

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.co)

During the month of September the choir will be singing repertoire from two contrasting periods of musical history. Sixteenth century music from Italy – or, in the case of Hassler, influenced by Italy – will be set alongside examples from Britain in the twentieth century. Composers Palestrina, Viadana will be contrasted with works by Stanford, Campbell, Howells and MacMillan.

2.9.18: Anthem: Exsultate Justi: Viadana

Offertory: O For a close walk with God: C.V.Stanford.

9.9.18: Anthem:Gloria: H.L.Hassler

Offertory: Affettusoso: Handel

16.9.18:Anthem: Sing we merrily: S.Campbell

Offertory: Think of how God loves you: James MacMillan

23.9.18 Anthem: Like as the Hart: H.Howells

Offertory: Sicut cervus: Palestrina

30.9.18. Missa Secunda: H.L.Hassler.

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, 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 the main organ would have been as splendid as his foundation of Vicars Choral. The type of 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 September will be taken from German music of the mid and late Baroque. J.S.Bach will be featured, as will also less well know figures of he generation before Bach – Christian.Herbig, Martin Radeck, Praetorius, Ritter with one work by Sweelinck at the end of the month.

Voluntaries for September.

2.9.18: Wir glauben all(Trio).J.S.Bach
Wir glauben all: J.S.Bach

9.9.18: Adagio e dolce(Sonata 3); J.S.Bach
Sonatina in d minor: C.Ritter

16.9.18.Canzon(unter Vater): C.Herbig
Praelambulum: M.Radeck

23.9.18. Canzona: M.Radeck
Canzona(Wir glauben all'): C. Herbig.

30.9.18. Psalm 140: J.P.Sweelinck
Praelambulum: Praetorius.

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