Glasgow University Memorial Chapel

Wednesday, November 2, 2022, 1.10-1.50pm

Organ Recital

Kevin Bowyer

Prelude, Toccata and Chaconne (1959) (9’30”) Brian Brockless (1926-95)

L’Orgue Mystique, Suite 3

Nativitas D. N. Jesu Christi (1927/32) Charles Tournemire (1870-1939)

Prélude à l'Introït (0’45”)
Offertoire (2’40”)
Élévation (0’40”)
Communion (2’35”)
Pièce terminale – Paraphrase (6’15”)

Christmas Rhapsody (1958) (7’45”) Camil van Hulse (1897-1988)

There’s a lot of Christmas in today’s programme. The Tournemire is the suite for the Nativity of Christ, and the van Hulse is a festive romp, full of well-known Christmas tunes that you’re sure to recognise. But we begin with Brian Brockless’s Prelude, Toccata and Chaconne (Novello’s International Series of Contemporary Organ Music, No. 5), a neglected yet important piece, written in the 1950s, when British organ music in a modernist style was extremely scarce, the only other examples I can think of being penned by Elizabeth Lutyens and Alan Gibbs. Brockless’s piece (his earliest published organ work) was inspired by “the remarkable qualities of the new organ in the Royal Festival Hall”. It’s a bit of a tour-de-force, with its vigorous Toccata, and colourful Chaconne, with its characteristic ground bass (there’s a passage that makes me think of Macbeth’s witches, snarling and spitting on the Swell reeds!) Despite an investigation on social media, I’ve been unable to identify where the first performance took place, or who the first player might have been. The following biography is from Wikipedia:
Brockless was born in London, the son of an amateur French horn player and baritone. He was inspired by music from a very young age along with his sister Pauline, who herself became a fine soprano and performed regularly at the Proms.

Brockless studied organ and composition at the Royal College of Music under the direction of Herbert Howells, a great influence on the young composer. Howells' influence can be seen most in "An English Elegy", dedicated to Howells and originally the slow movement of a quartet written for his BMus degree. Brockless went on to study conducting with Sergiu Celibidache at the Accademia Musicale, Siena, Italy (where he won the conducting prize in 1963). He subsequently worked with Celibidache in Europe and Scandinavia.

For twenty years Brockless was a part-time professor at the Royal Academy of Music and was subsequently made an Honorary Member. He was also senior lecturer at the University of Surrey and taught at Goldsmith's and Morley colleges.

Among the orchestras he conducted were The London Schubert Orchestra (founded by George Schubert, Brockless was musical director), the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philomusica of London, Northern Sinfonia and The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He gave concerts (with the London Schubert Orchestra) in Romania, Palermo, Stockholm, Brussels, Venezuela, Denmark, as well as conducting choral and orchestral performances for the BBC, Belgian, Swedish and Danish Radio Orchestras. He pioneered the presentation of Choral music on TV with the ITV series "A Date With Music".

As well as conductor and composer, Brockless had a fine counter-tenor voice which he employed along with his sister Pauline in Wigmore Hall recitals, as a choir member of the Savoy Chapel, Schola Polyphonica and the Elizabethan Singers.

In 1971 Brockless left St Bartholomew's due to the pressure of work but returned as Director of Music again in 1979. He remained there for the rest of his life.

Brockless's hobbies included cricket, ornithology, and reading.
Today we hear Suite No. 3, from Tournemire’s *L’Orgue Mystique*. The five-section plan follows that of the earlier suites, but we hear for the first time a loud concluding movement – devastating, in fact, the second section rising to a monumental climax in which the low pedal C sharp is sustained on the full organ for nearly a minute and a half! Hold on to your hats – this is awesome!

