

Past Events

EDOA Members' Recital Saturday June 24th 2023

This year's Members' Recital took place at St Mary's, Potters Bar, where we were warmly welcomed by the resident organist Dave Miller. The building is by architect J S Alder (1848-1918), who settled in Hornsey. St Mary's, built in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, dates from 1914 and Enfield organists will recognise the architecture because he also designed St Stephen's, Bush Hill Park, 1906, which EDOA members have visited on many occasions over the years.

The EDOA members who visited St Mary's in May 2022 were already familiar with the 3 manual Lewis/Walker organ, which was rebuilt by Henry Groves & Son in 2019 having been relocated from St Alkmund's Derby. Five members – Damon Ying, Pavlos Triantaris, Luke Jones, Jonathan Gregory and Michael Hennin – volunteered or were persuaded to play in the recital and the programme was coordinated by Michael Hennin.

Damon Ying began the concert by playing J S Bach's Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C major, BWV 564. This was a spirited performance with exciting runs. The buzzy reed which Damon used for the pedal solo in the Toccata was not to my taste but apart from that Damon's performance of this substantial work was very enjoyable.

Next to perform was Pavlos Triantaris who played a transcription of the Passacaglia from Brahms' Fourth Symphony. A passacaglia gives the player an opportunity to use a wide variety of stops, which Pavlos did, ranging from a very quiet swell chorus through sweet flutes to full organ. This latter was perhaps overpoweringly loud to the audience in the nave. This organ does not sound as loud to the player at the console as it does in the nave and players really need to take this into account when choosing their registration. This symphony is always a joy to listen to but personally I prefer to hear it played by an orchestra, and one wonders whether there is any need for transcriptions in this age of multiple means of recording.

J S Bach wrote several chorale preludes based on the chorale *Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten*, and Luke Jones, who is a student at the prestigious Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, played two of them: BWV 642 and 647. BWV 642 is in the Orgelbüchlein and has the chorale melody in the top part, driven forward by the insistent rhythm of the lower parts. BWV 647 is one of the Schübler Chorales and is an arrangement Bach made of the duet in his Cantata No. 93. Luke successfully balanced the chorale melody in the pedals with the counterpoint (the voice and string parts in the cantata) on the manuals.



Members' Recital June 2023 – recitalists
Photo: Hilary Bailey

Handel's organ concerto HWV 295 *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* was first performed as an interlude during his oratorio *Israel in Egypt*. There are four movements: slow, fast, slow, fast – and it is in the second movement that the calls of the eponymous birds are heard. (The cuckoo is recognisable enough, but how many of us can say whether the nightingale sounds just like the real thing?) This work always delights audiences and Jonathen's performance was immaculate.

Michael Hennin ended the recital by bringing us into the twentieth century with "*Joie et Clarté*" from Messiaen's *Les Corps Glorieux*. The subtitle of this movement reads: "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father." (Matthew 13:43). With its syncopated rhythms this work has been described as 'jazzy' and 'funky'. Michael used the Great trumpet as a solo stop and, following Messiaen's instructions, the Swell vox humana and some 16 foot stops on the manuals. Whatever one thinks of Messiaen, it was an authoritative performance.

Although the works played were by no means lightweight, the concert was a relaxed and enjoyable occasion. We thank all who played, and the Vicar and Churchwardens of St Mary's for allowing the concert to take place. To round off the evening, members repaired to the Chinese Buffet for a meal.

Rosemary Knight