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THE NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANIST

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Welcome to our 5th annual publication of The North Hampshire Organist.

There are always interesting things going on in the organ world, from live experiences to discovering new composers or ways to improve performance. In this year's edition we have articles about all of those...

Richard Martin recounts a salutary and very memorable expedition to meet Anna Lapwood at Southwark Cathedral.

John Riley gives us an insight into two fascinating composers who are not well known and reveals examples of their musical style.

Read about the cultural and musical adventures of a small group of members who, in August, went to Vienna and Graz in Austria. They saw wonderful sites, met enthusiastic people and played amazing instruments.

A reminder of an enjoyable online organ magazine and a glimpse of NHOA four decades ago.

Lastly, some thoughts about a topic that can raise much anxiety among organists - page turning! Read about ways to reduce the stress and help both turner and player make this a calming experience.

Please enjoy!

Geoff

A Very Expensive Organ Trip

I first learned of the existence of Anna Lapwood when I heard her interviewed on Radio 4.

I was so thrilled to hear the super-enthusiastic way in which Anna talked about the organ and its use in modern music that I danced around my kitchen waving my arms in the air, shouting 'Yes!!' and various other things.

When she got to the bit about her Albert Hall performance with the electronic band Bonobo and how it was one of the best things that had ever happened to her, I just welled up. I was hooked; I instantly became Anna's greatest fan, before I even saw her or heard her play a single note.

When I heard that Anna was to perform at Southwark Cathedral for her Luna album launch I knew I had no choice; I had to go to London. (Anna decided on that venue because the cathedral happened to be hosting a celebration of the moon, which fitted the theme of the album perfectly).

I must have bagged the very last ticket, because when I completed my purchase the 'sold out' message appeared. I then booked a room for two nights at a Premier Inn at a cost of £200 per night! Eek! But wait! It gets worse; much, much worse....

My next task was to call the hotel to make sure that I got a quiet room. I must have called about twenty times over three days and all I got was an automated apology, followed by being cut off. There wasn't even an answer when I called the special number for booking more than twenty rooms!

I soon established that there was almost no other accommodation available anywhere near the cathedral, unless I opted to spend ninety pounds a night to share a dormitory with total strangers! No thanks.

Now then, since reaching the age of seventy-eight I have become extremely keen on the idea of having as many new experiences as possible before the elastic breaks. With this policy in mind I cancelled the Premier Inn booking and took a giant leap. I booked two nights on

the 46th floor of the Shangri-La hotel, which is situated in the Shard! My wallet nearly burst into flames.

In due course I set off to the railway station in Hereford, only to find that the long stay car park was full. For the next hour I drove all over the area desperately trying to find somewhere to leave my car for a few days; it was just impossible even a long way out of the city, and the whole trip started to turn into a huge disaster.

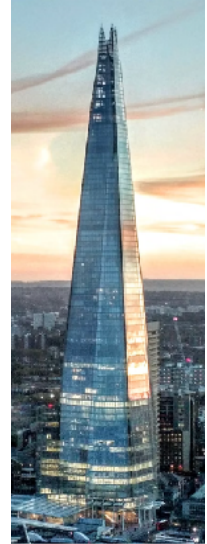
I went back to the station in a huge panic, and almost begged one of the staff to help me. She turned out to be solid gold; she moved her car out of the long stay car park and let me have her space. What a hero! You can probably imagine the profuse thanks with which she was bombarded.

The train journey into London was uneventful and I eventually checked into the Shangri-La, feeling a bit conspicuous with my rucksack in among all the poshness. I hardly had time to admire the very lovely room or the fabulous view from floor 46 before munching a supper of sandwiches and setting off to Southwark Cathedral, which is conveniently only a few hundred yards from the Shard.

There was a short queue of folks waiting for opening time and I had very nice chats with some of them. Eventually we all marched in to the cathedral and headed for our preferred seats, admiring the enormous moon hanging from the roof of the nave; it must have been at least twenty feet in diameter.

I went for the choir stalls (recommended by Gillian), but we were all thrown out by a member of staff, despite some of us pointing out that we had received an email that very day, inviting us to sit there if we wished. That mistake was soon rectified and we all flooded back into the choir stalls.

To my great delight I found myself in among three young organists, probably in their early twenties, and we all got on like a house on fire. I told them that they had made my day, and they seemed very pleased.



The other good thing about our seating position was that we could see part of the console and part of Anna too.

At last Anna took her place, the music started and for the next hour I floated somewhere near the ceiling. The pieces were mostly modern, composers included Ludovico Einaudi, Philip Glass and Hans Zimmer. We also heard some Bach, Chopin, and of course Debussy's Clair de Lune. Some of the audience moved silently around while the music played. They were invited to do so and I didn't find this at all distracting, which was a bit odd as I am normally very fussy about audience behaviour.

The organ is apparently pretty much as it was when T C Lewis built it in 1897. A Willis console was added in 1952, according to the cathedral's write-up; there are 61 stops.

The hour passed very quickly, and there then followed an album signing; the queue was pretty long but once again I chatted to my fellow enthusiasts and all of a sudden there I was being greeted by the lovely Anna. I was delighted when she told me that she remembered meeting me a while ago. (That was at a vocal workshop and concert that Anna organised with Eric Whitacre in Cambridge last June). We had a necessarily brief chat and Anna suggested a selfie, which was duly done. Then it was off back to the Shard, with a new pal from the queue for part of the journey.



The whole of the next day was spent in the Science Museum, with at least a thousand shrieking school children. The noise peaked at 85db, with an average of 75db according to my phone app. Thank goodness I had thought to bring my wonderful noise cancelling AirPods!

I passed through London Bridge station several times on my travels. To my great delight I found a young person playing some Buxtehude on the small single manual organ in the station. We chatted for a while

and I told him that he had made me very happy. There is a YouTube video of Anna playing this organ with one of the station staff singing.

