

ORGANIST COMPOSERS SET TWO

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**Harold Darke, Henry Ley, E J Hopkins, William Faulkes,
George Thalben Ball, Percy Whitlock.**

Here follows my second set of organist composers who should not be forgotten but probably revived.

HAROLD DARKE

Harold Edwin Darke is best remembered for his beautiful setting of In the bleak midwinter.

He was born in Highbury, London on 29 October 1888 to Samuel Darke and Arundel Bourne.

Harold joined the RAF and while serving his country he married Dora Garland who was the first woman to lead the Queen's Hall Orchestra.

To backtrack a few years, Darke's first organist appointment was at Emmanuel Church, West Hampstead from 1908 to 1911. He spent fifty years as organist at St Michael's Church, Cornhill from 1916 although in 1941 he deputised for Boris Ord as Music director at King's College, Cambridge.



At the church in Cornhill he gave lunchtime organ recitals, the longest running series anywhere in the world and his successors, Richard Popplewell and Jonathan Rennert have continued this.

Apart from In the bleak midwinter Darke's other compositions are Anglican setting such as Communion Services and a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. There is a cantata As the leaves fall, Rhapsody for organ Op 4, Benedictus in F, Carols, Jubilate, Te Deum, Five Miniatures for piano and Songs of Innocence.

In 1956 his devotion to St Michaels Choir, which he founded, and on their fortieth anniversary gave first performances of Hierusalem by George Dyson and Vaughan Williams A Vision of Aeroplanes.

Darke died in Cambridge on 28 November 1976

HENRY LEY

Ley came from Devon, born in Chagford on 30 December 1887. He was a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, a music scholar at Uppingham School and an organ scholar at Keble College, Oxford from 1909 and president of the University's Music Club. At the Royal College of music (RCM) he was a pupil of Walter Parratt and Marmaduke Barton.

He had several organists posts namely St Mary's, Farnham Royal (1905-1906), Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford (1909 -1926), professor of organ at RCM from 1919 and precentor at Radley College and at the College Chapel at Eton (1926-1945). He had been made an honorary fellow of Keble College in 1926 and was awarded a MA, DMus, FRCO, FRCM and an Honorary FRAM.



He composed some choral works including a one time admired setting of the Founder's Prayer of Henry VI.

He died on 24 August 1962.

E J HOPKINS

Edward John Hopkins is best remembered for some of his melodious hymn tunes such as Ellers, St Hugh, Culford and Nukapu.

He was born in London on 30 June 1818. His family were musical; his father was a clarinettist and a bandmaster and his brother (1822-1900) was the organist at Rochester Cathedral. At the age of eight, E J Hopkins became a chorister at the Chapel Royal where all the boys obtained a good grounding in education. At the age of fourteen, he was playing the organ for some services in Westminster Abbey supervised by the Abbey's organist, James Turle.



Hopkins' first appointment was at Mitcham Church, Surrey followed by other posts until he came to Temple Church in London in 1843 where he was given the title Organist to the Honourable Societies of the Inner and Middle Temple where he stayed for fifty five years. Two years before his retirement he had ceased giving organ recitals.

The Temple Church was renowned for its excellent music which was always perfectly presented. Hopkins was a first class musician.

He published his own hymn book; the first he published WAS entitled the Temple Choral Service-Book which was favourably reviewed. He edited three more collections, the Free Church Hymnbook for the Church of Scotland, Church Praise for the Presbyterian Church of England of 1882 and the Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

The popularity of this fine musician has been almost completely forgotten and that is unjust.

(PDF of [Andante Grazioso](#))

WILLIAM FAULKES

George William Henry Faulkes was born in Liverpool on 4 November 1863 where he spent his whole career as a church organist. He was a pupil of William Dawson. Faulkes became the organist of St John the Baptist, Tue Brook, Liverpool (1882-1886), St Margaret, Anfield (1886-1933).

