



## London Organs Day

Four fine instruments in the City, Marylebone and Mayfair

**Tuesday 12 September 2023 (LJ 684)**

The *London Organs Day* will be an enthralling experience for both pipe-organ devotees and for the merely interested. London has an outstanding wealth of historic and modern instruments – no other city in the world comes close – and five very fine examples will be heard today, played by four top-rank organists.

At all four venues you hear music ideally suited to the organ in that particular church and, by the end of the day, will have enjoyed a cross section of the repertoire which is the widest of any instrument, stretching back to medieval times and continuously augmented by today's composers.

Each recital is preceded by a discussion with the church's organist which will explain what is special about the instrument and say something about the music to be played. The interviewer throughout will be Simon Williams, Director for the Royal College of Organists' East, South and South West regions. Until recently he was director of music at St George's Hanover Square, a prized post because it was G.F. Handel's parish church.

All the organs are located in historic churches of great architectural and historical interest. It is not by coincidence that our selection is clustered around the Central Line: the day involves one journey by Tube, but otherwise progress between recitals and lunch will be on foot, a total distance of one and a half miles spread over seven short walks. You are welcome, however, to substitute a taxi for the tube (at your expense).

### The venues

#### **ST MARGARET LOTHBURY**

*Organist: Richard Townend*

Tucked behind the Bank of England, St Margaret Lothbury was rebuilt after the Great Fire under the direction of Christopher Wren. Relatively unscathed during the Blitz, it has one of the most fully furnished church interiors of the era, including carvings by Grinling Gibbons; many pieces found a home here during the wave of church demolitions in the 19th century.

Built by George England in 1801, the organ is an exceptional survival of a classical instrument and retains much of its original pipe work. Thankfully, it was little 'improved' in the next two centuries though it was restored in 1984. There are two manuals and pedals and,



*Photograph ©Ben Ealovega.*

with 21 speaking stops, it is the smallest of the four main instruments we hear today.

#### **ST LAWRENCE JEWRY**

*Organist: Matthew Jorysz*

One of the most expensive of Wren's City churches, a 'sumptuous barn', St Lawrence is the official church of the Corporation of London. Damaged in 1940 and restored in 1957, it has a spectacular white and gold interior.

The main organ was built in 2001 by Johannes Klais Orgelbau of Bonn and has three manuals and pedals with 39 stops. A much smaller one in a side chapel, also by Klais, has one manual and pedals with six stops.

#### **ALL SAINTS MARGARET STREET**

*Organist: Dr Stephen Farr*

Historically and artistically, All Saints Margaret Street is arguably the most important Gothic Revival church in London. Building began in 1850 to a design by William Butterfield under the scrutiny of the Tractarian wing of the Church of England for whom it was intended to be a model modern church. The red and black brick exterior harbours an interior of unsurpassed richness.

The organ is a superb four-manual Harrison and Harrison instrument with 66 speaking stops, built in 1910 and restored in 2003. It retains the best of the pipe work of its

predecessor, the considerably smaller Hill organ. Though as big as those found in most cathedrals, it sounds intimate when played quietly – though monumental when loudly.

#### **ST GEORGE'S HANOVER SQUARE**

*Organist: Richard Gowers*

St George's is the parish church of Mayfair, built 1721–24 to the designs of John James, Wren's assistant at St Paul's cathedral. The classical front with six great Corinthian columns was innovative and highly influential; the Grinling Gibbons reredos frames a 'Last Supper' by William Kent. The interior was modified in 1894 under the direction of Sir Arthur Blomfield and was splendidly refurbished in 2010. George Frideric Handel was a regular worshipper at St George's, which is home to the annual London Handel Festival.

Gerard Smith, nephew of Bernard Smith, built the first organ in 1725, but this was rebuilt several times – in 1761 by John Snetzler, and in 2012 by Richards, Fowkes & Co. of Ooltewah, Tennessee. This has its stylistic roots in the magnificent 17th and 18th century organs of North Germany and Holland. There are three manuals and pedals and 46 stops.

London Organs Day  
continued

## The interviewer

**Simon Williams** was Organist and Director of Music at St George's Hanover Square 2000–2022, where he was closely involved with the commissioning of the new organ installed in 2012, and Music Director for Harrow Choral Society 1990–2022. Currently he is Director for the Royal College of Organists' East, South and South West regions. He is also an RCO Accredited Teacher.

## Practicalities

**Start:** 10.30am at St Margaret Lothbury, EC2R 7HH. Nearest stations: Bank, Monument, Moorgate. Doors open at 10.00am.

**Finish:** c. 5.15pm, St George's Hanover Square. Nearest stations: Oxford Circus, Bond Street, Piccadilly Circus.

**Fitness:** there are walks, at a leisurely pace, of at most 10 minutes (waiting at pedestrian crossings included).

**Price:** £240 per person. This includes lunch as well as exclusive admission to the four recitals, programme booklet, the services of a number of staff.

**Audience size:** maximum of 80 participants.

**Booking:** you do not need to complete a booking form for this event. Please call us to book over the telephone, or book online at [www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com).