I left the Shard the next morning and spent a while aboard HMS Belfast (highly recommended), but not before settling the bill. Are you ready for this? Two nights, two continental breakfasts and one evening meal; one thousand four hundred and seventy-two pounds!

My wallet is still smouldering but I loved the whole experience and it was well worth the awesome cost; what an adventure! The staff were so friendly, helpful and very attentive but without actually grovelling, thankfully. I was so well looked after that it was a bit like being in hospital. (A private hospital!) My lovely room was completely quiet, quite an achievement in the middle of London. There was a swimming pool on floor 52 and one of the staff offered to take me up there to see it. I was told that there were people living permanently on the higher floors; mind-boggling, isn't it?

I eventually arrived back at Hereford's railway station, where I looked for my lovely saviour in the ticket office. My idea was to pop across to Morrison's and buy her a big bunch of flowers, but sadly she was not there. I have been back twice more but again she was absent. I will track her down eventually; she will not escape!

Finally, as most folks know, Anna's social media followers reached a total of one million not long ago.

At last I can claim to be one in a million!

Richard Martin

The Organ Works of Theodor Kirchner (1823-1903)

Kirchner is hardly a name well-known to organists and his output is a mere 14 short pieces, none of which are expressly liturgical in nature. Nevertheless, they are well worth exploring and eminently suitable for liturgical use or within a recital. The bicentenary of his birth seems a good opportunity to highlight his work.

Kirchner held various important teaching posts and enjoyed the friendship and advocacy of a number of leading composers of the day, notably Mendelssohn, Clara and Robert

Schumann and Brahms. (His relationship with Clara was particularly close). As an organist, he held an important post in

Winterthur, Switzerland, where his playing is said to have been admired by Wagner and Liszt, though his compositions were probably not regarded as

warmly by them, being very much in the opposite camp to Wagner in particular. Kirchner is probably best-known for his piano legacy consisting of over 1000 works, mostly aphoristic character



Theodor Kirchner (1823–1903): Sämtliche Orgelwerke		
Clara Schumann (1819–1896): Briefe an Theodor Kirchner		
1	Präludium g-Moll (Maestoso)	op. 89 Heft I, Nr. 2 3:28
2	Arioso G-Dur (Andante)	op. 89 Heft I, Nr. 1 4:01
3	Quasi Sarabande g-Moll	op. 89 Heft I, Nr. 4 2:51
4	aus Briefen an Theodor Kirchner, Dezember 1857 – März 1858 2:37	
5	Andante G-Dur	op. 89 Heft II Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 5 2:56
6	Moderato c-Moll	op. 89 Heft II Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 6 2:34
7	Andante Es-Dur	op. 82, Gedenkblätter, Nr. 9 2:09
8	aus Briefen an Theodor Kirchner, Oktober 1862 – Dezember 1862 12:59	
9	Legende B-Dur (Poco lento)	op. 89 Heft I, Nr. 3 3:02
10	aus Briefen an Theodor Kirchner, Dezember 1862 – Februar 1863 9:13	
11	(ohne Bezeichnung) F-Dur	op. 89 Heft III Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 10 2:03
12	Poco lento a-Moll	op. 89 Heft III Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 9 1:50
13	Largo m-Moll	op. 89 Heft III Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 11 2:01
14	aus Briefen an Theodor Kirchner, Juli 1863 – September 1863 3:12	
15	Largo As-Dur	op. 89 Heft II Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 7 2:09
16	Andante cantabile Ges-Dur	op. 89 Heft III Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 12 2:33
17	Andantino cantabile E-Dur	op. 89 Heft II Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 8 1:46
18	Brief an Theodor Kirchner, Juli 1864 3:19	
19	Andantino (poco lento) h-Moll	op. 89 Heft III Lyrische Blätter, Nr. 13 2:49
Martin West an der Buchholz-Grüneberg-Orgel in Demmin		
Stephanie Achilles, Sprecherin		

pieces not unlike those of Schumann. Indeed one of this organ works, the Andante in E flat major appeared as one suitable for piano or organ in his op. 82 Gedenkblätter pieces for piano. His undoubted success as a musician and teacher though was often undermined and limited by his less than stable character and profligacy, not least his gambling habits. For example, in 1884, Brahms and other leading musicians had to raise 30,000 marks to pay off Kirchner's debts.

Kirchner's life and career was a long one, by the standards of the times at least, and whilst his organ works are limited in number, they nevertheless reflect a wide range of influences and something of the major developments, upheavals—and perhaps stylistic ambiguities and uncertainties—in organ music during that period. His Prelude in G major is contrapuntal in nature, not dissimilar to the preludes and sonata movements of Mendelssohn, yet also the thickness of texture and bold gestures reminiscent of Brahms, his early preludes in particular. The Arioso in G minor demonstrates Kirchner's skilful use of motifs as the basis for development, whilst the Quasi Sarabande in G minor, as elsewhere, exhibits complexity of harmony and volatility of mood associated with works by Liszt and even Reger. Most of his organ works however come under two collections of *Lyrische Blätter*, and as the title suggests these are rather akin to short character pieces for piano such as those by Schumann, and indeed of Kirchner himself. They are essentially lyrical and declamatory in nature with shifts of mood and texture that almost paint a narrative speaking to the listener. Although Kirchner's harmonic language overall is superficially not dissimilar to that of his near contemporary, Rheinberger, Kirchner's music at its best arguably conveys more of a personal and focussed voice and connection with the player and listener. As with all music however, the proof must lie in the listening and playing. All but one of his organ works are contained within the op.89 volume, and available at reasonable price from www.jpc.de or as a download from www.stretta-music.com All his organ works are included on a CD performed on the Buchholz - Grüneberg organ (1818/66) in Demmin Stadtkirche by Martin West: Ambiente ACD 2019. The disc is also interspersed with readings of letters sent by Clara Schumann to Kirchner. N.B. the extensive CD notes are in German only, as are the readings. The fine instrument and performance do full justice to Kirchner's music and the disc is highly recommended as a means of acquaintance with his music.

