

The International Organ Festival at St Albans

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Festival 2011

Only **352** days to the 26th International Organ Festival at St Albans, which will take place from **7th to 16th July 2011**.

The 2011 Competitions Program was published on 23rd **March 2010**. Click **here** for more information.

If you have an enquiry about the Competition please contact the IOF office.

Meet the Artist 2009- 2010

- **Nicolas Kynaston**
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Meet . . . Nicolas Kynaston

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

The Bach Chaconne, written originally for solo violin, has been transcribed many times, most notably by Brahms whose transcription was for piano left-hand only! Of the many organ transcriptions, that by W T Beit is probably the earliest and certainly the most faithful to the original. Dupré's *'Suite Bretonne'* is his most light-hearted composition for organ. The three movements are inspired by his visit to the coastal resort of Perros-Guirec. Reger considered his F# minor Variations Op 73 his most important work for organ. It is on a massive scale. I played it for the first time in Germany in 1973 for the Reger Centenary Festival and subsequently broadcast it twice on the BBC and once for the Westdeutscher Rundfunk.



What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

I became interested in the organ when I was a choir boy at Westminster Cathedral and started lessons when I was 12. I had started the piano at the age of 6 and I later played the French Horn.

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

My two main teachers for the organ were Fernando Germani and Ralph Downes. I owe them a lot.

What is a typical day in the life of Nicolas Kynaston like?

There is no typical day in my life! I have been freelance since 1971 so every day is different.

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

In August I am playing in Dresden, then later in the month in Denmark. In September I play in Stuttgart and Ingolstadt, before St Albans. October – Westminster Cathedral. November – Athens Concert Hall.

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Meet . . . Lionel Rogg

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

In the center of my programme I put selection of beautiful chorale preludes from the "Orgelbüchlein" of Bach, following the calendar of the liturgical year. In contrast to those

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precious miniatures, I will then play the glorious Prelude and Fugue in C major BWV. 547, one of my favorites. Otherwise, the programme includes Spanish, Italian (Frescobaldi) and French classical (Grigny) music. I am particularly fond of the deep and majestic music by Nicolas de Grigny, so original with its very expressive ornamentation. As a conclusion, I play a little Suite of mine, written in 2008 for an instrument of a rather French style. The last piece is a "Scherzando"

which may bring a smiling conclusion to the concert.

What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

My interest for the organ was a consequence of my admiration for Bach. I heard the little G minor fugue played on a little romantic organ in a Swiss village when I was about 12 and this may have decided of my future as a musician, although I completed my piano studies with the great Russian pianist Nikita Magaloff...

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

When I started playing I was under the attraction of two stars : André Marchal and Helmut Walcha. Before, I had been taught by Pierre Segond at the Conservatory of Geneva. This former pupil of Dupré, great friend of Jehan Alain, gave me what I could call the "sense of quality". Then I learned everything from my wonderful pupils, and more recently I have received the most precious lessons watching on TV some of the great conductors.

What is a typical day in the life of Lionel Rogg like?

When I am at home, I devote the mornings to organ practice and the afternoons to composition. We are lucky enough to have a beautiful garden which can be sometimes invaded by our 9 grandchildren. I try to read every day a text in a foreign language, including Japanese... Watching then an episode from the "Tudors" can make it a day.

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

More concerts, more composition, Jurys in Leipzig and Haarlem, good time in the Swiss mountains.

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Meet . . . Helmut Deutsch

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

The programme of my St. Albans concert could be summarized by the thematic idea "Death and Life," or "From Darkness to Light."

This concept governs most of this evening's works, although the drama unfolds differently in each piece. One can hear a principal Beethoven had already used—"Through darkness to light—per aspera ad astra [to the stars through difficulties]"—playing out in Mendelssohn's first Sonata and Liszt's Fantasie-Sonata, "Après une lecture de Dante" ["After a Reading of Dante"]. Mendelssohn based his sonata on a musical text—the chorale "Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit" ["Thy will, my God, be always done"]—while Liszt followed and reflected on a



literary text by Victor Hugo.

