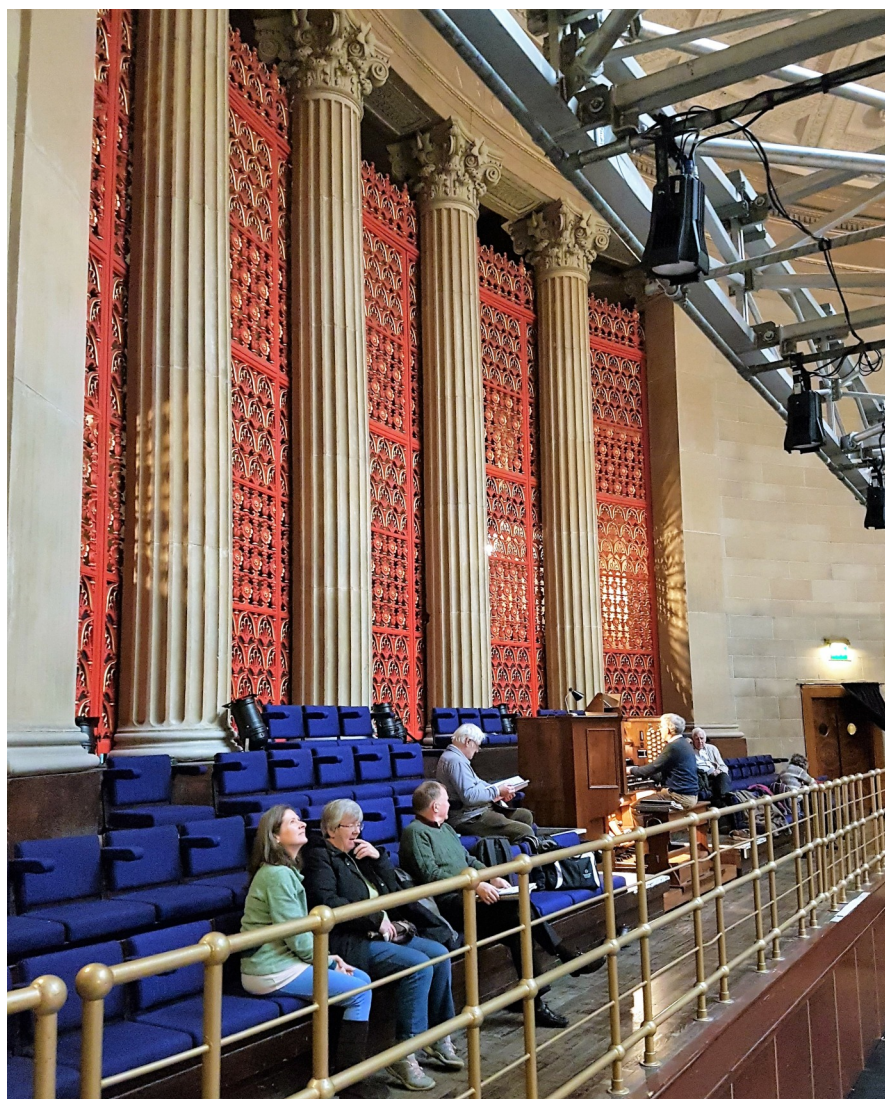


Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



Civic Splendour in Sheffield - Richard Brice

I met our host, Carrick Smith, at Edinburgh last year and he said that we should really visit the organs in Sheffield City Centre. Carrick is the unofficial Curator of the City Hall Organ and our visit was built around being able to sample this organ. The 12th January was one of the few days when the hall wasn't being used or being set-up for a scheduled public event, although we had to stop using the organ at 11.30 as there was a tea dance in the adjacent ballroom.

On arrival at this Grade 1 listed organ (the last major concert organ of the Willis dynasty and essentially in original condition)

we were ushered into the 'Holy of Holies' - Carrick's lair within the organ - and were faced with the enormous glass-fronted boots of the 32 ft reed; such is the size of the reeds themselves that they all have a little rod worked by a bellows to give them a starting kick (see photo, page 2). The *Trompette Militaire* (like those in St Paul's Cathedral which her late Majesty said were not to be played in her presence) had beautiful resonators of spun brass; buried in the innermost part of the organ (see photo, page 2), these could not be seen and Carrick, who has restored this stop himself, lamented that they were not on display. In fact

Next DDOA Meeting

**Visit to Trent College, Long Eaton
Thursday 23rd March at 6.45 pm.**

Members are invited to view and play the [Nigel Church organ](#) (1976) in the school chapel. The two-manuals and pedals instrument with 13 speaking stops has mechanical action.

Access to the school is from Derby Road, NG10 4AD.

Directions: From Derby take the A52 to the M1 interchange roundabout. Look out for the turn into Bostocks Lane, sign-posted 'Long Eaton'. After half a mile take the right turn at the T junction (B6002). Continue for another half mile, then turn left into Derby Road at the roundabout. After further half mile, Trent College is on the right hand side.