The wonders of Vienna and Graz in Austria

Vienna, Day 1:

This is a world heritage site since 2001 (but on the World Heritage in Danger site since 2017 thanks to the controversial Vienna Ice-Skating Club - Intercontinental Hotel development)

With origins dating back to Celtic times, Vienna was granted city rights in 1221 by Leopold VI. Habsburg rule dates back to the 13th century and the city became the capital of the Habsburg empire in 1683. The city then developed rapidly into the truly magnificent baroque city we know today.

Vienna was home to Beethoven, Haydn, Liszt, Mahler, Mozart, Schubert, Strauss (yes, some of us did make a detour to see the famous Hellmer statue in the Stadtpark) to name but a few. This truly was the musical capital of Europe.

Vienna also became 'home' for a group from NHOA for a week.

The EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (Dec 2023) has revealed that every month from June to November broke global heat records and Vienna certainly didn't opt out of helping make this a record breaking year. August in Vienna was HOT.

We have learned from past overseas excursions that choosing a hotel near to the main public transport hub is always a good idea. The NHOA group stayed in the Novotel Wien Hauptbahnhof which proved an excellent choice and also had the most extraordinary views over the city from the top floor. We have learned also, that having an idea of what tram or train (etc) we need is invaluable to have in advance. With all this information to hand, it was easy to buy our 'season tickets' for our week in Vienna and be ready to explore.



Vienna vista from the hotel

Day 2:

Our first port of call was also the furthest away from the Novotel and in spite of our very best efforts, we were not sufficiently acclimatised to the transport system.

Thanks to the assistance of very friendly and helpful tram drivers we were en route with a great journey passing all the main Vienna tourism areas therefore sight-seeing in comfort.

We found ourselves at Klosterneuburg, founded in 1114 and rebuilt in the baroque style in the 18th century. The complex is situated on the top of a steep hill (quite a climb in the heat) and just outside the Vienna city limits. Originally it was on the banks of the Danube, but the course of the river was altered over time to some 2 kilometres away.



Klosterneuburg

We had booked a tour during which we learned that what is in existence today is only about a quarter of what Emperor Charles VI had planned. (Only two of the planned nine domes were built). Building works stopped when he died in 1740. What was built is still impressive.

Two items of particular interest were the 1136 Margarine Agnes candelabra and the 1181 Verdun Altar. If you are ever 'in the neighbourhood' a visit is strongly recommended.



Chororgel above the choir stalls

The abbey church was remodelled in the baroque style and we could hardly have made a more spectacular start with the magnificent Festorgel organ (Freundt 1642/Kuhn 1990) and no less impressive Chororgel (Kuhn 2005) which were perfectly complemented by the splendour of the building and the enthusiasm of our young hosts.



Our host makes a swift registration change

However, no less impressive (at least visually) was the Herbert Gollini 1984 instrument in the nearby parish church (St. Martin) with its case from 1720.



St Martin, Klosterneuburg

Day 3:

There is a huge advantage to having someone within the NHOA group who can

speaking enough of the local language to sort out problems. This was invaluable when we all arrived triumphantly (and early) at our first venue only to learn that we were in the wrong place! Two taxis later and we arrived at the correct venue where we were very kindly served tea and coffee whilst our organists had fun with the console in the Lutherkirche, there being no organist to demonstrate the instrument.

The second venue of the day was Peterskirche, Petersplatz. This is a magnificent baroque church dating back to around 1700 and was the first domed structure in Vienna, the design being inspired by St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The interior contains plenty of gold stucco and beautiful frescoes and as the church was renovated at the turn of this century the colours are really vibrant.



Gillian Lloyd and Rob Goldfinch having fun at Peterskirche

Our final destination today was one of the oldest churches in Vienna and one of the few remaining Romanesque buildings (it has remained unchanged since 1792). Michaelerkirche is near the Hofburg Palace and has a history dating back to 1221. Whilst inside, we managed to avoid a thunderstorm which had mainly passed when we left. It made no difference whatsoever to the incredibly hot summer weather.

The magnificent 1714 Sieber organ has a gilded case which is the largest baroque organ in Vienna. It was played by Joseph Haydn when he was 17 and Mozart's Requiem had its world premiere here.

Day 4:

Karlskirche is one of the few churches in Vienna which has a huge open area (with ornamental pond) in front of it enabling one to view the facade in all its glory. Built (in baroque style, of course) in 1715, to commemorate the end of a plague epidemic, it has a vast dome and two enormous flanking columns and we arrived early enough to take in this somewhat



Impressive Karlskirche

famous edifice. Vivaldi

was buried just metres from this church in a cemetery that was later levelled. The church regularly hosts Vivaldi concerts in his honour.

We met the delightful organist Lusine Poppel. She improvised for us, then insisted on a photo with The Gang (she's on the left-hand-side). Our presence had attracted the attention of many tourists walking through the organ loft. Amongst them were some young people clearly fascinated by the 1947 Seyberth organ.



Lusine Poppel, David Markby, Jeff Lloyd, Richard Martin, Geoff Willis and Rob Goldfinch

We had a guided tour of the Musikverein, home of the Vienna Philharmonic, the venue for the annual Vienna New Year's Day concert. It included the concert hall (quite a unique experience to sit in the great hall empty of everyone other than our tour companions). We could see, but not play, the enormous 2011 Rieger organ. We were also taken into their other music halls, each made of different materials



The flight deck of the Rieger organ in Stephansdom

e.g. glass, metal, stone or wood. Music remains important to the people of Vienna which is such good news!

In the evening, some of the NHOA group went to a an organ concert held in the Stephansdom, whilst others found their way to an authentic Austrian restaurant where many schnitzels were enjoyed.

Day 5:

Maria am Gestade is a gothic (yes, it is still gothic) church first documented in 1158, located in the Innere Stadt. It was formerly used by sailors on the Danube before said river 'moved'. It was used as an arsenal and a stable during Napoleon's occupation of Vienna and then renovated and re consecrated in the early 1800s.

