

Tuesday 14th July

Two lunchtime organ recitals

Michael Gailit

Peterborough Cathedral - 1.15pm

The Programme

‘Truly no one could feel more deeply the loss which Art has suffered in your Julius, than the one who has followed with admiring sympathy his noble, constant and successful strivings in these latter years, and who will ever remain true to the memory of his friendship’ *Franz Liszt (letter of condolence to organ builder Adolf Reubke, father of Julius Reubke)*

One of Liszt’s favourite pupils, Reubke was most heavily influenced by the music of Liszt and Wagner, who represented the new German School.



Sonata for piano in B flat minor
Julius Reubke (1834-1858)
Allegro maestoso; Andante sostenuto; Allegro agitato
There are three linked movements. The three-note opening motive is its main musical idea, characterised by a dotted rhythm. Following some development, a transition leads to a lyric theme. This ends with a question, answered by a dramatic interjection of the main motif, followed by a repetition of the lyric theme. The climax coincides with the beginning of the recapitulation, which follows the same formal scheme as the exposition. In the second movement a new, chorale-like theme is answered by a freely

flowing melody. Soft, introspective chords grow to a massive hymn. The chorale theme is played in dark octaves in the bass, accompanied by pale arabesques. In the third movement the main motif breaks in, transformed into a demonic waltz.

Sonata in C minor, The 94th Psalm Julius Reubke
Grave-Larghetto-Allegro con fuoco; Adagio; Allegro
Reubke’s organ sonata dates from 1857, when he was invited to participate in a recital on the famous Ladegast organ in the Cathedral of Merseburg, Germany. The 94th Psalm is a symphonic poem, in which most of the musical material is derived from the first four bars. Again we can distinguish three separated movements, which are linked to each other and based on the same theme. He tried to achieve in the piece the impression of a spontaneous, improvisatory fantasy.

- 1. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself
- 2. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud
- 3. Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?
- 6. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless
- 7. Yet they say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it
- 17 Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence
- 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul
- 22 But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge
- 23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness

Reubke was already suffering from consumption when he composed these two works; he died in 1858. One cannot help feeling that his organ sonata bears autobiographical features: the struggle with the injustice of his own fate.

The Performer

Michael Gailit received his musical and academic training at the University of Music in Vienna, receiving his performance degree in organ in 1977 followed by a performance degree in organ in 1982. He is organist at St Augustine’s Church, which has the largest music programme in Vienna, including a high mass with choir, soloists and orchestra every Sunday.

Professor Gailit regularly tours in Europe and the United States, lecturing and performing on both organ and piano; he has also released many CDs, and in 1995 published the first comprehensive book on Reubke.

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Susan Landale

Exeter College Chapel, Oxford - 1.15pm

The Programme

Variations de Concert **Joseph Bonnet** (1884-1944)
In 1906, after studying at the Paris Conservatoire, Bonnet became organist at St. Eustache. He fled France in 1940 to settle in Quebec, teaching at the Conservatoire. He also composed a number of works, including a free fantasy on ‘Nearer my God to thee’ as a tribute to the victims of the Titanic, but his ‘Variations de Concert’ of 1906 is the only one of his compositions to have held a place in the repertoire.

Chorale Prelude and Fugue, O Taurigkeit, O Herzeleid
J Brahms (1833-1897)

During 1856, Brahms moved to Düsseldorf to be near the dying Robert Schumann and his wife Clara. Brahms himself had been suffering from a prolonged creative block, and so he embarked upon a daily diet of technical exercises. This course of rehabilitation must have worked, because he then managed to complete no fewer than four original compositions for the organ in quasi-Baroque style.

Trois Pièces, Op 29
Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937)
Prélude; Cantilène; Scherzando de Concert
Remembered today mainly for his ‘March of the little tin soldiers’, Pierné was an accomplished musician with a reputation as an organist and conductor, as well as composer. He spent 24 years as conductor of Paris’s influential ‘Concerts Colonne’, gave the first public performance of Saint Sâens’ ‘Carnival of the Animals’, and in 1890 succeeded his teacher, Franck, as organist at St Clotilde.



