



^T**S. JAMES'**
Bicentenary 2019-2024

The Last Hurrah

*A farewell concert for
the St James' organ*

Sunday, 30 October 2022, 5:15pm
St James' Church
173 King Street, Sydney

Sponsored by
The St James' Music Foundation

PROGRAMME

Introduction

Robert Marriott

Chair of the St James' Organ Replacement & Restoration Appeal Committee

Improvisation sur le 'Te Deum'

Charles Tournemire (1870-1939)

Callum Knox

An announcement of the 1971 rebuild

Archival recording including excerpts of a performance by Walter Sutcliffe

Threnody

Titus Grenyer (b.1988)

Titus Grenyer

Harmonies du soir, Op. 72, no. 1

Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

Alistair Nelson

Paeon

Herbert Howells (1892-1993)

Mark Bensted

Reminiscence

Peter Jewkes

Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 731

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Peter Ellis

Komm, heiliger Geist, BuxWV 199

Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637-1707)

Jessica Lim

Allegro maestoso e vivace & Fugue

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

from Sonata no. 2, Op. 65

Brett McKern

Improvisation

David Drury

To his servant Bach

Graeme Koehne (b.1956)

Alistair Nelson

Carillon de Westminster, Op. 54, no. 6

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Marko Sever

BIOGRAPHIES

Mark Bensted

Mark assisted Walter Sutcliffe, his organ teacher, at St James' from 1976 to 1982, mostly during Howard Hollis' tenure as Rector. Initially this was as a student at St Andrew's Cathedral School, and then while completing a Bachelor of Music at Sydney University. He subsequently trained as a pilot, flying mostly international services.

David Drury

Organ Scholar 1981-1984, Organist 1997-1998, Director of Music 1998-2007

One of Australia's top concert organists, David Drury has given recitals in premiere venues in London, Paris, Canada, and the USA, as well as throughout Australia. He broadcasts regularly for the ABC and has released numerous solo and ensemble recordings. He is Director of Music Emeritus and Organist at St Paul's College, within the University of Sydney.

Peter Ellis

Assistant Director of Music, Acting Director of Music, Organist 2005-2009

From Halifax UK, Peter Ellis has been resident in Australia since 2002. He read music at University of Birmingham (1994-1997) and PGCE at University of London (2000). Peter has been Director of Choral Programs and Music Teacher at Barker College since 2012, and also Music Director of Willoughby Symphony Choir. He is now only an occasional organist.

Titus Grenyer

Organ Scholar 2016-2019

Titus Grenyer is the Director of Music at St John's Uniting Church in Wahroonga, having previously served as Organ Scholar at St James' and at St Mary's Cathedral. His main work today is in performing, composing, and presenting for his YouTube channel *Pep Organ*, which is now the largest organ channel in Australia.

Peter Jewkes

Assistant Organist & Choirmaster 1985-1994

Previous to his time at St James', Peter Jewkes held positions at Scot's Church Mosman and St Bride's Fleet Street, London. He was at Christ Church St Laurence as Assistant Organist from 1980 to 1985 and Organist from 1997 to 2020. Peter is also one of the premiere organ builders and restorers in Australia, and is consultant for the new Dobson organ for St James'.

Callum Knox

Organ Scholar 2020-present

A pianist since the early age of 5, and an organist from 12, Callum Knox is one of the finest young organists of Sydney. He achieved first prize in the intermediate section of the 2020 Sydney Organ Competition, and completed his Licentiate in organ with High Distinction. Callum has performed highly regarded organs around Australia and beyond.

Jessica Lim

Robert Blunden Organ Scholar 2011-2012

Dr Jessica Lim teaches English at St Andrew's Cathedral School, and was recently a Director of Studies of English at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. She was the Robert Blunden Organ Scholar at St James' from September 2011 until September 2012, and was later Assistant Organist at Magdalene College, Cambridge (2016-2018).

Brett McKern

Assistant Director of Music, 2000-2004

Dr Brett McKern holds degrees in music, education, theology and two doctorates in musical composition, and maintains an international career as a composer. He lectures at university, examines for the AMEB, and consults on music and music education. Brett has performed and recorded as an organist and choir director in Australia and abroad.

Alistair Nelson

Organist 2011-present

Alistair Nelson was Assistant Organist at Christ Church St Laurence in 2005 and later returned to Australia to become Organist of St James' after six years overseas. In the USA, he received a Master of Music from Yale University and was Associate Organist and Choirmaster at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, New York. Alistair is also a conductor and teacher, and is studying a Master of Teaching (Secondary) at UNE.

