



## Tracklist

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Funérailles (Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, S. 173, No. 7)</b>	<b>13.53</b>
	<i>Franz Liszt</i>	
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Pilgrims' Chorus from Tannhäuser, S. 676ii</b>	<b>7.36</b>
	<i>Richard Wagner arr. Franz Liszt</i>	
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Organ Sonata in G minor, Op. 284</b>	<b>16.18</b>
	<i>Carl Reinecke</i>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Prelude and Fugue on 'O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid'</b>	<b>6.06</b>
	<i>Dame Ethel Smyth</i>	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>The Reed-grown Waters.</b>	<b>3.29</b>
	<b>(Seven Pastels from the Lake of Constance, Op. 96, No.4)</b>	
	<i>Sigfrid Karg-Elert</i>	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring</b>	<b>7.56</b>
	<i>Frederick Delius arr. Eric Fenby</i>	
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Carol (Four Extemporisations, No. 1)</b>	<b>4.29</b>
	<i>Percy Whitlock</i>	
<b>2.5</b>	<b>The Immovable Do</b>	<b>5.38</b>
	<i>Percy Grainger</i>	
	<b>Folk-Song Preludes</b>	
	<i>Peter Warlock arr. Alexander Pott</i>	
<b>2.6</b>	<b>i Very Slow</b>	<b>2.18</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>ii Cantabile</b>	<b>1.24</b>
<b>2.8</b>	<b>iii Maestoso; alla marcia funebre</b>	<b>1.49</b>
<b>2.9</b>	<b>iv Fairly slow, but evenly flowing in strict time</b>	<b>1.29</b>
<b>2.10</b>	<b>v Largo maestoso</b>	<b>4.53</b>
<b>2.11</b>	<b>Organ Sonata in G major</b>	<b>10.54</b>
	<i>Frederic Austin</i>	
	<b>Total Running Time</b>	<b>88.16</b>

## Programme Note

### Anglo-Saxony: A Leipzig Legacy

Saxony has a startlingly strong musical legacy, with many of classical music's most famous names having lived and worked in the cities of Leipzig and Dresden: Johann Sebastian Bach wrote much of his vocal music for the Thomaskirche in Leipzig; Felix Mendelssohn would rediscover and revive Bach's work through conducting the Gewandhaus Orchestra and founding the Leipzig Conservatoire in 1843; and Richard Wagner spent his early life in Leipzig and Dresden, where he achieved his first opera successes. Name a composer of the last two hundred years and it's likely that their story intersects at some stage with the musical legacy of the small state of Saxony. This became the inspiration for

the musical journey on this recording, which also celebrates the physical journey of a new organ – designed and built in Saxony, and installed in Magdalen College, Oxford in 2023.

Let us start our journey not in the cities of Leipzig or Dresden, but in a town on the extreme east of modern Germany, close to the border with both Poland and the Czech Republic. The town is Bautzen, a medieval settlement which in the 1870s was an increasing centre of skilled craftsmen trading goods made of cloth, leather, wood, and metal. This was good news for Hermann Eule, who set up his own organ building company in 1872, and whose knowledge of the latest developments in romantic organ design established him as a desirable builder

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of new organs in the large number of churches springing up or expanding to provide for the increasingly populous towns and cities of Saxony. Characterised by a warmth to the sound that made smooth dynamic changes possible and kept up with the demands of an increasingly virtuosic repertoire, his organs are notable for wide-scaled principals, melodious flutes, and strong string stops. With early successes in local churches, it was soon time for new churches in the cities to take note: Dresden got its first Eule organ in 1878 and Leipzig would follow in 1894.

The three tracks of CD 1 illustrate the kind of music which was both popular and controversial as those first Eule organs were being built. From the 1840s, much of Europe had been gripped by 'Lisztomania', as **Franz Liszt** (1811-1886) enthralled audiences with his combination of virtuoso technique, good looks, and daring chromaticism. Saxony featured on his intense concert touring schedule, with performances

in Leipzig and Dresden in 1840 and 1841, and Bautzen and Dresden in 1844. Liszt's fame continued to rise, and his rejection of composing symphonies in favour of looser narrative forms resulted in him being hailed as the beginner of a '*Neudeutsche Schule*' (New German School) by the music critic Franz Brendel in the influential Leipzig publication *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. **Funérailles** is a fantastic example of his dramatic style, written in 1849 as a commemoration of the brutally crushed Hungarian Revolution the previous year, in which he had lost friends. Although originally written for piano and published in the cycle *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, the piece's drama and colour have made it ripe for transcriptions for the organ including this one by Jeanne Deme-sieux (1921-1968).

