



University
of Glasgow

Glasgow University Memorial Chapel

Wednesday, January 25, 2023, 1.10-1.50pm

Organ Recital

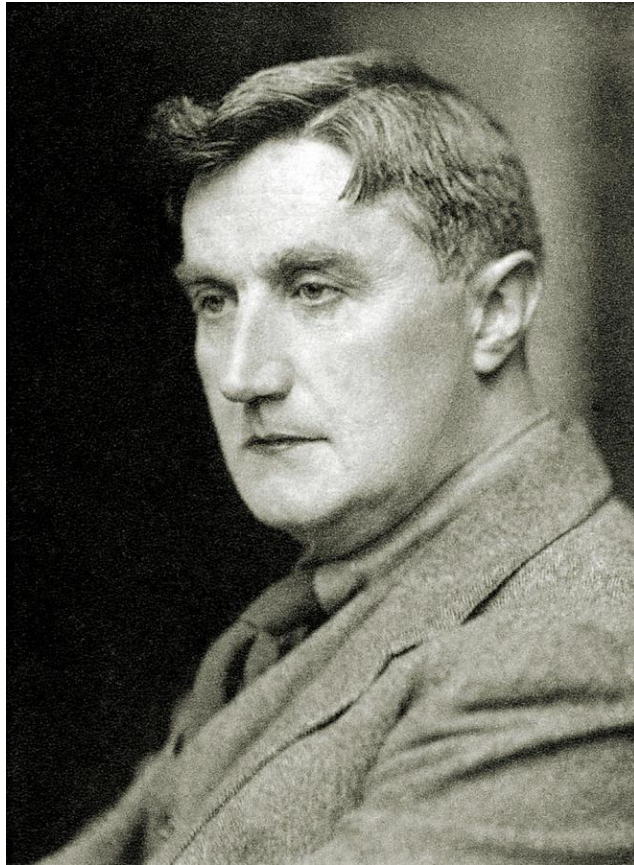
Kevin Bowyer

Prelude and Fugue in C minor (1921, revised 1923 and 1930)	(9'30")	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Organ Sonata (No. 2, 1934)		Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
1. Vivo, energico ed agitato	(9'30")	
2. Quasi lento, tranquillo	(6'30")	
3. Allegro assai	(9')	

Today's programme comprises two works that have suffered neglect, probably for no better reason than that they have dull-sounding, unpicturesque titles. "Preludes and Fugues" belong to Bach, don't they? As for the Howells Sonata – unlike much of the composer's output for organ, it doesn't have a catchy name (such as Paean, Master Tallis' Testament, Siciliano for a High Ceremony) – and it's not associated with stories about Zeppelin raids (as is the case with the magnificent 3rd Rhapsody, for example).

One of my early organ teachers sagely told me (more than once), "Kevin, never buy the Howells Sonata – it's not his best..." and went on to relate how other eminent organists agreed with him, particularly the one who'd given the first performance. "So," I thought, "Douglas rejects it – must be a pretty fine piece!" And so it is! It's designated here as No. 2, although the published score carries no number. There is also a student work, a Sonata in C minor, once thought lost but which was recovered in the late 80s after the composer's death. Hence the updated title.

Enough said. They're both mighty pieces.



Vaughan Williams at about the time of writing the Prelude and Fugue



Herbert Howells at about the time of writing the Sonata

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). A disc of organ works by the reclusive American composer Gordon Sherwood (all first recordings) is due for release on the *Sonus Eterna* label this year.

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 March 2022 he was awarded the Medal of the Royal College of Organists, the institution’s highest honour. In January 2023 he was awarded the “Ehrenpreis” (Lifetime Award) of the German Record Critics – the “Ehrenpreis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik”, citing particularly his work with J S Bach, Johannes Brahms and Kaikhosru Sorabji, and describing him as “The most exciting and stimulating organist of our time.”

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 a novelist, and has produced seven volumes of fiction. He and his wife, Sandra, regularly take part in the pub quiz at The Coach House in Muirkirk on Thursday nights, coming last on each occasion.

The Wednesday Series, 1.10-1.50

February 1	Kevin Bowyer	GU Composition Students Julius Reubke Sonata on the 94 th Psalm
February 8	Francesca Massey	Percy Whitlock Organ Sonata
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	Organ music by James Cook

Spring break

April 26	Paul Walton (Bristol Cathedral)	
May 3	TBC	
May 10	Alan Kitchen	
May 17	Kevin Bowyer	Tournemire and Jacquelyn Hazle
	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.

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!