He seems to have known many organists since he dedicated work to organists in France and the USA,

He died in Liverpool on 25 January 1933.

He was a prolific composer not only of organ music but of chamber music, choral music and instrumental music. There is a piano concerto and a violin concerto. In the early 1920s he made about 30 organ-roll recordings.



List of original organ works

Allegretto Cantabile in D flat

Alleluia! (Op. 183/1)
Alleluia : Festal Postlude on “Läßt uns erfreuen”
Andante pastorale in
Andante Affettuoso in B flat
Autumn Song
Barcarolle in A minor
Barcarolle in D
Barcarolle in E flat
Barcarolle in E minor (Op. 104/2)
Barcarolle in G
Barcarolle in G minor (Op. 105)
Barcarolle in B flat
Berceuse in A flat
Berceuse in B flat
Berceuse in G
Cantabile in E flat
Cantilène Pastorale in F (Op. 138/2)
Cantilene in A
Cantilène in D flat
Canzone
Capriccio in A
Caprice in E flat (Op. 135/4)
Carillon (Op. 113/2)
Carillon in C
Chanson (Op. 136/2)
Christmas Meditation on “Adeste Fideles”) (Op.183/3)
Communion in D
Communion in E
Communion in E (Op. 101/3)
Communion in E minor (Op. 128/2)
communion in F
Concert Overture in E flat
Concert Prelude and Fugue
Cortège
Elegie in F minor
Elevation in D (Op. 138/5)
Elevation in F
Elevation in G
Elevation in B minor
Fanfare
Fantasia on the Old Melody “Urbs Beata” (Op. 112)
Fantasia in D
Festival prelude on “Ein’ feste Burg”
Finale in E flat (Op. 128/6)
Four Pieces Op 83
Gavotte and Musette
Grand Chœur (Op. 136/1)
Grand Chœur alla Handel
Grand Chœur in A flat
Grand Chœur in D
Hossana! (Op. 183/4)
Idyll in D flat
Impromptu in G

Intermezzo in C
Liebeslied in A flat
Legend and Finale
Marriage benediction
March Triumphale in E (Op. 138/1)
March nuptiale
March pontificate
March in B flat
March in C (Op. 101/2)
March in E flat
Meditation in D
Meditation in E flat
Melody in D flat (Op. 101/4)
Minuet & Trio in B minor
Minuet & Trio in D (Op. 104/3)
Mélodie in E minor (Op. 138/4)
Nocturne in A
Nocturne in D (Op. 142/1)
Nocturne in F (Op. 104/1)
Nuptial Postlude in F
Offertoire in D minor
Offertoire in F minor
Offertoire in E minor
Overture in F
Organ Sonata no 2 in A minor
Pastorale in C
Pastorale in F
Pastorale in F sharp minor
Pastorale in in G (Op. 101/1)
Pastorale in A
Pastorale in E
Polonaise in E minor
Postlude in B flat (Op. 101/5)
Postludium in G
Prelude Heroic (Op. 139/1)
Prelude and Fugue in G minor
Priere in D
Processional March in A
Reverie in E flat
Rhapsodie in G minor (on "O filii et filiae")
Rhapsodie on Old French Carols
Rhapsodie on a theme for Pentecost
Rêverie in A (Op. 135/5)
Romance
Scherzo in A minor (Op. 138/3)
Scherzo in D (Op. 135/6)
Serenata
Sombre March (Marche sérieuse) in C
Sortie in A
Spring Song (Op. 113/1)
Theme (Varied) in G major
Theme (Varied) in E falt
Theme and Variations in F (Op. 143)

Theme with Variations
Toccata in F major
Toccatina in G minor (Op. 128/4)
Two Communion (1: in A flat; 2: in B)
Two organ Pieces OP 113
Wedding Chimes (Op. 183/2)

There are many arrangements for organ of works by Chopin. Liszt, Kullak, Henselt, Rubinstein and others

(PDF of [Organ Sonata no 2](#) and [Overture in F](#))

GEORGE THALBEN BALL

George Thalben-Ball was Australian born of Cornish parents in Sydney on 18 June 1896. Thalben was his mother's maiden name. The family moved back to the UK when George was four years old. He studied organ at RCM from the age of fourteen. When he was nineteen, he played Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no 3 at RCM.



