
CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2019

Friday 22 March 2019

1.10pm

McEwan Hall

Mark Brafield · organ

Programme of works by J.S. BACH, SAINT-MARTIN,
PÄRT and NEIL COX



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Ricercar à sei voci from *The Musical Offering*, BWV 1079

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Three years before he died, in 1747, Bach met King Frederick the Great at the King's residence in Potsdam. The King proudly showed Bach his latest novelty, a fortepiano, and invited the composer to improvise on the instrument. According to popular legend, the King gave Bach a theme to improvise upon. (Less romantically, academics now believe the theme may have been prepared by Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, then working as a musician at the Potsdam court). Two weeks later, Bach presented the King with the *Ricercar in six voices*, based on the royal theme, a summation of his contrapuntal technique at the end of his life, austere but richly magnificent at the same time.

Méditation sur le Salve Regina

Léonce de Saint-Martin (1886 – 1954)

A member of the minor aristocracy and, (like today's recitalist), a lawyer by training and profession, Léonce de Saint-Martin succeeded Louis Vierne as the organist of Notre Dame de Paris in 1937, a post which he held until his death in 1954. History has not been kind to Saint-Martin; his reputation suffered from being appointed to the position by the cathedral authorities when Vierne had expressly directed that his successor was to be appointed by competition. As a result, Saint-Martin's compositions have been unfairly overlooked, although happily a number are being re-discovered. Contemporary accounts record a musician of poetry and sensitivity, qualities beautifully demonstrated in the *Méditation sur le Salve Regina* with its echoes of Ravel and Debussy.

Pari Intervallo (1976)

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

In the early 1970s, Arvo Pärt underwent a crisis of faith in his compositions. Seeking to reject earlier complexity, he went out into the street and asked the first person he could find - a road-sweeper - how he should write music. Speaking with greater prescience than he knew, the road-sweeper replied that Pärt should write music 'as if he loved every single note'. The result was Pärt's tintinnabuli style, in which the music is pared down to its utmost, bell-like purity. The four voices of *Pari intervallo*, inspired by the death of a friend, weave their magic in a haunting E flat minor.

Four Ikons of the Archangels (2013)

Neil Cox (b. 1955)

Prelude; Gabriel, the Might of God
March; Michael, his Sword and Shield
Sarabande; Raphael, the Healer
Toccata; Uriel, with the Fire of God

Neil Cox was the Director of Music at Lancing College from 1978 until his recent retirement.

The *Four Ikons of the Archangels* unfold from the monodic theme heard right at the beginning, to be played 'as if casting a spell'.

The *Prelude* depicts Gabriel who will announce the end of time. Michael, the warrior, calls the heavenly host to arms, driving the second movement *March* to a shattering climax. Raphael, the healer, is depicted in a *Sarabande* 'like a slow hypnotic dance', whilst Uriel, Regent of the Sun brings the suite to a close with a whirlwind *Toccata*, to be played 'with a relentless and terrifying energy'.

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Mark Brafield has studied the organ with Robert Munns, David Sanger and Dame Gillian Weir. He held an Organ Scholarship with a Scholarship in English Literature at Trinity College, Oxford, and is a Fellow and Trustee of the Royal College of Organists.

Mark combines a legal profession with a career as a concert organist. He appears widely at leading venues in this country including St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey and is increasingly active overseas, with recitals having included the Leonardskirche in Basle, St Thomas's, Fifth Avenue, New York and Notre Dame de Paris.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS:

Friday 22 March

7.30pm

Reid Concert Hall

Edinburgh University String Orchestra

Iain McLarty (conductor)

Elodie Chousmer-Howelles (violin)

JOHN KONSOLAKIS Closure

PETERIS VASKS Distant Light

BARTOK Divertimento

£10 / £5 Tickets available on the door or contact string.eusa.ed.ac.uk

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Friday 22 March

8pm

Edinburgh University Chamber Choir

St John's Church, Princes Street/ Lothian Road

Joseph Beech (organ)

Michael Bawtree (conductor)

CANTOS SAGRADOS

Songs of passion from across the World.

MacMILLAN Cantos Sagrados

SCARLATTI Stabat Mater

GUERRERO Ave Virgo Sanctissima

BACH Der Geist Hilft

BINGHAM Ave Virgo Sanctissima

Tickets: £10 (£5 students), available on the door.

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Saturday 23 March

7.30pm

Greyfriars Kirk

Edinburgh University Music Society Sinfonia

Ondrej Soukup (conductor)

SMETANA Vltava

SIBELIUS Spring Song

ELGAR Sea Pictures

ELGAR Enigma Variations

£10 / £5 (concessions and students)

Tickets available from www.eums.org.uk or on the door