Liszt was himself a voracious transcriber of music, both of his own and of composers he admired. He first became familiar with the music of **Richard Wagner** after attending the première of

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the opera *Rienzi* in Dresden in 1844. The following year Wagner staged his next opera, **Tannhäuser**, which Liszt would go on to conduct himself and make two arrangements of the *Pilgrims' Chorus*. Particularly after the opening of his own opera house in Bayreuth in 1876 for the *Ring Cycle*, Wagner's music became the inspiration for many of the next generation of composers, who were enthralled to his revolutionary style.

Not all the musical establishment was won over by this new style, and the Leipzig Conservatoire acted as the centre for German composers who advocated for a different musical future, built upon Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms. One of the staunchest traditionalists was **Carl Reinecke** (1824-1910), who was a composition teacher at the Conservatoire from 1860 until his retirement in 1902, as well as being Director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. His *Organ Sonata in G minor* shows the influence of Mendelssohn, especially in its wonderfully lyrical middle

movement, which is reminiscent of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*. The sonata's three movements are linked through short bridging passages. The musical ideas developed in the first movement return in the third, into which hints of a chorale theme eventually lead to a triumphant verse of the epiphany chorale *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (How brightly shines the morning star). Although his nearly three hundred compositions are mostly forgotten today, his legacy lives on in the number of students he taught, including Edvard Grieg, Max Bruch, Ferruccio Busoni, Leoš Janáček, Charles Villiers Stanford as well as the next three composers on this musical journey.

It would be fair to say that not all of Reinecke's pupils found his teaching to be inspiring. **Ethel Smyth** had grown up in England and had high hopes for her studies at the Leipzig Conservatoire when she arrived in 1877. Her assessment of Reinecke was particularly damning: 'lessons with Reinecke were

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rather a farce; he was one of those composers who turn out music by the yard without effort or inspiration, the only emotion connected with them being the ever-boiling fury of his third wife – a tall, thin woman with a mop of frizzy black hair – at the world's preferring Brahms's music to that of her adored husband.' Although she would terminate her studies with him after just a year, the influence of Leipzig's organ culture can certainly be seen in her *Prelude and Fugue on O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid*, written as part of a set of Five Chorale Preludes in 1882-4. The Prelude presents the chorale for Good Friday as an ornamented melody with three accompanimental lines underneath, similar to some of J. S. Bach's settings in the *Orgelbüchlein*. The Fugue subject is derived from the chorale and grows into an intense outburst of Passiontide anguish before relenting into the sombre ambience of the Prelude.

The generation after Smyth to study at Leipzig benefitted not only from

the wisdom of Carl Reinecke but also Salomon Jadassohn, who had been a pupil of Liszt. Amongst the many influential musicians making regular visits to Leipzig was Edvard Grieg, and the influence of these three musicians proved important to two composers in particular. **Sigfrid Karg-Elert** (1877-1933) studied at the Conservatoire for three years from 1896, during which he developed a wonderful harmonic palette and a taste for musical impressionism that is well demonstrated in his *Seven Pastels from the Lake of Constance*, from which we hear *The Reed-grown Waters*. Amongst the reeds we discover an array of birds tweeting, including the first of a few cuckoos lurking across these tracks. The striking reed sound used at the start is the Physharmonica, a free-reed stop which was popular as a bridge between the foundation stops and the heavy reeds amongst some late 19th-century German organ builders including Hermann Eule. They are a rarity on modern organs – Magdalen has

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the only one in the UK – but reminiscent of the harmonium, of which Karg-Elert was the undoubted master.

A decade before Karg-Elert found **Frederick Delius** (1862-1934) benefitting from two years of study at the Conservatoire, as well as meeting regularly with Grieg, who became a close friend. Although hearing Wagner, Liszt, and Grieg had a lasting impact upon the composer, Delius was as disparaging about the formal tuition as Ethel Smyth. That said, he may not have tried his hardest – his end of year report for piano lessons from Reinecke reads: 'Herr Delius has attempted to play the piano for years, but he is not talented enough to achieve anything at all as a performer'. His attendance record was poor for everything except composition, in which Reinecke did admit that 'he was hard-working and composed some nice things.' *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* was written in 1912 using a Norwegian folk-song that had previously been set by Grieg, called *In Ola Valley*.

The folk-song seems to conjure up a picturesque scene of a church in the valley, except that the bells are ringing out in the hope of bringing back a child who has disappeared, never to be seen again. Although considered by most to be a quintessentially English piece of music, there are many more layers to this charming piece than just the cuckoo's calls.

