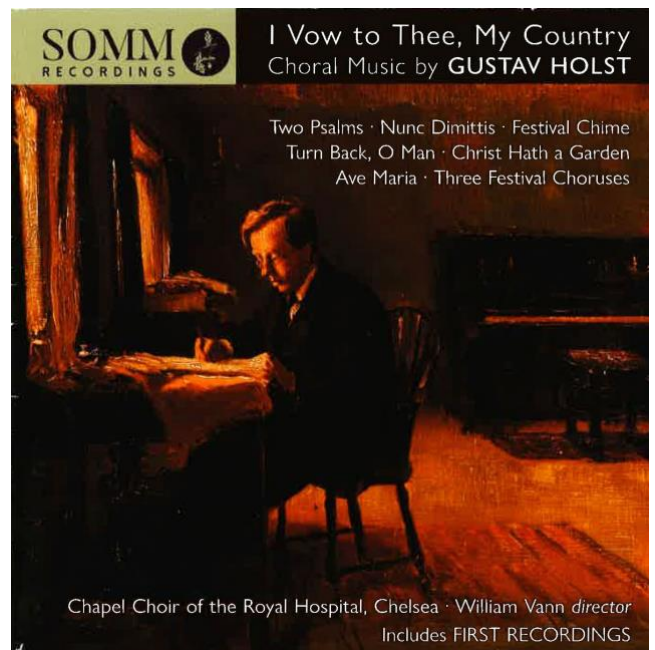
BY CHRIS COPE, CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUSTEES, THE HOLST SOCIETY

If I was to suggest that Holst composed music for the Church, I suspect that your response might be the carol 'In the bleak midwinter' and the anthem 'Turn back, o man'. But there's much more.

In 2019, the Holst Society sponsored a CD of Holst's Christmas and organ music. The Christmas music covered the period 1904 to 1931. His earliest Christmas work was 'In the bleak midwinter' dating from 1904. He went on to compose Four Old English Carols (1907), Two Carols (1907-1916), 'Christmas Day' (1910), 'Lullay my liking' (1916), Three Carols (1916-1917), 'O one that is so fair and bright' (1916), 'This have I done for my true love' (1916), 'Bring us in good ale' (1916). And then there was 'A dream of Christmas' (1917) and the Wassail Song (published in 1931).

Although Holst was an organist, he composed little music for the organ. There are though four early works dating from 1890 to 1891 when Holst was 16/17 years of age. These included March in C Major, Allegretto Pastorale, Postlude in C and Funeral March in G Minor.

At the end of his life, Holst decided to compose an orchestral symphony. This was his first symphony since the Cotswold Symphony appeared in 1899/1900. We know that he intended to compose a four-movement symphony as that is what he told his friend Ralph Vaughan Williams. Unfortunately, due to failing health, Holst was only able to compose and fully score the Scherzo, but left no notes or sketches in relation to the other three movements. In 2015, Richard Brasier arranged the Scherzo for organ duet. In his introduction to the score of the Scherzo (published by Goodmusic Publishing Limited), Richard wrote:-



The arrangement for organ duet of the Scherzo pushes the bounds of virtuosity on the organ to the very limit. The orchestral original transfers exceptionally well to the organ, so the task of recommitting to manuscript was not an onerous one. Rehearsing the work requires hours of slow practice, unnatural contortions of the human body, patience and a complete confidence in your performing partner.

The work was premiered by Richard Brasier and Tom Bell on 7th March 2015 at Westminster Central Hall, as part of the annual London Organ Day.

The four early works were recorded by John Wright and the Scherzo recorded by Richard Brasier and Tom Bell at Hereford Cathedral on 22nd August 2019.

Holst's Christmas music was recorded at St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead, London, on 13th and 14th July 2019 by the Godwine Choir under its conductors Alex Davan Wetton and Edward Hughes. The recording is on the EM label (EMR CD 062).

Two years later, the Holst Society decided to sponsor a recording of the rest of Holst's sacred music. This was recorded at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square, London, on 21st and 22nd July 2021. The choir is the Chapel Choir of the Royal Hospital Chelsea under its director of music William Vann. The organist was Joshua Ryan.

Every church musician will be familiar with the tune Thaxted sung to the words 'I vow to thee, my country'. The tune itself is the main theme from Jupiter, part of the Planets. But, in fact, Holst composed a number of hymns. This recording includes six of Holst's best hymns, namely Chilswell, Essex, Sheen, Hillcrest, Leighton and Brook End.

