05 First Encounter organ concerts—repertoire and programming advice

The following advice is intended both for those new to introducing the organ and its music to new audiences, and to offer fresh ideas for those with experience in this field.

As with any non-specialist organ concert programme, a balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar is likely to work best (children in particular respond well to music they recognise). Aim to leave the audience wanting more rather than desperate to escape after an over-long concert! Also consider:

- The resources of the organ being used.
- The demographic of the expected audience (mostly children, mostly adults, used to hearing organ music, completely new to organ music...).
- Variety of mood, tempo and dynamics.
- Playing extracts rather than complete pieces, especially where the audience mostly comprises children.
- Pieces which demonstrate different aspects of how an organ works and how it is played.

A. Opening and closing pieces

- You will almost certainly wish to start and end with music which has a 'wow-factor'.
- It is difficult to go wrong by starting with Bach's *Toccata in D minor BWV 565*. The opening at least is known to most people and, even if not, is arresting; it is quite short; contrasting sounds on different keyboards can be used; it is by/attributed to (depending on your point of view!) one of the most famous composers.
- Choice of closing piece will depend to a greater or lesser extent on what has gone before. It might be original organ music, a transcription of an orchestral piece, arrangements of well-known film or tv themes or current pop songs (pop music is often available in simple

keyboard versions at **www.everand.com** (subscription required) and elsewhere on the internet.

- Whatever you choose as your closing music, this is the piece most of the audience is most likely to remember and which is therefore most likely to encourage them to listen to more organ music.

B. Other ideas for repertoire choice

- There is no need to shy away from using a good proportion of music written for the organ. After all, the organ has the widest repertoire of any instrument giving us much from which to select.
- When using an historic instrument and/or building, could your programme take people on a journey through time, with music chosen from different periods in the organ's/building's evolution?
- Adults may respond to hearing music from the same period but from different countries/traditions.
- Choose music to demonstrate the different families of stops, the swell box and anything specific to the organ you are using.

C. Specific repertoire suggestions

- Older organ music without pedals.
  - Extracts from variation sets by Sweelinck with jaunty tunes—Sweelinck composed these to get the sailors of Amsterdam out of places of ill repute and into church to hear his organ recitals!
  - Pieces such as *Capriccio sopra il cucu* by Johann Caspar Kerll in which the cuckoo motif is heard constantly
  - *Fugue in C BuxWV 174 (Gigue Fugue)*, Buxtehude
  - English 18th-century organ music, cornet and trumpet voluntaries for example
  - French Baroque organ music (Clérambault, Couperin, Daquin...)
- Pieces to demonstrate different organ sounds.
  - Principals/Diapasons (and how a chorus is built up): a well-known hymn tune or, if this might not suit your audience, a catchy piece such as *Mohrentanz* (La Mourisque) by Susato (available in the Noel Rawsthorne book mentioned below)

  - Flutes: one of the pieces by Haydn for musical clock available in a free edition at vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/a/ae/IMSLP380107-PMLP81899-Haydn_Flotenuhr_complete.pdf
  - Strings: Berceuse from *24 Pièces en Style Libre*, Louis Vierne
  - Loud reeds such as trumpets: *Prince of Denmark's March*, Jeremiah Clarke, or any other of the many trumpet voluntaries, tunes, marches readily available
  - Soft reeds: *Prélude* from *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* by César Franck (oboe); an arrangement of e.g. *'The Teddy Bears' Picnic'* (clarinet)
- Arrangements of non-organ music. Volumes such as the following can be useful.
  - The Noel Rawsthorne Organ Arrangements Book 1 www.kevinmayhew.com/products/rawsthorne-organ-arrangements-book-1-1400342#contents
  - *Star Wars* for Organ www.musicroom.com/star-wars-for-organ-organ-hl00157400?returnurl=%2fsearch%3fq%3dstar%2bwars%2bfor%2borgan%2b
  - Andrew Lloyd Webber: *The Phantom of the Opera: Organ* https://www.musicroom.com/andrew-lloyd-webber-the-phantom-of-the-opera-organ-hl00290300
  - *A Whiter Shade of Pale*, Procul Harum https://www.musicroom.com/procol-harum-a-whiter-shade-of-pale-dam131246?returnurl=%2fsearch%3fq%3da%2bwhiter%2bshade%2bof%2bpale
  - *Gabriel's Oboe* (from the film *The Mission*), Ennio Morricone https://www.musicroom.com/ennio-morricone-gabriel-s-oboe-from-the-motion-hle90004684?returnurl=%2fsearch%3fq%3dgabriel%2527s%2boboe