

President's Message

October 2024

At the first of this term's lunchtime Cornhill organ recitals (Jonathan Rennert's no. 476), it was good to be reminded of *Skye Boat Song* by David Aprahamian Liddle. Some of you may have received an e-mail from David giving a link to his Ascensiontide Antiphon. Written for solo soprano, trumpet and glockenspiel, it is as he says one of his few compositions not to feature the organ. Also well worth a listen and easy to find on his YouTube channel are David's Fugues for Piano, Op. 13. The first is based on the letters of Felix Aprahamian's name. There are seven fugues in all, attractive and brilliant, and a remarkable achievement for someone still at school.

The new assistant at Cornhill, Ben Collyer, has wasted no time in arranging an event there for schoolchildren to be introduced to the organ. Similarly, at St Paul's Cathedral, Jeremiah Stephenson is imaginatively engaging children, and you can hear him being interviewed about this in the recent RCO Organ Podcast (no. 17): <https://bit.ly/3XObnOv>. All of us, of course, are keen to foster the interest of youngsters. Roger Carter's student, Matthew Porter, is our youngest member and made a most favourable impression at the Members' Recital. Robert Evans is also to be commended for introducing two of his pupils to the joys of EDOA student membership.

Our warmest congratulations go to Philip Shrimpton and Poly Victorios on their marriage at St Andrew's, Enfield. When the banns were read for the third time of asking, Philip burst in on the organ with a snippet of the Hallelujah Chorus, to the surprise and delight of one and all! One of the organ pieces at the ceremony was 'Shrimpton's Stride' by his godfather, the late, much-missed Peter Smith.

I endorse Michael Hennin's thanks to Richard Harvey for enabling our members' recital to take place at St John's URC, New Barnet. As always, the support of some of the congregation was much appreciated. Joel Colyer and Jonathan Gregory kindly played some additional items in place of a couple of withdrawals. Jonathan's Stanford pieces were timely as we commemorate the centenary of his death. As Jonathan hinted, and has been stated here before, there is so much to explore beyond the cloistered familiarity of, say, Stanford in B flat. A recent personal discovery has been his obvious homage to Bach with two sets of 24 Preludes for piano in every key (Op. 163 and 179).

A hearty *well done* to Rosemary Knight for winning crossword 120 (June 2024) of the *Organists' Review*. Everyone is again encouraged to read this bi-monthly magazine of the IAO. In the latest you will discover who was the young lady who gave the first British performance in the dark days of 1943 of the Poulenc Organ Concerto and where – and how – Felix Aprahamian reacted. You will also see a photo of Jeanne Demessieux's organ shoes that have become the stuff of legend. This is within an article by Norman Harper about the person who was closest to Demessieux outside the family, namely Pierre Labric who was born in the same year, 1921, and is still alive! Finally, Paul Hale has written about Liverpool Cathedral's long-awaited Echo Organ, 'prepared for' for 98 years! You will be able to hear Ian Tracey demonstrating it on the same RCO Podcast referred to above – or in person by going along to the anniversary recital on Saturday afternoon, 19th October.

Looking ahead, a warm welcome awaits anyone who wishes to accept Ruth Lewis's generous

“At Home” invitation for Thursday 14th November; details in this newsletter and on our website. It’s far too early to send greetings for Christmas, though my next message will be in early New Year, when we will be eagerly anticipating the Bloomsbury Organ Day on 25th January and beyond that our AGM and many other delights to come.

Terence Atkins