

OUNDLER SCHOOL CHAPEL Saturday 20 July at 11.30

Organ Recital by Gillian Weir

Toccata and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565)

BACH

This is probably Bach's single most widely known work and yet, ironically, it is not only quite likely that the work isn't by Bach at all but also that it was probably not written for the organ but as a violin solo with accompaniment. However, whatever the arguments there can be no doubt about the drama of the opening Toccata which is improvisatory in style and is made up of many small sections. The Fugue which follows is built around a lively semi-quaver subject and ends with a return to the sectional style of the Toccata at the end.

Voluntary on a flight of angels for an organ in a clock

HANDEL

In 1736 an ingenious clockmaker called Charles Clay of Stockton in Yorkshire invented a musical clock which possessed a chime of 29 bells and a set of organ pipes which marked the hours by playing a Concerto of Corelli. Handel was obviously fascinated by this novelty as he wrote some 17 pieces for it.

Two Sonatas

SCARLATTI

This programme begins as all great tercentenary tributes should with a work from each of the great composers who we are celebrating this year. Scarlatti has certainly had less limelight than Bach and Handel through his keyboard sonatas were every bit as revolutionary in their day (possibly more so) than anything that Bach and Handel wrote. They mostly follow a similar course being in a single movement in two sections.

Fantasia in F minor and major (K.608)

MOZART

This classic of the organ repertoire, like the Handel pieces heard earlier in the programme, was written originally for a musical clock. Mozart wrote three such works all dating from the last year or so of his life. They were commissioned by Count Josef Deym, a Viennese nobleman who possessed several instruments of this type.

K.608 is the finest of Mozart's clock pieces and the idea obviously caught his imagination as something new to which he could apply his mind. The work is in three clear sections, the outer two highly dramatic and the central one a lyrical Andante.

Noël de Saintonge

DANDRIEU

Noël pour les grands jeux

DAQUIN

In 17th century France, the term "Noël" came to be applied to organ pieces, most of them variations on popular Christmas melodies designed to be played during the Christmas Services. Gillian Weir plays examples this morning by two composers who were contemporaries.

Dandrieu was a priest who composed a considerable amount of organ and harpsichord music and who spent his whole life (1682-1738) in Paris. Daquin (1694-1772) was a keyboard virtuoso from the age of 12 and became organist of the Convent of the Cordeliers, succeeding his teacher Marchand. He indicated that his Noëls (12 of them) were suitable for performance not only on organ and harpsichord but by violins, recorders and oboes, thus ensuring a good market for them!

Variations on 'Vater unser' from Sonata No. 6 in D minor MENDELSSOHN

Mendelssohn's six organ sonatas were written towards the end of his life during 1844-1845. They were composed in response to a request from a London publishing firm for some 'organ voluntaries'. As he was unfamiliar with this English genre, Mendelssohn wrote works that were far longer and more involved than were intended. It was decided, then, to call them Sonatas.

The variations on 'Vater unser' form the first movement of the sixth Sonata and they are based on the Lutheran Choral Melody set to the Lord's Prayer.

Scherzo in G minor

BOSSI

The Italian composer Enrico Bossi (1860-1925) was a fine organist himself and this popular Scherzo is written in his characteristically 'bravura' style. It is cleverly written to cover the whole dynamic range of the organ.

Elfes

BONNET

Josef Bonnet (1884-1944) was another able organist, being a pupil of Guilmant and organist of the Church of St Eustache in Paris at the age of only 22. His collection of 12 Pieces nouvelles pour grand orgue were composed in 1910. Elfes is marked Allegro Vivace and is a skittish, pictorial piece.

Prelude and Fugue on BACH, S.260

LISZT

Liszt wrote his Prelude and Fugue on BACH in 1855 for the dedication of the new organ in Merseburg. In the end Liszt's other great organ work 'Ad nos' was played on this occasion and the first performance of 'BACH' was given by Liszt's pupil Winterberger the following year.

Many composers have used the BACH (Bh, A, C, Bb) motif beginning with Bach himself in his final, incomplete fugue in the Art of Fugue. Liszt's work must be amongst the most popular in the entire repertoire, however, and is certainly one of the most important between Bach and Reger. The work is really a single continuous fantasy; the fugue doesn't last much longer than its exposition before succumbing to the Fantasy treatment again and there is barely a bar in the whole work when the BACH motif is not present. It is full of virtuoso, dramatic gestures and is a monument of Romantic Organ music.

Programme Notes by Paul Spicer

Light refreshments are available before and after recital in Festival Club.

Gillian Weir

Gillian Weir's international career was launched when she won the St. Alban's International Organ Competition while still a student at the Royal College of Music in London. She makes annual visits to America, Australia and Scandinavia and this year, besides many concerts in Britain, she is also visiting Poland, Holland and Austria. She has made fourteen recordings for Argo and has broadcast the complete organ works of Bach, Messiaen and, most recently, Franck for the BBC.