
CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2016

Friday 18 March 2016

1.10pm

Greyfriars Kirk

Paul Stubbings · organ

Programme of works by MEYERBEER and LISZT.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Mélange sur 'Le Prophète' (1854)

Henri Cramer (1818-1877) arr. Paul Stubbings

Fantasie und Fuge über den Choral *Ad nos, ad salutarem undam*, S.259 (1850)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Grand Opera on a Church Organ? Well, yes and no.

Sadly, the Music of Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864) may be of little more than curiosity and antiquarian value. In his day he was one of the most celebrated of all composers, considered as a rival to Beethoven. He was certainly one the wealthiest of any age, but for economic as well as socio-political reasons his grand operatic spectacles have all but fallen away.

Meyerbeer's five-act opera 'Le Prophète' received its premiere in 1849 in Paris, then travelled to Covent Garden; it was staged throughout Germany the following year, and passed through Vienna, Lisbon, Antwerp, New Orleans, Budapest, Brussels, Prague and Basel. The intense breeze of success continued on into the early 20th century. But the opera's monumental popularity also captured the attentions of Hitler, who proceeded to erase Meyerbeer's name from German History, along with that of Mendelssohn's. Any thought of a post-war rehabilitation however was to be dashed - his grand operas deemed too expensive to mount in the years of austerity that followed.

Henri Cramer's piano transcription c.1854 draws together some of the principal themes from *Le Prophete*, including its very own *Grand March from Aida!* Liszt's Fantasia of 1850, on the other hand, picks up just one, the Anabaptist's Chorale, from the opening moments of the opera.

What exactly captivated Liszt about Meyerbeer's chorale? He must have recognised the dramatic strength of its contour; but in adopting a melody from an operatic blockbuster, perhaps he was merely responding to the spirit of an age. The theme is woven variation-like, culminating a full half hour later with a thrilling fugue and blistering final-page apotheosis, a true Great Gate of Kiev, with steeple bells pealing, fireworks cracking!

Peter King speaks of *Ad Nos* as "a milestone in Romantic organ composition, introducing virtuoso techniques, breaking new ground by its very length, by demanding a greater dynamic range and a wider tonal palette than anything that had gone before, and bringing organ repertoire into line with contemporary mainstream repertoire. It encompasses a wide spectrum of moods and colours, and in its attempt to solve the problem of one-movement form on a large scale it is comparable with the B minor Piano Sonata – generally agreed to be Liszt's piano masterpiece."

P.S.

Brought up on the North Yorkshire coast **Paul Stubbings** was educated at Chetham's and Manchester University, studying organ with Francis Jackson and Gordon Stewart. Countess of Munster and Dutch Government awards enabled him to pursue advanced organ studies with Bach Scholar Jacques van Oortmerssen at the Amsterdam Conservatoire, where he gained the Prix d'Excellence 'cum laude'.

His career began at the Royal Parish Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields where as Organist & Master of the Music he presided over one of the most vibrant choral and concert programmes in the country. Later whilst Director of Music at St Lawrence College in Ramsgate he maintained an international profile as a recitalist, playing in churches, cathedrals and concert halls throughout Europe, and in Australia and Canada. In 2013 he undertook a cycle of performances of the complete organ music of J S Bach.

In 2012 he was appointed Director of Music at the prestigious St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, one of the UK's five Specialist Music Schools and Choir School to St Mary's Cathedral.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 18 March

7pm, Methodist Church, Nicolson Square

Hugh Davies Project

Works composed by HUGH DAVIES, performed by Grey Area and James Mooney

Mobile with Differences (1973)

Galactic Interfaces (1968)

Quintet (1969)

Not to be Loaded with Fish (1968/9)

Music for a Single Spring (1975)

Admission Free

Saturday 19 March

7.30pm, Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square

Edinburgh University Brass Band

Ondrej Soukup (conductor)

The programme will feature an entertaining mixture of classics and well-known contemporary tunes, with an overarching theme of space and the universe.

£5 (non-student) / £3 (student) Tickets available on the door

eubrassband@gmail.com

Sunday 20 March

7.30pm, Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square

Edinburgh University String Orchestra

Chris George (conductor)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

BARTOK Romanian Folk Dances

WEBER Quintet for Clarinet and Strings Op.34

Arr. STUART TAYLOR Traditional Scottish tunes

£10 / £5 Tickets available on the door

euso.president@gmail.com

Tuesday 22 March

1.10pm, Methodist Church, Nicolson Square.

Alex McCartney (lute)

WEISS Suite in F major

WEISS Suite in D minor

Admission Free