

Past Events

Members' Recital at St Mary Magdalene, Enfield
Visit to St Mary's, Potters Bar
Northern Ireland International Organ Competition Anniversary Recital

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Members' Recital at St Mary Magdalene, Enfield **Saturday June 11th 2022**

Four months after the AGM and recital in February, EDOA returned to St Mary Magdalene for the Members' Recital. The organ was rebuilt in 2019 by the Village Workshop, and has 3 manuals, 30 pedals and 32 speaking stops. Our member Jonathan Marten, who is Director of Music at the church, has written about the restoration work in the June 2019 issue of our Newsletter.

Five members took part in the recital and presented a varied and enjoyable programme. Michael Hennin opened the recital with the Trumpet Tune in D by David Johnson. With its full chords and pedals this is obviously a twentieth century work but the solo line with its ornamentation harks back to the eighteenth century. It is a cheerful and engaging piece, ideal for starting the concert. By contrast, Michael's second piece was J S Bach's chorale prelude on Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten. Surprisingly, he used reed stops for both hands, but each line came through with clarity.



Recitalists Pavlos Triantaris, Jonathan Marten, Michael Hennin, Dr Peter Stokes, Terence Atkins

Those of us who visited All Saints Hertford in October were pleased to hear again part of the Sonata in G, Op. 29, by the Belgian composer Edgar Tinel, played by Pavlos Triantaris. Thank you, Pavlos, for introducing this composer to some of us who had never heard of him.

The compass of an organ is of course much shorter than that of a piano and two people on an organ bench might be a bit cosy. However, Terence Atkins and Jonathan Marten were not

daunted and played the fugue from Samuel Wesley's organ duet, conceived as 'an introduction to the Grand Triple Fugue in E flat by Sebastian Bach' (BWV552). What an exhilarating piece this is, running with almost no let-up from the opening subject and counter-subject to the final chords.

As we were in the week of Pentecost, Dr Peter Stokes chose as the theme for his concluding improvisation the plainsong *Veni Creator Spiritus*. He spent some time explaining what his improvisation would contain, also pointing out that until 1730 English organs had no music desk, from which one could infer that improvising was more common than playing set pieces. The four aspects of the Holy Spirit which he planned to incorporate were the comforter, the unexpectedness, complexity, and fire. The torrent of notes on the manuals above the plainsong theme in the pedals was certainly impressive.

We are grateful to the Vicar and Churchwardens of St Mary Magdalene for allowing us to hold this event in their church. We were pleased to see that the audience included quite a number of local people in addition to EDOA members.

After the recital some EDOA members spent the rest of the evening enjoying a meal at the Jolly Farmers public house at Frog's Bottom. You can see the concert programme on the Events page of our website, and some photos in the Gallery.

Rosemary Knight

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**Visit to St Mary's, Potters Bar
Saturday 14th May 2022**

Six members attended this visit to St Mary's, which is a large parish church built in 1915 with a glass screen added at the west end in the 1950s.



Michael Hennin playing the organ at St Mary's Potters Bar

The church has 2 organs. A 1970s Mander chamber organ of 3 stops stands in the south front of the nave, and its clear tone can be heard well in this resonant building. The main organ was introduced by the organist, David Miller. The former Hill Norman and Beard organ was deteriorating and was replaced in 2019 with a redundant TC Lewis organ built in 1888 and rebuilt by JW Walker from St Alkmund's church in Derby. The organ was installed and enlarged by Henry Groves and Son, and is located in a spacious arched chamber to the right of the chancel. The 3-manual and pedal stop-key console is situated opposite, at the north front of the nave, and has electronic piston control, transposer, and digital recording facility. The specification can be seen at [NPORView F00136](#). The Great, Swell and some Pedal pipes speak down the south aisle of the nave, the Positive faces north across the chancel, and the Great/Positive Trumpet and large pedal pipes speak in both directions. 3 pedal stops are digital, providing 32' and open wood tone, while some stops are extensions. I enjoyed the pleasing diapason chorus, the sweet but full sound of the Positive chorus, and the comprehensive variety of tone of the organ.