Mendelssohn's Sonata in F Minor has a deeply earnest character, which expresses itself in the opening movement and returns in the third movement, after a lyrical Adagio that separates these dramatic sections. The music takes an unanticipated turn with a radiant and virtuosic Finale, so that the sonata closes with a distinctly positive character.

In Liszt's Fantasie-Sonata, "Après une Lecture de Dante," a tritone leitmotif is emblematic of the torments of Hell (a tormented artist, according to Victor Hugo's poem of the same name!). The dissolution of this tension-filled interval into a perfect fifth marks a transformation in this dark chapter and—as in the Mendelssohn

sonata—the music strives inexorably toward a positive ending.

One doesn't find this sort of positive dramatic turn of events in Mozart's *Fantasie K. 608*. The entire first part of the piece—the Introduction and Fugue—remains in the somber key of F Minor, which later returns following a tender *Andante* with variations. In contrast to the opening, the reprise unfolds with a double fugue and an unrelenting coda that brings the piece to an adamant close. The work is, without exaggeration, one of the most remarkable compositions in all of Mozart's corpus.

One can interpret the three sections of Bach's "*Pièce d'orgue*" as three stages of human life: "*Très vite*" is youth, with its carefreeness and freshness; "*Gravement*" is maturity, with strength in the middle of life; and "*Lentement*" is old age, with its gradual fading. The lament of the "*Lentement*," with its strident chromaticism and descending bassline, closes with a wonderfully simple cadential gesture that, in a musically symbolic manner, points upward.

The *Chorale Prelude "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," BWV 659*, is beautifully crafted—a quietly hopeful and radiant piece of music that points from the darkness of Advent to the light of Christmas.

What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

I began at the age of 11 by playing regularly for worship services on a little romantic organ in my hometown, in the far southwest of Germany, directly along the French border. The pedals were still foreign to me; up to that point, I had exclusively studied the piano (starting at the age of 5). Soon after, at the age of 12, I dived into regular organ lessons as well.

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

That's hard to say. Early on it was probably pianists and conductors. My father, an organist who passed away at too young an age, worshipped Marcel Dupré and Walter Gieseking, so naturally they colored my early impressions. Later influences included personalities like Bernstein, Gould, and Richter; but I never had a real favorite, as there were so many wonderful musicians, with their own particular idiosyncrasies.

What is a typical day in the life of Helmut Deutsch like?

That's also difficult to answer, because every day is different. As a Professor of Organ at the Hochschule fuer Musik in Freiburg, I typically teach three full days a week. I spend three other days handling various necessary tasks—preparing for concerts, dealing with correspondence, and so on. I try to keep one day free for my family and for things other than music, such as literature and art exhibits.

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

I still have several concerts to play before Christmas. I can't really single out a "highlight," as I try to regard every performance as special, but one of these concerts will be in St. Albans Cathedral, and I'm really looking forward to that! Afterward, I'll be giving a masterclass at the Royal Academy in London. Following Christmas, things will be somewhat calmer. After the New Year and until next summer, I'll be dedicating most of my time to my organ students, as there are several recitals, graduations, and special projects coming up, including taking my students on a week-long fieldtrip to learn about different organs. As my studio is quite full, there's a lot to do.

Next autumn, I hope to take a sabbatical from the University, as I'd like to be able to focus on my own studies without interruptions. My aim during this break is to continue writing organ transcriptions.

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Meet . . . Andrew Lucas

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

I chose the program to present to the audience what I feel can reveal the strengths and beauty of the repertoire for organ and the particular nature of the cathedral's organ. So the music of Bruhns and Buxtehude forms the bedrock of the repertoire upon which later musicians, including JS Bach, built. I love the drama and rhetoric of Bruhns and the contrasts and textural changes in Buxtehude's work which is seasonally apt. Both are fun to play on this organ - unlike most English instruments where one struggles to find a single successful and balanced registration scheme, this cathedral organ offers so much scope and many different possibilities. Karg-Elert's Canzona is a complete contrast revealing this organ in its most usual accompanimental role with voices and a violin solo participating towards the end. Peter Hurford's Passingala was composed in the exciting period when this organ here had first been installed - all the registration for the organ can be found in the printed score - it is a nod to those heady days. The Grainger is a bit of fun - not to be taken too seriously - featuring a fake 'cypher' which may even tease the organ builders! Finally this organ sounds wonderful in French music of any period. It's chameleon-like character is one of the great wonders of this fabulous instrument.



