

Past Events

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Members' soirée on Thursday 28 January at the home of Ruth Lewis in Barnet

Twelve members of the EDOA responded to Ruth Lewis's kind invitation to enjoy a musical evening, including a hot supper, at her home in Barnet. Everyone was invited to take along music, in whatever form, that had some meaning for them and which they would like to share with others. Those who accepted were: Terence Atkins, Hilary Bailey, Jack Beeson, Anne & Michael Coffey, Robin and Mary Coxon, Rosemary Knight, David Patrick, Edward Sharp, Ashley Wagner and Colin Wharton.

We arrived around 7.30 to be greeted by the strains of a piano duet *March and Waltz* by Thomas Attwood⁽¹⁾ played by David, with Ashley playing the bass part, on the Edgar Horne upright piano standing in the spacious entrance hall, replete with its own candelabras. This was a commendable performance seeing that it was entirely unrehearsed, Ashley not even having seen the music before!

We then moved to the comfortable lounge with its very capable Hi-Fi, where our President welcomed us and played his choice - a live recording on vinyl of an event called "Organ in Sanity and Madness" that took place in the Albert Hall on 24th September 1966. We listened to a track of Marco Enrico Bossi's⁽²⁾ 'Etude Symphonique', played by Simon Preston that was followed by tumultuous applause from the concert audience, reminding Terence, and some others present, of an amazing musical occasion.

Michael offered a couple of organ duets from a set of 8 CDs of seldom-heard works by Alexandre Pierre Boëly⁽³⁾, found in a monastery shop near Carnac, Brittany, both played by Eric Lebrun and Marie-Ange Leurent: 'Andante' from the collection *Fêtes du Mois de Juin* and 'Quatuor' from the collection *Veuve Canaux* ca 1843. Boëly was an accomplished organist, pianist, violist and prolific composer yet was dismissed from his post and rejected by his public and musical peers for preferring to play the serious music of Bach and his contemporaries rather than the popular music that had taken hold in revolutionary France.

Colin wished to make three tributes: The first to the late John Scott with a recording of him on the organ of St Paul's Cathedral playing the Toccata '*Placare Christe servulis*' from *Le Tombeau de Titelouze* by Marcel Dupré⁽⁴⁾. His second tribute was to the late Carlo Curley with him playing Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in A minor* on the very large George and Wilma Van Wesep Memorial Organ of the LaGrave Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan⁽⁵⁾. Colin's third choice was another piece by Bossi: *Scherzo in G minor* played by Ian Tracey on the organ of Liverpool Cathedral⁽⁶⁾ as a tribute to Terence for having completed 40 years as organist and choirmaster at St John the Baptist Parish Church, Chipping Barnet.

Robin played first Herbert Murrill's⁽⁷⁾ Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in E from a CD of St Paul's Cathedral Choir conducted by John Scott with Christopher Dearnley at the organ. This was followed by another favourite from Murrill, played by Simon Preston on the Westminster Abbey organ – *Carillon*, which had served as the 'wedding march' on the occasion of his marriage to Mary. What a wonderful memory to share!



EDOA members David Patrick, Hilary Bailey, Michael & Anne Coffey listening to CDs

Photo: Rosemary Knight

The next piece, chosen by Hilary, created a more sober mood as Bach's version of *O Mensch, Bewein Dein Sünde Gross*, was played by Otto Winter⁽⁸⁾ on a Silbermann organ. Hilary chose this piece because she wanted opinions from other members about the sound of the organ. Later research reveals that this organ located in Mount Calvary Church, Szombathely, Hungary is, in fact, a copy of a Silbermann.

Edward used a tablet computer linked wirelessly to a loudspeaker to play his choice - a choral piece, *Mass for Notre Dame*, recorded by Trinity College Choir in Gloucester Cathedral under conductor Stephen Layton and the composer, David Briggs, playing the organ⁽⁹⁾. Gramophone, August 2010, said " ... one of the finest CDs of sacred choral and organ music you'll ever hear ... listeners who are churchgoers and non-believers alike will find this disc a profoundly moving experience."

Rosemary gave us a taste of 17th C music with Ton Koopman playing the *Tocatta No 6 in G minor 'da sonarsi alla levatione'* by Johann Froberger⁽¹⁰⁾ on a 16th C organ from St Valentine's Catholic Church, Kiedrich⁽¹¹⁾, Hesse, Germany. Following on we had another choral rendering, this time by the St Albans Cathedral Choir under Barry Rose: *Let all mortal flesh keep silence* by Edward Bairstow⁽¹²⁾.

Jack did not arrive until half way through the evening, unfortunately having been held up at the Blackwall Tunnel. However, refreshed by a hot meal he gave us his choices recorded on the restored organ in his former United Reformed Church in Winchmore Hill. These included the *Sortie in E flat* by Lefébure-Wély⁽¹³⁾ played by Joyce Beaumont and also Mendelssohn's *Allegro in vivace*. Liszt's *Fantasie and Fugue on B.A.C.H.* was his last choice but this lengthy piece had to be shortened due to the lateness of the hour.

