



## A new Binns organ for the Albert Hall, Shankill Road Mission

*Belfast News-Letter*, Monday 13 June 1910, page 8

### SHANKILL ROAD MISSION

#### Opening of the New Organ

The new organ which has been built in connection with the Shankill Road Mission was opened yesterday, when there were large congregations. The instrument has a beautifully sweet and mellow tone, and it ought to prove a great acquisition to the mission in the rendering of the praise. The builders were Messrs. Binns, of Bramley Organ Works, Leeds, and the specifications are as follow: —

Compass, CC to C, 61 notes.

Great Organ — Bourdon, 16ft.; open diapason No.1, 8ft.; open diapason No.2, 8ft.; dulciana, 8ft.; hohl flute, 8ft.; principal, 4ft.; fifteenth, 2ft.; trumpet, 8ft.

Swell Organ — Geigen diapason, 8ft.; lieblich gedact, 8ft.; viol d'orchestre, 8ft.; celestes, 8ft.; salicet, 4ft.; dulciana mixture, 3 ranks; horn, 8ft.; oboe, 8ft.

Pedal Organ — Compass, CCC to F, 30 notes — Harmonic bass, 32ft.; open diapason, 16ft.; bourdon, 16ft.; octave diapason, 8ft.; flute bass, 8ft.

Couplers — Swell to great, swell to great sub-octave, swell to great octave, swell sub-octave, swell octave, swell to pedal, great to pedal, tremulant to swell.

Accessories — Four combination pedals to great and pedal organ, four combination pedals to swell organ, balanced crescendo pedal to swell organ.

The builder's patent tubular pneumatic action is applied throughout. The organ is blown by a discus fan driven by an electric motor.

The instrument was played by Mr. F.H. Sawyer, F.R.C.O. who had prepared the specification in conjunction with that eminent firm of organ builders, Messrs. Binns, of Bramley, Leeds. Mr. Binns himself paid a visit to Belfast, and examined the hall in company with Mr. Sawyer, and together they prepared the specification which had resulted in the high-class instrument

...

This next paragraph is from the *North Down Herald and County Down Independent*, Friday 17 June 1910, page 7

Before the congregation separated, Mr. Sawyer played the following items, which include those given at all the services during the day: — Overture (Hollins), "Chorus in E flat" (Guilmant), "Postlude in D" (Smart), "Barcarolle" (Bennett), and "Hallelujah Chorus".

Both newspapers listed the second manual as 'Small Organ' and 'lueblich' for 'lieblich'. Overleaf is more information about F.H. Sawyer, for many years organist and choirmaster of Elmwood Presbyterian Church.

## F.H. Sawyer (1873-1948)

From Thornsby, Frederick W., ed. *Dictionary of organs and organists*, London, 1912

SAWYER, FREDERICK HENRY, MUS. B. (DUNELM), F.R.C.O., L.R.A.M.,  
3, West Elmwood, Belfast. Born 1873 in Ripon. Org. Londoun Par. Ch., 1897,  
College Ch., St. Andrew's 1902, Elmwood Ch., Belfast, since 1904.

During his years in Belfast, F.H. Sawyer gave many organ recitals, was a frequent recitalist at the Ulster Hall recitals, and opened many new organs around the north of Ireland. For example, this one in 1914 (from Comber Historical Society listings at comberhistory.com):

A magnificent organ was installed in 1st Comber. The sermon at the dedication service was preached by Rev Dr Taylor, a previous minister of 2nd Comber, while Mr F H Sawyer, who superintended the building of the organ, had charge of the praise. An electric plant was installed to help drive the organ and also to light the church and manse.

Sawyer was also a pianist and accompanist, taking part in some of Lawrence Walker's chamber music recitals at Queen's College. He was also Honorary Organist to Queen's College, Belfast.

In 1918, F.H. Sawyer was one of the 54 founding members of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters.

He left Belfast to return to his earlier stomping ground of St Andrews, Scotland, taking up the post of university organist and lecturer in music at St Andrews University where he was a much-loved figure.

*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, Saturday 07 November 1925, page 6

The University Court of St Andrews met on Thursday – Principal Sir James Irvine in the chair.

The Court appointed Mr Frederick Sawyer, Mus.Bac., to be a lecturer in music in the University.

On Thursday 25 February 1926 he made his first appearance as conductor of the St Andrews University Musical Society with 'about 60 students' in Bach's *Peasant Cantata* and part songs by Gibbons, Pearsall (encored) and Elgar. 'The continuity of the cantata was rather spoiled by the intermittent, albeit enthusiastic, applause of the audience.'

Continued overleaf –

*St. Andrews Citizen,*  
Saturday 14 November 1925, page 6

**UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS.**  
**A SERIES OF LECTURES**  
(with Illustrations)  
ON,  
"THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL  
ART"  
WILL BE GIVEN IN THE  
UNITED COLLEGE HALL  
BY  
MR F. H. SAWYER, MUS.B., F.R.C.O.  
(Lecturer in Music in the University)  
AT 6 P.M. ON THE FOLLOWING DATES

November	12th	Folk Song.
"	19th	"The Early Contrapuntal Schools."
"	26th	"Music of the Sixteenth Century."
December	3rd	Chamber Concert.
January	16th	"The Rise of Modern Music."
"	23rd	"J. S. Bach."
"	30th	"Recital of Instrumental Works by Bach."
February	6th	"Development of Struc- ture." 1. Haydn and Mozart.
"	13th	"Development of Struc- ture." 2. Beethoven.
"	20th	Chamber Concert.