What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

First of all I started with the piano at the age of 7 but the organ was always an incentive - I was amazed by the size of the instrument and the fact that when you played the on one keyboard the notes on the other keyboards also went up and down 'by magic'. I was hooked!

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

All my teachers: William Smallman, John Birch, Peter Hurford, Piet Kee; my colleagues: John Scott Christopher Dearnley and Barry Rose in so many different ways; training choristers on a daily basis for more than 25 years teaches you so much about music - so all of those children in their funny little ways; conductors especially Laszlo Heltay (a wonderful musician) and orchestras - my first concert tour with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields (as a harpsichordist!) back in the 80s changed my organ playing more than you could ever have expected.

What is a typical day in the life of Andrew Lucas like?

Long! Regularly working from 7.30 am to 10 pm with many different parts of the day where I have to be at my very best to animate others. It's a six day week and very tiring, but it's usually fun, but not always. In between there are periods of extreme tedium - usually called meetings and administration by others. Organ playing features very low in my priorities these days, but its therefore more of a novelty and almost always enjoyable! Out of term time it's very different - on another shore and usually in a much greater light. Long live Easyjet!

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

More of the same - nothing very exciting!

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Meet . . . Sophie-Veronique Cauchefer-Choplin

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

I am happy to play this organ and I especially choose to play Couperin, Bach, Mendelssohn and Bedard because I am sure that these pieces will be nice on this organ... I finish with an improvisation because for me it's a tradition - I love to do this at the end of each concert!



What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

My first attraction and memory of an



organ was in my town... where my mother played for mass...I remember all the colours ...it was for me (I was 12) very magical that an instrument could make such different sounds! I began to learn the organ when I was 14, but I continued at the same time to practice (very hard) on the piano. But when I decided to try to enter at CNSM (Conservatoire national supérieur de musique) of Paris, I had to choose between the piano or organ. With organ studies you have to learn "harmonie, contrepoint, fugue" and it's difficult but exciting.

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

One of the first to inspire me was Pierre Cochereau. I lived near Chartres and we often went to the Grand prix de Chartres each September. Pierre Cochereau suggested that we sat down near the jury" ! It was incredible to meet a lot of organists - I was just 14,15,16... And at the end of each competition, Pierre Cochereau went to the organ and created a wonderful improvisation, it was fantastic! The improvisation of Rolande Falcinelli and Loïc Mallié have also greatly influenced my playing.

What is a typical day in the life of Sophie-Veronique Cauchefer-Choplin like?

A typical day when I am not at Royal College of Music in London or out for concerts - I practice for 3 hours; I teach my private students; I play in my 2 churches. I am a wife and a mother. - and I like to cook . . .

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

The highlight is every day for me! I am lucky to live with music as my passion, and I am lucky with my 2 children. But the first highlight of this year will be to play in the US in April, on the great organ of the Disney Hall center in Los Angeles.

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Meet . . . Saki Aoki

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

It is 100% pure French music. With this programme I would like to try to convey *esprit* of modern French music, which I assimilated and came to love in France, and I want to fill St Albans Cathedral with beautiful French sounds of the 20th century. The programme is constructed to show the links between the composers: that is to say Jean Langlais who composed the "Rhapsodie Gregorienne" which I will play first, studied at the National Institute of the Young Blind in Paris; as did Gaston Litaize who composed "Lied" which I will play for the last part of my programme. They were both pupils of Marcel Dupré in Paris, like Jehan Alain and Olivier Messiaen: Alain's two "Fantaisie" and "Litanies" and two pieces from the "Messe de la Pentecôte" of Messiaen are part of my programme.



I shall be playing "Andante Sostenuto" by Chartres-Marie Widor, who was a composition professor of Olivier Messiaen, and produced many famous organist-composers such as Marcel Dupré, and Charles Tournemire, who played at St. Clotilde church in Paris where Jean Langlais was the organist. My programme ends with Tournemire's great improvisation on "*Victimae Paschali laudes*". Thus the organist-composers whom I chose for this concert, crossed at various scenes in the 20th century. They were influenced by and stimulated each other, but at the same time they have own styles and strong colour of their music. I am sure that you will hear and enjoy that.