Essex turned up in my late father's copy of the Public School Hymnbook dating from the 1920s. It was a hymn completely unknown to Holst's biographer and had not appeared in the list of his works compiled by his daughter Imogen.

The remainder of the CD includes a number of anthems, namely Nunc Dimittis, Two Psalms (86/148), 'Not unto us o Lord', Short Festival Te Deum, 'Man born to toil', 'Eternal Father', 'Ave Maria' (for female voices) and the Four Festival Choruses. One of the reasons why a number of Holst's anthems have so rarely been performed during the last 100 years is because he originally scored them for chorus and orchestra. With a view to ensuring that these anthems are given more frequent performances (and hopefully become standard church repertoire) we needed to create arrangements for choir and organ. Accordingly, the Holst Society engaged Iain Farrington to make an organ arrangement of Holst's Short Festival Te Deum, together with three of the Four Festival Choruses. The fourth already had an accompaniment for organ. These four arrangements appear on the CD.

One of the anthems I found particularly attractive is 'Eternal Father'. This anthem has an interesting history.

On 3rd January 1928, Miss Janet Hardwick married the Reverend Richard Brook, the principal of Liverpool College. Following its consecration, this was Liverpool Anglican Cathedral's second wedding. Looking at the wedding photographs, Brook was easily twice the age of his young bride. In fact, he was 47, she in her early 20s. Fifty clergy were in attendance. The congregation numbered 500.

The Dean, Dr Frederick Dwelly, clearly had musical connections as he commissioned Vaughan Williams, Martin Shaw and Holst to compose the music for the wedding. Holst's composition was the anthem 'Eternal Father' scored for three choirs, organ and tubular bells which the Cathedral had just acquired. Having spoken to I Brook's great-nephew, I understand that Vaughan Williams and Shaw declined the commission.

The composition dates from late 1927. The words were by the Poet Laureate Robert Bridges. Holst did not attend the wedding as he was certainly not listed amongst the distinguished guests. The organist and director of music at the Cathedral was the splendidly named Walter Harry Goss-Custard who reigned as Cathedral organist for 40 years from 1916 to 1955. The original manuscript was found years later in an undisturbed storeroom at the Cathedral.

Holst's sacred music appears on the SOMM label, SOMM CD 279.

All of Holst's I, organ and sacred music has been published. If any member of EDOA has difficulty finding the music, please let me know.

If you would like a copy of these CDs, one is available from the Holst Society at a cost of £12 including postage and packaging. However, we can make both CDs available for an all-in price of £20. If interested, please contact me, Chris Cope, chairman of the Holst Society at chairman@holstsociety.org.

Finally, I do hope that you will find some time this year to include during your services some of this wonderful music composed by Holst, much of which is sorely neglected. And, of course, this year is especially important, seeing that we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of the UK's greatest composers.

Chris Cope, Founder/Chair, Holst Society, 18th June 2024

ORGANS IN MALTA – Part 1

Installation at St Dominic's, Valletta

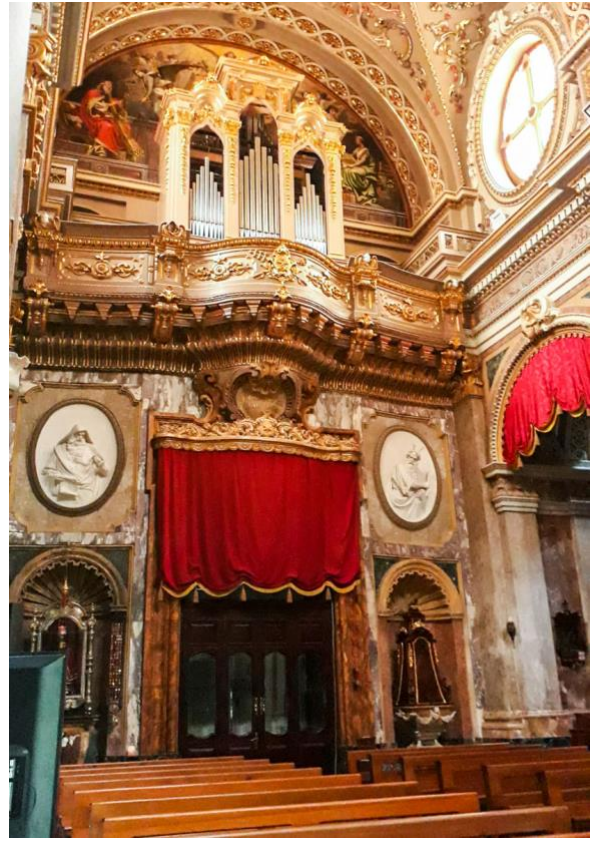
In November 2023, EDOA members were invited to Michael Farley's workshop, to view and try out a nearly-completed organ, destined for installation in The Basilica of Saint Dominic, in Valletta, Malta. An account of our visit, together with photos, was given in the January 2024 issue of The Cornopean.