Members of the Public will be admitted to the Series (including the Concerts) on payment of a Fee of £1 which includes Registration Fee. Fees may be paid at the Secretary's Office, North Street, or at the door. Admission to a single Concert or Lecture, 2/6.

*St. Andrews Citizen,*  
Saturday 06 November 1926, page 4

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS.**  
**Session 1926-27.**  
LECTURESHIP IN MUSIC.  
A Course of Lectures on  
"THE EVOLUTION OF THE ORCHESTRA"  
WILL BE DELIVERED BY  
MR F. H. SAWYER, Mus.Bac., F.R.C.O.,  
IN THE  
UNITED COLLEGE HALL,  
On the undermentioned Dates, at 6 p.m.

**Thurs. Nov. 18th**—The Physical Basis of Music.  
**Thurs. Nov. 25th**—The Strings.  
**Thur. Dec. 2nd**—The Wood Wind.  
**Thur. Jan. 13th**—The Brass and Percussion.  
**Thur. Jan. 20th**—The Orchestra of the 17th and 18th Centuries.  
**Thur. Jan. 27th**—The Orchestra in the time of Beethoven.  
**Thur. Feb. 3rd**—The Modern Orchestra.

In addition to the above, five Chamber Concerts have been arranged for the following dates:—

**Fri. Nov. 12th**—The Edinburgh String Quartette, at 8 p.m.  
**Sat. Nov. 27th**—The Scottish Chamber Music Players, at 3 p.m.  
**Fri. Dec. 10th**—The Falconer String Quartette at 8 p.m.  
**Fri. Jan. 7th**—  
**Fri. Feb. 11th**—Song Recital and Chamber Music, at 8 p.m.

Members of the Public will be admitted to the entire Course of Lectures and Concerts on payment of a fee of £1, which includes Registration Fee, and to the series of five Chamber Concerts on payment of a fee of 12s 6d. The fee for a single Lecture or Concert will be 3s. Fees may be paid at the Secretary's Office, 71 North Street, or at the door.

*Belfast News-Letter,* Wednesday 31 December 1947, page 3

### The late Mr. F. H. Sawyer

Musicians in Ulster mourn sincerely the death of Mr. Fred H. Sawyer, which occurred in Scotland last week. He was the first director of music at Methodist College, Belfast. During his residence in the city he was organist and choirmaster of Elmwood Presbyterian Church. His name will ever be associated with the fine musical service of this church. Mr. Sawyer was followed as organist there by Mr. Alan K Parker, who in turn was succeeded by Dr. Stoneley. Now Mr. Stanley Lynch, L.T.C.S., is organist there. The late Mr. Sawyer left Belfast to become lecturer in music at the University of St. Andrews. He has two sons — both of whom were educated at 'Methody' — Captain J. F. H. Sawyer, R.N., and Rev. G. W. Sawyer. The latter is minister of Dunbar Presbyterian Church. In the spring of this year, he preached in Elmwood Church on the invitation of the minister, Rev. Dr. Frazer-Hurst.

### LATE F. H. SAWYER

At the service in the University Chapel on Sunday, the following tribute was paid to the late Mr F. H. Sawyer. It had been prepared by Principal Duncan, and in his unavoidable absence it was read by Professor Baillie: —

Since last we gathered within these walls for our Sunday worship, death has removed from our midst one whom it is fitting that we remember now before God with reverent and thankful hearts.

For twenty years, from 1925 to 1945, Mr F. H. Sawyer combined the post of Lecturer in Music in the University with the duties of organist and choirmaster in the University Chapel. Of the technical side of his work this is not the occasion to speak, though we cannot forget how he raised the musical part of the Chapel service to a pitch of excellence which set a standard for other Universities, and which made it an unflinching joy for us here in St Andrews to join week by week in this corporate act of worship.

The secret of Mr Sawyer's influence lay in this, that he was so very much more than a gifted musician. Those who were privileged to know him intimately came soon to realise the reach and range of his artistic and literary interests. His soul expanded in congenial company, and in quiet ways he revealed himself as a most loyal and loving friend. Above all, he was a man of deep, personal religion. Here, I should like to refer more particularly to the close personal links which bound him to the members of the Chapel Choir. His standards were high, and his demands exacting; but for such a master they gave gladly of their best, knowing that nothing but the best would satisfy him. Even after they had left the University, their affectionate regard for him continued undiminished. And for many of them their most cherished memories are associated with those occasions when, turning aside from his music, he discoursed to them with passionate sincerity on the things in life which are pure and lovely and holy.

Many tangible tokens remain to remind both us, and those who come after us, of his interest in, and love for, this Chapel and its services — the improvements effected in the organ; the University Psalter, every line of which he pointed with the most studious care; and the vases which he and Mrs Sawyer gave to adorn the communion table and the organ-gallery. But the most precious heritage he has left us is in the realm of the spirit. And I do not doubt that his spirit is with us to-day, urging us on and drawing us upwards "to where beyond these voices there is peace".

Compilation by David Byers, February 2021