

Preface

Music for organ has always been an important part of the catalogue of the music publisher Stainer & Bell, founded in 1907 and in its early days closely associated with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924). For the fledgling company he undertook the editing of an influential collection of organ music, known as the ‘black and white’ from its distinctive cover design. Most of its contents were contemporary, composed between 1906 and 1910, and all pre-dated the First World War, but several of them have become classics, including Stanford’s own opus 101 and opus 105 sets of *Preludes and Postludes*, and Harold Darke’s superb *Rhapsody* in E. Then, in the 1920s, the experiment was repeated with another series, this time edited by Henry Ley (1887–1962), who chose to feature a large number of transcriptions, including works by Handel and Vaughan Williams, plus another firm favourite, the *Tuba Tune* by Norman Cocker.

These two collections are the source for all but one of the items in *By Babylon’s Streams*, which has been compiled to reflect a growing interest in music of this period, shown in the increasing availability of recordings of the repertoire, and a conviction that it compares favourably with the very best of continental traditions. The exception, a slightly earlier *Scherzoso* by Walter Battison Haynes (1859–1900), is included on the grounds of its own merits, and to show the continuity of the English school through from the latter part of the nineteenth century. Robin Langley described it as a ‘Dvořák-like Slavonic dance’, and it is the third movement, perhaps redolent also of Guilmant, from an organ sonata published by Kistner in Leipzig in 1883 as the composer’s opus 11. The dedication is to ‘Herr Professor Dr. Robert Papperitz’, who was organist of the Nicolaikirche. Like many English composers of this period, including Stanford himself, Haynes went to Germany to complete his musical training (he had previously been a pupil of Ebenezer Prout). At Leipzig he studied with Jadassohn and Reinecke at the Conservatoire. The sonata was published shortly before his return to England, where he subsequently became organist to the Chapel Royal, Savoy, and a staff member of the Royal Academy of Music.

Charles Wood (1866–1926), Professor of Music at the Royal College of Music and later at Cambridge University, was a fastidious composer of church and instrumental music, and a highly-regarded teacher. His 16 organ preludes ‘founded on melodies from the English and Scottish Psalters’ are notable for their use of metrical psalm tunes as a source of invention. The most extensive and popular item from this set is the prelude on the tune *St Mary*. The shorter piece included here, *Nunc Dimittis*, from the great sixteenth-century treasury of sacred song, the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter, was a favourite of the virtuoso English organist Sir George Thalben-Ball (1896–1987). He performed the work with the lower voice of the right-hand canon thumbed on the Choir Clarinet, an attractive effect reproduced here in an arrangement for four staves.

Another fine twentieth-century English player was Harold Darke (1888–1976), who was for fifty years organist of St Michael’s Church, Cornhill, in the City of London. His lunchtime recitals were an institution, and many composers of the day wrote works especially for him. One of these was Sir William Henry Harris (1883–1973), organist of St George’s Chapel, Windsor, a pupil of Charles Wood, and a composer firmly entrenched in the Anglican tradition. His *Fantasy on the Tune ‘Babylon’s Streams’*, representing Ley’s post-war series, is a finely imagined reworking of Campion’s tune, with a dramatic and florid introduction and a series of variations, interrupted by returns of the opening material.

Sir Sydney Hugo Nicholson (1875–1947) was a noted reformer of parish church music, and founder of the School of English Church Music (now the Royal School of Church Music). His slender legacy of works for the organ consists of just two impromptus, in A flat major and in D major, dating from 1907 when he was organist of Carlisle Cathedral. The second Impromptu is in the mood of a light-hearted scherzo in ternary form. Its dedication is to the great English organ builder, Arthur Harrison, whose reputation was in the ascendant at this time, and who in 1907 rebuilt the cathedral instrument at Carlisle.

The Novello editions of Rheinberger’s organ sonatas and Franck’s Three Chorales in the Novello edition of Harvey Grace have been familiar repertoire for several generations of players. Grace (1874–1944) was organist of Chichester Cathedral from 1931 to 1938, a popular lecturer and adjudicator and, for 36 years, editor of the *Musical Times*, to which he himself contributed under the pseudonym ‘Feste’. He was also a quite prolific composer, and his *Lament*, opus 10, deserves to be better known. The style has more than a suggestion of Dvořák about it, especially the second theme, in D flat major.

