

CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2016

Friday 11 March 2016

1.10pm

Greyfriars Kirk

John Kitchen · organ

Programme of works by **MARCHAND,**
CLÉRAMBAULT, ALAIN and **COR KEE.**



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Dialogue sur les grands jeux

Louis Marchand (1669–1732)

Marchand seems to have been a difficult and tempestuous character. He fell foul of no less a person than Louis XIV, when he walked out in the middle of Mass in the royal chapel because half of his organist's salary had been paid directly to his wife (because he kept her short of money, apparently). "She must then play half the service" he is reputed to have retorted. Perhaps, however, we have some sympathy with Marchand regarding the proposed organ-playing contest in Dresden in which his skills were to have been pitted against those of J.S. Bach. When the day dawned, it was discovered that Marchand had secretly left town—and who can blame him? The turbulence of his life, however, is not reflected in the music, which is carefully-wrought and polished. This multi-sectional *Dialogue*, which exploits the sounds of different reed-combinations 'in dialogue' with each other, is precisely dated 'Paris, 1696' and would have been used as an *offertoire* at High Mass.

Suite du deuxième ton

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676–1749)

Plein jeu

Duo

Trio

Basse de cromorne

Flûtes

Récit de nazard

Caprice sur les grands jeux

Although firmly grounded in the Classical French style, Clérambault's music is lighter and more Italianate than that of the previous generation. His *Premier Livre d'Orgue*, containing two organ suites each of seven movements, was published around 1710, towards the end of Louis XIV's reign. Whereas the organ versets of some French composers had a very specific liturgical function—François Couperin's, for example, are intended for the Mass—others wrote versets which could be flexibly used. Clérambault falls into that category, and the movements heard today might have been used in the Mass, for the Magnificat at Vespers, or for psalms and other canticles; in all cases they would have alternated with sung

plainchant. Clérambault follows tradition also in titling the movements by their intended registrations. Even when these are not specific, as in the *duo* and *trio* above, there were well-established conventions for registering such movements which would have been known to contemporary organists, and which were often outlined in composers' prefaces to their publications.

Le jardin suspendu (chaconne)

Jehan Alain (1911–1940)

Alain was the older brother of the well-known organist Marie-Claire Alain (who died in 2013). Tragically, Jehan was killed in action in 1940 at the age of 29. Marie-Claire spent much of her distinguished career performing and promoting his music, which is highly individual, elusive and often enigmatic. *Le jardin suspendu* employs only a very few stops high in the treble, and seeks to evoke a secret, silent landscape of the soul. Alain prefaces the piece with the words 'The Hanging Garden is the fugitive ideal of the artist, forever pursued, but forever out of reach, the inaccessible and inviolable refuge'.

Variations on a Dutch song 'Merck toch hoe sterck'

Cor Kee (1900–1997)

Cor(nelis) Kee, father of the renowned Dutch organist Piet Kee, had an extraordinarily long and distinguished career as a writer, teacher, organist and composer. The early 17th-century Netherlandish song, *Merck toch hoe sterck*, refers to resisting Spanish invasion, and standing firm against the enemy. ('See how strong they are as they fight to set us free from the Spaniards...') Cor Kee's variations on this fine melody, still well-known in Holland today, are straightforward but highly inventive, exploiting a wide range of imaginative textures and figurations. The tripartite form of the tune, with each section repeated, offers the player many opportunities for varied registrations. The theme is followed by seven variations; particularly striking are the *alla marcia* and the luscious *adagio*. The final movement begins as a fugue, but soon becomes freer and rhapsodic in style, leading to the final climax of the *andante maestoso*.

J.K.

John Kitchen is an Honorary Fellow in the Reid School of Music and University Organist, as well as conductor of the Edinburgh University Singers. He will continue to be involved with the Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments at St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh when it reopens, following the current refurbishment. John is also Director of Music of Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church and Edinburgh City Organist with duties at the Usher Hall. He gives many solo recitals both in the UK and further afield, and also plays regularly with several ensembles, covering a wide range of musical styles. In addition, he is much in demand as a continuo player, accompanist, lecturer, writer, adjudicator and reviewer. John's latest Delphian CD, recorded on the recently-restored McEwan Hall organ, will be released in a few months' time.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 11 March

7.30pm

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Lutton Place

Edinburgh University Singers

John Kitchen (conductor)

Morley Whitehead (organ)

DURUFLÉ Requiem

and French motets.

Admission by donation at the door

Friday 11 March

7.30pm

Canongate Kirk

Edinburgh University Chamber Choir

Robert Brooks (conductor)

'Love and Death'

BERTOLUSI Osculetur me and Ego flos campi

SAINT-SAËNS Les fleurs et les arbres and Calme des nuits

MONTEVERDI Sfogava con le stelle and Dolcissimo uscignolo

PAUL SJOLUND Love Lost

ROBERT BROOKS Endymion

SHEPPARD In manus tuas I, II and III

PARRY Songs of Farewell

Tickets £10 (full price) / £5 (students/under 26s/concessions)