

ST OSWALD'S PARISH CHURCH, DURHAM

MUSICAL NOTES

SEPTEMBER 2019

Welcome back!

Welcome back to the first edition of Musical Notes for the new academic year. Welcome back to the choir, returning after its summer break, and returning to the choir stalls at the back of church now that the scaffolding around the organ has been removed. And welcome back to the organ itself, of course!

The restoration work was completed on Friday 26th July, and the organ played its first voluntaries on Sunday 28th. It has had time to settle back into the environment of St Oswald's over the summer, and although minor issues of regulation and tuning have cropped up (as is only to be expected with a job of this size and complexity), it is sounding, in my opinion, better than ever. We are enormously grateful to Nicholson & Co. organ builders, and our consultant Tom Bell, for their hard work on this project.

There will be the opportunity to hear a little more about the project in talks and demonstrations during the Heritage Open Days, week beginning **16th September**, and a special rededication service to follow on **6th October** - stay tuned(!) for more details on these. For now, though, the organ is straight back into use as an accompanying instrument with Stanford's hymn-anthem *O! for a closer walk with God* (**Sunday 8th September**) - see the back page for more on this piece.

David Harris, Director of Music

THIS MONTH

Sunday 8th September - Eucharist (11.00 a.m.)

Anthem: *O! for a closer walk with God*

Music: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 - 1924)

Text: William Cowper (1731 - 1800) - *see Common Praise #532*

Voluntary: Postlude in D minor *from Six Short Preludes and Postludes (set 2), Op 105 no 6*

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 - 1924)

Sunday 15th September - Eucharist (11.00 a.m.)

Anthem: *Cantate Domino*

Music: Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni (1657 - 1743)

Text: Psalm 149 vv. 1-2

Voluntary: Festival Toccata

Percy Eastman Fletcher (1879 - 1932)

Sunday 15th September - Harvest Tea and Hymns (4.00 p.m., Institute)

Anthem: *For the beauty of the earth*

Music: John Rutter (b. 1945)

Text: Folliott Sandford Pierpoint (1835 - 1917)

We will also be singing a selection of Harvest hymns - come along to suggest your favourites!

Find out more at:

facebook.com/music.at.st.oswalds oswalds.org.uk/music

Email: d.m.harris108@gmail.com

Sunday 22nd September - Eucharist (11.00 a.m.)

Anthem: *From the rising of the sun*

Music: Sir Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley (1825 - 1889)

Text: Malachi 1:11

Voluntary: Nun danket alle Gott - Marche Triomphale, *from*

Choral-Improvisationen für Orgel, Op 65 no 59

Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877 - 1933)

Sunday 29th September - Eucharist (11.00 a.m.)

Anthem: *O quam gloriosum*

Music: Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548 - 1611)

Text: Magnificat antiphon for Second Vespers of All Saints

O quam gloriosum est regnum,

in quo cum Christo

gaudent omnes Sancti!

Amicti stolis albis,

sequuntur Agnum,

quocumque ierit.

O how glorious is the kingdom

in which with Christ

all the saints rejoice

Clad in robes of white,

they follow the Lamb,

wherever he goes.

Voluntary: Sonatina in D minor

Christian Ritter (c. 1645 to 1650 - after 1725)

Sunday 29th September - Congregational Evensong (6.00 p.m.)

Magnificat: Responsorial

Owen Alstott (b. 1947)

Nunc dimittis

Text: adapted Mary Holtby; music: Sir John Stainer (1840 - 1901)

Psalm 135: Responsorial

David Harris (b. 1994)

FEATURED PIECE

O! for a closer walk with God - Hymn (after a Song of Wisdom)

Music: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852 - 1924)

Text: William Cowper (1731 - 1800)

(see *Common Priase* #532, vv. 1, 3, 5)

Stanford's *Bible Songs* (op. 113) are a set of six songs for solo voice, each intended to be followed by a short SATB anthem. The last of these songs, *A Song of Wisdom*, takes its text from the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus 24, where the feminine personified figure of Wisdom describes her origin from God and her place among God's people.

The hymn-anthem *O! for a closer walk with God*, which the choir sings on 8th September, is intended to follow this. Based on the familiar hymn by William Cowper (tune: CAITHNESS, from the Scottish Psalter 1635), it responds to the preceding characterisation of wisdom by yearning for closeness to God and the rewards this brings - a "calm and heavenly frame", a "light to guide". It also invokes the Holy Spirit - the "Holy Dove" and "sweet messenger of rest" - perhaps Wisdom and the Spirit are to be taken as one and the same, a gift from God to those who follow him, helping to illuminate the path ahead, guard against sin, and "lead us to the Lamb."

Recommended recording: Winchester College Chapel, conducted by Malcolm Archer. Album: Stanford - Choral Music (also contains *A Song of Wisdom*, op. 113 no. 6)