



KENNETH LEIGHTON ORGAN WORKS VOLUME 1

STEPHEN FARR
& JOHN BUTT

ORGAN OF ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

Organ Works
Volume 1

Stephen Farr *organ*

with

John Butt *organ*

The Rieger organ of St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh

About Stephen Farr:

'His approach is refreshingly unfussy and quirk free, and he draws on an unfailingly interesting palette of tonal colours'

Gramophone

'Farr rises to the occasion, turning in performances that are as varied and vital as the music demands, intricate details inked with telling clarity'

Choir and Organ

Six Fantasies on Hymn Tunes, Op. 72 (1975)

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Helmsley | [3:22] |
| 2. Aus der Tiefe (Heinlien) | [4:02] |
| 3. Lumetto: Little canonic variations on
'Jesus bids us shine' | [2:57] |
| 4. St Columba (Erin) | [2:58] |
| 5. Veni Emmanuel | [6:11] |
| 6. Toccata on Hanover | [3:08] |

7. **Martyrs: Dialogues on a Scottish Psalm-tune, Op. 73 (1976)** [12:21]
for organ duet

8. **Improvisation in Memoriam Maurice de Saumarez (1969)** [6:50]

Missa de Gloria (Dublin Festival Mass), Op. 82 (1980)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------|
| 9. Kyrie | [4:35] |
| 10. Gloria | [8:28] |
| 11. Credo | [7:57] |
| 12. Sanctus | [5:39] |
| 13. Agnus Dei | [5:57] |
| 14. Ite, Missa Est | [4:32] |

Total playing time [79:07]



Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)
Organ Works Volume 1

'Like all great gifts of God, music is a mysterious and paradoxical thing which can be used or misused, and which encompasses every part of our being, body, mind and soul'

Kenneth Leighton

As a treble chorister from 1938, many of Kenneth Leighton's formative musical experiences were accompanied by the 1905 Abbott and Smith organ of Wakefield Cathedral, in the West Yorkshire city where he was born and educated. As well as informing his writing for both organ and choir, Leighton repeatedly praised the importance of his time in the choir stalls throughout his life, stating 'My whole background is choral church music. I think one's early background is terribly important' and '[...] my career as a Cathedral chorister left some of the most vivid impressions in my mind of that time of life [...] what a marvellous musical training.' Given this musical upbringing that left such a mark, it was perhaps inevitable that Leighton would go on to write a great deal of choral music, mostly liturgical, as well as works for the organ.

Most of Leighton's solo organ works were written to commission, the first of which,

the Op. 41 Prelude, Scherzo and Passacaglia, was completed in 1963 following a commission from Bryan Hesford, then organist of Wymondham Abbey in Norfolk. Initially, the organ was not an instrument for which Leighton felt particularly compelled to write, or even with which he felt particularly comfortable, turning to it only in his mid-thirties. He was most concerned overall with the instrument's architectural possibilities, at various times lamenting how the lack of clarity in the organ bothered him, as late as 1979, in a published interview stating how he '[...] found the organ frustrating, there's very little good music to play on it anyway apart from Bach'. While it seemed to present a significant challenge for him to overcome, however, his solo organ music constitutes a significant part of his output as a whole. Indeed in the same 1979 article he also goes on to say how '[...] I've found writing for the organ very exciting recently and I've kept on at it'.

The earliest of the four works contained in this volume, **Improvisation in Memoriam Maurice de Saussure** was composed during November and early December of 1969 – six years after the Prelude, Scherzo and Passacaglia, and during his second, and final, academic year as a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. It was some

years earlier, while a Gregory Fellow in music at the University of Leeds in the mid-1950s, that Leighton had first met the artist Lionel Maurice de Sausmarez (1915-1969), who held the post of Head of Fine Art at the same university from 1951-1959. In 1964, de Sausmarez commissioned Leighton to write his Seven Variations for String Quartet, Op. 43, in memory of the artist's mother, Jessie Rose de Sausmarez.

