

ULSTER SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS AND CHOIRMASTERS

President: James Little



USOC BULLETIN OCTOBER 2007

**Members Recital
Saturday 27th October at 7.30pm
St George's Parish Church, Belfast**

Saturday 27th October is next event, our annual Members' Recital:
St George's PC at 7.30 (note time)

Featuring Charles Harrison and Nigel McClintock
(Both former Directors of Music)



This will also feature the choir of St George's with David Revels, Director of Music and accompanied by Richard Campbell, Organist.

Admission is free. Members are encouraged to bring their friends.

Note time: 7.30 p m.

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2008 Trip – Liverpool, Chester and the North West.

Because of the postal strike we have extended the deadline for bookings to 31 October. If you have lost the booking form, you can download it from the USOC website, or call the Secretary on (028) 9032 8332

Bach at Queen's: From 2nd to 4th November there will be an International Symposium 'Understanding Bach's B-minor Mass. This will feature a string of internationally renowned speakers and musicians. It will conclude with a performance of the work itself by the Dunedin Consort, directed by John Butt in Clonard Monastery. This will be a *Belfast Festival at Queen's* concert so tickets will be available from their Box Office.

In advance of the Symposium (for which there will be a charge) there will be a series of free Bach Workshops for the local community.

Keyboard Workshop: 10-12:30, jointly hosted by QUB, Ulster Hall, and USOC

Tutors: Colm Carey (harpsichord and organ), Philippa Waite (baroque dance). This is a workshop for young pianists of Grade 8 or above standard. It will be a rare opportunity for pianists to work with a professional organist, scholar/performer, and a Baroque dancer, exploring two specific areas:

1. Learning to play the Early Keyboard Instruments to appreciate how Bach originally created his sound world, and
2. Learning some aspects of the Baroque dance, which is fundamental to the sound understanding of general characters in any Baroque compositions.

The participants can stay on to have individual lessons with the artists in the School of Music building.

Further details from Professor Yo Tomita (028 9097 5206 or y.tomita@qub.ac.uk). Also see www.music.qub.ac.uk. Two of our committee members Tanja Tierney and Ian Mills, both PhD students at QUB are heavily involved with the organisation of all the events and USOC members will find much to enjoy.

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Saturday 15 December, 2007 at 8.00pm: The Priory Singers

(Director: Harry Grindle)

with Noel Williamson (Organ) will present what will be their *last*
"Carols by Candlelight" in St. Molua's Parish Church, Stormont, Belfast.

Admission: £10.00(including seasonal refreshments).

Tickets available from The Good Book Shop, 61-67 Donegall Street,
Matchetts Music Ltd., 6 Wellington Place or telephone 028 9048 4913.

Colm Carey, Belfast City Organist. Last year, Colm gave a private lesson to a number of advanced players who had not had the opportunity to have formal lessons for some time. These were free of charge and were appreciated by those who took part. Colm is keen to repeat the experience and anyone interested should the President.

Reviews

DVD - The Grand Organ of Liverpool Cathedral – Ian Tracey
(PRDVD 1)

It was with much anticipation that I waited (for just over a week) for the delivery of Priory Records first DVD release. I have to admit that I no longer buy a lot of organ CD's and simply download from itunes any tracks I want to hear, but as soon as I heard about this, it was a must have! Mainly because, like every other "organ nut" out there, I have a certain fascination with this the largest liturgical instrument in the UK.

Sitting down to view (give yourself about 1 ½ hours to watch it all in one sitting) I was immediately disappointed by the filming which does seem slightly amateur compared to what I was expecting. Once I selected "play all" and sat back, it became very quickly evident that the filming was not live and that Prof. Tracey was "miming" to the audio he had recorded earlier. I found it very irritating hearing registration changes but not seeing them (even taking into account the general crescendo pedal) and hearing swell shades moving but the LED's on the console (Liverpool has Willis infinite speed & gradation swell pedals with LED displays) not moving! But worst of all was when Ian Tracey was obviously having trouble knowing when to start and end with the recorded sound. I don't blame him for this but rather Priory who surely could have afforded at least 2 cameras and recorded the visuals "live".

