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Peter Parshall Moves On
Table Quiz and Auction
The Story of Tristan

Peter Parshall Moves On

Peter Parshall has contributed enormously to the musical life of Saint Bartholomew's over the last few years. He has done this in a number of important ways: as a fine organist, always willing to play for the choirs; as Acting Director of Music following the departure of Malcolm Wisener for Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral; as Assistant Director of Music working alongside Director of Music Fraser Wilson; and, latterly, as Director of Music working with Fraser as Assistant Director. In each of these roles Peter's innate musicianship and natural leadership has enriched the musical life of Saint Bartholomew's and the singers under his direction.

Peter brought with him a rich and varied tapestry of choral music expertise. His impressive track record includes such roles as Director of Music at Saint Mary Magdalen Church, Oxford; Director of Chapel Music at Westminster College, Oxford; and Organist to the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Prior to his coming to Dublin in 2003, Peter was accompanist to the Royal School of Church Music's Southern Cathedral Singers, playing for services in cathedrals all over the Midlands and South East of England.

Peter became co-ordinator of the Royal School of Church Music in Ireland in 2004. This role gave him responsibility for the development of the RSCM on the island of Ireland, and for the implementation of its education and training programmes. Consequently in Saint Bartholomew's Peter has encouraged members of the choirs to participate in the Voice for Life Awards. His practical support led to a great number of the boys and girls – and at least one member of the back row who prefers to (try to) remain anonymous – working towards, and earning, one or more of the awards.

In introducing this initiative, Peter's natural teaching abilities, characterised by patient encouragement and unstinting good humour, played a key role. The Voice for Life Awards provide a very positive support structure for singers on their respective musical journeys, and in many ways sum up the values so clearly in evidence in Peter's approach to his duties at Saint Bartholomew's: dedication, patience, hard work, encouragement, and a sense of making progress along an exciting journey.

During his tenure at Saint Bartholomew's Peter introduced many new pieces



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to the repertoire – for this writer, the most sublime example being the men's voice motet Regina Coeli by Robert White, an intricate polyphonic work in which the many individual parts interweave with celestial splendour. The piece is by no means an easy sing – a truth well borne out by the experience of those of us who attempted to perform it in Peter's absence during a choir visit to Westport (happily, subsequent performances have improved markedly!). It is a wonderfully uplifting piece to sing, aptly taught to us by a person of Peter's positive attitude and unshakeable belief in our abilities!

Sunday 20 February marked the last day of services at which Peter directed the music at Saint Bartholomew's. Although we are very sorry to see Peter leave us, we celebrate the lasting contribution he has made to our Choirs and to our community. As a way of marking his departure from Saint Bartholomew's, the Choir presented Peter with a number of gifts: an elegant decanter and set of wine glasses; a copy of *Les Choristes* on DVD, and framed prints of the photographs found in the center pages of this magazine.

We hope that, wherever his onward journeys may take him, Peter will often raise a glass to fond memories of his time spent at Saint Bartholomew's. When he does this, he can be certain in the knowledge that his salute will be fondly reciprocated by all of us who have been fortunate enough to sing under his guidance. We warmly wish Peter and his partner, Judy, every happiness for the future.

Des Ryan

Organ Fireworks

An unusually large number of people stayed to listen to the Organ Voluntary on Easter Sunday – the famous Sortie in E flat by *Lefébure-Wély* – not least quite a few of the choristers who found it unusually difficult to maintain solemn expressions while processing out of the church.

The writer has persuaded our organist Fraser Wilson to make a recording of this piece, which was completed on the afternoon and evening of Sunday 15 May. It is now available for free download on the parish web site, where it joins a number of other interesting recordings.

Richard Bannister





The Story of Tristan - Our Director of Music

Tristan Russcher was born in Perth, Western Australia into a musical family. His grandmother, Meta Overman, was a concert pianist and a prodigious composer who began teaching him the piano at the age of three. His grandfather, Rob Hyner, was and still is an amazing jazz pianist who regularly toured Australia with his jazz ensembles, so, from an early age, Tristan was exposed to many different musical styles.