What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

I started to play the piano when I was 7 years old, influenced by my parents who love music. The CD of J.S.Bach by Glenn Gould was always being played at home and I grew up listening to it. But

the problem was that my older sister was a pianist too and I just didn't want to play the same instrument! So at the age of 14 I made up my mind to change my instrument and said "no more playing the same thing as my sister!" I hesitated between harpsichord or organ. Then my parents took me to the organ concert in Tokyo and it was the concert of André Isoir. I was moved by the giant instrument, its strength and unlimited possibilities. Then I determined to start playing the organ. By the way, my sister became an organist too 5 years ago! (Now there is no problem between us, since I became an adult!)

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

I can not choose just one person, but the first great encounter of my musical life, when I was 17 years old, was with Masaaki Suzuki, organist and conductor. He gave me so many ideas, expert knowledge, and dynamics. Eric Lebrun was another great influence, he developed my interest in French organ music which became a very important part of my musical life in France. I must also mention Erwan Le Prado, with whom I studied a lot and shared some happy times and hard times. We prepared for several competitions and I progressed so much musically, technically and mentally through his lessons, I am sure that I would not be as I am today without him.

What is a typical day in the life of Saki Aoki like?

Practice, practice, eating, practice, practice, sleeping, practice, practice, concert, practice, practice etc... sometimes good beers and I am quite happy about this simple life style !

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

I am planning to record a CD this winter, in Chartres Cathedral, of 20th century French organ music. This is my first album so it will be very interesting, and I am very excited at this first step in a new direction in my musical life.

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Meet . . . Clive Driskill-Smith

Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

I have chosen a programme of English, French and German music for the Mander organ in St Peter's Church. The concert begins with Sir William Harris' arresting Flourish for an Occasion, originally composed for the annual Garter service of 1947 at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where he was organist. Cochereau's Bolero sur un theme de Charles Racquet is next; the bolero rhythm is provided by a side-drum player, while the harmonies built over a pp-ff-pp arc form are typical of Cochereau's improvisations at Notre Dame. Mozart's Fantasia in F minor K608 is dramatic in the outer sections and sublime in the central variations, and this is followed by one of Mendelssohn's most popular works, the Sonata in A major, with its grand first and charming second movement. Wesley's effective Larghetto in F sharp minor provides a moment of calm before the final work, Dupre's exciting Variations sur un Noel, which end in a blazing D major toccata.



What first attracted you to the organ as an instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

As a boy at Eton College I attended morning services in College Chapel every day and was struck by the look and sound of the magnificent Hill organ. All the visible pipes are painted in colourful patterns and I remember being fascinated by the variety of beautiful soft sounds and the power of full organ. So I asked the Director of Music, Ralph Allwood, if I could start learning the organ. Unfortunately, he said no, not until I'd done grade 8 piano! So I practised the piano hard that year, did grade 8, and then started learning the organ with Alastair Sampson when I was 15.

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

David Sanger has been a wonderful influence on my playing. I

have also studied with Hans Fagius in Copenhagen, as well as with Marie-Claire Alain, Guy Bovet, Andrea Marcon, Luigi Tagliavini and Harald Vogel.

What is a typical day in the life of Clive Driskill-Smith like?

As Sub-Organist at Christ Church Cathedral, I am involved in all aspects of the Cathedral's music department, both administrative and practical, including the 8am chorister practice, 5pm full choir rehearsal and 6pm evensong. I practise every day, teach the organ privately, teach Harmony and Counterpoint to the Christ Church music undergraduates, and perform concerts in this country and abroad.

What are the highlights of your forthcoming schedule?

I'm looking forward to two concert tours in the USA, one in October (Austin, Oklahoma City, Laredo, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Nashville) and the other in February (St Louis, Pittsburgh, Dundas, Richmond), to recording another CD on the Rieger organ at Christ Church, and to directing the Cathedral Choir during Stephen Darlington's sabbatical next year.

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