Wikipedia:
Born in Bordeaux, Tournemire moved in adolescence to Paris, and there became one of César Franck's three youngest students (the other two were Henri Büsser and a Belgian, Guillaume Lekeu, the latter having been born only two days before Tournemire).
From 1898 (on the resignation of Gabriel Pierné) to 1939, Tournemire served as the *organiste titulaire* at Franck's old church, the Basilique Ste-Clotilde, Paris. He was also professor of chamber music at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1931, he published a biography of Franck.
A year before the biography appeared, Tournemire recorded five organ improvisations, which were later transcribed by Maurice Duruflé from phonograph recordings. Of ten 78-rpm discs which Tournemire made in 1930, playing the Aristide Cavaillé-Coll organ of Sainte-Clotilde, five contain compositions by Franck. This set of discs was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque in 1931 and has been reissued on both LP and CD.
Insofar as Tournemire's name is now remembered, it is usually spoken of in connection with his largest composition, *L’Orgue mystique*, a group of 51 sets of five pieces each (except for Holy Saturday, which contains only three pieces), all written between 1927 and 1932. This collection covers the cycle of the Roman Catholic liturgical year, each set being based on the Gregorian chants for the day. Unlike the symphonies of Charles-Marie Widor, which are usually heard in secular recitals (even when individual movements of these symphonies had liturgical origins), *L’Orgue mystique* was designed for church use.
Tournemire was found dead in Arcachon, France, in November 1939. The cause of his death remains unknown.

![Charles Tournemire](image-url)
I’ve played van Hulse’s Christmas Rhapsody (No. 4 in Novello’s *International Series of Contemporary Organ Music*) on three or four occasions in the past but have never met another organist who’s performed it. It’s a bit of fun. Count the tunes…

Wikipedia:
Camil van Hulse's father, Gustaaf van Hulse, was composer and organist of the deanery church of St. Nicholas. His mother, Mary Pelagia Coppens, was a gifted pianist and singer. At age six, Camil got his first musical education in piano and music theory, and later in harmony and counterpoint, from his father, a disciple of Edgar Tinel. By the age of twelve, he was able to play the organ, lead a choir, and sing Gregorian chant from attending church services with his father. From then on, he regularly substituted for his father as organist and conductor.

Van Hulse attended school in Sint-Niklaas at the St. Joseph Institute and then studied Greek and Latin at the St. Joseph Minor Seminary, a Roman Catholic college which provided basic training for the priesthood. He followed this course until the first quarter of his third year, after which he devoted himself entirely to music. In addition to his passion for music, he also loved to read. He kept in touch with his former teachers and old college friends.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, van Hulse joined the military at the age of seventeen. During the war, he suffered exposure to poison gas and was told that he had six months to live. He also suffered from tuberculosis.

In 1919, he began study at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp despite his poor health. He studied with Edward Verheyden (harmony and composition), Frans Lenaert (piano), Constant Lenaert (chamber music), and Lodewijk Mortelmans (counterpoint). That same year, he succeeded his father as organist at St. Nicholas Church in Sint-Niklaas. In 1922, he was awarded the prize for harmony with highest distinction and the Royal Medal, as well as the Albert De Vleeschouwer prize. In 1923 he was awarded the highest distinction for piano and the Royal Medal.

After graduating, van Hulse's first concern was his health. His doctor told him that he would benefit from a warm and dry climate. Therefore, he moved to Oklahoma in September 1923 and then to Tucson, Arizona, at that time one of the most musical cities in America. Tucson is also known for its favorable climate for pulmonary patients. After spending a summer in Tucson, where the temperature is close to 100 degrees Fahrenheit, he felt much better and decided to stay there. During that time he also changed the spelling of his name from Kamiel to Camil.

In 1924, he married Augusta Nijs, a woman to whom he had already been engaged in Belgium. They had two children, Lesghinka and Aziadé.

For van Hulse, the musical life of Tucson was of great importance. He gave private lessons in piano, organ, harmony, and counterpoint. In 1924 he was given a permanent position as organist at All Saints Church, and later he became organist and choirmaster of Ss. Peter and Paul Church. He was the founding conductor of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. He combined this work with a busy career as a concert pianist. As a composer, he published 130 works. He composed music in all major genres except opera. Van Hulse maintained the late romantic style but combined this with modern trends such as Expressionism. In 1956, he retired in order to devote himself entirely to composition. His compositions received numerous awards. In addition to his professional career as a musician, he was also a skilled linguist and is included in the Dictionary of Linguists. He also has a place in the Dictionary of Musicians.