Writing about the Improvisation, Leighton states that it '[...] was composed towards the end of the 1969 for the memorial service [...] for the artist, teacher and dear friend, Maurice de Sausmarez, who died an early death in the same year.' The organist at the first performance, which took place on 15 December 1969 was Nicholas Cleobury, himself a former student under Leighton at Worcester College. From the outset the Improvisation is a work of great anguish, and is dark and deeply foreboding. Leighton further describes the work as expressing '[...] a mood of mourning and protest symbolised in the conflict between lyrical counterpoint, and an ostinato (subject to variation) consisting of three chord clusters which persist throughout the piece. The clusters reach a climax of intensity in a chord containing all the notes of the chromatic scale'.

The **Six Fantasies on Hymn Tunes**, Op. 72 were written during August 1975 and dedicated to Herrick Bunney (1915-1997), a close friend and the organist of St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh for an incredible fifty years from 1946 to 1996. Written some five years following Leighton's appointment as the Reid Professor of Edinburgh University's Faculty of Music, the Six Fantasies are representative of the considerable mellowing of his musical style that occurred during this decade, as well as demonstrating Leighton's interest in all forms of hymnody. Indeed, Leighton was one of the music consultants, as well as contributing five hymn tunes, for the third edition of The Church of Scotland's *The Church Hymnary*, first published in 1973.

This magnificently constructed and contrasted collection of hymn Fantasies begins with a strident Fantasy on the Advent hymn tune 'Helmsley' (Lo! he comes with clouds descending), marked by the composer as 'Exultant and fast'. The second Fantasy is based on the Lutheran chorale 'Aus der Tiefe', from the *Nürnbergisches Gesangbuch* of 1676 and mostly associated with the Lenten hymn 'Forty days and forty nights' in the Anglican tradition, and is much more chromatic and searching. The characterful Fantasy on 'Lumetto' follows, which is subtitled 'Little canonic variations on 'Jesus bids us shine'',



The organ of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh

which consists of four clear short variations of differing textures.

Associated with the text 'The King of love my Shepherd is', the fourth Fantasy is based on the Irish hymn tune 'St Columba'. A decorated version of the tune is heard in canon, beginning calmly before growing in intensity before an elated climax. Based on the hymn 'Veni Emmanuel' (O come, O come, Emmanuel) the fifth, and most substantial, Fantasy uses the melody of the Advent hymn adapted from a French Missal by Thomas Helmore (1811-1890), beginning darkly and chromatically before going through a series of variations, growing once again to a climax, before a sudden soft and serene ending. The final Fantasy is the vigorous 'Toccatto on Hanover' (O worship the King all-glorious above) that is reminiscent of the jubilation of the opening Fantasy on 'Helmsley'.

Commissioned by The Organ Club for its fiftieth anniversary in 1976, the organ duet **Martyrs: Dialogues on a Scottish Psalm-tune**, Op. 73 was first performed in Westminster Abbey on 15 July the same year by its dedicatees, brothers Nicholas and Stephen Cleobury. Furthering the influence of hymn tunes found in the Six Fantasies, *Martyrs* is based on the metrical psalm-tune of the same name that was first published in the

Scottish Psalter of 1615. Leighton was a frequent visitor to the Scottish Isle of Arran, which was also destined to become his final resting place. It was also a place where he liked to compose and during the winter of 1975-76 he decamped to the island to write the first act of his only full-scale opera, *Columba*, Op. 77, based on the life of the Irish saint and early Christian missionary. The significant organ duet *Martyrs* was also composed during this period in January and February of 1976.

The influences on *Martyrs* are inevitably linked to his other activities through this time, in particular his work on *Columba*. In many ways the bleakness of the winter on Arran is echoed throughout the duet alongside his interest in hymnody and, in this case, Scottish metrical psalm-tunes. Leighton states how 'The power of a great hymn tune is immortal – it spans the centuries and crams into a few notes the spiritual experience of a whole civilization, this is perhaps why I seem to be using them more and more as a focus and inspiration to my own ideas.' Leighton's fascination in this area also extended to the haunting and seemingly bizarre Gaelic methods of congregational psalm singing, that is found in churches in the Scottish islands in particular. The original psalm-tune, *Martyrs*, is in itself

an austere but robust psalm-tune, and is heard in full at the beginning of the work. Densely chromatic and inventive variations follow, the dialogue taking place between the two organ parts beginning with slow and soft counterpoint closely based on material from the psalm-tune. The work is characterised by constantly accumulating tension in the two extended parts of the work all leading up to the epic and fully harmonised final declaration of the psalm-tune, which is interspersed with triumphant fanfares.