The final piece in this collection, by Cyril Bradley Rootham (1875–1938), was inspired by the blind virtuoso to whom it was dedicated, Alfred Hollins (1865–1942), composer of *A Song of Sunshine* and from 1897 to his death, organist of St George’s West Church, Edinburgh. Rootham was a pupil of Stanford and a composer who made his mark with large-scale choral settings such as the *Ode on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*. He had a lifelong association with St John’s College, Cambridge, and contributed much to university life. *Epinikion (Song of Victory)* is a stirring piece that is practically a one-movement sonata for the instrument. It requires colourful registration, and in its technical demands and flamboyantly imaginative sweep *Epinikion* sums up many of the qualities that make English organ music of this period so worthwhile and distinctive.

Martin Ellis

A Note on Registration

For players wishing to explore the riches of the English Romantic School, a major hurdle to be cleared is that of registration. Except for Battison Haynes, whose sonata was conceived of for a German style of organ, the composers represented in this volume wrote for instruments which, by and large, were of moderately scored pipework, and built by firms such as Hill, Walker, Harrison & Harrison and Gray & Davison. Many of the instruments with which the composers and performers were familiar have subsequently been rebuilt. For example, Harold Darke would have first played William Harris's *Fantasy on the Tune 'Babylon's Streams'* on the organ of St Michael's Church, Cornhill, prior to its extensive rebuilding in 1925 by Rushworth & Draper, the same firm which, soon after the composition of that work, also undertook alterations to Harris's instrument at New College, Oxford.

Photographs from copies of the journal *The Organ* from this decade show consoles of the larger London instruments, such as that of Westminster Abbey, where control of the departments under expression was by the old-fashioned ratchet pedal(s) to the right-hand side of the pedal board. The number of registration aids was minimal, with perhaps no more than four pistons to a department, such as the Great Organ, where the number of speaking stops was no more than three times that number. General pistons were very rare, and pistons adjustable at the console a luxury. The organ of Central Hall, Westminster, where from 1912 to 1932 the popular organist J. Arthur Meale gave weekly lunch-hour recitals, had only one adjustable piston each to the Swell, Great and Pedals respectively. Likewise, the Harrison rebuild of the Royal Albert Hall organ (1924, 1934) was comparatively spartan in its console accessories.

Performers of the time, who were as likely to have as formidable a command of the piano as of the organ (Alfred Hollins, for example, began his career as a concert pianist), controlled their instruments by hand registration, an art which, given the relatively luxurious aids to registration available to the modern player, is far less commonly encountered now than even thirty years ago. Moreover, there are today few recently rebuilt instruments of the type for which this music was conceived that have not been fitted with multi-channel piston systems together with general pistons controlling all stops and couplers.

The challenge, therefore, is to remain faithful to the composers' intentions, while placing the manifold resources of the modern instrument at the service of music which demanded and received from its original players imaginative registration of the highest order, achieved by different technical means. At the same time, the responsibilities of interpretation require not a straitjacket for the music, but creative solutions which inevitably will be unique for every player, instrument and acoustic, in the quest to recreate the orchestral style of registration that is characteristic of this period.

To this end, the text of this edition combines a broad range of suggestions for registration, pedalling and interpretation, to assist players in a positive approach to this problem. All fingering, pedalling, registration, hand distribution and crossed slurs and hairpins, and all material in square brackets, are editorial, as are cautionary accidentals enclosed in round brackets. Information appropriate to the individual pieces, including a record of the original registrations, can be found in the Editorial Notes, so that informed choices can be made in the light of the original phrasing and dynamics, and of the requirements of contemporary instruments and different performing environments.

SCHERZOSO

Sw: Full Swell
Gt: Diapasons 8' 4' 2'
Coupplers:
Sw - Gt
Sw - Ped
Gt - Ped

W. Battison Haynes
Edited by Martin Ellis

Allegro $\text{♩} = 60$ [$\text{♩} = 80$]

MANUALS

Gt *f*

PEDAL

f

8

16

Sw - reeds
reduce Gt and Ped

mf

p

23 Add Sw

1 2 1 3 1 2 3 3 2 3

29 Add Full Sw

più f [con rubato] **ff**

1 2 3 3 3 3

34

[9] 2 1

Add Gt and Ped

41

Add Gt and Ped