
CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2016

Friday 22 January 2016

1.10pm

Greyfriars Kirk

Peter Backhouse · organ

Programme of works by **CLÉRAMBAULT**,
PACHELBEL, **MESSIAEN**, **BUXTEHUDE** and **DUBOIS**.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Suite du Premier Ton

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749)

- (i) Grand plein Jeu
- (ii) Fugue
- (iii) Duo
- (iv) Trio
- (v) Basse et Dessus de Trompette ou de Cornet séparé, en dialogue
- (vi) Récits de Cromorne et de Cornet séparé, en dialogue
- (vii) Dialogue sur les Grands Jeux

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Les Mages

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Dieterich Buxtehude (c1637-1707)

Fiat Lux

Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)

The Peter Collins organ is well suited to French music and so we begin with Clérambault's 1710 Suite du premier ton. The movements were designed to alternate with sung plainchant verses of the Magnificat. The character of each movement is linked to the organ registrations in the titles. The title of each movement prescribes which stops and manuals are to be used and each stop combination is associated with a style and mood.

As this organ recital is taking place during the season of Epiphany, I will also play music with a connection to the Three Kings and the star. There are two 18th-century preludes to the well-known chorale 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' (How brightly shines the Morning Star).

In Pachelbel's setting we hear the melody in long notes played on the pedals. Each phrase is preceded by counterpoints on the manuals that are based upon the chorale.

Buxtehude's setting is longer and more elaborate (you will still recognise the chorale melody) and features bright, star-like textures and registrations.

'Les Mages' is the penultimate movement of Messiaen's 'La Nativité du Seigneur' (1936) and is prefaced by a quotation from St Matthew, 'The Wise Men departed, and the star went out before them'. Messiaen's imaginative and original use of rhythm, harmony and melody created a wonderful new sound world for organ music in the 1930's. These sounds brilliantly conjure up images of Three Kings coming from the east. You will sense that their journey was not easy (I am always reminded of TS Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi' ('A cold coming we had of it....') but eventually you will hear them quietly and slowly approach the stable and the final chord must represent them seeing the baby Jesus inside.

'Fiat Lux' was published in 1893 when Dubois was organist at the Madeleine church in Paris. He illustrates the meaning of his title ('Let there be Light') by composing a scherzo that is one long and energetic crescendo from pp to ff. Incidentally, I only recently noticed that the inscription over the main door into the Central Library, just near here on George IV Bridge, is 'Let there be Light'.

P.B.

Peter Backhouse began his musical training as a chorister in the choir of York Minster. Later he studied music at Edinburgh University where he graduated BMus (Hons), having won the 3rd Year Class Medal as well as the Tovey Memorial Prize for his organ playing.

He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and holder of their Choir Training Diploma, as well as an Associate of the Royal College of Music. In 1977 he was appointed Assistant Organist at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. This post, with its daily accompaniment of services, as well as many concerts, recitals, broadcasts and recordings, kept him busy for over 20 years.

In 2000 he was appointed Assistant Organist at St Giles' Cathedral, and combines this post with teaching A-Level music at St Mary's Music School and first and second year tutorials in Harmony and Counterpoint at Edinburgh University. After 24 years of teaching he retired from The Edinburgh Academy in 2014. He has served on the Council of The Edinburgh Society of Organists for many years, including two as President. He supports the work of the Royal School of Church Music and was for a number of years an organ adviser in the Edinburgh area for the Scottish Federation of Organists.

He has played for services and given recitals in many cathedrals, including Westminster Abbey, Canterbury, Durham, Ripon and St Albans Cathedrals, St George's Chapel Windsor, King's College Cambridge, the Temple Church London

and York Minster. As a continuo player he has played with all the major professional ensembles in Scotland.

Railways have interested him all his life, and he is a qualified signaller on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. His photographs, principally of organs, churches, railways and walking holidays, continue to be published, and he tries to find time to enjoy cricket and walking.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Saturday 23 January

8.00pm

Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square

The Michael Shea Scholarship Recital

in association with Schola Cantorum of Edinburgh

Paul Grant (baritone) and Stuart Hope (piano)

Music by RAVEL, KEEL, SCHUBERT and TOSTI.

£10 /£5 Tickets available on the door

Tuesday 26 January

1.10pm

Methodist Church, Nicolson Square

Alec Frank-Gemmill (horn) and Alasdair Beatson (piano)

BEETHOVEN Horn Sonata

JOHN CASKEN Serpents of Wisdom

SCHUMANN Adagio and Allegro

Admission Free

Friday 29 January

1.10pm

Playfair Library Hall, Old College, South Bridge

Laura Sergeant (cello) and Ian Watt (guitar)

Music by VIVALDI, SIMPSON, VILLA-LOBOS, GNATTALI,

SMITH-BRINDLE and SQUIRE.

Admission Free

Tuesday 2 February

1.10pm

David Gerrard (harpsichord)

Methodist Church, Nicolson Square

Music by J.S. BACH, KUHNNAU and FISCHER.

Admission Free