When he was eight he was awarded a scholarship to study at the Perth Conservatorium of Music, and he was awarded the Associate Diploma in Music (A.Mus.A) at the age of fourteen – at the time the youngest person in Australia to receive the diploma. His schooling was at Guildford Grammar School in Perth, and it was at the age of fifteen that he took up the organ under the guidance of the Master of Chapel Music, Ian Hockley. Soon after this he was appointed Junior Organ Scholar at Saint George's Cathedral, Perth, where he studied with Simon Lawford, Dan Hyde, Antony Gowing and Christian Wilson. At the age of sixteen he was awarded a full music scholarship to Ampleforth College, York, where he completed his A-Levels. During this time he had many opportunities to play on the abbey's organ under the tutelage of Simon Wright and Ian Little, while keeping up his studies on the piano, violin and viola.

His studies at Ampleforth enabled him to apply for Oxford, and in 1999 he was awarded an unconditional offer to study music at Worcester College, Oxford, where he was also organ scholar for three years. During his time at Oxford he studied the organ with David Goode and Edward Higginbottom, and was tutored by Robert Saxton. At Worcester College the organ scholar had the opportunity to train and run the boys and men of the chapel choir, and after the appointment of Judy Martin as Director of Music in 2001, also to conduct and play for the newly-formed mixedvoice adult choir for four services per week.

Towards the end of his degree, Tristan was awarded the joint organ scholarship at Saint Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedrals in Dublin, and he held this post for two years from 2003-2005. During this time he was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists, the most prestigious organ diploma in the world. Shortly after this he was runner-up in the Pipe-





works International Organ Competition. After acting as assistant organist from 2005-2007 in Christ Church Cathedral, he was appointed to the new position of Assistant Director of Music, a post which involved being the primary organist for the cathedral, and latterly to run the cathedral girls' choir, along with playing a vital role in the development of the music department.

While at Christ Church, he participated in the professional recordings of two CDs on the Signum record label; he recorded, produced and mastered four discs of live recordings (including a solo organ disc) and a DVD of the Advent Procession. He also assisted in the publicity and coordination of numerous high-profile concerts in the cathedral. In 2008 he presented the complete organ works of Olivier Messiaen

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in a joint recital series with David Leigh, sponsored by Pipeworks.

During his time in Dublin he has played for all the major choral societies and orchestras, and is currently balancing a busy freelance career with the role of Director of Music at Saint Bartholomew's Church, Clyde Road. As a repetiteur he often works for the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Lyric Opera and various professional musical societies, along with accompanying the choirs in Saint Patrick's Cathedral for services on a regular basis. Recent solo recital venues have included Saint Paul's Cathedral London, Oosterkirk Amsterdam, Washington National Cathedral, Worcester Cathedral and the National Concert Hall Dublin.

He is also interested in recording techniques and mu-

sic technology, and has set up a successful sideline business, which caters for students and young professional musicians wanting to record a high quality demo disc. He provides a 'one-stop-shop' for recording, engineering, accompanying, production and mastering of the final disc. More details are available at www.dublindemodiscs.com.

Towards the end of 2011 he will be performing Francis Pott's monumental two-and-ahalf hour long organ symphony, *Christus*, a challenge met by only six previous organists, in Saint Peter's Cathedral, Belfast. When not working eight days a week, he enjoys pottering around in his garden in Harold's Cross with his partner Vicki, cooking curries and attempting to learn the guitar.

Bobby Barden





DYO Symphony Orchestra Concert

For almost thirty years Dublin Youth Orchestras has been showcasing the talents of the capital's young musicians. Its Symphony Orchestra provides a platform for its most experienced players, and in February, for the third year running, the orchestra chose Saint Bartholomew's as the venue for its annual concert.

Under the baton of Fergus Sheil, the Orchestra first threw itself into a lively rendition of the *Overture from William Tell* by Rossini, with the brass galloping confidently through the well known cavalry charge.

