



University
of Glasgow

Glasgow University Memorial Chapel

Wednesday, November 23, 2022, 1.10-1.50pm

Organ Recital

Kevin Bowyer

Three Preludes founded on

Welsh Hymn Tunes (1920)

1. Bryn Calfaria (3')
2. Rhosymedre (3'35")
3. Hyfrydol (2'10")

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)

L'Orgue Mystique, Suite 4

De Dominicum infra Octavum Nativitatis (1929) (1870-1939)

- Prélude à l'Introït (1')
- Offertoire (3')
- Élévation (1'05")
- Communion (2')
- Pièce terminale – Postlude-Choral (8')

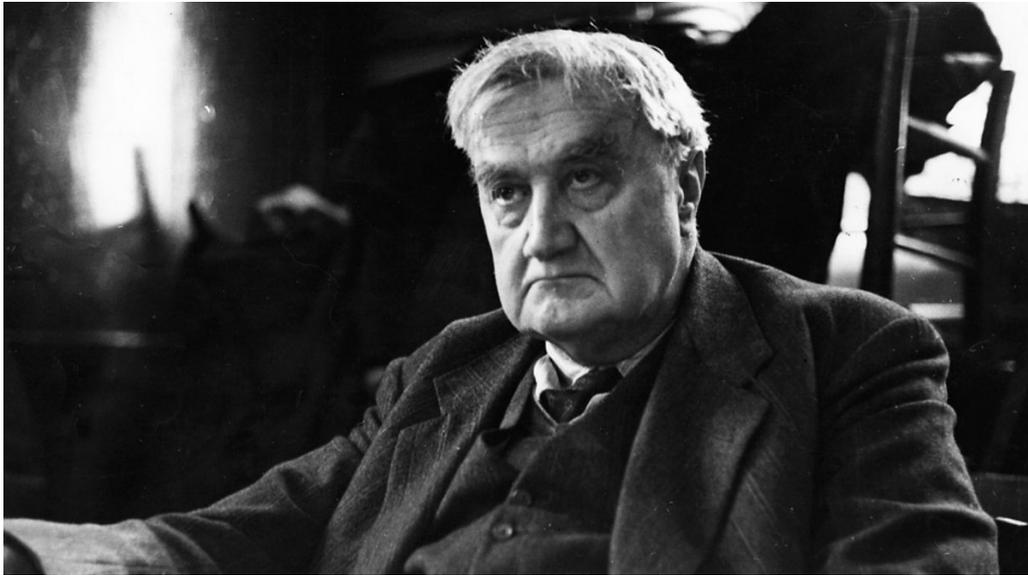
Charles Tournemire

Festive Overture (1966) (7'15")
(arr. Tim Harper, 2020)

Peter Tranchell
(1923-1992)

If only Vaughan Williams had written more organ music! He left a magnificent – and almost never played – Prelude and Fugue in C minor (1921, revised, 1930 – often described by organists who've probably never heard it, let alone played it, as “dull”), and these three hymn preludes (of which, only the middle one has made it to the mainstream repertoire). *Bryn Calfaria*, rugged, bleak, striding through a dark landscape of volcanic peaks, has a black, intimidating aspect in the page, its tumbling triadic chords, not always easy for the fingers to grasp. As for *Hyfrydol* (described by

my first organ teacher as, “the worst organ piece in the world”), one has to have an appreciation of how the momentum works to get it to talk. *Moderato Maestoso*, it’s marked. The secret is in the pacing (not fast) and the legato. The harmony rumbles like boulders running in opposite directions, tectonic plates of sound that demand time for their respective gravities to develop. It’s a mighty work, albeit compressed into only two minutes. And *Rhosymedre* of course (“*Lovely*” in English) – one of the organ’s perfect pieces.



Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Tournemire suite played today is for the Sunday after Christmas. It’s a gentle piece, with more than a hint of the lullaby, in deference to the sleeping Christ-child. The final movement contains chorale-like passages with much writing for double pedal, the solo voice on the Swell oboe, accompanied by phrases for a high solo flute, like angels genuflecting. Later, we hear fleeting phrases in echo, rapid, like air displaced by the wings of unseen birds, flying out of sight high in the rafters. To end, a quiet G minor chord, signalling night, still, calm.



Charles Tournemire

Peter Tranchell (1922-93) was a composer, Precentor of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge and Lecturer in Music, University of Cambridge.

Festive Overture was written in 1966 for Peter Marchbank and the Basingstoke Musical Society Orchestra (now the Basingstoke Symphony Orchestra), and was first performed in the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday 14th May 1966. Well received, it was repeated the following year. Apparently, the marking *con amore* (b. 149) caused consternation to the elderly viola players, who had never been faced with such an instruction before.

A recording by the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by John Wilson, was released on the 2010 Dutton Vocalion CD *John Ireland: Orchestral songs and miniatures*.

This organ arrangement was made by Tim Harper in 2020.



Peter Tranchell

Kevin Bowyer was born in Southend-on-Sea in January 1961 and studied with Douglas Hawkrige, 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 in progress.



Thinks: "Time for tea"

The 2023 Wednesday Series, 1.10-1.50

- January 18 Kevin Bowyer: Ivan Langstroth and Charles Tournemire
January 25 Travis Baker
February 1 Kevin Bowyer: GU Composition Students
February 8 Francesca Massey
February 15 Steven McIntyre
February 22 Kevin Bowyer: Jorge Lopez and Charles Tournemire
March 1 Jeremy Wan (Lanfine Organ Scholar)
March 8 Jonathan Smith (Lanfine Organ Scholar)
March 15 Alan Tavener
March 22 Kevin Bowyer plays A Quaker Reader by Ned Rorem (1923-2022)

Spring break

- April 26 Paul Walton (Bristol Cathedral)
May 3 TBC
May 10 Alan Kitchen
May 17 TBC
Friday, May 19, 6pm **Celebrity recital: Paul Hale**
May 24 Gail Archer (USA)
May 31 Christopher Nickol

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.

For future concerts, see organrecitals.com

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!