The new console was constructed by Renatus Limited, and was separately viewed by the editor on a private visit to their works, also the subject of an article in the August 2023 issue.



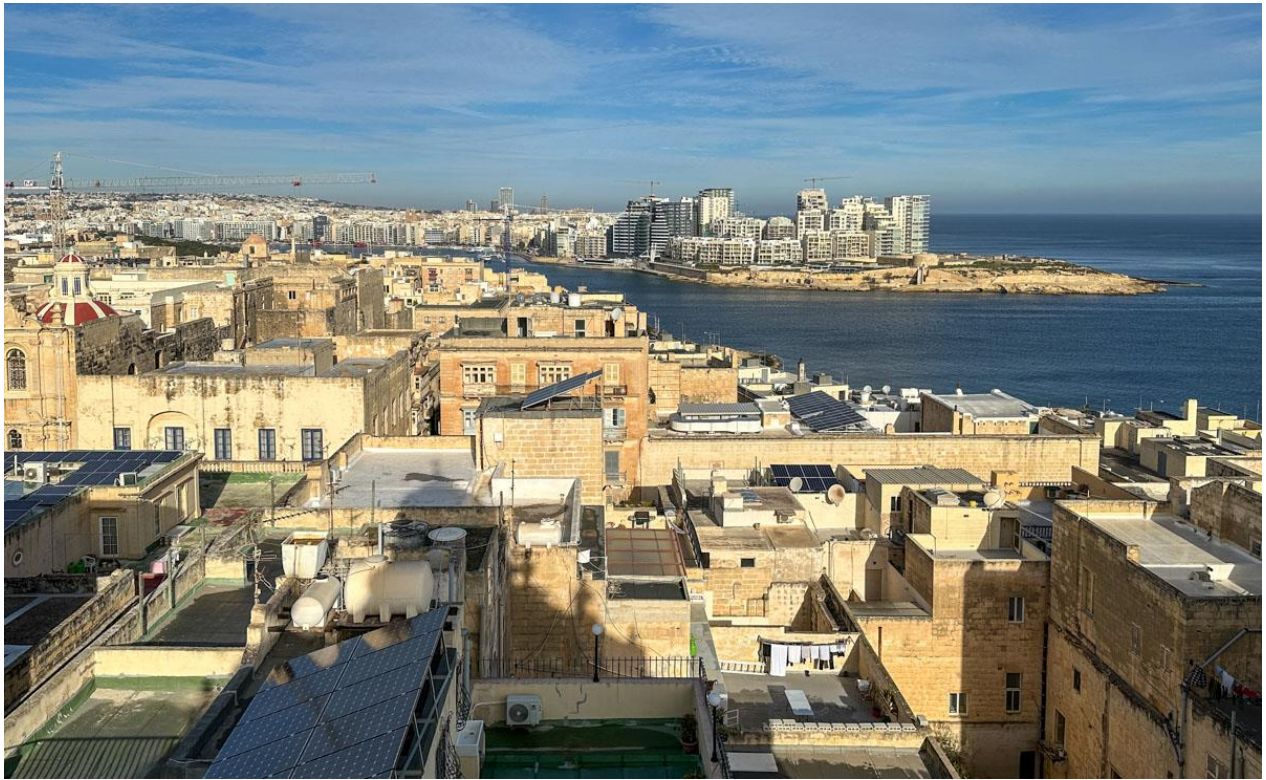
Restoration of the casework



The organ installed at St Dominic's, Valletta, Malta



Arrival of the organ blower



The harbour, Valletta, Malta

The pipework mostly came from a 4-manual Charles Martin organ formerly in St Clement's Church, Oxford. This is of particular interest to me, as my grandfather, a newly-ordained curate, met his future wife in this church, and they were married there in 1913. Many of the pipes that sound in this new organ would also have sounded at their wedding.