Camille Saint Saens composed his engagingly melodic *Allegro Appassionato* in 1875. This was the year when, at the age of forty, he married the twenty year old Marie Truffot. The composer's marriage foundered in 1878, after only three years. However the piece, scored for cello and orchestra, has remained a favourite with audiences since it was first performed. DYO's gifted young cellist Sean Warren did full justice to this substantial work, showing particular maturity in his reading of the lyrical second theme.

The evening of music culminated in the *Symphony No. 5 in E minor* of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. This work, with its clear exposition of the notion of victory through strife, has always been popular with audiences. Its musical trajectory was highlighted dramatically when, on the night of 20 October 1941, the Leningrad Radio Symphony Orchestra mounted a performance, broadcast live in London, from a city under siege by Hitler's armies.

Listeners in England were horrified to hear bombs dropping from the beginning of the second movement, and in awe of the musicians who continued playing until the last note. Under the assured and energetic direction of their conductor, the young musicians of DYO did full justice to the drama of the work, to the delight of an audience which filled the church.

John King

The Select Vestry has formally approved a plan to produce two new recordings of Saint Bartholomew's Choir.

Engineering for both discs will be handled by Brian McIvor, who was responsible for the disc of Carols and Readings released in 2009. Judy Martin has agreed to reprise her role as producer.

The first disc will

Choir CD Projects

feature the Girls and Men performing a number of favourite items from the repertoire, to include selections such as *Stanford* in G, *Parry* I was glad, *Lindley* Ave Maria, *Archer* Missa Omnes Sancti, and *Chilcott* God so loved the world. We also anticipate including a hymn, a psalm, and at least one organ voluntary. Recording is planned to take place in October, with a view towards a Christmas release. The second disc, featuring the Boys and Men, is on the drawing board for the 2012/13 term. The exact programme will be decided closer to the time. Further details on both projects will appear on the parish web site in the very near future.

Richard Bannister

I am accustomed to making music in Saint Bartholomew's in the relative privacy of the organ loft (where one is susceptible to delusions of solitude), or — if I happen to be conducting — with a lovely view of the altar. As such, it was a refreshing experience to find myself on the other side of the screen (literally), and facing the other way, for a recent concert — and all the more so, because it was my first appearance as a member of Anúna.

I have long been familiar with Anúna's striking and beautiful music. Recently as guest organist at their Christmas concerts (also held here) and as a participant in their choral workshop at the National Concert Hall, I came into contact with the choir's mastermind and driving force Michael McGlynn. It was a big surprise afterwards to be invit-

Singing with Anúna

ed to join the group, to share a stage with these people whose singing had made them famous across the world, and to appear with them for the first time in my own church.

Many will know that Anúna sings from memory on stage, no paper allowed - so the entire concert programme has to be memorised by each singer. This involves learning not only your own line but also everyone else's, so that you know when to sing, what to listen for, who to take your cue from, and so on. And there's always the chance that you might need to sing the second tenor part in a piece for which you had earlier learnt first bass. So it really is a case of doing as much work as you can! On being asked to sing in this concert, a quick calculation showed that I had ten days to learn sixteen pieces: cue sleepless nights, multi coloured crayoning, and iPod on endless repeat... I was proud that on the night I only had to absent myself from one number (Dúlamán, in case you were wondering: too much Irish – and too quick, for even my supreme linguistic skills...). Happily, I was able to take a back seat in the choir stalls at the right moment, and then drift seamlessly back into the choir.

I know that the choir is delighted to have performed a number of times at Saint Bartholomew's, and that the church in turn is very happy to have hosted Anúna over the past year. The building's acoustic and atmosphere seem to be an excellent match for the choir's singing and approach, and we all hope that it's a partnership that will continue long into the future.

Fraser Wilson









A Voice from afar

When former vicar Fr John McKay passed away last summer, it was quickly arranged that his funeral would take place at Saint Bartholomew's. Amidst the other preparations, it struck me that music should play a significant part in the service. Knowing that Fr Mc-Kay had a great interest in both music and the spiritual writings of John Henry Newman, I made the suggestion to his widow, Rhona, that perhaps a suitable text of Newman's could be found and set to music in John's memory, and that is how *A Voice from afar* came to be composed.

