

Autumn Recitals

Those who attended the recitals of music on 11th and 18th October were treated to a feast of what can only be described as heavenly music, brought to us by the cellist Raphael Wallfisch and organist Colm Carey.

Playing an instrument made in the early nineteenth century, over the two concerts Wallfisch performed Bach's unaccompanied suites for solo cello, which contrasted with some of the major organ works by the same composer performed by Carey.

Baroque suites are made up of popular dances – Minutes, Gavottes, Bourées, Giges... The challenge which Bach faced in writing suites for solo instrument lay in including harmony within a single melodic line. The performer is required to play chords through double stopping as well as to bring out and to decorate a melody, whilst always articulating the dance rhythm. All this Rafael Wallfisch accomplished seemingly effortlessly, drawing from his instrument a range of

tone which at times gave the impression of a full-blooded string orchestra and at others simulated the delicacy of a solo violin.

The suites were complemented in the first concert by organ works whose rhythms are derived from dances – the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor and the Prelude and Fugue in E flat (St. Anne), and in the second concert by the famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor. Carey's playing was characterised by the rhythmic precision and clarity normally associated with baroque string players.

Bromley Parish Church was fortunate to host performances by one of the leading cellists of our day. Internationally renowned, Wallfisch is professor of cello in conservatoires in London and Switzerland and performs throughout Europe and the USA. The younger Irish-born organist, Colm Carey, who studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and in Geneva, is building a similar international reputation.

MT/GT/RC

"La Nativité du Seigneur"

On Sunday December 14th at 6.30pm I shall be playing "La Nativité du Seigneur" (The Birth of our Lord) - a cycle of nine meditations by the 20th century composer Olivier Messiaen.

In "La Nativité" Messiaen pursues five principal theological points: Our predestination fulfilled by the Incarnation of the Word, God living among us, God suffering, the three births: the eternal birth of the word, the temporal birth of Christ and the spiritual birth of Christians, and a description of some of the characters who give Christmas a particularly poetic appeal - the Angels, Magi and the Shepherds. I was fortunate to study this work during my time in Paris as a pupil of Susan Landale. The music is essentially impressionist and its message and emotion sincere. Each of the meditations will be preceded by a sentence from scripture chosen by the composer.

Henry Fairs