

# St Mary's Church, Portsea

Thursday 7th March 2019

7.30pm



## Organ Recital by Simon Taranczuk

in aid of The Organ Project  
[www.theorganproject.org](http://www.theorganproject.org)



## The Organ of St Mary's

*"...A unique survival, certainly of very considerable national importance, and a treasure that will increasingly be prized as time goes by."*

*"...Tonally, I regard this organ as the final achievement of 19th century British organ building.. this organ at Portsea is without question exciting."*

**J.W. Walker and Sons** began their association with the parish of Portsea in 1879, when they loaned a one manual organ for installation in the temporary iron church, "for a reasonable time gratuitously" on the understanding that they would be given the order for "the building of the New & permanent inst."

Discussions with Dr. (later Sir) George Martin, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, began in 1888. It was the intention that the new organ, for one of the largest parish churches in the country, should have four manuals, making it truly of cathedral proportions and of a class that was normally exclusive to the very richest town churches.

A two manual portion of the instrument was available for use at the consecration of the new church on 10th October 1889. Stops were added to complete the scheme in its present three manual form and the organ itself was dedicated on 31st October 1892, with an opening recital by Dr. George Martin in November. It is unclear to what extent mechanical preparation was made for the proposed Solo Organ, but historic photographs show that the space for the redundant fourth row of keys was used by successive organists as a makeshift bookshelf.

The organ cost £2,573 in total. Blomfield's beautiful case, made by Thompson of Peterborough, was added in 1901 as a memorial to those lost in the Boer War, at a further cost of £1,000. Additional expenditure on blowing equipment, including a gas engine in the cellar of the church, brought the total cost to nearly £4,000.

Every 50 years or so, a pipe organ requires costly renovation and repair. A simple cleaning and overhaul was undertaken in 1939, and thus the instrument continued into the post-war period in its original state, again with no immediate prospect of full renovation.

It was not until the 1960s that long-awaited renovation work could take place. At that time a Portsmouth parish could no longer consider replacement or restoration on quite the scale envisaged by the Victorians. If there had been unlimited funds, they would almost certainly have been spent on 'improvements' to the pipework that we would now find entirely regrettable. It is only a small mercy that no changes were made to the original 1892 stop list.

The organ as it stands today is an instrument of 2,622 speaking pipes, still of fundamentally Victorian structure and character, rebuilt with new key and stop action and console in 1965. Its general condition is as would be expected with any mechanical instrument that has been worked daily, without any significant maintenance for over 52 years. There are individual failings and over the next two years these will become more frequent and ultimately acute.

## The Organ Project

The Organ Project has been established to interpret, restore, enhance and celebrate the heritage associated with 125 years of music making in St Mary's Church, Portsea.

The unique 1889 Walker pipe organ is at the heart of life within the Parish, but is now in a critical condition where interim repairs are no longer sufficient to keep the nationally significant instrument from being lost.

We will engage with local communities, develop volunteer skills and enthuse visitors with an exciting activity programme; interpreting the organ's history, science, sound and function, and sharing its awe.

By restoring this organ to its original Victorian character, we will inspire a new generation of musicians, students and audiences, and further extend the outreach of a less-privileged, but dedicated Parish church, to the diverse inner-city community in Portsmouth and beyond.

The Organ Project will make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities.

## Organ Specification

### Great Organ

1. Double Open Diapason	16
2. Open Diapason No.1	8
3. Open Diapason No.2	8
4. Open Diapason No.3	8
5. Wald Flute	8
6. Principal	4
7. Harmonic Flute	4
8. Twelfth	2 <sup>2/3</sup>
9. Fifteenth	2
10. Mixture 15.19.22	III
11. Clarion Mixture 22.26.29	III
12. Double Trumpet	16
13. Trumpet	8

*I Swell to Great II Choir to Great  
III Great and Pedal Combinations Coupled*

### Pedal Organ

14. Sub Bass	32
15. Open Wood	16
16. Violone	16
17. Bourdon	16
18. Trombone	16

*I Choir to Pedal II Great to Pedal  
III Swell to Pedal IV Pedal Octave*

### Swell Organ

19. Double Diapason	16
20. Open Diapason	8
21. Stopped Diapason	8
22. Vox Angelica	8
23. Dulciana	8
24. Echo Gamba	8
25. Principal	8
26. Flute	4
27. Mixture 15.19.22.26	4
28. Mixture 22.26.29	IV
29. Contra Fagotto	III
30. Horn	16
31. Oboe	8
	8

*I Swell Octave II Swell Sub Octave  
III Swell Unison Off IV Tremulant*

### Choir Organ

32. Violin Diapason	8
33. Lieblich Gedeckt	8
34. Dulciana	8
35. Dulciana Principal	8
36. Lieblich Flute	4
37. Harmonic Piccolo	4
38. Clarinet	2
	8

*I Swell to Choir*

# Programme

Marche ( <i>from Suite de Danses</i> )	<i>Pierre Cochereau</i> (1924-1984)
Variations on Mein junges leben hat ein end	<i>Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck</i> (1562-1621)
Psalm Prelude Set 2 No. 1	<i>Herbert Howells</i> (1892-1983)
Cat Suite <i>i) Prrrelude, ii) Cats at Play, iii) Catnap, iv) Toc-cat-a</i>	<i>Denis Bédard</i> (1950-)
Mad Rush	<i>Philip Glass</i> (1937-)
Gigue ( <i>from Suite de Danses</i> )	<i>Pierre Cochereau</i> (1924-1984)

**Simon Taranczuk** was born in Portsmouth in 1974 and went to school at City Boys'. His musical career began just down the road at All Saints which, at the time, had a very strong choral tradition. At 16 he took up his first organ post at St Thomas', Bedhampton before his appointment as the first Hampshire County Council Organ Scholar at St Mary's in 1991 at the same time as the beginning of the Music Foundation and held the post for two years. He studied the organ with Adrian Lucas at the Cathedral. He was appointed Organ Scholar at the University of Hull where he was also Assistant Organist at Beverley Minster. At Beverley he worked under the expert guidance of Dr Alan Spedding MBE. During his time at university he was taught by Colin Walsh at Lincoln Cathedral. Following lessons with David Briggs, he was awarded the FRCO diploma in 2003.

He went on to study for a Masters Degree in English Church Music at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. He was tutored by the composer Peter Aston, and wrote a thesis on the development of congregational settings of the Mass in the Church of England. He was a Choral Scholar at Norwich Cathedral. He directed three youth choirs in rural Suffolk who were involved with the Dutch Premiere of Paul McCartney's Liverpool Oratorio and recorded (on a boat in Southwold harbour) some music for performance on the BBC's Songs of Praise.

Before taking up the post of Director of Music at King's Worcester in September 2013, his two previous posts were as Director of Music at King's, Rochester and Director of Chapel Music at Marlborough College. Whilst at Marlborough he directed the Chapel Choir on tours to Paris and Rome and took part in Masses at Notre Dame and St Peter's. A CD of choral and instrumental music was also released celebrating the 125 th anniversary of the College Chapel. At King's he is responsible for the day to day running of the Music Department, teaching all year groups and directing various ensembles. The Choir and Chamber Orchestra have taken part in two successful tours in recent years to Paris and, in February this year, Venice where they took part in Mass at St Mark's Basilica. Away from music, his interests include taking his mischievous Jack Russell on long walks in the Worcestershire countryside, and supporting the greatest football team in the world – Portsmouth! He is married to Helen, and has two young boys who bring him much joy.