

Organ Recital - Linden Innes-Hopkins
St Mary's Church, Welwyn - Saturday 6 February at 11.15 am
Two Toccatas and something in between...

Toccatas and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565

Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

This is arguably the most famous piece of organ music, possibly due in part to its appearance in the 1962 film, *The Phantom of the Opera*. It was composed by Bach when he was a young man, perhaps around the age of 20, when he was trying to establish a reputation both as a player and as a composer. In the light of this, it is unsurprising that it is a work displaying some virtuosity in both the writing for manuals and for pedals. The Fugue makes extensive use of echo effects before building to an unexpected and dramatic interrupted cadence, followed by a return to the improvisatory style of the Prelude.

Master Tallis's Testament (No 3 from six pieces for Organ)

Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)

Howells, like Bach, was an organist; he was known for his improvisations and, indeed, a number of his compositions feel like improvised music. *Master Tallis's Testament*, however, is rather different, drawing on Howells's deep love for Tudor music, which he first encountered while editing choral music from that period. Overall, the mood is elegiac, ruminatory and nostalgic but the modal melodies and jazz-influenced harmonies are woven skilfully into the fabric of what, at the outset, seems to be an Elizabethan 'sorrowful song'.

Mozart Changes (1995)

Zsolt Gárdonyi (b. 1946)

Things can change; things do change – and this is certainly one of the ways in which the title is reflected in the music, wherein Mozart's original theme (taken from the Piano Sonata in D, KV 576) undergoes a series of transformations. However, 'changes' – especially in the context of jazz harmony - can also mean a series of chords. Bellringers, too, use the word 'change' to indicate the many various orders which are possible with a particular set of bells. Apparently, if there are 12 bells available, the number of 'changes' is 480 million!

Suite Gothique (Opus 25)

Léon Boëllmann (1862 – 1897)

- 1. Introduction – Choral**
- 2. Menuet Gothique**
- 3. Prière à Notre-Dame**
- 4. Toccata**

Boëllmann graduated with 1st prizes in no less than six different musical disciplines and was taken under the wing of Gigout, for whom he became a kind of assistant teacher. He was renowned as a performer (apparently able to 'coax pleasing sounds from even the most recalcitrant instruments') and as a teacher. As well as 'pleasing sounds', Boëllmann is said to have had a 'pleasing personality' and made friends easily; he died, aged just 35, possibly from tuberculosis. The *Suite Gothique* is one his best-loved compositions for organ. A stately Chorale (hymn tune) is followed by a cheerful Minuet; the *Prière à Notre-Dame* conjures up the reverent atmosphere suggested in its title; the final movement – often accompanied by the choir humming the pedal part if played as a final voluntary! – is today's final piece and second Toccata.