Minuetto - Toccata **Eugène Gigout** (1844-1925)
Gigout entered the Ecole Niedermayer when he was 11, and struck up a life-long friendship with fellow pupil, Gabriel Fauré. Together they were destined, with the help of Bonnet, to edit Bach’s complete organ works. His many published works include the ‘Ten pieces’ in which this elegant Minuet and brilliant Toccata are respectively the second and fourth movements. The Toccata is probably his best-known piece.

Prélude and Fugue in B flat minor (from Symphonie, Op 5)
Augustin Barié (1883-1915)
Time has not dealt kindly with the blind Augustin Barié. Organist at St Germain-des-Près and renowned as an improviser, his cyclic Organ Symphonie (1911) was heralded as one of the most important of its kind. He had time to publish only three other short works before his untimely death. The Symphony opens with a sombre Prelude followed by a Fugue which shows "a mastery and perfection of form which ... is sufficient to make it a masterpiece."

Epilogue from ‘Faust’ **Petr Eben** (b.1929)
The score which this Czech composer wrote in response to a commission for incidental music for Goethe’s ‘Faust’ made considerable use of the organ. He later made a concert version for solo organ. In the Epilogue, Eben aims to create "an atmosphere of calm and still as though suspended between heaven and earth", and uses the Lutheran chorale, ‘Aus tiefer Not’, played high on the flute above deep left-hand chords, to depict "the liberated soul".

Choral-Improvisation sur le ‘Victimae Paschali’
C Tournemire (1870-1939)
Tournemire studied the organ with Widor and spent most of his life as organist at St Clotilde in Paris. The use of plainsong is integral to his composing style, and permeates this Choral-Improvisation. The score is one of five improvisations which were transcribed in 1930, and published in 1958 by his pupil, Maurice Duruflé.

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(Continued on next page)

Rimsky-Korsakov String Quartet of St Petersburg

St Mary’s Church, Fotheringhay - 7.30pm

Mikhail Bondarev, violin
Jekaterina Belissova, violin
Alexei Popov, viola
Stanislav Liamine, cello

The Programme

String Quartet no. 2 in D **Alexander Borodin** (1833-1887)
Allegro moderato; Scherzo: Allegro; Nocturne: Andante; Finale: Andante - Vivace
Although Alexander Borodin showed an early interest in music and began taking flute lessons when he was nine, he also spoke four languages and enjoyed making fireworks. His scientific interests gradually took over most of his time and in 1850 he entered the Medico-Surgical Academy in St Petersburg where he eventually received a doctorate for his dissertation, "On the analogy of Arsenical with Phosphoric Acid." Borodin then became a career chemist, augmenting his salary by translating scientific books and becoming a champion for the education of women in the sciences. As a result, he had little time for music, writing only about 50 works of which many are very slight and several are incomplete. "No musician has ever claimed immortality with so slender an offering," commented Sir Henry Hadow in 1906. After gaining his doctorate in 1858, Borodin spent three years studying in Western Europe. Much of his time was spent in Heidelberg, and in 1861 he met the 29-year old Ekaterina Protopopova, who had been sent there for treatment for tuberculosis. The couple married and twenty years later, in the summer of 1881, Borodin composed his second string quartet as a nostalgic evocation of the time of their first meeting. The Quartet is best known today for the haunting Nocturne which forms its third movement.