At some thirty-five minutes in length, **Missa de Gloria**, Op. 82 is Leighton's *magnum opus* for the instrument, and the latest work in this collection. Begun in October 1979 and completed on 22 March 1980, it was written for the first Dublin International Organ Festival; the world premiere was given in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, by the organist Gerard Gillen on 29 June 1980. John Birch gave the UK premiere of the work in July the following year at St Michael's Church, Cornhill in London.

Subtitled the 'Dublin Festival Mass', the *Missa de Gloria* was described by Leighton to be the first of his works '[...] to be almost entirely inspired by plainsong'. While the 'Kyrie' is free and doesn't employ

this influence, each of the remaining movements of the organ mass features and is based on elements from the twelfth-century Sarum chant for use on Easter Day. While Leighton clearly marks where the representation of each section of text comes throughout the score, the chant is not always overtly obvious in most cases, and is quite seamlessly integrated into Leighton's musical style.

The opening 'Kyrie' contains a brooding atmosphere, described by Leighton as 'Intense and mainly contrapuntal movement based on oscillating major and minor thirds'. The 'Gloria' is contrasting, beginning optimistically with '[...] introductory fanfare-like sections', after which '[...] the music closely follows the plainsong in the manner of a *toccatto*.' A softer section, representing the text 'Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata', follows in which the plainsong is more decorated, before returning to the *toccatto* of the opening, which is now '[...] more developed [...] and culminates in a fugal *coda* on the word *Amen*.'

Leighton describes the 'Credo' as '[...] mostly calm and meditative', and asks in the score for 'frequent changes of colour' in the registration. The chant is most obviously stated throughout the 'Credo', surrounded by varying and often rich harmonic textures,

which are often improvisatory in nature, and suggestive of the twentieth-century French organ music that interested him – Messiaen in particular. Leighton continues: ‘The chant speaks for itself, but the treatment becomes gradually more decorated towards the end.’

The ‘Sanctus’ opens with a brilliant fanfare, ‘[...] a slow swing in great chordal and polytonal texture’ while the central ‘[...] *Pleni sunt caeli* is soft and dance-like’. The soft ‘Hosanna’ leads into the ‘Benedictus’, a bitonal duet, ‘[...] slow and mystical’ while ‘a brief reference to the dance says Hosanna.’ The chromatic and contrapuntal fantasia section that begins each ‘Agnus Dei’ is punctuated with a more chordal ‘miserere’ while ‘The final Agnus Dei and Dona nobis pacem are soloistic and triadic in conception.’ The closing dismissal ‘Ite Missa Est’ is highly virtuosic: ‘A brilliant toccata ending with a massive acclamation.’

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Stephen Farr and John Butt

**Specification of the 1992 Rieger Organ
St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh**

Great (Manual II)

1. Bourdon	16
2. Principal	8
3. Stopped Diapason	8
4. Harmonic Flute	8
5. Octave	4
6. Nachthorn	4
7. Quint	2 2/3
8. Superoctave	2
9. Mixture VI	2
10. Mixture IV	1 1/3
11. Cornet V	8
12. Trumpet	16
13. Trumpet	8
14. Trumpet	4
Tremulant	

Swell (Manual III)

26. Bourdon	16
27. Diapason	8
28. Souffle	8
29. Flûte à cheminée	8
30. Gambe	8
31. Voix Céleste	8
32. Prestant	4
33. Flûte pointue	4
34. Nazard	2 2/3
35. Quarte de Nazard	2
36. Tierce	1 3/5
37. Sifflet	1

38. Plein Jeu VI-VIII	2 2/3
39. Basson	16
40. Trompette	8
41. Hautbois	8
42. Voix humaine	8
43. Clairon	4
Glocken	
Tremulant	

Positive (Manual I)

15. Gedackt	8
16. Salicional	8
17. Principal	4
18. Chimney Flute	4
19. Octave	2
20. Recorder	2
21. Sesquialtera II	2 2/3
22. Larigot1	1 1/3
23. Mixture IV	1
24. Rankett	16
25. Cromorne	8
Tremulant	

