

# Organ Recital by Robert Mingay-Smith at Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## **E. Elgar (1857–1934)**

Sonata in G: I. *Allegro maestoso*

The recital opens with the grandeur and majesty of the first movement of Elgar's Sonata in G. Big, noble organ chords, soaring melodies and falling semi-quaver passages make for a quintessentially English listening experience. The sonata was written for Hugh Blair (organist of Worcester Cathedral) in 1985 to be played when a group of American organists would be visiting the cathedral. It has since become a landmark piece for organists and listeners.

## **P. Whitlock (1903–1946)**

Four Extemporizations: III. *Fidelis*

Whitlock was known as a master of extemporization and yet every note has been placed with absolute precision in this the third movement of Four Extemporizations. Harvey Grace wrote in a Musical Times review following its first publication, it is 'a good example of the composer's ability to be simple without loss of freshness'.

## **Thomas Hewitt Jones b. 1984**

Carnival (2010)

Thomas Hewitt Jones is an award-winning composer of contemporary classical and commercial music. Winner of the 2003 BBC Young Composer Competition, his music is widely published. Carnival was composed in 2010 and is an outburst of festivity, funfairs and frolicking.

## **Andrew Wilson b. 1960**

La Rosace, Op. 235 (2017) *Commissioned by R. Mingay-Smith*

*Virgin & Child*

*Virtues & Months*

*Virgin & Child*

*Vices & the Zodiac*

*Virgin & Child*

*March of the Prophets*

*Virgin & Child*

Andrew Wilson is an award-winning English composer based in the West of the country where he is organist of Okehampton Church, conductor of the Okehampton Choral Society. He is also Director of Studies of the National College of Music, London.

*"La Rosace" is structured as a musical interpretation of this cathedral's famous west window that you can see behind the organ. It was specially commissioned for Robert Mingay-Smith to play at today's recital. The central roundel of the Virgin and Child, about which the whole piece revolves, returns, in different guises throughout the piece between each ring. The outer ring depicts "The Months of the Year and the Virtues", then there's a darker section for "The Zodiac and the Vices" and a "March of the Prophets" for the inner ring. – A. Wilson*

## **W. Walton (1902–1983)**

Orb & Sceptre

The recital closes with a march written for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953. It is influenced largely by Elgar's Pomp & Circumstance Marches where we hear a grand march followed by a softer section with a sweeping melody before the final flourish.

## Biography

Robert Mingay-Smith began his musical career as an organist at the age of 14 and completed the ABRSM Organ Diploma for performance at the age of 19. In 1998 he became Director of Music at St Peter's Church in Brandon, Suffolk after which he commenced his studies in organ, voice and bassoon at Trinity College of Music, London. Robert graduated with a BMUS (Hons) in 2005.

During his career, Robert has held choral scholarships at both St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Suffolk and St Martin-in-the-fields, London and posts as Assistant Director of Music at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel, Greenwich, and St. Michael's Cornhill, London.

From 2009 to 2013 Robert was a member of the British vocal ensemble VOCES8 with whom he toured world-wide. During his time with the ensemble they recorded six CDs including the Bach Motets and Aces High.

Robert performs regularly as an organ soloist in the UK and at many of London's churches and cathedrals. He has performed all over America and in concerts improvising alongside Naji Hakim. He is a founder member of the flute & organ duo INVERSION, alongside the award-winning flautist Ruth Stockdale with whom he tours internationally.

Robert founded the Square Mile Music Series and is artist director of the new ensemble Seraphim ([www.seraphimconsort.com](http://www.seraphimconsort.com)); both of which are based at St Mary-at-Hill Church, London where Robert is the Director of Music, a post he has held since 2007. Robert is also Director of Music at St John the Baptist, Wimbledon, London.