

TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

Francis Rumsey graduated from the University of Surrey in 1983 with a first class degree in Music with Applied Physics (Tonmeister), after which he worked for Sony Broadcast as a Lecturer and Product Manager. He returned to Surrey to join the teaching staff as a lecturer in 1986, eventually becoming a professor, leading a research group specialising in sound quality, spatial audio and psychoacoustics. In 2009 he left Surrey to devote his attentions more fully to some of his other activities. He now works as a technical writer, consultant and organist, through his company, Logophon Ltd. He is currently Chair of the Technical Council of the Audio Engineering Society, Consultant Editor of the AES Journal, and was recently awarded the AES Bronze Medal in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the Society. Francis is organist and choirmaster at St Mary the Virgin Church, Witney. He studied organ performance with Ann Elise Smoot in London, and more recently improvisation with Andrew Knowles in Oxford. Until June 2010 he was Director of Music at St Mary's, Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey, and has played for various cathedral engagements of the Guildford Chamber Choir including at Guildford, Winchester, Portsmouth, Romsey Abbey, and St. George's, Windsor. In the past few years he has given international recitals at the School of Music, Piteå, Sweden, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan, St Matthias Church, Berlin and the Cathedral of the Polish Army, Warsaw. He sings bass with the Oxford Pro Musica Singers, and accompanies concerts and services for various choirs.

Sigrid Erbe-Sporer started playing the piano aged 7, violin aged 11 in Ingolstadt, and pipe organ aged 14. She decided early that she wanted to become a musician, and studied music for higher education at the University of Würzburg and the Music University of Würzburg. Among her teachers had been Peter Hollfelder, well-known for his books about history of piano music and Norman Shetler (Lied Accompaniment). After the 2nd state examination she started to work as a music teacher and musician. Eventually she decided to conclude her organ studies with a formal examination (Reinhold Meiser, Ingolstadt and University for Protestant Church Music, Bayreuth). For a long time she was playing violin and viola in several orchestras, and organ in church services. During a childcare break she developed more interest in popular music and got additional training in jazz, pop music and composition in Weikersheim and Fürth. She currently teaches piano to children and adults, plays the organ at different congregations in the Nuremberg region, and the harpsicord and the piano together with the ensemble Pegnitzschäfer-Klangkonzepte and Christian Gabriel (J.S.Bach, W.A.Mozart, G.Pergolesi and others). She is responsible for music education in the Bavarian branch of the international initiative World Day of Prayer. In recent years she has played jazz on the pipe organ, has her own jazz combo, and her newest project is bringing together pipe organ and saxophone.

THE ORGAN

The current organ at St Matthias was originally built in 1958 by the firm of Romanus Seifert & Son, consisting of four manuals and pedals. It is distributed spatially and the considerable reverberation of the space gives it an impressive but challenging acoustic context. From 1972–4 it was enlarged by Seifert to become what was then the largest organ in Berlin, containing 109 ranks and 74 stops. In 1993 it was subject to a general overhaul during the church renovation, and a new console was built by Stockmann. Thanks to recent additions in 2008–9 it now has an extensive combination system and a few more ranks, bringing the specification to 111 ranks and 76 stops, arranged on four manuals and pedal. More information can be found at http://www.die-orgelseite.de/specials/stmatthias/stmatthias_e.htm, and <http://st-matthias-berlin.de/musik/die-st-matthias-orgel.html>

Organ Concert

Katholische Kirchengemeinde
St. Matthias • Berlin

“Jazz Meets Classical”

Francis Rumsey and Sigrid Erbe-Sporer



Presented as part of the
Audio Engineering Society's 142nd Convention

Monday 22nd May, 2017

20:00 (8 pm)

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91) Fantasia in F minor, K.608

Both of the so-called Fantasias for organ were originally written for a type of clockwork organ, probably with rather short, high-pitched pipes, which would have made it sound somewhat light and squeaky. The works we know now are essentially arrangements of piano duet versions made by other people soon after the original was composed. That may help to explain why they are quite difficult to play in some places, as the original wouldn't have taken any account of the problems of actually performing these with hands and feet on a real organ. The arrangements lend themselves to some fat, dramatic registrations in places, quite unlike the original, although there's a suggestion that Mozart would probably have preferred what we play today. There's a grand opening theme in French style, which reappears a number of times in slightly altered form including at the end, some fugal sections, and a lovely set of variations in the middle that has some tricky pedal work.

