

Organ Recital – Linden Innes-Hopkins – Music for Autumn and Harvest
Saturday 3 October at 11.15 am – St Mary's church, Welwyn

Overture to 'The Occasional Oratorio'

Andante maestoso – Allegro – Adagio – March

G F Handel (1685 – 1759)

The Occasional Oratorio was composed or (more accurately) stitched together from earlier compositions in 1745 for a prematurely celebratory concert attended by the Duke of Cumberland, who was leading the King's troops in suppressing the Jacobite uprising (Bonny Prince Charlie and all that). It is certainly upbeat and makes a suitably celebratory start to today's concert. Thinking about Harvest, Handel was a philanthropist as well as a composer; he was a benefactor to the Foundling Hospital in London, which cared for abandoned – usually illegitimate – babies.

3 movements from 'California Wine Suite', Opus 40

Hans Uwe Heilscher (b. 1945)

1. Zinfandel (Siciliana)

Medium-full-bodied dry, rich red wine, a speciality of California.

Intense, fruity and berry-like.

2. Late Harvest (Rêverie)

Strong white, fruity wines with a good degree of sweetness.

Good for accompanying desserts.

3. Cabernet Sauvignon (Fanfares)

Full-bodied dry red wine of distinction.

Tannic when young, complex and oaky when aged.

Sarabande for the 12th day of any October from 'Partita' (1972)

Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)

A Sarabande is a stately (possibly Spanish in origin) slow dance in 3-time. Howells's piece is actually so slow that it would be extremely difficult to dance to. Every melodic fragment descends, giving the music a melancholy, autumnal feel. The rich harmonies, too, are pervaded with sadness through Howells's copious use of 'blue' (flattened) notes.

Praeludium in E minor, Bux WV 142

D Buxtehude (1637 – 1707)

Like most of Buxtehude's Praeludiums, this piece is in multiple sections. An opening Fantasia-like section leads into two fugues; the first is rather busy and the second is characterised by a descending chromatic theme, which is autumnal in character. An improvisatory section leads to the final section, which is a Jig, a quick dance – perhaps reminiscent of peasants' merry-making once the harvest is 'in'!

Largo from 'The New World Symphony'

A Dvorak (1841 – 1904)

This sublime movement from Dvorak's most famous Symphony will be familiar to most because it was used for the evocative (filmed in Shaftesbury) Hovis advertisement. With that association – bread – the piece seemed eminently suitable for today's concert!

Nu la Oss Takke Gud (Now thank we all our God)

Egil Hovland (1924 – 2013)

Written in typical French Toccata style (i.e. with many, many virtuosic notes in the manuals and the melody played by the pedals, this Norwegian 'take' on the famous German hymn of thanksgiving, 'Nun danket', provides an exciting end to the concert. For those who might be interested... just before the end, the organist is required to play black-note clusters using the side of the left hand in a kind of chopping action!!