We were welcomed by Dominic O'Toole, the chief priest who was born in Somerset and, after the players had finished, invited us into the shaded monastery garden for tea and coffee. It was a fabulous experience to sit in a cool and peaceful garden, in the middle of a hot, busy city with such an entertaining host. Here we learned that there is a universal church tax in Austria. You could opt out of paying this tax, but would then be unable to be buried in a churchyard. A small snippet of information which falls into the 'useless but fascinating fact' category.

In the afternoon we were treated to what was undoubtedly the educational highlight of the whole trip: a talk about, and recital on, the 1642 Wöckherl instrument in the Franziskanerkirche. We were privileged to share the expertise of Professor Johannes Ebenbauer, formerly Director of Music at the Stephansdom and now head of the Institute for Organ, Organ Research and Church Music at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. The organ retains 90% of its original pipework, which miraculously survived World War 2, having been kept safe 60km west of Vienna. Orgelbau Kuhn were responsible for the restoration (2006-11). Herr Ebenbauer demonstrated with works by Kerll, Muffat and Frescobaldi, amongst



Jeff Lloyd plays the Wöckherl organ

others, and pointed out the split keys, eight pure thirds and very bright mixtures. The organ is situated behind the altar and the manual 'ladder-rung' bellows were ably demonstrated by our host's assistant. The organ is surrounded by its own small area of seating for the monks so it feels rather like a church within a church. Our host was kind enough to show us the church's 'big' organ [Rieger, 1980] in the usual west end position.

The Franziskanerkirche was ceded to the Franciscans in 1589, after much procrastination, having once been the convent of the Penitents. The story goes that former 'strumpets' lived here as Penitents. (What city has not had its fair share of 'strumpets'?). The Franciscans rebuilt the church but incorporated old components so this renaissance church, completed in 1607, also includes some of the Gothic style.

Day 6:

With free time on this Friday morning, a group set off by tram (oh, the advantage of being near a transport hub, having season tickets and becoming familiar with the transport system). We passed all the best tourist sights and alighted near the Rathaus. Built between 1872 and 1883, the Rathaus forms part of the magnificent Ringstrasse which is almost totally dominated by historicism. Vienna does have many genuinely old buildings as we have seen above, but many of the buildings, being built in the 19th century, mimicked older architectural styles.

Having had our fill of such incredible splendour, the next item on the agenda was 'find a place to have a coffee or tea in the shade'. We found ourselves, purely by chance, in one of Austria's oldest coffee houses with loads of comfortable and shaded outside seating. Parked



Salesianerinnenkirche

in front of us was a vintage Rolls Royce and a Bentley, so we soaked up the atmosphere of times gone by....the coffee and tea were good too!

We were given a warm and courteous welcome by the nuns at the impressive Salesianerinnenkirche (try saying that when you're tired). The fine acoustics of the domed church were best

heard downstairs away from the organ loft.



David Markby at the Kauffman console

At the Schottenkirche we met the young organist who apologised profusely that the main organ was not available as there was no key to be found, but there was a smaller organ available. The players were allowed to have a brief play and then we were ushered out. A small note here from a non-organist, "Normally the pews / seating in churches is uncomfortable. Some brutally so, others just ok. This church was comfortable, so, naturally, this was the shortest visit".

The original church here was destroyed by a fire in 1276. An earthquake in 1443 damaged the next building and when lightning removed the tower,

the church was rebuilt in the Baroque style (yes, again) and was finished in 1648. The memorial service for Haydn was held in this church on 15th June 1809, the film director Fritz Lang, having been born in this parish, was baptised here in the Schottenkirche. Far more recently,



The beautiful ceiling of the Schottenkirche



Gillian Lloyd at the Chorogel

Princess Maria-Annunciata von Liechtenstein married Emanuele Musini in 2021. The incredible baroque interior really shows in all its magnificence in her wedding photographs.

Day 7:

We said goodbye to two of our travelling companions and set off to the Hauptbahnhof which took all of 5 minutes to reach for which we were grateful thanks to the heat. We met up with a new travelling companion at the station and sat down and relaxed on Platform 6 awaiting our train. As luck would have it, one of us decided that it would be best to re check which platform we should be on and we were not where we should have been, so with about 2 minutes to spare, we sprinted to the correct place and caught our train. There is always something to be said for travelling in a group. There is usually one person who gets it right. We simply took it in turns to be that person.

Graz, Day 1:

A beautiful two and a half hour train journey through Austria saw us arrive at Graz, Austria's second largest city, home to some 300,000 people and another UNESCO World Heritage Site (this compared to the UK's second city, Birmingham, which has a population of c.1.2million). Graz had a completely different feel: still hot, busy and touristy, but somehow more relaxed and intimate. According to UNESCO "the historic centre and Schloss Eggenberg bear witness to an exemplary model of the living heritage of a central European urban complex influenced by the secular presence of the Habsburgs and the cultural and artistic role played by the main aristocratic families". Well, quite! At the heart lies the Hauptplatz which is mediaeval in origin and from which the Herrengasse leads its way to Jakominiplatz (a tram hub) and our home for the next 5 days, the Motel 1. All of the



James West, Gillian and Jeff Lloyd, Rikki Willis, Jane Jacobs, Rob Goldfinch and Geoff Willis

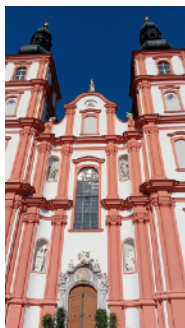
NHOA group headed out for dinner and thoroughly enjoyed a sociable meal sitting outside under huge awnings at Glockl Brau.

Day 2:

Our first church, Heilandskirche, is one of five Protestant churches in Graz. Originally opened as a 'prayer house' and built to resemble an ordinary residential building, a change to the law in 1848 made it possible to build a church that looked like one, so in 1853 renovations took place. Further changes took place in 1992 and this church is home to over 6,000 local protestants...the largest such congregation in Austria.