After graduating, he deputised, as required, as organist at the Temple Church, London where the organist was Sir Henry Walford Davies whom he succeeded in 1923, a post which he held for almost sixty years. His choir received international fame in 1927 with its recording of Mendelssohn's Hear my prayer with Ernest Lough as the treble soloist.

G T Ball, as he was often known, wrote anthems and choral works including the Elegy for organ played at Princess Diana's funeral.

In 1935, he was awarded the Lambeth degree of Doctor of Music and until his knighthood in 1982, he was affectionately known as Doctor.

He was a regular broadcaster with the BBC and gave the inaugural concerts on the organ at the Royal Albert Hall where he was the curator organist and at the BBC Concert Hall. In 1949, he was appointed Birmingham city organist and, also, Birmingham university organist which university he served for about thirty years during which time he gave about a thousand recitals on a weekly basis.

In 1948 he was elected President of the Royal College of Organists where he had become a fellow in 1915.

He taught at RCM where one of his pupils was the conductor Meredith Davies.

He was a virtuoso player and awarded the CBE in 1967. He was twice married with a son and a daughter. His second wife was the concert organist Jennifer Bate.

He died on 18 January 1987.

PERCY WHITLOCK

Percy William Whitlock is a very fine and underrated composer. He had a short life blighted by tuberculosis and high blood pressure.

He was born on 1 June 1903 at Chatham in Kent and became a student of Vaughan Williams at RCM. While there is a lot to admire in Vaughan Williams he was not the best of teachers. There are those

who love to use comparisons about music styles and some have said that Whitlock's music show influences of Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Gershwin, Stanford, Rachmaninov and Quilter. Such remarks are off-putting, questionable and unfair. It is also said that he composed themes that sound like folk songs alla Delius and Vaughan Williams and, in fact, one of his Five Pieces for organ is called Folk Song. All of this conjecture is a hindrance to Whitlock's skill as a composer and he was also a fine organist.

He was assistant organist at Rochester Cathedral from 1921 to 1930 and in the following five years he was director of music at St Stephen's Church, Bournemouth and, from 1932, he was the borough organist and gave regular recitals at Bournemouth Pavilion and from 1935 he worked full-time at the Pavilion.

He was a man with several interests with a skill in writing prose usually under the name of Kenneth Lark. He broadcast many times from the BBC until his death on 1 May 1946. He was a keen railway enthusiast loving steam trains as many other composers do. There is something strangely musical about steam trains, their movement, their rhythm, their build up and changes of tempi like the cogent argument in a symphonic work and so on.

Whitlock worked closely with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

His organ music is as good if not better than most other British organ composers and although his critics claim his music are miniatures, another stupid remark, even his short pieces have a clear purpose. His Organ Sonata in C minor of 1936 makes the Elgar Sonata to be a kindergarten work and why Gordon Jacob orchestrated the Elgar to try to improve it.

Whitlock also wrote a Symphony in G minor for organ and orchestra completing it in 1937. Other orchestral works include Carillon (1932), March : Dignity and Impudence, Concert Overture, The Feast of St Benedict (1934), To Phoebe (1936), Poem (1937), Wessex Suite (1937), Balloon Ballet (1938), Holiday Suite (completed 1939), Ballet for the Wood Creatures (1939), Music for orchestra (1940) and Caprice (1941). I make this point to show that Whitlock was not just an organ composer.

For a man so gifted to have a tragic life is unfair. He eventually lost his sight and died a few weeks before his 43rd birthday.

(2036)

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