

# Organ Recital St Michael's Betchworth

Margaret Phillips Organ Recital – May 21st 2016



If ever justification was needed for the purchase of a new pipe organ in a country church, it was surely in this recital given by the international concert organist Margaret Phillips.

A packed church witnessed a concert of the highest class by a musician of the highest class, who plays in cathedrals and concert halls the world over and shortly can be heard in London's Royal Festival Hall.

The programme was carefully chosen to demonstrate music from the Baroque to the modern, including some full blooded 19th century pieces. That great master of the organ, both as a player and composer, J. S. Bach, was represented by the first of the Leipzig Chorale Preludes – the Fantasia on “Komm, Heiliger Geist” – where the chorale tune is heard played on the pedals against figurations on the manuals, clearly signifying the rushing wind of the Holy Ghost. The same Chorale was also heard in the setting by Bach's contemporary Dietrich Buxtehude whose reputation was such that the younger man walked some 200 miles to Lübeck to hear him play!

The Kenneth Tickell organ of 2014 is fully equipped to play this period of music just as well as the more light-hearted dances by composers born in the 20th century, one of which, by Lionel Rogg (b.1936), calls for the utmost virtuosity in the pedal department, as does the 19th century Saint-Saëns' Fantaisie in Db. This last also demonstrated some of the full range of colours that this organ possesses, which were beautifully realised by Margaret.

The programme had begun with W.T. Best's arrangement of Handel's Occasional Overture, and this, together with Guilmant's March on a Theme by Handel heard earlier, linked up the 18th with the 19th century, while the concert concluded with Joseph Bonnet's Concert Study from his Douze Pièces Op.7 (1910).

The enthusiastic and long applause prompted an encore from Margaret in the form of a charming piece called “Shalom” by the little known 21st

century Dutch composer, Toon Hagen, that seemed to incorporate the song "Peace be with you" in its flow of notes, making a fitting end to this magnificent recital.

Christopher Slater