Marko Sever

Robert Blunden Organ Scholar 2012-2016

Acting Assistant Head of Music since October 2022

Marko Sever has recently returned to his home country of Australia, having spent six years working and studying in London, gaining experience at the highest level of the English Cathedral tradition. His time in the UK concluded with two years at Westminster Cathedral, where he regularly accompanied and directed the famed Cathedral Choir. While at the Cathedral, he recorded his debut CD, *Symphonie-Passion*, on the Cathedral's world-famous Grand Organ.

Walter Sutcliffe

Organist and Choirmaster 1966-1994

Walter Sutcliffe came from Yorkshire and was a chorister as a lad, meeting some of the great names of 20th century British choral music. In Sydney, as well as his position at St James', Walter Sutcliffe was the Principal Double Bass player of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He was later organist and choirmaster of All Saints Church, Woollahra from 1994 to 2004. He also conducted the Jacobean Singers for the first 15 years of its existence, retiring in 2009.



History of the St James' Church Pipe Organ

The first organ at St James' was by John Gray of London and was installed in 1827. It was rebuilt and moved around the church many times during the 19th century, mostly by the Sydney organ builder William Davidson. In 1901 it was moved from the south side of the church in the present-day Chapel of the Holy Spirit, to its present position on either side of the choir stalls, and the action (the connections from the keyboards to the pipes) was changed from mechanical to tubular-pneumatic (operating on air in a vacuum).

By this stage, the vast majority of the organ's material was still by Davidson, despite claims that the organ contained pipework from the 1827 instrument. Considerable alterations were made to the organ throughout the 20th century, with a significant amount of the pipework being replaced.

Finally, in 1971 the organ was extensively rebuilt and 'modernised' by Hill Norman and Beard (Australia) Pty Ltd. The action was converted to electric (with a combination of electro-pneumatic and direct electric operation), soundboards were significantly altered, pipework was entirely re-voiced, and a new large console built. A significant number of stops was also added at this time, including an entirely new 'floating' Positive division of 9 stops, a short-compass Trompette Militaire stop on the Choir division, and many other tonal alterations typical of the period, with the then new instrument totalling 67 stops.

The present organ has now given over 45 years of excellent service, with almost legendary reliability, but the mechanical aspects of the instrument are starting to fail. Some problems are obvious to the congregation: for instance, the wheezing from the organ during Lent 2017, caused by perished leather on the bellows (the reservoirs of pressurised air which make the pipes speak), and the absence of colourful stops such as Clarinet or Trompette militaire (because the corresponding bellows have had to be disconnected owing to holes in the leather), and notes which stick because of mechanical or electrical failings.

Some problems have to be hidden by the ingenuity of the organist (working around missing notes and unpleasant sounds which are result of mechanical or electrical failure or poor construction of pipes). Whilst the organ in its 1971 format was reasonably successful mechanically, it was never regarded highly among musicians for its tonal quality. Even the earliest 19th century pipework

was known to have been of indifferent quality, and subsequent replacements have had only limited success.

While the 1971 work rationalised and improved some tonal aspects, it left the church with an instrument which has never entirely fulfilled its purpose, and with the passing of time, the Neo Classical tonal additions were of course recognised as inappropriate and incongruous.

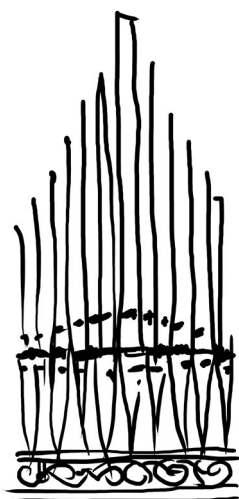
Whilst giving good mechanical service, there are also some very basic design and construction issues in the organ, not just from 1971. These include the main slider soundboards (c.1901) which, despite their rebuilding, still show clear evidence of inferior construction and inadequate operation, presumably dating from their earliest days. Visually, whilst the organ may have possessed some quaint qualities when moved to its present position, the casework remained incomplete until 1971, at which stage it was 'completed' by the addition of modern pierced metal screens at the East end of each side, of lamentable quality and appearance. Further, the expanded specification meant that not all interior pipes could be properly masked by the casework, and these can be seen protruding from many perspectives in the Church. In addition, the 1901 spotted metal 8' façade pipes are of poor quality and have not aged well.

Over the last 26 years various organ builders passing through Sydney have informally examined the organ in varying levels of detail according to time available. All have agreed that an essentially new instrument is required, but some of the existing stops can be retained (both for musical and sentimental reasons).

We look forward to preserving St James' reputation of fine music-making with the replacement of the organ.

Adapted by Alistair Nelson (Organist, St James' Church) from a document dating from 2015 written by Peter Jewkes.





stjamesfoundationorganappeal.com.au

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