

# Tayside Organists' Society

## ***Members' Recital***

in aid of Dundee Food Bank

Dundee Congregational Church

Saturday 21 March 2026

*Review by Peter Thornton*

The Society's March meeting took the form of a Saturday afternoon recital on the organ of Dundee Congregational Church by four of our members: Norman Beedie, David Smith, Alison Malcolm and Ron Oliver. Society treasurer, Ian McLagan, acted as Master of Ceremonies in his usual inimitable style.

Norman Beedie, organist of the church, introduced the event, outlining his own musical career and relating the history of the organ, significantly rebuilt by the Dundee organ builder John R Miller in the early 1900s, subsequently receiving attention in turn from Rushworth & Dreaper and Nicholson & Co. Norman proceeded to give a demonstration of the instrument, showing off its beautiful tonal colours in an improvisation that grew gradually from the quietest sounds via crescendo to magnificent full organ and back through decrescendo to a whisper. The spacious layout of the organ across the full width of the front gallery allowed the pipes to speak clearly and the audience was able to appreciate the individual sounds of the delicate string and flute ranks, fiery reeds and rich tonal palette. The church's large video screens allowed the listeners to see the player at work, and we were intrigued by Norman's idiosyncratic choice of footwear to play the pedals: port and starboard socks!



Norman Beedie introduces the event



The colourful pedalling!

In the following programme David Smith, Honorary Life Member of the Society, played *A Little Tune* by William Fenton, *Meditation on Annie Laurie* by Simon Lole (commissioned by Gordon Stewart and dedicated to The Friends of the Caird Hall Organ) and *Homage to Alfred Hollins* by Malcolm Archer. Alison Malcolm, who had acted as David's console assistant and page-turner, then changed places with him and, with him as her assistant, played *Intrada in Jazz* by Michel Johannes Mathias, *Allegretto* by Florence Beatrice Price, Vaughan Williams's beautiful Prelude on *Rhosymedre* and *Penguins' Playtime* by Nigel Ogden. Alison was followed at the console by Ron Oliver, who played an arrangement of the *Andante Cantabile* from Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 1 in D. The first half of the afternoon's programme concluded with a challenging *Name that Hymn Tune* quiz devised by Ian McLagan. Norman Beedie played the eight tunes, Ian gave cryptic clues, and when the audience filled in the answers on the sheet provided, "FoodBank" could be read across the grid.

After a welcome interval during which refreshments were provided by church members, the musical entertainment resumed. David played *Siciliana* by Alfred Hollins, *Cavatina* (from the film *The Deer Hunter*) by Stanley Myers and *Marcietta* by Théodore Dubois. Alison played Alexandre Guilmant's arrangement of *Le Cygne* from *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns, *Sicilienne* by Gabriel Fauré and *Scherzo* by Eugène Gigout. For his final piece Ron chose John Philip Sousa's military march *The Stars and Stripes Forever* – appropriate in the USA's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year!

To conclude the afternoon Norman Beedie explained his approach to improvisation and demonstrated the technique by skilfully weaving together the Scottish psalm tunes *Old Hundredth* and *French (Dundee)*, again showing off the organ's wide tonal and dynamic range.

In closing Bryan Weir, Society Secretary, thanked the church and all those involved in arranging and providing an excellent afternoon's entertainment, which, it was later confirmed, had raised £210 in donations and a crateful of foodstuffs etc. for Dundee Food Bank.