

President's Message **June 2017**

We in the EDOA are privileged to count among our membership two of the foremost figures in organ education in the UK. I refer of course to Anne Marsden Thomas MBE and Simon Williams, both former presidents of our association. At the last Royal College of Organists Diploma Presentation, Anne was a recipient of The RCO Medal "in recognition of distinguished achievement in organ pedagogy and of distinguished service to the college". Our warmest congratulations to Anne! At that same ceremony in Southwark Cathedral last March, most of the prizes for ARCO were awarded to Damon Ying from Elstree, Hertfordshire born and educated, who has been mentioned in this column before.

Formerly Director of the RCO Academy, Simon Williams is now Director, RCO East, South & South-West England and has been very much at the forefront of establishing and promoting the early-level certificate scheme called the RCO Certificate of Accredited Membership (CAM). The college has just announced the name of the first CAM award holder. There is a full account (by Andrew McCrea) of the scheme elsewhere in this newsletter, but we were fortunate that Simon was able to provide an excellent presentation to our association in May. Christ Church, Cockfosters was an ideal venue for both the PowerPoint and for Simon's illustrations on the accessible organ. I am extremely grateful to Susan Dingle for all she did in arranging this event and in ensuring its smooth running on the day – thank you, Susan! In thanking Simon on your behalf, I feel I must also apologise to him for the rather disappointing attendance, for apart from the committee only two others turned up, only one of whom is a member. Please, if you possibly can, do let us know what sort of meetings and events you would like and tell us where and when would suit you best.

This month of June marks the 80th anniversary (precisely, June 2nd) of one of the most memorable recitals of all time, when Louis Vierne died just as he was about to improvise after playing his *Tryptique* to an audience of 3,000 in Notre-Dame. The abandoned concert should have continued with Maurice Duruflé playing more Vierne, concluding with the *Aria* and *Final* from the *Sixth Symphony*. For us nowadays, fortunate to have instant access to so much wonderful music, it seems inconceivable that at one time Vierne's music was considered to be beneath the dignity of many (though not all) of the British organ establishment, much in the way that Rachmaninov was so shamefully neglected by the BBC Proms. Nicolas Kynaston's recording of Vierne's 6th on the Klais organ of Ingolstadt remains legendary after forty years, though Iain Simcock's on Priory from Westminster Cathedral is my personal favourite. For an utterly compelling YouTube performance of the *Final*, search out our member Ashley Wagner's, recently uploaded from Birmingham Cathedral.

Not many days to wait now for the IOF, right on our doorstep! The concerto finals this year will take place at St John's, Smith Square on Saturday 22nd July. Earlier in the day, from 11:00 till lunch, we are invited to explore organ music (ensemble as well as solo) in a series of talks, demonstrations and performances at the Royal Festival Hall – and all free. And please don't overlook all the good things conferred by membership of the EDOA! As usual, they are listed in this newsletter and on our website – with thanks as ever to Rosemary Knight.

Terence Atkins