Some of the NHOA group had arranged to forgo the final 2 days of organ visits in Graz to travel across to see Salzburg. (No visit to Austria can ever exclude a visit there...it really is such a special city.) As we would miss seeing Mariatrost Basilica, we decided that we should visit this before the next scheduled organ visit.

The Basilica stands on the top of the Purberg hill and is a famous Styrian pilgrimage site. There are about 250 steps to climb before reaching the site and in the heat, this was no easy challenge, but very well worth it thanks to it being a stunning building with incredible views over surrounding countryside. The remaining NHOA members visited this on Day 5 (when the others were sitting on a train enjoying a simply stunning train ride through the centre of Austria to Salzburg).



Mariahilfkirche

That afternoon we visited Mariahilfkirche, another pilgrimage church with its origins dating back to 1744. The organist who met us had just flown back from New York and fought his jet lag admirably. The chancel organ built by Felsberg was set into a plastic case where all the workings were visible. Then on to the main organ where, delighted by the usual NHOA enthusiasm, he showed us the internal

workings of that instrument.



Geoff Willis plays the 'transparent' organ

A Positive organ was situated in a small, wonderfully ornate room with a lovely painted ceiling.



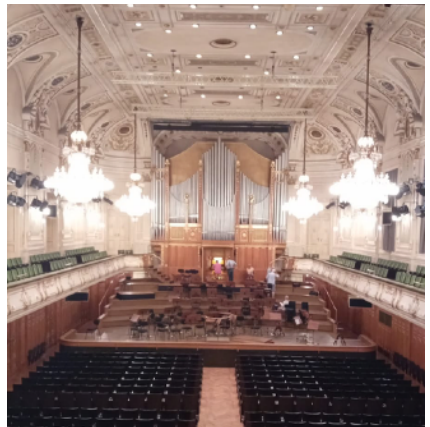
Mariahilfekirche chapel ceiling

*James West at the Skrabl
Positivorgel*

Day 3:

We walked to the Stefaniensaal, Musikverein, built in the 1880's and named after Crown Princess Stephanie of Belgium. We were shown in to a treat of the highest order. We were allowed free rein on the splendid 2002 Klais: certain of our party took full advantage, and delighted the rest of us.

Over lunch, a splinter group headed off to see Schloss Eggenberg, as quoted in the UNESCO statement above. This building and its contents are one of Austria's most important cultural assets. The house has its origins in the Middle Ages and was subject to some major building work in the 17th century.



Plenty of sound to fill the concert hall

The wonderful blue tram line 1 took us there, leaving only a short level 10 minute walk to the impressive property (in the heat, again, not as easy as it sounds!). After a walk around the grounds and a cup of coffee / tea, this group headed back to the tram for a very easy trip to the next venue.



Schloss Eggenberg

Or so they thought...

The Kunst-Universität proved rather harder to find than originally thought / hoped. We arrived at our destination only to be told that we should be a 20 minute walk away and were given very helpful and explicit directions. Half an hour later, we were still confused so one of us, who had some very limited German, saw fit to ask a person loitering in the street. This turned out to be quite fortuitous as it was our next host! He was standing outside hoping to catch sight of a group of some seven organists (quite what a group of seven organists normally looks like is unfathomable) but we were actually a group of five at that moment! Two of our group never did make this venue, such were the difficulties locating it. In the end, we were shown eight different organs, all mainly unplayable and all in a varying state of disrepair but the experience was curiously enjoyable as our host had unrelenting enthusiasm and we were assured that as this was the summer holidays, the organs would be fixed by term time.

Day 4:

We were a little apprehensive, therefore, about our next visit, to the Johann-Josef-Fux Konservatorium. In fact we were met by our host and taken to a performance hall. The 2012 Močnik organ is modest, but it was beautifully demonstrated by organ teacher Magdalena Moser, and the conservatory's director, Edouard Lanner, gave us a fascinating insight into the organ's history and significance.



Uhrturm clock tower

After this visit, it was decided to go to the Uhrturm on the Schossberg. The clock tower possibly dates back to 13th century and forms part of the Fortress on the top of the hill, which is reached by a funicular railway. The clocktower has a battlement from which fire watchers could keep an eye on the city. The city residents paid a ransom to Napoleon to prevent his troops destroying the clock tower, such is the importance of this structure to the people of Graz. The hour bell, which dates back to 1382 still strikes on the hour. The Uhrturm was renovated from 2008 to 2011 to help keep it as the the great landmark of Graz. The views from this hill are well worth the funicular ride and the walk back down, and is recommended by your authors.



The final destination of the day was the Stadtpfarrkirche a most impressive building on the Herrengasse and our host for today had been our host at the Kunst-Universitat, Sebastian Trinkl. Our organists played a small instrument in the chancel and then our host demonstrated the main organ with some impressive Reger and then we were left to enjoy ourselves.

Rob Goldfinch enjoying the Rieger Hauptorgel

Day 5:
Barmherzigenkirche is the stately chapel for the hospital founded by the Brothers (or, currently, Sisters) of Mercy. Unfortunately the organist could not be with us, but we enjoyed playing the 1893 Walcker.

Then it was time to gird our loins for the 200+ steps up to the magical Mariatrost Basilica, 7.5km NE of central Graz. It was a hard climb



Basilika Mariatrost

in 33 degrees, but so well worth it, not only for the beautiful building itself, but for the ample opportunity we were given to explore the large Reinisch organ.



Peter Heinrich

Our last 'organ day' in Graz was a matter of Little and Large. The University Church of Maria am Leech is the oldest church in Graz, with one part dating from 1290. It boasts two small organs in the west



Walker organ at Herz-Jesu-Kirche

gallery, the older of which is by Schwarz (1773). Its 7 stops produce a remarkably authoritative sound, especially in the hands and feet of Dr. Peter Heinrich, Assistant Organist of Graz Cathedral. In stark contrast, the Herz-Jesu-Kirche is an overpoweringly huge building with an 1891 west-gallery Walcker organ to match, and vast and gloomy crypt with a 1986 Hofbauer instrument. By this time there were only three of us left, so James West, in particular, was able to explore the larger instrument to his heart's content whilst Jeff Lloyd put the smaller one through its paces.

