

Biography – Stephen Hicks

The Allen Organ Company's new installation here at Williamwood Parish Church was showcased in a special recital to a packed church. The recital was given by Stephen Hicks.

He was born in Surrey in 1949. His early training was as a pianist at Trinity College of Music, London, where at the age of 15 he passed the Licentiate diploma, won the Billy Mayerl Scholarship and was invited to make his debut playing the Schumann Concerto with the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Benjamin Britten.

His first organ lessons were with Dr. Harry Gabb and already at 17 he became the youngest person to obtain the Fellowship diploma of the College in organ-playing. His playing was heard by Yehudi Menuhin and Nadia Boulanger who invited him to study with her in Paris and at the American Conservatoire in Fontainebleau for four years without charge. With scholarships from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the British Government he remained in Paris for several years where his teachers included such legendary names as Marcel Dupre, (organ) Andre Marchal, (organ) Casadesus, (piano) and Puyana (harpsichord). Whilst still a student in Paris he was invited by Pierre Cochereau to play his first recital at Notre Dame Cathedral and also made his debut as soloist with the Orchestre Philharmonique de l'O.R.T.F.

He also took post-graduate studies at the Royal College of Music with Ralph Downes (organ), and in that year became the youngest organ soloist at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall. At the end of this period, Nadia Boulanger wrote; `It gives me great pleasure to state the magnificent success which has closed the period of studies of Stephen Hicks. His talent is outstanding and he starts his career with all the elements of exceptional achievement.`

Since then he has toured giving numerous concerts throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, France, Monaco, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Germany and USA. He has played at the most prestigious cathedrals, churches, concert halls and at such festivals as the City of London, Oxford, Windsor, Harrogate, Paris, Brussels, Bruges, Ghent; Kristiansand, Bergen, Trondheim Olavsdagene, Krakow etc. His extensive repertoire encompasses every school of organ music and organ playing, and to each he brings an acute sense of style and scholarship along with a highly acclaimed virtuoso technique. His performances of Bach, Cesar Franck and Marcel Dupre have been especially praised.

Since 1983 he has lived in Norway where he is organist at the `Bergstadens Ziir` in Røros