It is a setting of Newman's poem of the same title, written for organ, soprano solo and men's chorus. This scoring suited the forces available: the men of the choir, so adept at chanting, sang the 'Requiem aeterplainsong nam' repeatedly, while the soprano part, sung by Rosemary Beecher Bryant, sets the Newman text. Only a few months previously, Rosemary and I had had a lovely warm evening with John and Rhona at their house in the country.

In performance I quickly discovered that the organ part had a few too many notes and required more fingers than I actually possessed; but I only had myself to blame! As with much of my music, then, it was written for specific musicians and a particular context: knowing who will be performing, and what the listeners will be feeling, enables me to write much more effectively than if I were composing in a vacuum.

In general, I feel that the role of music is to reflect people's feelings and perhaps to enable them to experience something more deeply; and on this occasion I hoped that the piece might provide some comfort or consolation to those who would be receiving Communion as it was sung.

Months later, the same performers met in Saint Bartholomew's to record the piece, to provide a lasting record both for Rhona and anyone else who might be interested. With Richard Bannister's technical expertise, we were quickly able to lay down a good account of it. A little bit of computer wizardry then yielded the track that can now be downloaded from my website, should you be so inclined: www.fraserwilson.org.uk/ voice.html.

Fraser Wilson

Singing in the Cathedral

The girls of Saint Bartholomew's took part in a joint evensong with the girls of Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday 22 May.

At a very relaxed 2:00pm, girl choristers began warming their vocal chords for the upcoming fest. The practice was a bit shaky to begin with, but we soon got used to the striking acoustics of Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

The *Walsh* responses or to Anglican chant psalms were new to us, and for those, we followed the lead of the girls from the cathedral. However when *Darke* in F came around, we felt more at home. *Parry* I Was Glad (traditionally featured in royal weddings) was triumphant, and could only have been improved upon with trumpets.

It was a wonderful opportunity to sing in this beautiful setting. Thanks to Mr Russcher for his patience with us.

Cliona Rogan

The Gaudete Singers were founded in 1976. The choir's notable performances over the years have included Rachmaninov's *Vespers*, motets by Bach, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and the *Passio* of Arvo Pärt.

The choir is at ease in a wide range of languages. It has presented programmes of songs in Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Czech and Hungarian. Under the direction of David Leigh, the Singers presented a concert in Saint Bartholomews

which featured sacred music from the twentieth century.

Frank Martin was born in Switzerland in 1890 and by the age of nine, he was composing children's songs. A performance of Bach's Saint Matthew Passion, heard at the age of twelve, left a lasting impression on the composer, for whom J. S. Bach remained the true master. He went on to study maths and physics as well as piano and composition, living in Zurich, Rome and Paris. He moved to the Netherlands in 1946 and lived there for the rest of his life. His style is very individualistic and, although he embraced some of the elements of Schoenberg's music, he did not abandon the sense of tone.

Gaudete Singers Concert

At Saint Bartholomew's the choir gave a magisterial performance of his *Mass for Double Choir* with its rich and complex interplay of rhythm



and harmony, texture and tone.

Born in Northampton in 1901, Edmund Rubbra also started composing as a child. His parents had limited means, and he left school at the age of fourteen to work for a local shoe manufacturer. His fortunes turned however when he gained scholarships to Reading University, and the Royal College of Music, where he was taught by Gustav Holst. He was appointed as a lecturer at Oxford, and later joined the composition faculty of the Guildhall School of Music.

Rubbra composed eleven symphonies which represent a significant contribution to the repertoire. The *Nine Tenebrae Responsories* which the choir performed at Saint Bartholomew's, reflect his devout Christian faith. They are mystical and intensely dramatic settings of the texts used dur-

> ing Matins on Maundy Thursday. Matins consists of three Nocturns, each with three psalms and antiphons and three readings with three responsories: hence nine responsories in total. The three responsories of the first Noc-

turn were written in 1951. There was then a gap of ten years before the next six were completed, the second Nocturn on the Feast of Christ the King in 1961, and the third during Advent.

