

David Hirst

Based in France since 2011, **David Hirst** was appointed titular organist of *Notre-Dame* Collegiate Church, Mantes-la-Jolie in 2016. As such, he is responsible for all the organ music for this magnificent gothic edifice including special services for the Diocese of Versailles. He is Artistic Director of the annual International Organ Festival at Mantes and is also responsible for organ music at the nearby Romanesque church of *Sainte-Anne de Gassicourt*.

Born in Haslemere, south of London (England), David was fascinated by the organ at the age of five and soon started his musical training with the piano, and later the organ, violin and trombone. From the age of eight he was a chorister at Chichester Cathedral under Dr John Birch where he sang eight services a week and performed in numerous concerts, tours, recordings and broadcasts.

At the age of 18, David won the organ scholarship to Emmanuel College, Cambridge where he played for the chapel services and concerts, directed the choirs and orchestra, and organised the weekly recital series and other musical events. He also led choir tours to France where he directed concerts and services at Chartres Cathedral and several Parisian churches, including *La Trinité*, *La Madeleine* and the *Sacré-Cœur* Basilica. During his three years at Cambridge he completed his academic studies gaining a master's degree in music. At the same time, he continued his studies of organ performance with Nicolas Kynaston.

David subsequently worked in international business. He lived in Japan for six years becoming fluent in Japanese, and studied for two years in Los Angeles where he gained an MBA from UCLA. He worked for companies including Fujitsu and McKinsey, and was later appointed Managing Director of Harrison & Harrison, the UK's largest organ-building company.

Returning to his music career, in 2002 David was appointed Assistant Organist of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the royal parish church in London. As well as the five weekly choral services, he played for royal and celebrity services, concerts, recordings, tours, and regular broadcasts for the BBC. He further refined his organ performance with Thomas Trotter, and later with Lionel Rogg at the Royal Academy of Music in London where he gained a postgraduate diploma in organ performance with distinction.

On moving to France, David became the titular organist of *St Germain du Chesnay*, near Versailles, and expanded his musical activities accompanying choral concerts in the region and developing his recital engagements in France and abroad. He has appeared regularly as a recitalist at the annual organ festival in Mantes which has featured organists such as Olivier Latry, Jean Guillou, Louis Robilliard and Daniel Roth. He also performs at the church of Saint-Germain-en-Laye where Marie-Claire Alain was previously

the titular organist, and collaborates with her successor, Hubert Haye, and other organists to promote organ music in the region through lecture-recitals and featured concerts.

David enjoys performing throughout the world and has played in a number of European countries as well as South Africa, Singapore and Japan. Recent recitals included Versailles Cathedral, Chartres Cathedral, Paderborn Cathedral, St Lamberti in Münster and St Laurenskerk in Rotterdam.

His extensive repertoire stretches from the Renaissance through to contemporary music, and he has a particular appreciation for the works of J.S. Bach and composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His CD recordings include *The Spirit of St Martin's* (the choir and organ of St Martin-in-the-Fields) and *Welte Restored* (the organ of Salomons Theatre with the Royal Academy of Music). In 2017 he recorded the first CD of the Merklin and Cogez organs of *Notre-Dame, Mantes-la-Jolie* and he is currently releasing a second CD of these organs with the Priory label.

www.davidhirst.org