Peter Hurford (b. 1930) Chorale Prelude on *Wem in Leidenstagen*

This delightful, short chorale prelude was written by Peter Hurford, the British organist who held a post at St. Albans Abbey for many years, and was instrumental in setting up the St. Albans Festival, now a major international organ competition. His interest in the neo-classical organ movement led to the building of a new organ at St. Albans Abbey in 1962, on whose design he worked with Ralph Downes. He is well known for his ground-breaking recordings of the complete organ works of J. S. Bach, made in the 1970s.

Jean Langlais (1907-91) Hymne d'Action de Grâce "Te Deum", Op. 5

Langlais was blind for almost his entire life, but overcame this challenge to become a widely acclaimed organist, winning various prizes and gaining the titular organist position at Ste. Clotilde in Paris, where he stayed for 42 years. This work is one of three "Gregorian Paraphrases", based on plainsong melodies. It begins with a statement of the plainsong theme in sections interspersed with fanfare-like answers. Its wonderfully chromatic modes and dramatic moments make for exciting listening, with the plainsong theme woven in to the improvisatory material. It concludes with some wild fantasia-like flourishes, settling onto a triumphant A major cadence.

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) Symphony No. 6 in G minor

IV – *Cantabile*
V – *Finale*

Widor's organ symphonies are among the greatest achievements of the organ repertoire, specifically intended to show off the orchestral and tonal palettes of Cavaillé-Coll's striking new organs. The idea of a "symphony" for the organ was a relatively new one, and these typically have multiple movements in different styles, often concluding with a grand finale in high French romantic style. Number six is one of the best, with its finale slightly less well known than the famous "Widor Toccata" from the 5th Symphony. We hear the beautiful, singing *Cantabile*, which uses a solo reed or two on the Recit. division accompanied by a mellow flute on the Grand Orgue. Then to conclude, the exciting *Finale* in G major, taken at a steady pace here in St Matthias, to accommodate the considerable reverberation time.

Short interval (5 minutes)

Zsolt Gárdonyi (b. 1946)

Mozart Changes

Gárdonyi was born in Budapest and undertook music studies in Budapest and Germany. He has been Professor of Music Theory at the Music College in Würzburg since 1980, and gained international recognition as a composer, concert organist and music theorist. "Mozart Changes" was composed in 1995, and makes an interesting contrast with the classical Mozart played in the first half of this program. It revolves around two motifs from W.A. Mozart's last piano sonata, KV 572. "Changes" suggests an association with jazz harmony, a term used for chord progressions, and Mozart's sonata changes from classical to jazz.

Johannes Matthias Michel (b. 1962)

Suite Jazzique

Grand Choeur
Prière
Menuett Jazzique
Cantilène Nuptiale
Toccata Jazzica

Johannes Michel was born in Gaienhofen (Bodensee), and undertook his music studies (piano and church music) in Basel, Heidelberg and Frankfurt. He is director of church music in Mannheim, teaches organ playing at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Mannheim, and at the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik in Heidelberg is a composer (especially church music in jazz style) and concert organist.

Suite Jazzique is inspired by French organ suites and organ symphonies of the 19th century, such as the Widor that Francis played in the first half. The composer himself says in the preamble that it sounds accidentally similar to certain compositions (some movements seem rather similar to *Suite Gothique* by Leon Boellmann, and even some of the movements have similar names). *Grand Choeur* is reminiscent of a piece of the same name by Theodore Dubois. *Prière* is based on *Prière à Notre Dame* by Leon Boëllmann from the *Suite Gothique*. The middle part, however, spreads into rubato and includes B-A-C-H motifs. The *Menuett Jazzique* includes references to Boëllmann, but includes a somber jazz waltz in the middle section. *Cantilène Nuptiale* is a further tribute to Dubois, and finally the *Toccata Jazzica* pokes fun with its references to Boëllmann's Toccata. You'll hear a small series of musical quotations towards the end, including the "Pink Panther" theme.