In 1930, Camil van Hulse returned to Belgium for the first time. For a while, he traveled back to his native country every two years to visit his family and friends. In 1946 he won four prizes - two awarded by the Society of Arizona Composers for an instrumental composition Suite for Cello
and Piano and for a vocal number, and 'The Beatitudes', a choral work with piano and organ accompaniment (first presented in Tucson on 8 May that year). A fourth prize was the national J. Fischer & Bro. prize from the American Guild of Organists, won with his 'Toccata' for Grand Organ.

In 1957, the Bibliotheca Wasiana organized a tribute concert in honor of his sixtieth birthday. For the 750th anniversary of the city of Sint-Niklaas, he wrote *The Ballad of the Six Knights* for orchestra, choir and baritone solo on a text by Anton van Wilderode. Camil van Hulse died at the age of 91 in Tucson, Arizona.

![Camil van Hulse](image)

**Kevin Bowyer** was born in Southend-on-Sea in January 1961 and studied with Douglas Hawkridge, Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, David Sanger, Virginia Black and Paul Steinitz. He won first prizes in five international organ competitions (St Albans, Paisley, Odense, Dublin, Calgary) and had early success in recording, producing a great many CDs in a career spanning more than thirty years, including the complete organ works of J S Bach, as well as a great deal of Romantic and contemporary repertoire. He gained a reputation for playing “impossible” music, including the works of Xenakis, Ferneyhough, Castiglioni and Kaikhosru Sorabji, performing the latter’s eight-hour *Second Symphony for Organ* (1929-32) several times, most notably in Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie (2019).

Solo concerts, broadcasts and lectures took him to many parts of the world. He was for nine years Senior Lecturer in Organ at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, also teaching on many summer schools and courses. In 2022 he was awarded the Medal of the Royal College of Organists, the institution’s highest honour.
Kevin has been Organist to the University of Glasgow since 2005. His schedule for 2023/24 includes concert appearances in Germany (Magdeburg and Hamburg), Austria (The Linz Brucknerhaus), Finland (Turku Cathedral), and Switzerland (St. Galen Cathedral). Kevin is the author of *The House on Boulby Cliff, In the Silence of Time* (2 volumes), *Close to the Silence*, and of the forthcoming *Babylon House, Cadmun Gale*, and *Splinters of Silence*. *In the Wake of Life* (2 volumes), a sequel to *In the Silence of Time*, is planned for 2023.
The Wednesday Series, 1.10-1.50

November 9  Angelique Po (Vancouver): Music from Canada
  Citius, altius, fortius! Maxime Goulet (b. 1980)
  Premonition Jocelyn Morlock (b. 1969)
  der Phönix (2020) Alyssa Aska (b. 1985)

November 16 David Hamilton (RCS)
  Marche Militaire Française (arr. Hamilton) Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
  Adagio (WoO 33/1) Beethoven (1770-1827)
  Praeludium et Fuga in d (BWV 539) J S Bach (1685-1750)
  From Le Carnaval des animaux: Saint-Saëns (arr. Guilmant)
    Le Cygne
  Overture to ‘Die Meistersinger’ Richard Wagner (1813-83)
    (arr. Westbrook)

November 23 Kevin Bowyer
  L’Orgue Mystique, Suite 4 Charles Tournemire
  Festive Overture (arr. Tim Harper) Peter Tranchell (1922-93)

On Friday, November 18 at 6pm, Tom Bell will play
Messiaen’s Livre du Saint-Sacrement complete

Funding by the Ferguson Bequest.

Professor Thomas Ferguson (1900-1977), Henry Mechan Chair of Public Health
(1944-64), bequeathed his estate to the University, with the instruction that the money should be
used to foster the social side of University life.

If you would like to be included in advance email publicity for our organ concert series, please drop me
a line and let me know:  kevin.bowyer@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you!