

Music at Services at the Cathedral of St.Machar.

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)

During the month of November the choir will sing a wide ranging repertoire, covering some of the extensive British tradition of cathedral music. Two generations of composers will be featured - the Romantic tradition represented by S.S.Wesley and Walford Davies; and a more recent, late twentieth century, with works by Britten and John Rutter. For the Remembrance Service this year we shall be singing three movements from Fauré's Requiem. For the feast of Christ the King, marking the end of the liturgical year, we shall sing works representing a rich internationality with the Italian composer Pitoni, the French composer Fauré and one of the choruses from Messiah.

- 4.11.18: Anthem: Wash me thoroughly: S.S.Wesley.
Offertory: Psalm 121: Walford Davies.
- 11.11.18: Anthem: Introit and Kyrie(Requiem): G.Fauré
Offertory: Sanctus: G.Fauré
Recessional: In Paradisum: G.Fauré
- 18.11.18: Anthem: A Hymn of St Columba: B.Britten
Offertory: The Lord bless you: J.Rutter
- 25.11.18 Anthem: Cantate Domino: G.O.Pitoni
Offertory:Lift up your heads(Messiah): G.F.Handel
Communion: Ave Verum: G.Fauré

The Organ

The present organ is not the first that there has been in the Cathedral. Unfortunately, because of the lack of evidence, or the survival of sixteenth century organs elsewhere, it is difficult to state, with accuracy, exactly what might have been in the Cathedral, in the pre-Reformation period, or indeed prior to the arrival of our present organ at the end of the 19th.century. Before the Reformation, however, in the early sixteenth century, given that Bishop Elphinstone had come to Aberdeen after living in both Paris and Louvain, it seems likely that there would have been a large organ, possibly on one of the walls of the original Choir. It seems very probable that the instrument would have been as splendid as his enlarged foundation of Vicars Choral. This organ would most probably have been

built on medieval Blockwerk principles, producing sounds which were loud and magnificent – particularly on Sundays and major feast days.

The organ in use today is a splendid example of ‘Father’ Willis, and has three manuals and pedals. Originally built in 1891, the third manual was 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. This most recent work has restored some of the quieter sounds that the original organ 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.

Organ music for November will be mostly taken from the extensive repertoire of organ music by the North German Baroque composer Johannes Pachelbel.(1653-1706). He was not only a noted organist but was the composer of the celebrated ‘Canon’. He wrote many other compositions. During the month of November several of his freely-composed works will be played, culminating in the extraordinary *Praeludium in d minor* which features the pedals with a very prominent part. Such pieces left their mark on a young J.S.Bach.

Voluntaries for November

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| 4.11.18: | Ricercar in c minor: | J.Pachelbel |
| | Toccatà in e minor: | J.Pachelbel |
| 11.11.18: | Lamentation: | Mike Merrill(b.1988) |
| | In Paradisum: | G.Fauré |
| 18.11.18. | Fantasia in g minor: | J.Pachelbel |
| | Fugue in D Major: | J.Pachelbel. |
| 25.11.18. | Fugue in C Major: | J.Pachelbel |
| | Praeludium in d minor: | J.Pachelbel |

Director of Music and Organist - Dr. Roger B.Williams, M.B.E. (November 2018)