The organ was finally installed at St Dominic's in February 2024.



Lifting parts to the organ gallery



Ashley Tooze, high up in the organ



ORGANS IN MALTA – Part 2

By the editor, Piers Howell

In May 2024, my wife and I visited Malta on a guided tour. As we had a day and a half of spare time in the tour, the big question was what to do in the spare time? Unsurprisingly (for me, anyway!) the answer was to visit a couple of organs that Michael Farley has installed in Malta. And it just so happened Michael had very helpfully arranged for me to visit and play these two organs. ...

St Dominic's Church, Valletta

Accordingly, when we had spare time in the capital city of Valletta, I was able to play the organ at St Dominic's, described in the 2 previous pages. I was given a friendly welcome, and enjoyed playing the organ that I had seen, initially at Renatus, and later at Michael's organ works.



Church of St John the Baptist, Xewkija



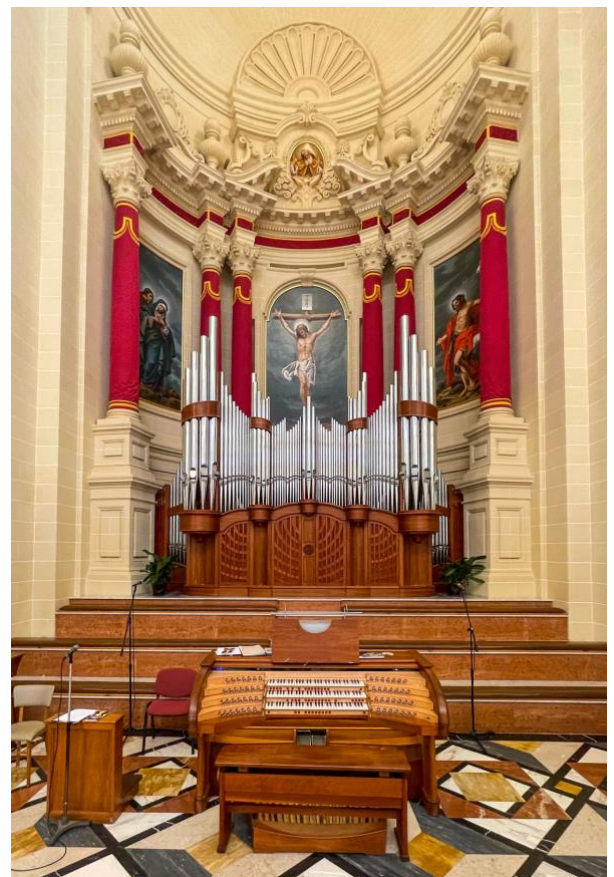
Floor reference to The Knights of Malta, organ visible at the far east end

Getting off the bus, we glimpsed across the fields, a basilica with a huge dome, a somewhat unexpected church for a village.

After the 2nd world war, the parishioners decided to build a bigger church. The foundation stone was laid in 1952, and the Church of Saint John the Baptist, commonly known as the Rotunda of Xewkija, was consecrated in 1978. It is stated that the dome is the world's third highest unsupported dome (height 246 ft, internal diameter 89 ft, circumference 279 ft). The Rotunda is also the spiritual seat for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, also known as the Knights of Malta (see the floor inscription above).

Church of St John the Baptist, Xewkija

Two days later, we took the ferry for the short crossing to the sunny island of Gozo, a less-frenetic part of Malta. A 3-mile bus ride took us to the village of Xewkiya (pronounced "show-kee-a").

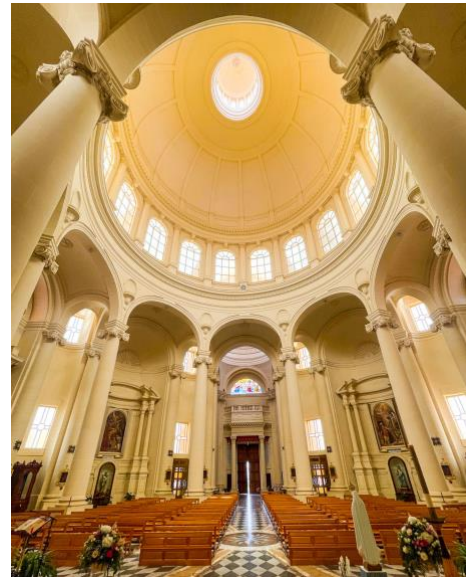


The organ behind the high altar, St John's Church



The editor, sampling the acoustic

When it came to designing a pipe organ for the basilica, there were various challenges in the possible locations that were considered. The final plans were drawn up by Noel Gallo, who designed not only the organ case and console, but also the disposition of the pipes and associated equipment, much of which is below floor level. The construction and installation of the organ was carried out by