Graz was an exceptional place to visit. Large enough to contain many a fantastic organ and small enough to explore fairly fully with an excellent transport system. We simply cannot recommend Graz highly enough.

Jane Jacobs, Rikki Willis and Gillian Lloyd

CALEB SIMPER (1856-1942)

Master of his craft or musical hack?

What are we to make of Caleb Simper, a composer whose output inhabits, albeit sometimes dustily, many an organ loft and choir library? His many works, though, have for decades been the object of much disdain from the critics, and while it might be suggested that it is all too easy for those who are not fully familiar with his music to be unkind, some might cynically suggest that it is even easier for those who are. Erik Routley's oft-quoted dismissal is quite typical: "From The Crucifixion you go downwards to the underworld of Michael Costa, Caleb Simper and J H Maunder..." (A Short History of English Church Music, 1977). (Many though would strongly disagree with his assessment of Maunder). Simper's passing in 1942 was virtually ignored by the musical establishment and press and of his huge output, nothing is currently available in a commercial recording. Nor is there any biography or comprehensive survey of his work, not even a mention in Grove's Dictionary. The most substantial source is Brian Clegg's survey found on: www.cul.co.uk/music/compX.htm Much of this article is based therefore on a personal evaluation of the scores rather than authoritative sources.



Yet, several million copies of his choral works (of which wrote around 200) were sold under his name or his pseudonym of Edwyn A. Clare. The publicity slogan, 'Sung throughout the civilised world' was not without a degree of justification. Moreover, the 12 volumes of his organ voluntaries, consisting of 17 pieces each, are still in print and have provided a ready resource for many an organist.

Born of humble origins and it would appear with no formal training, Simper eventually became a manager of a music warehouse in Worcester and organist and choirmaster at the then popular church of St Mary Magdalene in Worcester, (now closed). The new Nicholson organ there was of some note, now transplanted to St Christoforus Kerk, Schagen, The Netherlands. He subsequently moved to

Barnstaple in Devon where he ran another music warehouse and became organist at Emmanuel Church in the town, albeit with a rather mediocre instrument. Within months of this move, however, the huge commercial success of his compositions and the very considerable wealth it was bringing was such that at a mere 34 years of age, he retired from his day job and devoted himself almost solely to his composing enterprises.

Many a choir has warmed to his choral music, finding much of it easy to sing and memorise, and with gusto! The often predictable if rather four-square phrasing combined with simple harmonies, repetitive elements and that vital musical 'hook' can but give heart to a choir, particularly one of lesser resources. The infectiously buoyant and tuneful Christmas hymn-anthem, *Awake, Awake Good People All*, for example, is hard to beat as an attractive, simple and tightly-constructed choral work. It is difficult to understand why this is not better-known today. Some of his other choral works contain elements of almost embarrassing unsophistication, yet with much that becomes obstinate in the memory. His more extended works though are perhaps best appreciated via excerpts, sometimes just one, and much of his choral output overall is worthy rather than inspired. 'Popular' does not always equal 'good' but popular, it certainly was. Stylistically, the choral music moves little beyond that of the late Victorian era, though some, and often the best, relates to hymnody and anthems of up to a century earlier.

Turning to his organ music, which is the main focus for this article; the harmonic style is considerably more contrapuntal, though often let down by over-complex harmony. Unlike the output of many prolific composers of organ music, there is no use of liturgical themes such as a chorale, hymn or plainsong chant, only the odd adaptation from one of his choral works. Such titles as 'Prayer', 'Communion' or 'Meditation' are interspersed with, 'Loud Voluntary', 'Gavotte', 'Song without words' or a triumphal march. For his various pieces entitled 'Offertoire', Simper may well have had in mind some of those by Italian composers of the time, which tend to be distinctly jolly affairs. Even if not overtly in the title, the influences of opera, operetta and popular song are often evident throughout his output. One can but speculate that his involvement with the music trade will have brought him into much contact with published music of all kinds.

The music is all scored within two staves with a pedal symbol (sometimes optional) suggesting that the pedals can play the bottom line. The fact that these scores can be used for harmonium, pipe organ with or without pedals, or for players without an adequate pedal technique, may well account for some of the popularity of these volumes. (The 'one size fits all' approach though does not always obtain the most musical result). Moreover, each book of 17 pieces contains an even mix of genres so that just one volume will provide at least one piece for every eventuality. Some are several pages long whilst others, e.g. an 'Interlude', are of a mere few bars and designed to provide brief covering music for a gap or transition in the liturgy. (The volumes also include a small number of works by his son, Roland Chalmers Simper FRCO LRAM, one of which was written at the age of eight. Roland sadly died young in 1917). As with much organ music of this period, not least by composers of lesser rank, the shorter pieces are generally the more successful and can exhibit strong themes that are effectively developed within a simple and balanced structure. For example, the Adagio, Book 2 no. 9, (Ex.1) is a delightful gem; certainly one of Simper's best. The long and characterful arc-shaped melody, well-controlled harmonies and texture surely make this a worthy piece in any organist's repertoire and warrants being quoted in its entirety.

Ex.1

Legato ♩ = 104

mf Dip.

p

A trifle slower

The following Gavotte, Book 2 no. 10, (Ex.2) is also of some merit with a characterful theme that largely avoids the the four-square character of much of Simper's music. This is among the more structurally disciplined of Simper's long pieces though, as so often when Simper hits on a strong theme, he extracts his full money's worth out of it even to the point that it represents negative value.

Ex.2 $\text{♩} = 126$

f
Man.
Ped.
Etc.
Ped.