String Quartet in G minor **Sergei Rachmaninov** (1873-1943)
Romance; Scherzo
When Rachmaninov was nine, his family settled their debts by selling their estate near Novgorod and moving to St Petersburg. Rachmaninov’s musical gifts were already becoming evident and he entered the Conservatoire but his family was in turmoil; after his sister died from diphtheria and his parents separated, he failed his end of year examinations. His cousin advised that he should go instead to the Moscow Conservatory, and until 1889 Rachmaninov lived in the flat of his piano teacher, Nikolai Zverev. Zverev insisted, however, that Rachmaninov should begin his piano practice at 6am daily, and the two parted company when the young man tired of having no time or space to pursue his greater interest in composition. This Romance and Scherzo were written shortly after he gained his independence, and although he presumably intended to write a first movement and finale to go with them, he eventually decided to arrange them for string orchestra instead. They received their first performance in this form in 1891, and it was not until October 1945, over two years after the composer’s death, that the Beethoven Quartet first played them in their original form at a concert in Moscow.

The Performer

Susan Landale was born in Scotland; she graduated from Edinburgh University and studied with André Marchal in Paris. Today she pursues a dual career of concert organist and teacher.

Winner of the first Organ Playing Competition at St Albans in 1963, she has firmly established a worldwide reputation as concert artist, performing regularly in Europe, North America, Africa and Australia and making many recordings, winning a Diapason d’Or for her recent CD of Messiaen’s Livre du Saint Sacrement.

Susan Landale is currently Professor of Organ at the National Regional Conservatoire in Paris. Her studies of Petr Eben and Olivier Messiaen, considered to be particularly authentic, are translated into several languages.

Exeter College Chapel is an appropriate venue for this recital: the chapel, designed by Gilbert Scott in 1859, is modelled on the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and the new organ, by J W Walker & Sons, seeks to recreate the timbres of the 19th century Parisian organ builder, Cavallé-Coll

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String quartet no 8 in C minor Op110 **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1975)
Largo; Allegro molto; Allegretto; Largo; Largo
Shostakovich always trod a brave line between political correctness and artistic freedom, and after suffering in Stalin’s 1948 purges, attempted to restore his standing without compromising his principles. His efforts proved successful, and in 1960 he was sent to Dresden to write the music for a war film. Inspired by the city’s destruction, he also spent three days composing the 8th string quartet, an autobiographical work which quotes from his symphonies, ‘Lady Macbeth’, the first cello concerto and the piano trio. In doing so, however, he also tempted fate by including his own motto, ‘DSCH’, alongside a quotation from an old Russian song: ‘Exhausted by the hardships of prison’. This should have upset the authorities, but they were misled by the work’s dedication - ‘To the memory of the Victims of Fascism’ - and by Shostakovich’s decision to join the communist party. They therefore treated the first performance, in Leningrad on October 2nd, as a celebration of the lamb returning to the fold. This amused Shostakovich: "You’d have to be blind and deaf to do that: everything in the quartet is as clear as a primer."

The Performers

For many years the Rimsky-Korsakov Quartet has enjoyed an enviable reputation as one of St Petersburg’s outstanding ensembles, a reputation which has been further recognised internationally. The Quartet, all of whose members are graduates of the St Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatoire, has regularly given concerts in Germany since 1990, performing to great acclaim in such prestigious venues as Berlin’s Schauspielhaus and Philharmonie, and the Munich Philharmonie. Tours have introduced the ensemble to audiences throughout Europe. Tonight’s recital will be the Quartet’s debut performance in England.



The ensemble’s extensive repertoire embraces classical, romantic and modern works; a particular recent success was the German premiere of Hans Werner Henze’s Piano Quintet, given by these artists. They have also found a particular niche in discovering, playing and recording little known rarities, especially by Russian romantic composers.

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Film at the Festival

Thirty Two Short Films about Glenn Gould (12)

Dir. François Girard

St Peter’s Church, Oundle - 10.15pm
(the Parish Church)

Some films are so good that they remind us of cinema’s capabilities by, in a sense, reinventing the medium’s customary form. This is one of those films. It tells the story of the great, eccentric Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, who died in 1982 aged 50; but Girard’s masterstroke was to take his cue from Gould’s most famous piece, his interpretation of Bach’s Goldberg Variations, and to structure the film as 32 fragments, each revealing a different perspective.

The Festival Club is open today 10am to midnight
Bar Hours: 6pm to 7pm; 9pm to 11pm