

## Music at Services at the Cathedral of St.Machar for September 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.

During the month of September the choir will explore two areas of repertoire – music of the sixteenth century by Tallis, Byrd, Tye, Redford, Batten and Anon, will contrast with motets and anthems from Britain in the twentieth and twenty first century, with composers Stanford, Elgar, Rutter and Meador.

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))

### Choir Music for September 2019

Sept.1 <sup>st</sup> .	Anthem: O Sing Joyfully Offertory: If ye love Me	A.Batten T.Tallis
Sept. 8 <sup>th</sup> .	Anthem: O For a closer walk with God Offertory: O Lord, give thy Holy Spirit	C.V.Stanford T.Tallis
Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> .	Anthem: This is the Day Offertory: If ye Love me	Anon(16 <sup>th</sup> .cent.) P.Meador
Sept.22 <sup>nd</sup> .	Anthem: Sing unto the Lord Offertory: The Lord bless you	C.Tye J.Rutter
Sept. 29 <sup>th</sup> .	Anthem: Rejoice in the Lord Offertory: Sacerdotes Domini Communion: O salutaris	J.Redford W.Byrd E.Elgar.

## 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.

### Organ Music for September 2019

Voluntaries during September will feature some of the many works by the great Baroque organist J.S.Bach (1685-1750). Chorale Preludes, the *Pastorale*, and the great Kyrie from the third book of the *Clavierübung*, will be contrasted with the *Alla Breve*, and several fugues. This minor exploration will serve to remind us all of how inventive this composer was, while showing how flexible our fine Willis organ is.

1. Sept.1<sup>st</sup>.  
Before: Chorale Prelude: Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 709  
After: Alla Breve, BWV 589
2. Sept. 8th  
Before: Pastorale, BWV 590(a,b,c)  
After: Chorale Prelude: Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV720

3. Sept. 15  
Before: Chorale Prelude: Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, BWV 1116  
After: 'Gigue' Fugue, BWV 577
4. Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
Before: Chorale Prelude: Vater unser im Himmelreich, BWV 682  
After: Fugue in D Major, BWV 532b
5. Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>.  
Before: Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit, BWV 669  
After: Fantasia in C Major, BWV 570

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