It is through Delius that we start our musical journey away from Saxony and trace its legacy through some of the composers whom Delius inspired. The first of these is **Percy Whitlock** (1903-1946), who dedicated his *Carol* from the *Four Extemporisations* to Delius. The opening melody is lifted directly from *Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, and the cuckoo itself gets to make a brief appearance too. Although appreciative of his music, Whitlock never met Delius, unlike the remaining composers on this disc. The Australian **Percy Grainger** (1882-1961) shared Delius's passion for Grieg, and in fact introduced Delius to

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Grieg's setting of *In Ola Valley*. Grainger was a lively presence when visiting Delius's home in France, where his athletic party trick was to throw a ball from the garden over the house, running through the central gate in time to catch it in the street. His sense of humour is also demonstrated in *The Immovable Do*, ('do' being the first degree of the so-fa scale) subtitled 'The cyphering C', which aims to make a virtue out of a problem which ailing organs often present – a note that is stuck on and refuses to be silenced. Throughout the whole piece, the top C of the instrument is wedged down with a pencil whilst the march-like music continues underneath it.

Another regular visitor to Delius was Philip Heseltine, who became known as a composer under his pseudonym **Peter Warlock** (1894-1930). From the moment he heard Delius's music as a schoolboy, Warlock was intensely moved and wrote to Delius to tell him so, starting a deep friendship in which Delius became Warlock's musical father

figure. That relationship can certainly be felt in his *Folk-Song Preludes*, Warlock's only composition for solo piano. In places Warlock includes suggestions like 'quasi tromba' (like a trumpet) and bulging dynamics on one note which are impossible on the piano, justifying transcription for the organ which is able to achieve these effects. Each is based on a Celtic folk song: the first unidentified; the second is a Scottish tune *Mo Run Geal Dileas* (My faithful fond one); the third presents a Highland melody *A chuachag nan craoch* (O cuckoo in the grove, known with a different tune as the *Skye Boat Song*); the fourth is founded on a Welsh tune called *Tros y Gareg* (Crossing the Stone); and the final prelude is based on *The Sea-gull of the Land-under-Waves*, another Hebridean melody.

The final composer achieved a little success as a composer of orchestral tone poems, but is remembered more for his career as a baritone, having sung solo roles under the batons of Edward Elgar,

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Ethel Smyth, and Thomas Beecham, including for the British première of Delius's *Sea Drift*. **Frederic Austin** (1872-1952) retired from singing at Covent Garden in 1920 and turned instead to composing and teaching, inspired by friends including Grainger, Delius, and Whitlock. In the 1930s Austin's son Richard directed the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra and worked closely with Whitlock, to whom Austin's *Organ Sonata in G major* is dedicated. It is difficult to know if Whitlock ever performed it, as no fair copy has survived – only a manuscript filled with many alterations that was passed down through the family. The sonata is a one-movement work, with a vibrant opening section which returns several times between thematically-linked dance sections. It received its first modern performances from Charles Matthews in 2022 and is recorded here for the first time.

This recording then tracks a rather personal journey for me, as it marries together my two lives as a performer and

an academic. As a researcher on Delius, it has been a pleasure to dig further into the influences on him and other composers with Leipzig connections, as well as the composers who in turn were influenced by him. In so doing, we move from German Romanticism to English 20th Century composers – two styles that demonstrate the new Eule organ in Magdalen College, Oxford at its most colourful best. It also gives an opportunity to tell a story of musical influence that includes some more unusual names amongst the well-known ones, and embraces the art of transcription as a way to present a fresh narrative. I shall end by acknowledging my thanks to all those who helped make this recording project happen, whose names are listed in the credits.

**Alexander Pott, 2025**

## Biography

**Alexander Pott** is an organist, conductor, and academic active in Oxford, Cambridge, and London. From 2017 he spent eight years as Assistant Organist and Tutor to the Choristers at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was fortunate to be involved in the building and celebration of the new Eule instrument. As part of these celebrations, he improvised accompaniment to a silent film, and performed the complete organ works of J. S. Bach across two terms, in the process raising over £10,000 for Great Ormond Street Charity.

As an academic, his specialism is in the music of Frederick Delius, which is the subject of his PhD at the University of Cambridge. This specialism also feeds into his performance interests, notably through *The Delius Singers*, a choir he founded and directs in Oxford. He is in demand as a recitalist, conductor, and teacher, and is known particularly for his innovative programming of choral and organ music with education at its centre.