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And at £24.99 you expect a top-notch product! However, if you simply accept that this is the way it is, the recital that enfolds before you is enjoyable with a varied programme typical of that played at recitals at Liverpool – don't expect Bach preludes & fugues but rather transcriptions of Bach's orchestral works. Other composers played include Schumann, Verdi, Mulet, Tchaikovsky & Flor Peeters. An eclectic mix!

For all my irritation at the cheap production however, by far the best bit of this disk is the extra features! There is a chat through the programme at the console with Ian Tracey as well as him talking about his 25 years at Liverpool, but the 20 minute demonstration of the organ (stop by stop) is worth the £24.99 alone I reckon!

I do hope that Priory make more of these DVD's (similar disks of St. Paul's or Royal Albert Hall for example would sell like hot cakes) and if they do, let's hope they throw a bit more money at the production side of things.

Available from Priory's website - www.priory.org.uk

Richard Campbell

A country experience – Choral Evensong at St Andrew's Church, Balligan, with the Balligan Consort, 14th October 2007.

On a rare afternoon off from Belfast Cathedral I was delighted to be able to attend Choral Evensong not of my own making! I was invited to the beautiful village size church, St Andrew's Balligan, and to hear the Balligan Consort directed by David McKnight. The "a cappella" service began with the introit *Give almes of thy goods* by Christopher Tye, the canticles sung to a setting by Samuel Arnold (1740 to 1802) and the anthem, William Mundy's *O Lord the maker of all thing*.

Although the choir are positioned behind the congregation (and I always think it is beneficial to see the choir sing as well as hear them) I was pleasantly surprised by the truly musical performance, with precise tuning and beautifully shaped melodic lines. Often, a completely unaccompanied service can lack this, but not with the Balligan Consort. My only disappointment was the Sanders Responses, which felt a little simple and too easy for the choir. Have you tried Radcliffe? Or Stopford

Choral Evensong in the traditional form is sung at Balligan every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month (not July and August) at 3.30pm.

Philip Stopford

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Vacant Consoles

Townsend Street Presbyterian Church
Hunter Organ, Sunday morning only, no midweek choir practice.
Contact Reverend Jack Lamb, (028) 9084 9144 or 07720 293941

USOC 2007 Programme

17th Nov Hollywood Music Festival.
Inaugural organ classes organised by USOC

St Peter's Cathedral and USOC Saturday Mass series continues ...

November 17th Durufle Requiem (Requiem Mass)
7.30pm Cathedral Voices, Ecclesium and Melisma

This will be preceded by a concert of Sacred Choral Music sung by Ecclesium, Directed by Philip Stopford. Allegri's Miserere Mei, Salve Regina by Victoria and Poulenc and a new commissioned work, Collect of St Luke, by Philip Stopford. 6pm start, £8 admission by programme.

***Congratulations to Mr Nigel McClintock who has been appointed
Director of Music at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast.***

Any items of interest or news, or church posts you wish to advertise, should be sent to me at music@belfastcathedral.org or Director of Music, Belfast Cathedral, Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2HB. Thank you. Philip Stopford, Hon. Sec.

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2008 May Trip: Saturday 3rd to Bank Holiday Monday 5th

For next year's trip we plan to be based in Chester and visit that Cathedral city, north Wales including St Asaph, Liverpool including both Cathedrals, and other interesting venues in Lancashire and Cheshire. As you will know, Liverpool is to be European City of Culture in 2008. Professor Ian Tracey is assisting us with our planning of what should be another enjoyable expedition.

As usual, we need to collect deposits from those interested so that we will be in a position to book accommodation and flights at the lowest possible prices once the relevant flights are available (in this case to and from Liverpool). We expect the total price (flights, two nights room only, private coach travel as required and fees/gratuities) to be between £240 and £280 for those sharing a room, with a single supplement of £60.

Please complete and return the attached slip to
Philip Walden, 20 Hazeldene Avenue, Bangor, BT20 4RA
by **31st October** to make a booking.

I enclose a cheque for £150 (£200 for single room) or £300 (for two people) as a deposit for the 2008 USOC trip.

Name(s) _____

Full address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____