The Soft Voluntary, Book 6 no. 13, (Ex.3) also has an engaging theme that is rhythmically varied, though with around three-quarters of this short piece occupied by repetitions of the eight-bar opening theme, Simper again squeezes it dry, (if making though for quicker and easier composing – and learning)!

13 SOFT VOLUNTARY

Ex.3 *Andante* $\text{♩} = 100$

mf
Ped.
Etc.
Ped.

Ex.4 Con Animo ♩ = 132

The musical score for Ex. 4, 'Con Animo', is in G major and 2/4 time, with a tempo of 132. It is written for piano. The first system begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes the instruction 'Cl. to Sw. with Reeds.' and 'Man.' (Mancera). The second system continues the piece. The third system ends with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and the instruction 'Etc.'

While some of Simper's output is rooted within a traditional organ idiom, the orchestra or even military band often takes over. One of the best of his more triumphal works is the March in G, Book 6 no. 9, (Ex. 4). The strong opening theme portends well, though the chord textures and spacing is hardly of the organ world; neither is the marching bass after the double bar. (One can also imagine a big bass drum and cymbal—some romantic Italian organs had such things—on the held chord in bar five. Perhaps the spirit of Verdi is not far away).

So much for the good, and there is much that is. The wheel nuts on the bus though really start coming loose, even off completely, on some of Simper's lengthier marches and offertoires. The more triumphant the gesture, often the emptier it is. A crowning example (which I shall spare your eyes) is the Coronation Pomposo, Book 5 no.6, with a life-sapping banality in the opening rarely equalled elsewhere, albeit relieved and

redeemed somewhat by eventually morphing into a quite decent patch of pseudo-Rossini.

Italian-style opera abounds elsewhere, for example in the March, Book 1 no.6, (Ex. 5), though, wouldn't such repeated chords push some organs' sluggish actions to the limit?

Ex.5



In other examples of his extended pieces, one can but detect a sense of hurried and careless writing, and with an endless succession of bits pulled from the shelf of spare and empty ideas, strung together with little coordination between them. As an example, and an experience of what is surely crushingly bad music, savour (or merely avoid) the Offertoire, Book 3 no.5. (Indeed, at his very least inspired, Simper could be said to be to music what William McGonagall was to poetry and throughout his output there are clear candidates for a Tay Bridge Disaster award.)

There are also numerous examples where the organ music is excessively laden with chromatic, convoluted and cloying harmonies, sometimes acting almost as a cover for a paucity of genuine melodic quality. This can tax the fingers and also result in more challenging pedal parts. Organists sometimes speak of the ease with which his works lie under the hands, but this is not always the case and there is a fair smattering of clumsy writing that pervades Simper's output. Such an example can be found towards the end of Meditation, Book 8 no. 4, (Ex.6).

Some of the harmonic cul-de-sacs that Simper gets himself into require more than the skills of Houdini to escape from artfully, and not without a painful crunching of gears, (evoking perhaps our distant memories of Eastern Scottish Bristol Lodekkas with their crash gearboxes grinding up and down yon punishing Midlothian hills...but I digress). These are often where the music slows to a crawl, almost as if to give the composer thinking time as to what to do next.



Simper's organ works were but just part of a whole industry producing music to meet (and fuel) the fashions of the day; music that was deemed of an appropriate ambience, even total wallpaper, within the liturgy, and more secular genres. Other composers of similar ilk included such figures as Thomas Mee Pattison and Ernest A. Dicks. Their music, if not of great distinction, is written on three staves and has generally much more rigour in terms of organ texture. Dicks' compilations also include arrangements of music by other composers, some of rather greater merit. (The stylistic palette within church music overall has broadened considerably in subsequent years, though who is to say which fashionable sounds that may beguile the senses and underpin certain styles of worship today will not in their turn be largely discarded and even derided?)

So, what of Caleb Simper's legacy? Commercially astute he certainly was, producing material on a huge scale. At his best, he shows highly competent musical skills and was able to absorb a variety of styles,

albeit with generally less flare than that of his models. His works are often easy to sight-read and learn, if only because they develop in predictable ways and according the stock musical gestures of the day. Popularity though surely depends partly on the strata of less discerning tastes, and once the fashions change, the lesser creations eventually fade into history. Certainly, there are some fine gems to be found among his organ output; also, useful material to agreeably smother the chatter, prepare souls, even lift spirits... but then there's the rest! But decide for yourself; the organ music is readily available and various recordings of this and the choral music can be found on YouTube; these are interesting to explore...for various reasons! Curiously, the choral music is performed almost exclusively by non-European choirs. But, as the sales slogan said, 'Sung throughout the civilised world'!

John Riley

The Organ Manual

Do you remember back in 2019 a young organist Anna Hallett, started an online magazine about the organ during her final years at secondary school? That magazine is called “The Organ Manual” and contains an enormous range of organ related information - articles about people and music, links to many other resources and organisations etc.

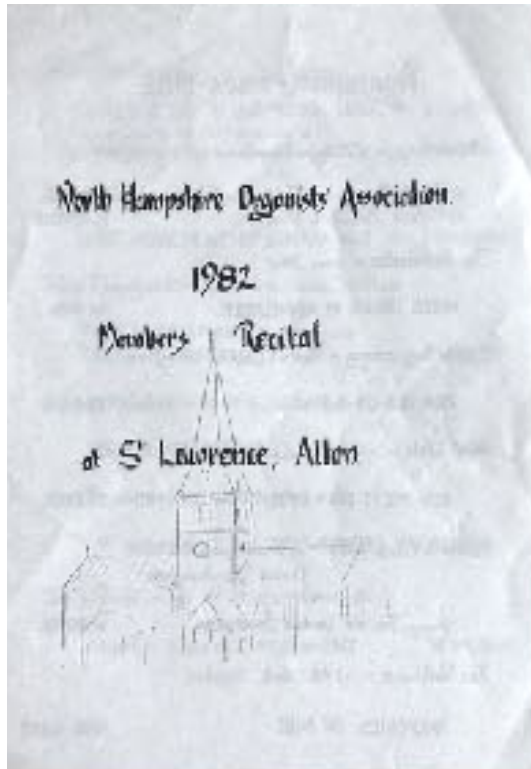
She is at college now and has less time so she has passed this on to others to edit and publish. You can find all the editions here ...

