

St. Albans International Organ Festival

Meet the Recitalist: Richard Pinel



Please tell us a little about your concert programme.

My programme really explores various types and treatments of chorale melodies. In the Orgelbüchlein Project works might reference Chorale Fantasia, this means Lutheran Chorales (or hymns), however in the Franck we hear the height of French Romanticism and in the Whitlock a charming sense of the English Pastoral tradition. In all cases these are melodies meant to be sung, or to come across as cantabile or song-like. The organ is often not thought of in these terms, but for me the way to express music best on the organ is to make it sing.

What first attracted you to your instrument and how old were you when you started playing?

My first instrument was the voice - I was fortunate enough to be a chorister at All Saints' Church, Northampton from the age of 7. That was serendipity but there I was exposed to some very high quality organ playing and the itch to find out more finally became too great to ignore and so, at age 13, I began organ lessons.

Who (or what) has had the greatest influence on you as a player?

Here I cannot single out one person. I have been so incredibly fortunate with all of my teachers and mentors and I feel all of their influences as I make music every day.

What would be a typical day in your life?

There really is no typical day. I have just taken up the post of Director of Music at Jesus College, Cambridge and so a great part of the day is spent learning my way around the various aspects of the job here. I'm usually at my desk by 9.30am and the rest of each day is a mixture of planning, doing administration, working with some extraordinary young singers (university students and boy trebles) and, hopefully, finding some time to keep up with my organ practice! The days are long but it is incredibly rewarding.

What have been the highlights of your recent schedules?

I had a very enjoyable last few months working in Windsor, both musically (recitals there, in London and elsewhere along with accompanying choral concerts in Windsor and an unforgettably good BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong) and also socially as I marked the end of my time in Windsor. As I intimated above, taking up my new post has been a huge highlight.

Which piece of music most recently made a big impression on you?

I've been living with Reger's *Hallelujah Gott zu Loben* (on my IOF programme) for quite some time now and I simply love it for many more reasons than I can list. For me, it expresses many of the things that I most love about the organ and its repertoire.

Which book would you recommend all musicians and music lovers to read and why?

As someone who is completely in love with the music of J.S. Bach, and also possessing a somewhat fanciful imagination, I was very taken with 'Evening in the Palace of Reason' by James Gaines. This is a fictional novelisation of the famous meeting between the Elder Statesman Bach and the conniving Frederick the Great. This meeting precipitated the composition of Bach's Musical Offering and Gaines writes a fantastically entertaining and informative narrative.