It seems that Rubbra did not initially conceive these pieces for complete liturgical performance, but there is a unity of purpose and approach; and he observes all the repetitions of the text which are dictated by the liturgy.

The church provided a perfect setting for the choir's sensitive reading of this intensely spiritual music.

Table Quiz and Auction

The annual choir fundraising Table Quiz and Auction took place on Friday 15 April at Merrion Cricket Club.

This year we are delighted to announce that the takings from the night (after the cost of venue hire) have come in at just under the €2000 mark, a fabulous result considering the economic situation in this country. We can all be very proud of this achievement.

The cumulative amount raised since the first quiz eight years ago has now exceeded \notin 20,000, money which has been used to good effect: subsidising choir trips; funding the CD produced in 2009; purchasing music; and of course assisting with the administration costs in running the music department at Saint Bartholomew's Church.

This year a total of fifteen teams took the challenge. The

winning team, featuring Damien Kiberd, Emmet Kiberd, Tim Thurston, Fraser Wilson, and Fergal Cooke, took home the overall prize after a closely fought contest – coming in just two points clear of the second place team (though some thirty-five points ahead of the "rubber duck" team!).

The questions were set for us once again by Frank Bannister. One unexpected highlight was a rather unique picture round – matching the gentlemen of the choir to photographs of themselves as young children. This proved surprisingly difficult for most teams, with the best score in the round being eight out of a possible eleven. (Extracting these photographs from the various gentlemen was probably at least as difficult as working out who was who on the night! -RB).

During the proceedings

we auctioned off a number of items donated by friends and family of the choir.

Our thanks must go to the various major sponsors: The Wicklow Wine Company, for some splendid wines divided into two lots and co-sponsored by the writer; Tim Thurston, for his usual supply of classical CDs, divided into three lots; the Kiberd family, for providing a voucher for thirty cupcakes from Blondie's Cupcakes, as well as six "demonstration" models brought on the night (which looked incredibly tempting - only the season of Lent was sufficient to stop at least one of these going missing prior to the auction *itself*! - RB); the Jones family, for providing two passes for the Guinness Storehouse and a voucher for a Fourball at Druids Heath Golf Course; Bobby Barden, for providing a framed map of Dublin circa 1750, and





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a large stainless steel fireguard, subsequently won by the Director of Music; Hugh and Margaret Considine, for three bottles of French Chateau Bordeaux wines in a presentation box.

The ever popular raffle was well supported by everyone, and we would like to thank all the parents, choristers and visitors for their valuable contributions to the prize table. There were virtually enough prizes to have "one for everyone in the audience", all gratefully received by the lucky winners. Please accept this as a collective thank you to all, too numerous to mention individually, who provided prizes for the raffle.

On a personal note, I would like to thank some of our corporate sponsors, who, despite recession, and downturn in business, have supported us annually for eight years. The Wicklow Wine Company, Main Street, Wicklow; Super-Valu Supermarket, Wentworth Place, Wicklow; and Butler's Medical Hall, Abbey Street, Wicklow have been very generous over the years, and I appeal to parents and choristers to support our sponsors when visiting the beaches at Brittas Bay and Silver Strand during the summer months.

The quiz could not go ahead without a lot of backroom work by Richard Bannister, who takes great pleasure in providing questions I can't pronounce. We must also thank Albert Horan and family for bringing the extra tables from the John Scottus School each year, and our hosts Merrion Cricket Club for allowing us the use of their Cricket Pavilion at a very nominal cost.

Voice for Life

A large number of our choristers were awarded Voice for Life medals in February.

Silver with distinction: Daisy Magahy-Buckley, Liam Newman; Silver with merit: Sally–Anne McCarthy, Des Ryan; Silver: Elias Dempsey, Jake Foley, Kate Somers; Bronze with merit: Hannah Charlton, Mazzy Ronaldson, Rachel Spratt; Bronze: Martin Henihan, Maya McNair, Cian O'Mahony.

Congratulations to all on their achievements. The race is now on for the first Saint Bartholomew's chorister to earn a gold medal!