<https://theorganmanual.com/?fbclid=IwAR0bt2rBXU-fb9YNE49Fzv6tIUNTF5uoXuSpjclJfbqpOilfDSf1b3AahSE>



From the Archives

It's hard to believe that NHOA is 58 years old in May this year. One or two members have been involved from the outset and many more have joined in the years since. Have things changed since those earlier times?



Here is programme of a Members' event in 1982 just 42 years ago. Do you play any of these pieces now?

Programme ~ NHOA - 1982

Stephen Longley - of St Mary's, Broomfield

- a) FANFARE
- b) PSALM PRELUDE No.2

Joe Huddleston - from Sheet

WATER UNSER IM HINNELREICH

Sean Montgomery - Papil of Stephen Hayes

PRELUDE IN E MINOR

Alex Crute - of Rothwick Parish Church

NUN FREUT ZICH LIEGEN CHRISTEN GNEIN

Harold & Mavis Willis - of North Camp Methodist Church, Scarborough

Song: 'TILL HIS LOVELY SHEPHERD'

Ken Pinkhurst - of All Saints, Crowleil

HARMONIES DU SOIR

LEMENS
H. HOWELLS

J.S. BACH

J.S. BACH

J.S. BACH

W. BOYCE

KARG ELERT

John Dixon - of All Saints, Odham

- a) PRELUDE ON AN OLD FRENCH CAROL
(Noel, mouve let Noel chantons toi)
- b) FANTASIA (Aut die Pleiner eines Golo)

G. MOORE

P. SWEELINCK

Peter Turner - of St Andrew's, Strimley

LAST MOVEMENT OF SONATA No.1

P. HINDEMITH

John Mansfield - of the U.R. Church, Broomfield

THEME & VARIATIONS from the suite
'HOMMAGE TO FRESCOBALDI'

J. LANGLANS

Richard Marshall - of St Andrew's, Broomfield

DORIAN TOCCATA

J.S. BACH

Ken Down - from Broomfield

1st MOVEMENT from TRIO SONATA N^o5 J.S. BACH

John Parker - of St Peter's, Wharfedale

MASTER TALLIS'S TESTAMENT

H. HOWELLS

Unsung Heroes

This is a conversation you might have had with an “Organ Maestro” friend ... or maybe you’ve woken up in a panic dreaming about it! Let’s call your friend, Bill.

Bill: “I’m playing that Durufle Toccata tomorrow. Could you turn the pages for me?”



You: “Ohhh! Errr...!”

Bill: “It’ll be fine. It’s only about ten pages. Look, I’ve got it here”

You: “Ohhh! That looks horrendous. I can’t follow that! You will nod won’t you?!”

Bill: “Of course! Don’t you worry, nothing will go wrong!”

Many organists I have met are very wary about turning the pages, even for players they know well. Of course, the anxiety is about turning too early or too late, turning two pages at once, pulling the music into the player’s lap etc etc.

I have learnt to enjoy turning pages so I offer some things I have found that make the whole experience calm and under control for both the page turner and player.

Firstly, take a quick look at the music with the player:

- Will they play any repeats and do those need page turns forward or back?
- If you don’t know the piece, find the cues to check where the player has got to. It could be a pedal entry, a key change or a large interval in any part.

Next, what is the state of the music score?

- Is the paper firm or flimsy, frayed or stuck with tape? Is the music a book, separate pages or pages taped together? More time is needed to prepare a turn if it's in a poor state.
- Are the pages numbered? If so, check are they sequential. When you are holding a page ready to turn, it's reassuring to see the page number behind is two higher than the one you are holding.

When the piece is played, when to turn? I ask the player if they like to signal a page turn and when they like it to happen, e.g. a bar before the page end or perhaps right at the end.

It's important to stand so you can read the music but not obscure the audience view of the player. Sometimes this means standing away from the console or on the left hand side. I try to stand as still as possible and wear the right specs to see the music!

Using the cues I spotted before or during the performance, I get ready for the turn at the beginning of the last stave on the page so I am standing in the right place. I slowly move my right hand to the top corner of the page, holding the page ready and on the agreed signal from the player (or where I think it's time if there is no signal!), take the page right across then slowly withdrawing the arm. If the page doesn't stay in place, it can be adjusted with minimal distraction for the player. I keep my eyes on the score for the next cue. What could be simpler?!



Well, there are a few variations, some making the job simpler, some not:

- Some instruments have page retaining clips on the music stand. I tend to park them flat out of the way unless the score is very recalcitrant!
- Some players (including me) copy their scores and tape two or three pages together. This is usually so the score can be marked up without wrecking the original. Now the page turner becomes the page remover! The principles are the same as above but the action is usually simpler. It does require care to prevent the large 'page set' from catching the paper behind. The page will likely be removed to the right so it will naturally reveal the first bars on the page behind so the player can carry on seamlessly.

Page turners don't necessarily have to read music. "What?!", I hear you say. Well, sometimes "needs must". When I took my Grade 8 on my organ at home, my wife, Rikki, was my page remover and she doesn't read music. We rehearsed a number of times, of course. She found tracking my eyes gave her the cue that a page change was imminent. I did nod too and all went well in the exam. Actually, in early rehearsals I did glance at my feet occasionally and when I looked back at the music, Rikki had mistaken my glance for a nod and had done the deed with great aplomb!

Some newish technology is now available where the score is displayed on an iPad and a facial gesture will 'turn' the page. I have met eminent organists who have learnt to use this very successfully. I am quite comfortable with technology but at the moment I am sticking with the human page turner/remover - I can 'gesture' to them very effectively if things don't go to plan!

Geoff Willis

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