

## PAST LIVES



### DAVID RUMSEY 1939-2017

Organ polymath David Rumsey died in February, following a short illness. Rumsey – a performer, teacher, writer, broadcaster, consultant, festival director, and much more – was an internationalist, working in North America, Europe, India and the Asia-Pacific region.

Born in Sydney, Rumsey studied the organ with Donald Hollier and Norman Johnston before travelling to Europe in 1963 to continue his studies with Jørgen-Ernst Hansen (Copenhagen), Marie-Claire Alain (Paris) and Anton Heiller (Vienna). In 1967 he took a post at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide, later becoming senior lecturer at the University of Sydney, where he founded the Organ and Church Music School at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He was also well known as a broadcaster, and was a pioneer in FM radio in Australia. Among his more unusual performances were the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony at several kilometres' distance from the orchestra (via a micro-wave link) to 100,000 people; and, in 1998, a 14-hour musical and dramatic spectacle on the life of J.S. Bach, which he wrote, produced, acted and performed in.

Rumsey was the regular organist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for over 25 years, and head of organ and church music at Sydney Conservatorium for 20 years. He settled in Switzerland in November 2000, where he played regularly at the Herz Jesu Church in Laufen. He wrote numerous articles about organs, served on many advisory committees, and was involved with numerous important historic restorations, including the 1874 Walker at St Stephen's, Newtown (Sydney), the 1737/1799 Nacchini/Callido at San Martino (Venice) and the Welte organ at Seewen (Solothurn, Switzerland). He was also involved in the reconstruction of a gothic positive organ based in part on a painting by Jan van Eyck, and the complete digitisation of the master roll collection of the Welte company; and most recently contributed information for the second of *Choir & Organ's Organs* in Scotland series.

## CHAMPAGNE CASE

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHURCH OF ST MARY'S, Car Colston, is celebrating the saving and restoration of its 2-manual Wordsworth & Maskell pipe organ (1875; pictured) with a recital by David Butterworth on 27 May, preceded by a champagne reception.

Butterworth, who served as adviser to the project, told *C&O*, 'The church supports one regular service per month, and there was strong pressure from certain quarters to scrap the organ and install a 3-manual electronic. [However,] the Churchwarden, Secretary and other members of the PCC put their foot down, and insisted on exploring the viability of restoring the existing instrument. They were able to attract the interest of a major donor to kick-start the funding.

'Upon original inspection, it was easy to discern the organ's potential. However, much of the pedal organ was inoperative, and there were other unhappy signs, e.g. a significant amount of beetle damage to both the organ and the floor beneath; and mouse guards of steel mesh, made to protect the pneumatic purses under the Bourdon chest, had been pulled back out of line, allowing free access to mice, with the inevitable result.

'Chris Hind of Aistrup & Hind, Lincoln, carried out the restoration meticulously, and the result is an instrument of excellent construction, newly restored in all necessary aspects, beautifully voiced with a particularly charming Great Principal chorus, and set to last for many decades without major attention.'



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## IN BRIEF

Registration is now open for choirs of young voices for the **5th Scratch® Youth Messiah** at the Royal Albert Hall (12 Nov) with conductor Ben Parry. Around 1,500 free places are available for singers up to the age of 25. [www.youthmessiah.co.uk](http://www.youthmessiah.co.uk)

**St Paul's Cathedral** has appointed a woman as a full member of its Choir for the first time in 1,000 years. Carris Jones will join the ensemble on 1 Sep as alto vicar choral. A member of the Choir of the London Oratory, Jones is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music; she has sung in professional ensembles and performed solo roles in oratorio and opera. [bit.ly/2onAa9M](http://bit.ly/2onAa9M)

Chester Cathedral has put out a call for 20 amateur organists to participate in its 6th **Grand Organ Marathon** on 16 Sep. The 12-hour event will include a guest performance by theatre organist Nigel Ogden. All proceeds go towards the Grand Organ Appeal to rebuild the Cathedral's Whiteley & Co. organ (1876). Details: [bit.ly/2nqmxq9](http://bit.ly/2nqmxq9); email the director of music, [philip.rushforth@chestercathedral.com](mailto:philip.rushforth@chestercathedral.com).

Booking has opened for the 2017 **Three Choirs Festival** in Worcester. Highlights include *A Child of Our Time* (22 Jul), *The Dream of Gerontius* (25 Jul), the *Glagolitic Mass* (26 Jul), and a solo recital by Wayne Marshall (28 Jul), who also performs alongside the Philharmonia Orchestra in Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns's Symphony no.3 (24 Jul). Tickets: 01452 768928, [www.3choirs.org](http://www.3choirs.org)

**Schoenstein & Co.** has announced it is building a II/16 organ for Mikell Chapel, Cathedral of St Philip, Atlanta. The organ is in the symphonic style and includes a double expressive division within the Swell. The Chapel sees heavy use for weekday services, two services on Sunday, as well as weddings and funerals. Installation is scheduled for Sep 2017.