Peter Parshall



Robin Heather

And now for something completely different...

Potato, potato, potato... it's the familiar sound of a Harley ticking over on the driveway, ready to become a loud grunt as it takes off for a day's riding.

We all have our hobbies and our favourite things to do in our spare time, and riding a motorbike is one of the things I enjoy doing a lot.

My early forays into biking involved poorly made 50cc mopeds, which were great fun as long as they started in the morning. As a student, motorbikes held together with gaffer tape were about all I could afford, but more recently I've settled into the comfortable world of the cruiser. I started out with a Yamaha cruiser - a remarkably light and nippy little bike, but I've settled on a Harley Davidson for the last couple of years and despite it being a much heavier bike, it's a real pleasure to ride.

Being in your mid-thirties with a cruiser has its advantages. Smaller cruiser bikes tend to be much cheaper than road bikes, and better yet, the insurance can be considerably less too! – although I still have a small hankering after road bikes from time to time (the call to the dark side, as it's known in the biking community!).

In Dublin having a bike is great for getting around through traffic and finding somewhere to park; but having Glendalough and the rest of County Wicklow practically on your doorstep is a nice perk too. On a bright and sunny morning there is nothing quite like the fresh air of the Sally Gap or the Wicklow Gap; the twists and the turns and the stunning views and vistas are amazing. Biking also has a great social aspect to it with organised ride outs and various charitable events like the famous Irish toy runs and the Route 66 run in aid of the Temple Street Children's Hospital.

I suppose that part of the attraction in riding for me – particularly now in terms of parish work – is not being tied to time or schedule, or being organised in the way that I need to be in my working life. The freedom of being able to jump on a bike and ride wherever, and park wherever, and stop and rest and eat whenever, and simply enjoying the unorganised, unplanned journey is greatly appealing.

If you are wondering what it's like to be on a motorbike in Dublin City, you can take a look at this link: http://tinyurl.com/thevicar. It's a trip down the Stillorgan Road filmed from a sports camera attached to my bike helmet! *Andrew McCroskery*





Emmet Kiberd (Sch.)

Warmest congratulations to Emmet Kiberd who has recently been elected a Scholar of Trinity College Dublin.

Undergraduate students at Trinity College become Scholars of the College on the basis of their exceptional performance in a demanding set of examinations, which they voluntarily undertake to sit. The process is highly selective, and is designed to identify students who show deep understanding and mastery of their subject areas, as well as a flair for creative thinking and scholarly inquiry. It is a great honour for students to be elected Scholars, and it is a tradition of which the College is very proud. Scholars are entitled to an annual salary, to free rooms on Campus for up to nine months of the year, to free college fees, and to free Commons. These benefits last for up to five years.

On the morning of 11 April 2011, the Provost of Trinity College – observing a long-established tradition – read the names of the newlyelected Scholars from the steps of the Public Theatre (Exam Hall) in Front Square. Emmet's name was called out to applause from a large crowd of academics, students, families, friends and spectators.

Emmet is currently in the second year of his degree in Business, Economic and Social Studies. His election as a Scholar is all the more impressive when it is recalled that, as well as his dedication as a Tenor at Saint Bartholomew's, Emmet has been busily singing at Christ Church Cathedral all year. It is a real credit to his ability and motivation that Emmet has so successfully combined excellence in both the academic and choral settings.

Well done Emmet, and best wishes for your years ahead as a Scholar!

Des Ryan

Musical Success

Congratulations to chorister Gavin Jones, who was awarded a silver medal (second place) in the boys under-12 treble solo competition in the Feis Ceoil.

Gavin was also awarded

a silver medal in the equivalent competition singing in Irish (the highest award made in this competition).

Richard Bannister

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Submissions for future issues of this magazine and all enquiries about advertising should be sent to the editor. This magazine is available by post for a nominal charge; for further details, contact the Administrator, Fergus McCullough on 01-6688522 or fergus@stbartholomews.ie.

Future events

A full schedule of services and events is available on the diary page of the parish web site, located at http://www.stbartholomews. ie/.

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