His organist training took place at Christ Church, Oxford and Westminster Cathedral, supplemented by support from the Musicians' Company and the Eric Thompson Trust, and his academic training has been supported by the Delius Trust.





## The Eule Organ

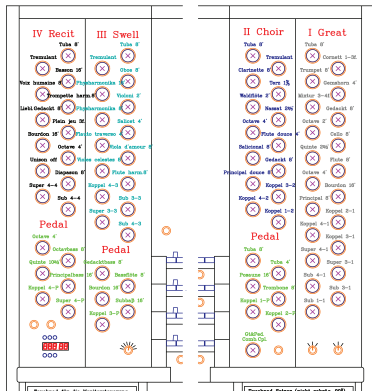
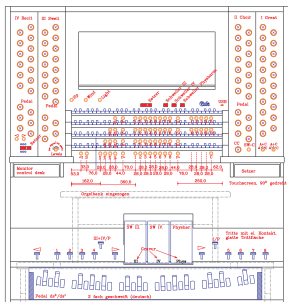
The disintegration of the previous instrument gave Mark Williams – Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, Oxford – the opportunity to start afresh in creating an organ that would have a distinct voice and meet the musical demands of daily Anglican choral services in the chapel. Hermann Eule Orgelbau has created an organ with breadth and sensitivity, using the tonal principles of their German Romantic heritage as well as the latest innovative technologies. The relatively modest 39 stops are augmented by a few transmissions and extensions and spread across four manuals and pedals for maximum versatility. The two enclosed divisions have shutters on both chapel and antechapel sides and can be used as one large division, or considered as two divisions of different characters – the Récit with heavier, French-style sounds, and the Swell a softer, German-style division which including the free reed stop that is unique within the UK. The brand new case contains the Great and Pedal divisions in the middle, with

Swell and Récit in the outer towers, and the Choir is housed within the unique stone case which was designed by Lewis Cottingham and built as part of his Gothic-style renovations to the chapel in 1829-1834.

The organ uses a mix of mechanical action (Great and Choir) and electric action (Récit, Swell, and Pedal) in order to preserve the touch necessary to make the instrument suitable for its pedagogical use, whilst maximising the space and allowing for transmissions and extensions. The organ was built in Bautzen in 2021, erected and voiced in Oxford in 2022, and opened in January 2023.



## The Eule Organ Specification



### I. Great

Bourdon (from IV)	16
Principal Major	8
Flûte Major	8
Cello	8
Lieblich Gedackt (from IV)	8
Octave	4
Gemshorn	4
Quinte (from Cornett)	2 2/3
Octave	2
Mixture 19.22.26	III-IV
Cornett	II-V
Trumpet	8
Tuba	8

*I-I sub, II-I (mechanical), III-I, III-I super,  
III-I sub, IV-I, IV-I super, IV-I sub*

Original construction drawings  
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## The Eule Organ Specification

### II. Choir

Principal doux	8
Gedackt	8
Salicional	8
Octave	4
Flûte douce	4
Nassat	2 2/3
Waldflöte	2
Terz	1 3/5
Clarinette	8
<b>Tremulant</b>	
Tuba	8
<i>I-II, III-II, IV-II</i>	

### III. Swell

Flûte harmonique	8
Viola d'amour	8
Violes célestes	8
Flauto traverso	4
Salicet	4
Violine	2
Oboe	8
Physharmonica	16
Physharmonica (ext. 16)	8
<b>Tremulant</b>	
Tuba	8
<i>III-III super, III sub, IV-III, IV-III super</i>	

### IV. Récit

Bourdon (ext. 8ft)	16
Diapason	8
Lieblich Gedackt	8
Octave	4
Plein jeu 15.19.22	III
Basson	16
Trompette harmonique	8
Voix humaine	8
<b>Tremulant</b>	
Tuba	8
<i>IV-IV super, IV-IV sub, IV unison off</i>	

### Pedal

Principalbass	16
Subbass	16
Bourdonbass (from IV)	16
Quinte (ext. Subbass)	10 2/3
Octavebass (ext. Principalbass)	8
Bassflöte (ext. Subbass)	8
Posaune	16
Trombone	8
Tuba	8
Tuba (ext. 8ft)	4
<i>I-P, II-P (mechanical), III-P, IV-P, IV-P super</i>	



Alexander Pott  
**THE EULE ORGAN**  
MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

**Recorded**

Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford, 28-29 December 2024.

With the kind permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College,  
especially Mark Williams, Informator Choristarum.

**Cover Image**

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