Dave Miller demonstrated the sounds of the organ by “remotely” playing pieces he’d recorded earlier – Gordon Young *Grand Choeur* and *Trumpet Vountary in C*; Noel Rawsthorne *Fanfare*; Flor Peeters *O come, O come Emmanuel*. There was then an opportunity for members to play, kicked off by Peter Stokes who explored the sounds of the organ with a substantial improvisation. Robin Coxon played Georg Böhm’s *Vater unser*, Francis Jackson’s *Fanfare*, and works by Niels Gade and John Travers. Rosemary Knight played a Bach chorale prelude, and Michael Hennin played a fugue by Pachelbel.

Thanks are due to Michael Hennin for organising the event, and to Dave Miller for welcoming us, for giving us such a wealth of information on the organ, and for his mini-recital.

Tony Bralant

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**Southwark Cathedral
Northern Ireland International Organ Competition Anniversary Recital
Monday 28th March 2022**

As concerts resume after this ‘online’ period, we can confidently say we appreciate in-person concerts and I will say the same about NIIOC’s 10th year celebration recital at Southwark cathedral, which took place on the 28th of March. The recital marks an important anniversary of the competition and a special occasion indeed, featuring ten phenomenal organists, an organ originally built by T.C. Lewis and a world premiere.

Ben Bloor opened the recital with Dupré’s transcription of the sinfonia from BWV 29. A jolly performance it was and the organ is voiced so perfectly too that it doesn’t sound too distant or direct. All the different parts balanced perfectly even with the challenges of the scattered divisions. The choir division is positioned in the quire right near the console to serve its purpose and the great, pedal and solo in the transept. Also the great challenge was that each recitalist only had an hour to get acquainted with the instrument to experiment, record and familiarise themselves with the features the newer Harrison & Harrison console has to offer.

Nadia Boulanger is obviously well known for producing great musicians including Copland and Bernstein but her music is unique in its own right. Her *Prélude in F minor* is a very emotional piece which Andrew Forbes used to his advantage, expressing himself throughout.

The piece may not have nearly half as many notes as the preceding transcription of Mendelssohn's overture to *St Paul*, but it instead has its own difficulties.

The next recitalist Ivan Reinke showed off one of the most 'wacky' pieces in the organ repertoire: Dupré's 'Fugue in G minor'. It's almost as if Dupré looked at Bach's fugues and thought, "Those subjects are too simple". Despite this, he played this item with incredible precision and distinct voicing. We also heard Alexander Hamilton play a transcription of the finale from the 'Firebird', which was followed by Johannes Krahl playing 'Vision in Flames'. Both pieces had a great use of colour and showed off what the organ does best: being loud! 'Vision in Flames' was a brilliant example of what expressionist music is all about, using large dynamic contrasts and beyond virtuosic writing. I didn't think I would see that many notes played on a pedalboard let alone a manual. Ben Comeau graced us with his own arrangements of two well known mainstream songs 'Jitterbug Waltz' and 'Dancing Queen' in its own 'flashy' style. We were then again treated to a premiere: a piece by the up and coming composer Grace-Evangeline Mason called 'Where the birds sing' composed for 'Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland' and played by Richard Gowers. Both the composer and performer presented the work amazingly, managing to get the organ to sound like birds, which is also really important for the main motif as it tied the whole piece together. Laura Schlappa was 2020's winner and played Franck's 'Cantabile' making great use of the solo division's lush reeds. This was definitely a good example of the different generations of young musicians, from the first winner Ben Comeau to the most recent, seeing the differences in attitudes and styles of playing. Sebastian Heindl was due to play, but despite the still improving circumstances, he was unable to attend due to having COVID, which is a shame as he was intending to play his own arrangement of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre*. It would have been a pleasure to hear, but we instead were treated to some more Dupré played by Richard Gowers, which was featured in his earlier solo recital.

By then the recital was over and the cohort of organists, the composer, registrant, founder and presenter gathered together for a bow and some cheeky pictures.

Luke Jones

EDOA is grateful for the free tickets which the NIIOC allocated to us. Our member Ashley Wagner was a finalist in the competition in 2016. Ed.