

Lanarkshire Society of Organists

# **The Stewart Alston Memorial Recital**

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Guest organist: Prof. Malcolm Sim  
*organist of Glasgow Cathedral*



Cadzow Parish Church,  
Woodside Walk, Hamilton

Stewart pictured as SFO President,  
at Motherwell Cathedral in 2007



## **Tribute to John Stewart Alston**

Always known as Stewart, Stewart was brought up in Langside, an only child. He had a happy childhood and attended Queen's Park Secondary School. It was in his early years that the foundation was laid for his interests all his life.

He was involved in the Boys' Brigade all his life, did his National Service, and lead many choirs and played organs in Rutherglen, Cambuslang Trinity St Paul's, St Machan's Larkhall and finally New St Andrew's where he played for 25 years!

But for this occasion, we would like to concentrate on his service to various local organist societies: Glasgow and Lanarkshire and probably a few more. He was also a member of the Cinema Organ Society!

In May 1991, he was appointed SFO secretary, a post he held for 14 years. His first duty in this post was to arrange the production of the President's Badge of Office which is still in use today. He was twice appointed SFO President, the first was the year before he became secretary and the second in 2006-7, the year after he was secretary.

During all this time, and after he retired, as an elderly and increasingly frail gentleman, he continued making the journey to Perth twice a year to attend SFO committee meetings representing Lanarkshire.

For many years, Stewart also travelled down to England to the IAO annual conference representing the SFO and his passing was noted in the Organists' Review.

One last memory of Stewart, was the warm welcome he gave to the committee, when we held a meeting in his house in Coatbridge, where everyone was encouraged to play his huge two manual organ! We often wondered what the neighbours thought of the noise this must have produced when he played!!!

## **Prof. Malcolm Sim**

Prof. Malcolm Sim is the organist of Glasgow Cathedral. He began piano lessons with Pearl Gelfer of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music at the age of four. He studied organ with his predecessor at the Cathedral, John Turner and Kevin Bowyer (Glasgow University). He continues his studies with international recitalists Thomas Trotter and Christopher Nickol.

He has played many recitals internationally as well as in the UK, including St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, St Mary the Virgin Cathedral, Blackburn, St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, London, Saint Sulpice and the Mormon Tabernacle Salt Lake City. He has also played for a number of internationally televised state occasions, including Queen Elizabeth's Scottish Diamond Jubilee service, and the national service marking the outbreak of World War One.



## Programme

La Mourisque Tylman Susato (c.1510-1570)

Master Tallis's Testament Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Now thank we all our God (Cantata 79) BWV 79  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750) arr. L. Lethbridge

Aria Flor Peeters (1903-1986)

Litanies Jehan Alain (1911-1940)

A little Liturgical Suite (based on Scottish Folk Melodies  
Geoffrey Atkinson (b.1943)

*Prelude - Plea - Postlude*

Largo Flor Peeters

Test Drive (from "How to Train Your Dragon")  
John Powell (b.1963) arr. Anna Lapwood

Andante (Piano Concerto 2)  
Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) arr. Sim

Carillon de Westminster (Pièces de fantaisie)  
Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

## **The Forster and Andrew organ of Cazdow**

1889 Forster & Andrew 2/17 (2 manual 17 stops)

r. 1928 H. Hilsdon Glasgow 2/19

r. 1980 Michael & Andrew Macdonald 2 speaking stops changed

r. 2000 John Lightbown & Son, Whitley Bay 2/23 with reed unit

The Organ of Cadzow Parish Church was built in 1889 by Forster and Andrews of Hull.

Built originally with an integrated console (see the two centre panels of the casework) and mechanical action, a new detached console was added in 1928 by Hilsdon Organ Builders of Glasgow and located at the base of the pulpit, behind the Communion Table; the key action was converted to tubular pneumatic.

The organ remained in this format until 1980, when the console was moved to its present position by the Glasgow Organ Builder, Michael MacDonald; the 1928 pneumatic was retained at this time. A few changes were made also to the specification, the Swell Celestes being replaced by a 2-rank (12,15) mixture and the Great Clarinet by a 3-rank (15,19,22) mixture. The celestes and clarinet ranks are still stored within the organ's blowing chamber.

In the year 2000, and to mark the new millennium, the organ was rebuilt by John R Lightbown & Sons Organ Builders of Tynemouth; the specification was further extended by the addition of a free-standing unit chest of reeds at 16ft, 8ft and 4ft pitches, playable from the Great and Pedal Organs. The action was also converted to Solid State and a full complement of pistons with capture system added.

## **Organ Specification**

### **Great**

Trumpet 8  
Mixture III  
Fifteenth 2  
Harmonic flute 4  
Principal 4  
Dulciana 8  
Clarabella 8  
Open diapason 8

### **Swell**

Tremulant  
Oboe 8  
Cornopean 8  
Mixture II  
Piccolo 2  
Gemshorn 4  
Echo gamba 8  
Stopped diapason 8  
Open diapason 8  
Lieblich bourdon 16

### **Pedal**

Schalmei 4  
Trumpet 8  
Trombone 16  
Bass flute 8  
Bourdon 16  
Open diapason 16

### **Couplers**

Swell octave  
Swell sub octave  
Swell octave to great  
Swell sub octave to great  
Swell to great  
Swell to pedal  
Great to pedal

### **Accessories**

Balanced swell pedal  
Divisional pistons  
Combination pistons

## **About The Lanarkshire Society of Organists**

Founded in 1962 we've been serving Lanarkshire's Church Musicians for more than 50 years. We exist to promote organ and church music – whatever form that may take! Our membership is small with only 20 or so members, but we represent a wide spectrum of ages and interests.

Our aim is to encourage those with an interest in Church music and music in general – especially the young, promote music activities in relation to the organ and build a social network of organists in Lanarkshire, to adapt to the changing needs of organists and musicians and church music in general.

### **Who are we here for...**

Whether you are an organist of a grand Cathedral or a small Parish Church, a worship leader or instrumentalist, a pianist or a reluctant organist, a member of a choir or a solo singer we're here for you – whatever your ability.

### **What we do...**

We organise and lead various events throughout the year. These include concerts, organ recitals, instrumental ensembles, training days for adults and children, an Annual Songs of Praise, organ crawls to local churches, outings and an annual dinner where members and friends continue to meet socially.

### **Office Bearers 2025**

President: Gordon Thomson

Vice President: Mary Smith

Secretary: Anne Maguire

Treasurer: Alan Mathew

### **Contact us:**

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