



ST. MARGARET'S
ILKLEY

St Margaret's Church, Queen's Road, Ilkley

Organ Recital

by Christopher Rathbone

Friday, February 4th 2022
at 12.30pm

Programme

Suite Gothique op 25 (1895)
Introduction-Choral Menuet Prière à Nôtre Dame Toccata
Léon **BOËLLMANN** 1862 - 97

from Suite Modale op 43 (1938)
Scherzo Adagio
Flor **PEETERS** 1903 – 1986

Elegy (1965)
Kenneth **LEIGHTON** 1929 - 1988

Rosace (Esquisses Byzantines publ. 1920)
Henri **MULET** 1878 - 1967

Fugen über B.A.C.H. op 60 (1845) 3 & 4
Andante Moderato, ma non troppo lento
Robert **SCHUMANN** 1810 – 1856

Fantasia on 'The Old Bath Road'
Christopher **RATHBONE** b. 1947

Programme Notes

This is a very mixed programme, a 'pot-pourri', a varied 'box of delights'.

Flor **Peeters** came from a Dutch Lutheran background, and wrote literally hundreds of Chorale Preludes. His Modal Suite (1938) was an attempt to achieve the popularity of **Boëllmann's** Suite Gothique (1895) only in a more modern modal idiom. The opening 'Koraal' is very brief (Boëllmann's 'Choral' is similar), while the Scherzo (in the Phrygian mode) has reached a certain popularity. The Adagio is similar to many of Peeters's slow movements, while the Toccata (mixolydian mode) is an effective example of the genre, if not quite as effective or popular as the Toccata Gothique! Here I shall play the well-known Boëllmann suite complete, plus the two charming Peeters inner movements, the Scherzo and Adagio.

The **Leighton** Elegy was composed for a Novello anthology called 'Music before service', though it somewhat exceeds its brief. It starts as a plaintive melody over an undulating accompaniment, but rises over several pages of intense development to a fortissimo climax before gradually subsiding to a pianissimo ending, albeit on a still tense final chord. Leighton, a brilliant pianist but not an organist at all, had produced his first organ work, the highly successful Prelude, scherzo and passacaglia, only a couple of years before. His knowledge of organ music was almost entirely aural, having been a chorister at Wakefield cathedral as a boy.

Henri **Mulet** is best known for two toccata-like pieces, the Carillon-sortie, and the toccata 'Tu es petra' from the Byzantine Sketches. The third of these 10 pieces is Rosace, a musical evocation of one of the massive and elaborate Rose windows to be found in French Gothic cathedrals: correspondingly delicate and elaborate musical textures are to be found in 'Rosace'.

In September we heard the first two of **Schumann's** six Fugues on BACH of 1845 which may have inspired Liszt's Prelude and fugue of 1855 heard here in December. (Schumann's – and Bach's - Leipzig and Liszt's Weimar are only a few miles apart). The 5-part Fugue no 3 has rich chromatic textures, while no 4 builds up to full organ before subsiding to a gentle pianissimo ending.

My Fantasia on '**The Old Bath Road**' was an 'in-joke' at Marlborough College where I was chapel organist for 23 years. It starts aggressively ('one of those dreadful modern pieces old Rathbone always plays'), but gives way to the splendidly Edwardian tune of the school song, The Old Bath Road, composed by John Ivimey (1868 – 1961), who was Director of Music from 1919. The tune is subjected to variation before being interrupted by the 'modernist' opening material. Two bars of the school song appear in the final peroration. This piece was played at the end of term service three times a year for nearly two decades, and an orchestral version of the Fantasia was once played at a First Orchestra concert too. I included the piece in a recital in Leeds Town Hall in 1999, and recorded it live for Amphion at a recital in Leeds Parish Church in February 2000.

Thank you for attending one of our First Friday organ recitals. Please make an appropriate donation to our retiring collection, in a Gift Aid envelope if possible. As well as contributing to our Choral Scholar scheme, the money will also help to build up the organ reserve fund for next time the organ needs a major overhaul.

The next recital is on Friday, March 4th.