

# ***UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN CONCERT SERIES 2018 – 2019***

## ***ANDREW FORBES ORGAN RECITAL***

### ***KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL***

***Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2019***

Andrew Forbes is Director of Music at Glasgow Cathedral. He is an organist, harpsichordist and conductor and a trustee of the Glasgow Society of Organists. In 2014 he won the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition. Originally from Perth, he is fast developing a reputation as a real virtuoso of the organ across Britain and indeed Europe. Born in 1993, his maturity as a performer is astounding in such a young musician. As one regular concert goer said to me after today's concert, this was without doubt a five star performance.

It began with the Toccata in F Major by Johann Jakob Froberger (1616 – 1667). Rapid precision playing of the opening had a whirlwind of upper notes against a solid undercurrent. It moved on to bright tuneful melodic playing, a rousing beginning to a wonderfully varied selection of music.

The Messe des Festes Solemnelles by Nicolas Lebègue (1631 – 1702) provided a marvellous opportunity for an exploration of the multicoloured sound possibilities of the Aubertin Organ. Andrew Forbes positively luxuriated in those possibilities. The two television screens at the front of the Chapel were focused on the performers hands. The screens were a great help in letting us see the use of all three keyboards in bringing out the music of the Mass with amazing clarity. The Kyrie alone had five sections including a trumpet fugue, a duo of flute mixtures and a rich Plein Jeu. The five parts of the Gloria included cornet and voix humaine and splendid fugues in the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. This was the organ as a full on orchestral instrument which is the core of the French style and to which the Aubertin is particularly well suited.

I particularly enjoyed the Kyrie eleison 6' a suitably quirky setting by Eric Satie. It had a certain simplicity, but over that, surprising yet delightful harmonic language to which Andrew Forbes added his special choice of stop blending.

The Suite du Deuxième ton by Louis Nicolas Clérambault (1667 – 1794) was somewhat easier to follow compared with the many parts of Lebègue's Mass since the stop choice details of each of the five movements is clearly laid out. A rich noble sounding Plein Jeu was followed by an upper flute part flute supported by a Cromorne Bass. The section just marked Flûtes had a delicious choral feel to its central chordal passages. The Récit de Nazard had a joyful dance-like quality and then the Caprice sur les Grands Jeux married a certain sense of fun with a generally rich and lofty sound quality.

J. S. Bach's Chorale Prelude Christe, aller Welt Trost, showed music in which form was more important than multiple contrasting sound qualities. Andrew Forbes played it very stylishly with exciting pedal work too.

The final piece, like the first, was a toccata but very different from Froberger's. It was Toccata Septima by Georg Muffat (1653 – 1704). He was of half Scottish descent through his father but born in the Duchy of Savoy now part of France and divided his time between Paris where he may have studied with Lully and Vienna and Salzburg. The Toccata was in a number of varied sections, with a noble sounding opening followed by delicate playful flutes, rapid close harmonies, a minor section then more playful harmonies on the upper manual and finally a fast running finale – a totally electrifying performance.

This concert provided us with a top quality opening to what I hope will be a very Happy New Year for Aberdeen University Music!