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Tuesday 18th July

Organ Recital HENRY FAIRS

7.30pm The Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, Oundle

Toccata in G

Johann Adam Reincken (c.1640-1722)

Reinken was organist at the Katharinenkirche in Hamburg, and although his Toccata in G was probably written for harpsichord, it sounds equally well on the organ. The piece comprises two fugues, which are framed by flamboyant free writing characterised by bold rhetorical figures and gestures.

Aria detto Balletto

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643)

Frescobaldi hailed from Ferrara and held several prestigious posts, including organist of St Peter's in Rome. 'Aria detto Balletto' is a set of dance variations on the aria 'Or Che noi rimena'. The introduction establishes tempo and pulse and the seven variations proceed through proportional time signatures, providing great scope for variety of texture, mood and style.

Voluntary in E minor, Op.7 No.7

John Stanley (1713-1786)

Stanley, though blinded in an accident at the age of two, overcame his disability to achieve esteem as London's most admired 18th century musician, rivalled only by Handel. 'Voluntary in E minor' features a sombre Diapason tone then cuts a dash with the pungent timbre of solo cornet.

Walpurgisnacht (from Faust)

Petr Eben (b.1929)

This piece opens with a wolf-whistle and witches dancing to the sound of the barrel organ and hurdy-gurdy. The mood gradually darkens, before a crazy waltz takes hold and battles with the chorale *Aus tiefer Not* played in the pedal. The work concludes with a wild pedal-solo before the chorale, played in unison, triumphs.

Three Studies, from Op. 56

R Schumann (1810-1856)

i. *Nicht zu schnell* (not too fast); iv. *Innig* (sincerely); v. *Nicht zu schnell*

The pedal piano was an instrument that held some fascination for a number of 19th century composers, combining as it did the touch-responsive resource of the piano with a nod to the organ's baroque pedigree. Robert Schumann, who died exactly 150 years ago, provided for this hybrid invention fugues on the name of

B.A.C.H., and a set of canonic studies from which tonight's pieces are taken for performance on the organ. The first is introvert and Bachian in tone; the second is more romantic, and the last adopts the manner of a scherzo.



Variations sur un thème de Clément Jannequin

Jehan Alain (1911-1940)

Alain found the theme of this piece in a collection of early songs that had belonged to his grandmother. Oddly, the melody was not composed by Jannequin; it was the work of an anonymous composer, published by Pierre Attaignant in 1529. The text of the first verse runs:

*The hope I have of winning your grace
And of enjoying the good that I pursue
Holds me in suspense, awaiting your consent.
But if you do not give it soon,
I have no choice but tire of love.*

Alain, whose questingly bitter-sweet voice was prematurely silenced by his death in the War, asks that this piece be played 'with freshness and tenderness'.

Choral Song and Fugue

Samuel Wesley (1810-1876)

Wesley was a brilliant performer and organist, and prolific too as a composer; he held positions in several cathedrals, Winchester and Hereford amongst them. The towering personalities of Bach and Mendelssohn pervade his musical style, and this work is cast in a conservative mould, given that it was first published in 1862. Choral Song adopts a lyrical style, whilst the invigorating and harmonically audacious Fugue was designed for the 18th century style of English organ in which the manual compass extended down to GG.

Henry Fairs is Organist at the University of Birmingham and an organ tutor at the Birmingham Conservatoire and the St Giles International Organ School in London. He was a prize-winner in international organ competitions at Chartres (Prix Maurice Duruflé), Paris (First Prize, Concerto competition) and St Albans (Second Prize). After graduating at Birmingham Conservatoire with first class honours in 1998, he studied in Paris and Köln. His principal teachers have been David Saint, Susan Landale, Thierry Mechler and David Sanger.



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