

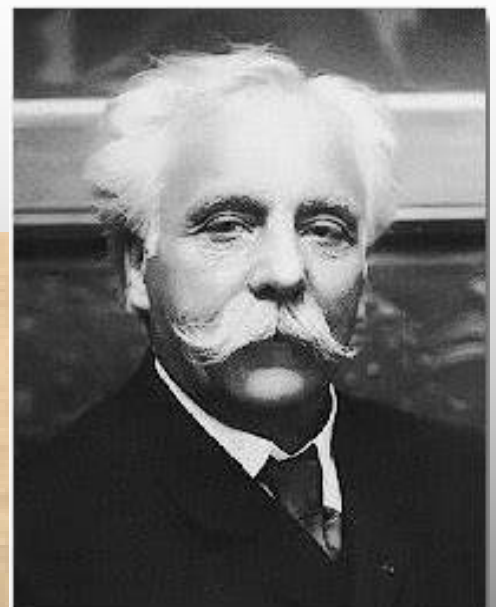
LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH

OUR LADY & ST NICHOLAS

A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF STANFORD 1853-1924

DUBOIS 1837-1924

FAURÉ 1845-1924



Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, was born on September 30, 1852 in Dublin and died on March 29, 1924 in London. He was an Anglo-Irish composer, conductor, and teacher who greatly influenced a generation of British composers; Ralph Vaughan Williams, Sir Arthur Bliss, and Gustav Holst were among his pupils. Stanford studied at Trinity College, Dublin and Queen's College, Cambridge, and between 1874 and 1877 with Karl Reinecke in Leipzig and Friedrich Kiel in Berlin. He became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London in 1883 and professor of music at Cambridge in 1887. He also conducted the London Bach Choir (1885–1902) and the Leeds Triennial Festival Orchestra (1901–10). He was knighted in 1901. Stanford was a prolific composer and was especially known for his orchestral works, which include seven symphonies and five Irish Rhapsodies. His other works include numerous choral pieces, 10 operas, and many songs. His music reflects the late 19th-century Romantic style, into which he introduced elements of Irish folk song.



The Royal College of Music

Célément François Théodore Dubois, was born on August 24, 1837 in Rosnay, France and died on June 11, 1924 in Paris. He was a French composer, organist, and teacher known for his technical treatises on harmony, counterpoint and sight-reading. He studied under the cathedral organist at Rheims and at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1871 he succeeded César Franck as organist at the church of Sainte-Clotilde. In 1868 he was choirmaster at the Church of the Madeleine and later succeeded Camille Saint-Saëns as organist there. He taught harmony at the Paris Conservatoire (1871–90) and was director there (1896–1905). He wrote music of all types, including operas and choral and orchestral works as well as much organ music. His outstanding composition is his oratorio, *Les Sept Parole du Christ* (“The Seven Words of Christ”).



The Paris Conservatoire

Gabriel Fauré, was born May 12, 1845 in Pamiers, Ariège, France and died November 4, 1924 in Paris. He was a composer whose refined and gentle music influenced the course of modern French music. Fauré's musical abilities became apparent at an early age. When the Swiss composer and teacher Louis Niedermeyer heard the boy, he immediately accepted him as a pupil. Fauré studied piano with Camille Saint-Saëns, who introduced him to the music of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. While still a student, Fauré published his first composition, a work for piano, *Trois romances sans paroles* (1863). In 1896 he was appointed church organist at the church of La Madeleine in Paris and professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1905 he succeeded Théodore Dubois as director of the conservatoire, and he remained in office until ill health and deafness forced him to resign in 1920. Among his students were Maurice Ravel, Georges Enesco, and Nadia Boulanger.



La Madeleine, Paris

Programme for the year

14th January Dubois: Marche des Rois Mages (No.9 from 12 Pièces) played by John Winstanley

Dubois really wanted to compose Operas, which he did but none were very successful. Consequently, at times, his approach to music was telling stories or “incidental” music that fitted a drama, so in his organ music there are Offerteries, Elevations, Communion and Sorties all fitting with different parts of the drama of a French Mass pre-Vatican 2. This march is a Sortie for Epiphany, written in 1889 after he was appointed to the Madeleine. It is a completely descriptive piece, the left hand has a plodding theme which accompanies a lolling right-hand tune, all very descriptive of a camel, ambling through the desert. With a nod to the guiding star, he makes provision for a “drone”, not an electronic hovering device, but a held note continuously on the same note, achieved by wedging a key with a piece of wood or an obliging assistant holding it down, using very high pitched relatively quiet pipes to achieve the twinkling effect. There is a brief oasis stop in the middle before the plodding camel train resumes off to Bethlehem. It is pure Opera music for the departing priests at the end of Eucharist for Epiphany. © JW 2023

11th February Fauré: Pavane played by Ian Wells

in 1887 for a small orchestra with an optional chorus part with a text by Robert, comte de Montesquiou-Fezensac. The text is frequently omitted since it adds little to the delicate and nostalgic mood of the piece. The modest orchestration is in line with Fauré’s dislike of vivid colours and effects, which he considered a form of self-indulgence and a cover-up for a shortage of ideas. Nevertheless, the elegant and gentle well-known theme represents the “A” in a conventional **ABA** form; In the brief middle section, Fauré gives in to an orchestral outburst in sixteenth-century modal harmony. It transcribes beautifully into a piece for solo organ. © IC 2023

