

## Music at Services at the Cathedral of St.Machar in June 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 might be interested in joining the choir please contact the Music Director ([rogerbevanwilliams@g.mail.com](mailto:rogerbevanwilliams@g.mail.com))

Music during June will feature music written by composers living and working in Aberdeen. Geoffrey Atkinson was, until recently, Organist at the Church of Queen's Cross; Raymond Dodd a former Head of Music Department of the University, as was our present Music Director and Organist. For our Communion motet on Pentecost we shall hear Messiaen's only essay into the world of Church motets. We shall also feature different traditions of psalm singing with music from the Episcopal Church with Stanford, the Church of Scotland with Raymond Dodd, the Reformed Church in Scotland, and the Anglican Church.

June 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	The Garden of Thy Soul O Praise God in his Holiness	G.Atkinson C.V.Stanford
June 9 <sup>th</sup> .	Whit Sunday Come gracious Spirit Te Deum (alternatim) O Sacrum Convivium	Raymond Dodd R.B.Williams O.Messiaen
June 16 <sup>th</sup> .	Trinity Sunday Let all the World Holy, Holy, Holy	R.B.Williams F.Schubert
June 23 <sup>rd</sup> .	Deus misereator(Psalm. 67) Wash me throughly	R.Johnson G.F.Handel
June 30 <sup>th</sup> .	The Lord is my Shepherd Jubilate Deo (Service in B flat) Ave verum corpus	H.Goodall C.V.Stanford W.A.Mozart

## The Organ

The present organ is not the first in the Cathedral. Because of the lack of direct evidence it is difficult to be certain what sort of instrument there might have been before the Reformation. However, according to the distinguished historian Leslie Macfarlane, we learn of two organ books in the Inventory of 1436. 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 George C. Dawson (1893-1916), 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 June we shall hear a variety of music taken from the sixteenth century from both France and Scotland, of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, music from the Reformation in Aberdeen will be featured with music by John Black – a Maister of the Sang Schule.

## Voluntaries for June

### June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Before the Service: Arabesque L.Vierne

After the Service: Postlude L.Vierne

### June 9<sup>th</sup>

#### Whit Sunday

Before the Service: Pieces 1-4 for Pentecost C.Tournemire

After the Service: Toccata Urbs Jerusalem Beata George McPhee

**June 16<sup>th</sup>****Trinity Sunday**

Before the Service: Pange lingua J.Titelouze

After the Service: Fugue in E flat(St.Anne) J.S.Bach

**June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Before the Service: My Delyt; Sir Jhon Black J. Black

After the Service: Musick Fyne J.Black

**June 30<sup>th</sup>**

Before the Service: Rhosymedre Vaughan Williams

After the Service: Toccata and Fugue in d minor, BWV 565 J.S.Bach.

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