There was still time left for Ashley to play Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's⁽¹⁴⁾ organ composition *Impromptu No 1 in F* on the piano with Terence playing the organ pedal part – very effective indeed. Ashley is an enthusiastic young organ student, always on the lookout for new repertoire and was delighted to come across the three Coleridge-Taylor Impromptus.

At the end of a busy evening for her, Ruth chose to play a recording by organist August Humer of a work entitled *Polonese* by the Italian composer Antonio Diana⁽¹⁵⁾. Played on Bruckner's favourite organ⁽¹⁶⁾ in the Alter Dom, Linz, this music served as a suitably lively sortie to speed the guests on their way. After all, it was by then ten past eleven!



Our host Ruth Lewis with members Dr Colin Wharton and Michael Coffey

Photo: Rosemary Knight

During the evening, the music was paused for us to go to the dining room where we served ourselves to a hot repast and again later whilst we collected a cheese course and fruit that could be eaten whilst listening. The hospitality was rounded off with tea and coffee. In short, we all had a very enjoyable evening and wish to offer our sincere thanks to Ruth for hosting this memorable occasion. Here's to the next time!

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ (1765–1838) appointed organist at St Paul's Cathedral in 1796

⁽²⁾ (1861–1925)

⁽³⁾ (1785–1858)

⁽⁴⁾ (1886–1971)

⁽⁵⁾ Built jointly by the Austin and Allen Organ Companies 1996 (5 manuals, 108 stops, 4413 pipes)

⁽⁶⁾ (1926 Henry Willis: 5 manuals, 152 stops, 10,268 pipes)

⁽⁷⁾ (1909–1952)

⁽⁸⁾ Otto Winter is the pseudonym of the Hungarian harpsichord and organ player Miklos Spanyi – (See <http://www.last.fm/music/Otto+Winter,+Silbermann+Orgel>)

⁽⁹⁾ (originally by Thomas Harris 1666; 1971 Hill, Norman & Beard/Downes; 1999/2010 Nicholson & Co)

⁽¹⁰⁾ (1616–1667)

⁽¹¹⁾ The organ is one of the oldest playable in Germany, built around 1500, probably with one manual, by an unknown organ builder. Elias Salvianer restored the organ in 1710, his contract documents giving the specification of the organ for the first time. Pedals were added in 1722, but from 1790 the instrument was unplayable. The English Baronet Sir John Sutton financed its renovation in 1858 by a Belgian organ builder, August Hooghuys, from Bruges. It was further restored between 1985 and 1987, by the Swiss organ builder Kuhn. (Information from Wikipedia and other sources)

⁽¹²⁾ (1874–1946)

⁽¹³⁾ (1817–1869)

⁽¹⁴⁾ (1875–1912)

⁽¹⁵⁾ (1815–1876)

⁽¹⁶⁾ The Brucknerorgel is in the old Monastery of St Florian near Bruckner's birthplace at Linz. It can be seen and heard on YouTube.

Michael & Anne Coffey

Review of AGM recital at St Andrew's Enfield, February 27 2016

The AGM recital this year happily gave us an exciting opportunity to hear a fine local organist Linden Innes-Hopkins, playing on a very recently rebuilt, or perhaps I should say 'reconstructed', organ.



The organ at St Andrew's, Enfield

Photo: Morwenna Brett

The organ, behind its gorgeous Richard Bridge 1752 facade, has endured many rebuilds and has been moved three times within the church. Since 1953 it has been back in a gallery at the west end with the front only of the case preserved, lower and further forward than it was originally and with exposed pipework on either side. The most recent version of the organ by David Wells of Liverpool involves fewer stops than the Hill, Norman & Beard instrument of 1965 and the reduction in size has provided more access for tuning and more egress for the sound. The console is on a raised platform in the north choir aisle opposite a three stop chancel division which is not currently connected to the console.

The recital began with preludes and fugues by Buxtehude and Bach. Although it was nicely played I was less than convinced by the sound of the organ here. The Great chorus is particularly strong in the 4ft and 2ft pitches. We were warned that the organ was loud but I am afraid that the excessively vigorous higher pitches became distracting and unhelpful to the rolling paragraphs of Bach's magnificently architectural Prelude and Fugue in C minor. It must also be incredibly difficult to judge and maintain articulation with a console which is so far removed from the pipes.

It was good to have the opportunity to hear the entirety of Whitlock's *Plymouth Suite*. This fitted the organ much better and we enjoyed the variety and sophisticated charm of the five varied movements which nevertheless stand well together as a single work. Howell's impassioned meditation on Psalm 130 worked equally well, with the central crescendo and diminuendo being skilfully and sensitively managed. As promised, Vierne's finale from his first *Symphonie* was an enjoyable romp.



Recitalist Linden Innes-Hopkins

Photo: Morwenna Brett

It was delightful to have Linden appearing at selected moments, from behind the pillar and curtain which separated her from the audience, to talk enthusiastically and informatively about the music.

We must congratulate the committee for organising a recital which put together a player who can truly communicate through music and a newly rebuilt organ. We must also express our gratitude to the church congregation which has had the vision and enthusiasm to reconstruct this important instrument.

Peter St John Stokes