17th March Stanford: ‘Founded on an old Irish Church melody’ (No.5 of Preludes and Postludes Op.101) played by John Winstanley

Being Anglo-Irish Stanford wrote several pieces with Irish origins. This piece written in April 1907 is based on St Patrick’s breast plate which seems appropriate for St Patrick’s Feast. The last movement of his Celtic Organ Sonata also uses it as a theme but is much longer and more complex in structure. In contrast this is a much shorter more approachable piece which uses fragments of the well-known tune as its basis which it treats in a relatively gentle way making it suitable for a postlude in a penitential season. © JW 2023

7th April Dubois: Alleluia (No.6 from 12 Pièces Nouvelles) played by John Winstanley

12th May Dubois: Offertoire pour la Fête de L'Ascension (No.10 from 12 Pièces Nouvelles) played by John Winstanley

These two pieces are similar, not so much in sound but concept. Dubois was Organist at the Madeleine in Paris, playing for congregational hymns was not a feature of his workload, the only hymns in that pre-Vatican 2 era were the plainsongs set for the day in the form of Introits, Graduals etc. and a few ancient hymn melodies from the Paris rite. The organist's job was to fill in the action around the Mass to add to the drama either with a free composition or improvisation and those were often based on the Plainsong of the day, they were like Bach's Chorale Preludes in the Lutheran services, but whereas his were often elaborate introductions to congregational singing, the Paris congregations did not do congregational hymns, in fact they did not sing much at all in except with the odd response and some ancient hymns. These two pieces are pieces for the Easter season and Ascension and are based on an ancient hymn and a plainsong.

Alleluia is for Easter and is based around the ancient hymn O Filii, O Filiae. It was thought to have been written in sometime in the 1400s by a Franciscan Friar Jean Tisserand, it became very popular in France. Normally the whole piece included the singing of three Alleluias before moving on to the text of the hymn and was concluded with Alleluias, hence the title of the piece. It also affects the layout because the opening two pages represent the Alleluias, followed by the tune of the hymn which is one that we now sing as well so will be recognisable. This tune is presented in various guises followed by a repetition of the Alleluias leading in typical French style to a joyful Easter end.

The Offertoire was for Ascensiontide. In the French liturgy the offertory and preparation of the Altar were and still are not accompanied by a congregational hymn but either by an organ piece or the choir singing an appropriate motet/hymn, the congregation remaining seated until it is their turn to be sensed by the Thurifer. So Offertoires were often written to cover the action and might use the plainsong for the season or day. This one uses the plainsong Ascendit Deus, the singing of which was also preceded by the singing of Alleluias, so the layout for the organ piece is similar. There are some opening bars representing the Alleluias before a very romanticised version of the plainsong which recures throughout interspersed with fanfare like passages before finishing with some more Alleluias. © JW 2023

30th June Dubois: Toccata in G Major (No.3 from 12 Pièces) played by Ian Wells

The Toccata contains a central chorale, but its outer work is in the typical bravura style of the period and, as the name implies, it is designed to show off the skill of the player and the qualities of the instrument on which it is performed.

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7th July Stanford: 'Verdun' (3rd Movement Sonata No.2 'Eroica' Op.151) played by John Winstanley

This Sonata was written in August 1917 and is dedicated to "Monsieur Charles Marie Widor and the great country to which he belongs." Stanford was greatly affected by the Great War, he found the bombing raids in London frightening and so moved out to Windsor, some of his pupils at the Royal College of Music were either injured or killed. The year 1916 had seen both the carnage of Verdun and the Somme. This Sonata was Stanford's response of solidarity with Britain's ally, France. The first movement is entitled Rheims and is based on our old friend O Filii, O Filiae, the second is a very moving Elegy, the third is entitled Verdun and the tune it is based on will be well known to everyone and is associated with another major event in French history celebrated this month. The tune is never far away, both triumphant and reflective. In common with Dubois, Stanford really wanted to make it as an opera composer but never quite did, but you can see particularly in the last page how Stanford saw this as a stage for drama and theatricality as a very reflective section moves into a marching like section that in turn leads, as tension builds, to the theme being blazed out on solo Trumpets as the French army marches to eventual glory, as the children of the homeland march to the day of glory against the tyranny in this case not against Austria but Kaiser Bill.