The dome, seen from the east end

Michael Farley, and the console and casework were made by Renatus Limited. EDOA members were able to see and play the organ at Michael's works in October 2016, when Andrew Millington also gave a recital. The organ was consecrated at Xewkija in 2017.



Console details

Arriving at noon on a Sunday, mass had just finished, but I was told that this was not the first mass of the day. Playing the organ was a very enjoyable experience, particularly with the massive acoustic developing in the dome, stated to be 11 seconds!



View of Gozo island from the ferry

MOBILES IN CONCERTS

A few issues back, reference was made in The Cornopean to the subject of unauthorised recording of live performances, whether in services or in concert.

The Association's position is that recording is only allowed with the specific permission of the performer, which must be obtained in advance. In all other circumstances, recording is not allowed.

Unfortunately, these ideals are coming up against changes in attitudes and practices; for example, the live-streaming of church services, which, whilst being of great benefit to those who cannot attend, take the copyright permission of organists and other musicians for granted. In concerts, too, the general public assume the right to use mobiles to record what is going on, oblivious to the rights of performers. Added to which, the sea of upheld mobiles is a strange sight, unimaginable only 20 years ago.

Two contrasting positions:

Firstly from the world-class concert pianist, Stephen Hough:

"I'm really excited to be playing Brahms 1 next season with one of my favourite orchestras The CBSO. I'm happy to be filmed on phones by the audience except for the following bars when I really need to concentrate and could be distracted:

1st movement: 91-118; 123-176; 185-199; 226-341; 352 to end; 2nd movement: 14-19; 21-27; 29-30; 33-58; 71 to end; 3rd movement: 1-36; 46-98; 122-167; 188-238; 275-333; 337-368; 376-410; 418-426; 434-442; 448 to end."

A Facebook comment:

"Apparently this adds up to all the bars where the piano plays!"

Secondly from the internet sensation that is Anna Lapwood, concert organist and Director of Music at Pembroke College Cambridge.

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Scrolling through Anna Lapwood's videos on her TikTok, where the organist has become a social media star with nearly 750,000 followers and 24.4 million likes, I'm particularly struck by one from the Proms last year. Thousands of phone torches wave in the darkness, turning the Royal Albert Hall into a sea of starlight. Other people captured the moment too, all tagging, sharing and capturing it for social media posterity. Unlike many other classical artists, Lapwood does not ban phones in her concerts. In fact, she "actively encourages" them.

Now I'm sitting opposite Lapwood in her office at Pembroke College, Cambridge, a cheerfully cluttered spot in which I spot the complete Bach organ works and a tote bag emblazoned with the #playlikeagirl hashtag she popularised a few years ago. She laughs when I bring up the issue of phones: "I knew you would ask me about that!" The thorny question has been hotly debated in recent weeks, after the tenor Ian Bostridge stopped mid-concert, distracted by audience filming. It turned out the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, with whom he was singing, had recently changed its policy to allow photos and filming in concerts. Many backed Bostridge's no-phone stance, including the pianist Stephen Hough.

Lapwood feels differently. "The biggest thing I would say is it's personal choice and context-dependent. Ultimately it should sit with the artist. Even for me, it will feel right in certain contexts to encourage people to film and in certain contexts it won't, and I think we can all recognise that and be open to each other's opinions," she says. "When I

Phones at classical concerts? That's fine with me

The organist and TikTok star Anna Lapwood is happy to be filmed during her shows, she tells Rebecca Franks

silent and the screen brightness turned down. Born in Buckinghamshire in the 1990s, she learnt all sorts of instruments as a music-hungry child, including the piano, violin, viola and harp, and harboured an ambition to be a film composer. She added the organ to the mix as a teenager and ended un

worlds are bizarrely similar," she says. "Similarly, we go straight from the *Interstellar* Suite into the Duruflé *Prélude and Fugue on the Name Alain*. So much of what we love about the Zimmer sound — with these driving rhythms and building of tension — we've got in the Duruflé as well"

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