

Pleasure at Toccata Tuesday

“Toccata Tuesdays” is a series of four August organ recitals organised by Doncaster Choral Society in aid of its Millennium Club. The recitals, in four different local churches, are given by the Society’s conductor, Dr Simon Lindley, arguably the most distinguished musician in the north.

The series, while not ignoring ‘standard’ organ recital fare, concentrates on the organ as a vehicle for popular, indeed ‘light’, music and the encouraging audiences so far suggest this repertoire is what people want to hear. I did not attend the first, at St Mary Magdalene, Campsall (2 August) but understand it was most enjoyable, including movements from Handel’s Water Music, Macdowell’s To a Wild Rose, Leroy Anderson’s Forgotten Dreams and pairs of pieces from Yorkshiremen Robert Cockroft and Alfred Hollins.

On 9 August Dr Lindley moved to a packed St Wilfrid’s Church, Cantley, where he had cunningly used his musicianship and vast experience of repertoire to devise a programme tailor-made for the church’s small organ: four charming Haydn miniatures, originally for a clock mechanism, cheerful movements from 18th century organ concertos by Arne and William Felton and Pietro Yon’s tiny Toccata for the Flutes. Three movements from Grieg’s Holberg Suite, usually heard on strings, sounded well on the organ, as did four popular tunes, Handel’s (so-called) Largo, the (also so-called) Trumpet Voluntary, Gershwin’s sultry Summertime and the once celebrated Last Rose of Summer. Standard organ fare came at the recital’s beginning and end, Karg-Elert’s Improvisation on Now thank we all our God and, by S.S. Wesley, on whom Dr Lindley is a world authority, the sombre Andante in E minor and the rousing Choral Song.

This was a valuable contribution to Doncaster music-making, not just for organ, though the series fills a gap while the Minster organ is out of action. I hope such an entertaining series reappears in the future, and not just at this year’s churches (the remaining two are at St Peter-in-

Chains, Chequer Road (16 August) and All Saints Church,
Arksey (23 August)

Orpheus