

## Music at Services at the Cathedral of St.Machar in April 2019

### Choral Music

The thriving choir, which includes Choral Scholars, sings at the Sunday morning Service and has an extensive repertoire, ranging from medieval plainchant to pieces which have been written in the twenty first century. The Choir usually makes two contributions to the Service - an Anthem and a Motet during the Offertory collection. Three items are included at the monthly Communion Service on the last Sunday of the month.

If you are an experienced singer who would be interested in joining the choir please contact the Music Director (rogerbevanwilliams@g.mail.com)

As we reach the end of the season of Lent and look forward to the first part of the Easter season we continue to sing a wide variety of music, ranging from medieval plainchant (as Intros), to the world premiere of a new piece for Easter Sunday. Palm Sunday will feature an anthem by our former Music Director Mike Thomson and on Good Friday we shall sing the Crucifixus from Bach's celebrated Mass in b minor. This variety of music is a reflection of the great and long history of this wonderful building.

April 7 <sup>th</sup> ..	Introit: Alone in depths:	Plainchant
	Anthem: Hide not thou thy face:	R Farrant
	Offertory: Call to Remembrance:	R.Farrant
April 14 <sup>th</sup> .	– Palm Sunday	
	Introit: Hosanna to the Son of David:	Plainchant
	Anthem: Hosanna to the Son of David:	M.Thomson
	Offertory: Crux Fidelis:	attrib. King John IV of Portugal
April 19 <sup>th</sup> .-	Good Friday Evening	
	Anthem: Crucifixus (Mass in b minor):	J.S.Bach
	Offertory: Popule Meus:	T.L.Victoria
April 21 <sup>st</sup> .	Easter Day	
	Anthem: Christ the Lord:	R.B.Williams
	Offertory: This joyful Eastertide:	P.Ledger
	Communion: This is the Day:	Anon(16 <sup>th</sup> .cent.)
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Low Sunday	
	Anthem: Most glorious Lord of Life:	W.H.Harris
	Offertory: Now the green blade riseth:	S.Lindley
	Communion: Panis Angelicus:	R.B.Williams

## The Organ

The present organ is not the first that there has been in the Cathedral. Because of the lack of direct evidence it is difficult to be certain what sort of instrument there might have been in the Cathedral before the Reformation. However, according to the distinguished historian Leslie Macfarlane, we do learn of two books of organ music which were recorded as having been at the Cathedral in 1436 – a very early date for an organ book. At the turn of the sixteenth century, during the time when William Elphinstone was Bishop, it seems likely that there would have been a large organ sited in the building, possibly in the Choir or in one of the Transepts. Given that Bishop Elphinstone had come to Aberdeen after living in both Paris and Louvain, it seems very probable that the instrument would have been as splendid as the Bishop's enlarged foundation of Vicars Choral. This organ would most probably have been built on medieval *Blockwerk* principles, with loud and magnificent sounds, and would have been played on Sundays and major feast days.

The organ in use today is a splendid example of a romantic instrument built by 'Father' Willis. It has three manuals and pedals and was originally built in 1891 with a third manual added in 1898. The organ was at first sited in front of the east window, but was moved to its present position in 1928, at which time some tonal additions were made. In 1973 there was a rebuild, with some further tonal modifications, carried out by the firm of Noel Mander of London. The three ranks of Willis pipes that were at that time taken off and kept in storage, were brought back onto the Choir organ in July 2018 with assistance from the Bach Choir. This most recent work has restored some of the quieter sounds that the organ originally possessed. The organ has a rich resonance and a variety of tonal sound that was characteristic of this most celebrated of Victorian organ builders.

In recent times, since the first organist Sydney Townsend was appointed in 1891, there have been only nine Organists, including some very eminent figures. These include Marshall Gilchrist (1920-38), John B. Dalby (1938-54), David Murray (1954-81), and James Lobban (1954-81), after which Mike Thomson held the post until 2016.

During the month of April we shall continue to explore Chorale Preludes by the twentieth century Organist and Composer Helmut Walcha. These will be contrasted with pieces by J.S.Bach, including several from his *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book). Closing Voluntaries will range from works by the sixteenth century French composer Johann Titelouze to the twentieth century English composer Herbert Howells. On Easter Day we shall hear the magnificent Prelude to Charpentier's *Te Deum*

### Voluntaries for April

7.4.19	Wer nur den lieben Gott: Erbarm dich BWV 721 Master Tallis' Testament	H.Walcha J.S.Bach H.Howells
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14.4.10	Palm Sunday Wen wir in höchsten Nöten sein O Lamm Gottes unschuldig, BWV 648 Christus, der uns selig macht BWV 620	H.Walcha J.S.Bach J.S.Bach
19.4.19	Good Friday O Mensch beweine deine Sünde gross, BWV 622 Fantasia in g minor	J.S.Bach J.Pachelbel
21.4.19	Easter Day Christ ist erstanden BWV 627 Prelude (Te Deum)	J.S.Bach M.A.Charpentier
28.4.19	Low Sunday Veni Creator Spiritus (no.1) Veni Creator Spiritus (no 4)	J.Titelouze J.Titelouze

Director of Music and Organist - Dr. Roger B. Williams, M.B.E. (April 2019)