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11th August Dubois: Grand Choeur (No.12 from 12 Pièces) played by Ian Wells

The Grand Choeur, is an imposing march but, unlike Lefébure-Wély, his registration instructions do advise the player to leave something in reserve for the ending, which is marked, in disarmingly small print 'Toute la force'. This is a direction which its dedicatee, Henri Dallier, organist at St Eustache at the time, would have had the armoury of pipework to fulfil. © IC 1991

22nd September Stanford: Marcia Héroïque (4 Intermetzzi Op.189) played by John Winstanley

This is one of four organ pieces published in 1923 a year before Stanford's

death. It is a very typical English type of march with outer sections very fanfare like and feature bursts of the Tuba stop (a very loud fanfare like reed stop) and an inner much more stately reflective section. It is not very original, but it is a good example of Stanford's very accomplished polished style of writing. The Opus number gives an indication of how prodigious his output was. © JW 2023

6th October Stanford: Postlude (No.6 in D minor Op.105) played by John Winstanley

This is one of four organ pieces published in 1923 a year before Stanford's death. It is a very typical English type of march with outer sections very fanfare like and feature bursts of the Tuba stop (a very loud fanfare like reed stop) and an inner much more stately reflective section. It is not very original, but it is a good example of Stanford's very accomplished polished style of writing. The Opus number gives an indication of how prodigious his output was. © JW 2023

10th November Fauré: Pie Jesu (from Requiem) played by Ian Wells

Pie Jesu from the Requiem was composed in 1888, when Fauré was in his forties, quite probably in response to the recent death of his father. Shortly after its first performance, Faure's mother also died, giving the work an added poignancy. In 1900, under some pressure from his publishers, he reluctantly agreed to the release of a revised version containing additional instrumental parts designed to broaden the work's appeal. Nowadays it is such a firm favourite that it comes as a surprise to learn that it did not gain widespread popularity until the nineteen-fifties. The *Pie Jesu* was originally written for Solo Soprano accompanied by organ and strings but transfers perfectly to the organ as a solo!
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22nd December Dubois: Fiat Lux (No.8 from 12 Pièces Nouvelles) played by John Winstanley

This piece has two links to Liverpool. Firstly, "Fiat Lux" appears on the University coat of arms and it was dedicated to W.T. Best who was the first civic organist and Organist of St Georges Hall. Liverpool Corporation had installed one of the largest organs in the country built by Henry Willis. Willis had connections with France because he was a friend of and worked closely with the French organ builder Aristide Cavaille-Coll who built virtually all the major French organs from the middle of the 19th century onwards, many contained mechanisms designed by Willis. It was a Cavaille Coll that Dubois played at The Madeleine church, so Dubois would probably have known Best both by reputation and via the Willis connection.

Dubois instructions are to start the piece "pppp" gradually building to "ffff" .

It is a Toccata like piece but with a great sense of rhythmic drive and rather dance like in the way it drives forward. © JW 2023

Meet the Organists:

IAN WELLS is Organist at Liverpool Parish Church (Our Lady and St Nicholas)



and Assistant Choral Director and Honorary Deputy Organist of Liverpool Cathedral, having been Assistant Organist at the cathedral for nearly 26 years, he relinquished this post at the end of 2007, to devote more time to his family and to teaching. He has been associated with Liverpool Cathedral and its music for most of his life, beginning as a chorister and then studying organ with Ian Tracey. He was Organ Scholar to both Noel Rawsthorne and Ian Tracey before being appointed Assistant Organist and Choral Conductor in 1982. During this time he was deeply involved in the daily round of cathedral choral services. He

also took part in concerts and tours throughout Europe including performances in Paris, Chartres, Barcelona, Brussels, Prague, Amsterdam, Cologne, Venice and Riga. He was Director of Music of Holy Trinity Church, Southport from 2008-2017 and Conductor of the Southport Bach Choir from 2008-2012 and was Head of Upper School and Director of Music at Tower College, Rainhill from 2001-2020. A graduate of Lancaster University from the specialist Honours course in Music and Worship, and an associate of the London College of Music. He also tutors privately in piano and organ.

JOHN WINSTANLEY started organ lessons with Caleb Jarvis the City Organist at St George's Hall in 1967 and played at churches during his first undergraduate spell in Liverpool ending up as Derek Sadler's deputy at St Nick's, as a result he played for a Songs of Praise Broadcast from there in 1975. For part of this time he was also accompanist to the Liverpool Archdiocesan choir, playing for concerts in the Metropolitan Cathedral. Later while at Medical School he was Organ Scholar at Mossley Hill Parish church which at the time meant playing for Choral Evensong every week, plus Choral Mattins and Eucharist and summer trips to various Cathedrals in the summer



deputising for the regular choirs. During this period he had lessons from Noel Rawsthorne gaining a Fellowship from Trinity College London. Subsequently he played the organ at St Agnes Ullet Road for the weekly Choral Evensong and Benediction. Moving to Manchester and being a Surgeon imposed a break on regular playing however he continued to play for a choral group that did itinerant Choral Evensongs and recommenced lessons with Gordon Stewart and then Jeffrey Makinson at Manchester Cathedral. After retirement he became Organist at the Manchester Oratory where, on his 65th birthday he did a recital as part of the Cheatham Hill Festival. When in Brittany he plays at the local churches and has given concerts during the summer tourist season. His real love is playing nineteenth and twentieth century French organ music.

The Saint Nicholas' Singers will also performing works by Stanford, Dubois and Faure throughout the year during the Parish Eucharist and in Choral Evensong on the first Sunday of the month. Please see the Music List online or in the Narthex.

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