

*A Celebration of Orlando Gibbons at assumed original pitch*

1. *Fantasia* (in d MB 6)
2. *A Voluntary of 2 parts upon a playnsonge / Kyrie Fantasia* (in a MB 48)
3. *A Voluntary of 4 parts* (in C, MB 13 - short version, Oxford source)
4. *Fantazie* (in a MB 10 - Elway Bevin's version)
5. *A Fancy in Gamut flatt* (in g MB 9)
6. *Fantasia* (in d MB 8)
7. *A Fancy for a double orgaine* (in d/D MB 7)\*

The lowest note, C, of the normal organ in the England of Gibbons' day corresponded to F in written vocal music and had a 5' pipe (around the pitch of today's G). Thus it is likely that most of the pieces written for organ sounded about a fifth higher than when played on an instrument pitched at  $a = 440$ . Pieces 2, 3, 4 and 6 of today's programme will be played as if on a 5' organ. This makes musical sense, the plainsong having d as its main note lies in a more comfortable vocal range and several pieces with semiquaver runs in the left hand have lightness and clarity which is lost when played at modern pitch.

Several large organs built at the beginning of the 17th century were pitched an octave lower with C 10'. This was the case in Westminster Abbey where Gibbons was organist. Some of his fantasies seem to have been written with such instruments in mind and pieces 1, 5 and 7 will be played thus today.

Father Smith's organ of 1708 had a range from GG-d'', its lowest note being at the same pitch as the 10' C of Gibbons' organ. All the music heard today falls exactly within the range of Father Smith's keyboard and will be played predominantly on the stops in which Father Smith's pipes survive. All pieces will therefore be played transposed up or down by a 4th, except no. 6 which is transposed up a 5th.

\* It seems likely that the 'Double orgaine' in the title referred to a 10' instrument rather than one of 5'; this piece does not appear to have been written for a two-manual instrument which is what the term 'double organ' came to mean later in the 17th century.

\* MB numbers refer to *Musica Britannica XX* which contains full source references (but which as an edition, on account of its halved note-values, cannot be recommended).

Christopher Stembridge was a chorister at Lichfield and - after reading languages at Cambridge where he was organ scholar in Downing - studied in Germany with Anton Nowakowski and was later a post-graduate in Oxford, learning much from James Dalton, John Caldwell and Denis Arnold. While lecturer in music at University College, Cork, he frequented courses given by Kenneth Gilbert and L. F. Tagliavini and subsequently moved to Italy where he taught in Brescia and at the *Accademia Chigiana* in Siena. He often travelled to teach and play in various countries, including semesters at Innsbruck University, the *Gnessin* Institute in Moscow, and Lviv National Music Academy; he was also musician-in-residence at Harvard University's *Villa i Tatti* in Florence.

His editions include the new Bärenreiter complete keyboard works of Frescobaldi; amongst his writings are the chapter on Italy in the *Cambridge Companion to the Organ* and articles dealing with the 19-note *cembalo cromatico*, an instrument that also features in his recordings.