Pedal

44. Untersatz	32
45. Principal	16
46. Open Wood	16
47. Sub Bass	16
48. Octave	8
49. Gedackt	8

50. Choral Bass	4
51. Flute	4
52. Mixture V	2 2/3
53. Bombarde	32
54. Bombarde	16
55. Fagotto	16
56. Posaune	8
57. Clarion	4
Glocken	

Compass: manuals C - a''' (58 notes)

pedals C - f' (30 notes)

Couplers: III/I, I/II, III/II, I/P, II/P, III/P

Combinations:

12 generals, 6 individuals per division on

16 memory levels

Sequencers

General Crescendo

Tutti

General cancel

Stephen Farr

Stephen Farr pursues a varied career as a soloist and continuo player, activities which he combines with the post of Director of Music at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge. He was Organ Scholar of Clare College, Cambridge, graduating with a double first in Music and an MPhil in musicology. He then held appointments at Christ Church, Oxford, and at Winchester and Guildford Cathedrals.

A former student of David Sanger and a prizewinner at international competition level, he has an established reputation as one of the leading recitalists of his generation, and has appeared in the UK in venues including the Royal Albert Hall (where he gave the premiere of Judith Bingham's *The Everlasting Crown* in the BBC Proms 2011); Bridgewater Hall; Symphony Hall, Birmingham; Westminster Cathedral; King's College, Cambridge, St Paul's Celebrity Series and Westminster Abbey: he also appears frequently on BBC Radio 3 as both performer and presenter.

He has performed widely in both North and South America (most recently as guest soloist and director at the Cartagena International Music Festival), in Australia, and throughout Europe.

He has a particular commitment to contemporary music, and has been involved in premieres of works by composers including Patrick Gowers, Francis Pott and Robert Saxton; he also collaborated with Thomas Adès in a recording of *Under Hamelin Hill*, part of an extensive and wide-ranging discography.

His concerto work has included engagements with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and the London Mozart Players; he made his debut in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in 2005. He has also worked with many other leading ensembles including the Berlin Philharmonic (with whom he appeared in the premiere of Jonathan Harvey's *Weltethos* under Sir Simon Rattle in October 2011), Florilegium, the Bach Choir, Holst Singers, BBC Singers, Polyphony, The English Concert, London Baroque Soloists, City of London Sinfonia, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Wallace Collection, Endymion Ensemble, the Philharmonia, Academy of Ancient Music, Britten Sinfonia and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

www.stephenfarr.co.uk



Stephen Farr

John Butt

John Butt is Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort. As an undergraduate at Cambridge University, he held the office of organ scholar at King's College. Continuing as a graduate student working on the music of Bach he received his PhD in 1987. He was subsequently a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of Magdalene College Cambridge, joining the faculty at UC Berkeley in 1989 as University Organist and Professor of Music. In autumn 1997 he returned to Cambridge as a University Lecturer and Fellow of King's College, and in October 2001 he took up his current post at Glasgow.

His books have been published by Cambridge University Press: these include Bach Interpretation (1990), a handbook on Bach's Mass in B Minor (1991), Music Education and the Art of Performance in the German Baroque (1994). Playing with History (2002) marked a new tack, examining the broad culture of historically informed performance and attempting to explain and justify it as a contemporary phenomenon. He is also editor or joint editor of both the Cambridge and Oxford Companions to Bach and of the Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Music (2005). His book on Bach's Passions, Bach's Dialogue

with Modernity, was published in 2010, and explores the ways in which Bach's passion settings relate to some of the broader concepts of modernity, such as subjectivity and time consciousness.

John Butt's conducting engagements with the Dunedin Consort (2003-) have included major Baroque repertory and several new commissions. His recording of *Messiah* in its first performed version (Dublin, 1742) was released in 2006 and received the Gramophone award in the Baroque Vocal Category in 2007 and the MIDEM award for Baroque Music in 2008. Linn released his recording of Bach's Matthew Passion in March 2008, and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in November 2008. His recording of Bach's Mass in B Minor was released in May 2010. He has been guest conductor with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Göttingen Handel Festspiele, the Berkeley Festival, the RSAMD Chamber Orchestra and Chorus and the Irish Baroque Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. John Butt also continues to be active as a solo organist and harpsichordist. Eleven recordings on organ, harpsichord and clavichord have been released by Harmonia Mundi. As conductor or organist he has performed throughout the world, including recent trips to Germany, France, Poland, Israel and Korea.

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