

RECITAL AT HALIFAX MINSTER

22 OCTOBER 2020

BY PROFESSOR DAVID BAKER

PROGRAMME

Larghetto and Allegro	John Varley Roberts
Soft Diapason Movement	John Varley Roberts
Introduction and Toccata (Suite Gothique)	Léon Boëllmann
Fugue in E flat ('St Anne') BWV 552	Johann Sebastian Bach
<i>On the Snetzler Organ</i>	
Preludium XIX	William Herschel
J.W.'s Lavolta (from 'Snetzler in Halifax')	Douglas Bell
Preludium XXVII	William Herschel
Chorale Prelude on St Anne	C.H.H. Parry
Trumpet Tune in D major	Philip Tordoff
Grazioso	John Varley Roberts
A Festival March	John Varley Roberts

This recital is being performed to celebrate the publication by Fitzjohn Music of an edition by David Baker and Ted O'Hare of all Dr John Varley Roberts's organ music. Roberts (1841-1920) was Organist and Choirmaster of Halifax Parish Church from 1868 until 1882, when he moved to Magdalen College Oxford, where he developed and directed what was said to be the best choir in the country if not the world.

The tribute extends to Philip Tordoff, Organist Emeritus at the Minster and Shackleton Pollard his teacher and sometime predecessor. Though Pollard did not write any organ music, it was said that he used the Boëllmann to accompany the cowboys-and-indians films at the Victoria Theatre! Douglas Bell was one of Pollard's students. The Suite Snetzler in Halifax was commissioned by me to celebrate the installation of the chamber organ originally owned by John Waterhouse (the JW of the title) and built in 1770. Waterhouse was one of the leading lights at Halifax Parish Church in 1766, when permission was finally given for the large Snetzler organ (built c 1764) to be played. William Herschel was the first organist and the pieces played today were written specifically for that instrument.

Given the current pandemic, I have also chosen to include two pieces which have the St Anne tune ('O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come') as their basis, though in JS Bach's it is unlikely that he was aware of the William Croft tune. I hope before too long to begin my planned series of recitals encompassing the whole of JSB's organ music, though not, I trust, for years to come!