Other Events

Mondays 12.30 - 1.10 pm

Lunchtime Music at St Anne's, Derby

6th March John Hobbs (piano)

13th March Elizabeth French (piano)

20th March Abigail Johnson (piano)
& Tom Corfield (organ)

27th March The Dumky Piano Trio

3rd April Alexander Binns (organ)

Saturday 11th March

London Organ Day at Chelsea Old Church.
Celebrating the William Drake organ.

Details: iao.org.uk/london-organ-day/

Good Friday 7th April 7.00 pm

Derby Cathedral. St John Passion - Bach
Derby Cathedral Choir, Heart of England
Orchestra conducted by Alexander Binns.
Tickets £15, £10 from www.livetickets.org

Mondays 1.00 pm

Birmingham Town Hall.

Lunchtime organ recitals

13th March Thomas Trotter

27th March Daniel Moulton

17th April Thomas Trotter

Birmingham Symphony Hall

3rd April Lichfield Cathedral Choir with
Ben Lamb and Thomas Trotter

Photo: DDOA members at Sheffield City Hall



After his talk and demonstration, Carrick Smith invites us to play.

The 'pitman chest' was developed around 1900 by E.M. Skinner and effectively replaces the slider mechanism with corresponding wind channels perpendicular to the key channels containing the pallets. Electromagnets control the flow of wind through both the stop channels and key channels, so the overall configuration is a form of 'electro-pneumatic' action. The supply of wind to an individual pipe is controlled by a 'pitman', a metal valve in the shape of a flat mushroom, sitting at the intersection of the stop and key channels. The design allows pipes to speak very promptly. Although it was adopted widely in America, examples of this action are less common in Britain and the City Hall organ is a rare surviving case. With over 4000 pipes in the organ, that's a lot of pitmans!

Download a detailed description by Stephen Allis [here](#).

the whole organ is hidden behind an enormous decorative screen.

Acoustically, the hall does no favours to the organ. Although we were not allowed to go wandering about the hall due to security issues, there was little point as the building contributed little. The organ is virtually in its original 1932 condition. Carrick thought that if the organ were swapped with Westminster Cathedral, no one would notice as they are so similar in [specification](#). (The organ in the Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, recently rebuilt by Harrison and Harrison, completes the Willis III triumvirate of the period.) The Sheffield instrument was built on his return from the USA and uses pitman chests, which he learnt about from Skinner (see panel). We all found the organ console very easy and comfortable to play but the odd notes and pistons not working were a result of the console being moved to allow the stage to be enlarged. All of us were able to try various pieces and none could resist the temptation of the 32' reed and *Trompette* stops. The 4-manual organ had four 4 swell pedals, but one was a crescendo pedal, which by overriding the stop settings, was quite perilous.

Unfortunately, the long-term future of this instrument is not as secure as one would like and it is kept working largely by the efforts of volunteers and the Sheffield and District Organists' and Choirmasters' Association: 75 stops take some looking after and Carrick is definitely on the lookout for an apprentice!

After lunch, the first organ of the afternoon was superb - at the Unitarian 'Upper' Chapel, a rebuild by Trevor Tipple of Worcester, the



The glass-fronted boots of the 32' reed.

latest in a succession of restorations of an original instrument by Wadsworth of 1866. The organ was a lovely three-manual and the galleried chapel had an excellent acoustic. This was another very comfortable organ to play. The specification is [here](#). The way things worked out, those who wanted had a second play of the instruments and I think that this was a very good way to conduct the sessions as it takes a bit of time to adjust to a strange organ.

The final organ was in St Marie's Roman Catholic Cathedral where we were met by the organist, Robert Webb. This was the smallest instrument, 3 manual, combaker action, with only a couple of traktion pedals, and only a pair of 16ft flues on the pedal but it packed quite a punch! What a fabulous sound and the acoustic of the Cathedral proved the importance of the building itself. Both playing and listening to this instrument I felt as if I had died and gone to Heaven! It was built by TC Lewis in 1875 and is one of only three to have survived unaltered, Kelvingrove being another. In 1973 an ill-advised firm of organ builders reworked the action with disastrous results. Most recently Nicholson's re-made a TC Lewis action for it five years ago and now it is an absolute pleasure to play. The Swell is behind the organ and speaks into a chapel rather than into the chancel,



Trompette Militaire



Pipework revealed



Upper Chapel (built 1770). Organ originally by Wadsworth 1866, extensively restored by Tipple 2002



Mary Cobbold at the console situated below the pulpit.

this gave a very interesting interplay between the Swell and the Great and Choir. With the exception of the player, everyone sat in the body of the church, so amazing was the sound. Specification [here](#).

Finally, I would like to thank Carrick on behalf of all of us for hosting this visit; I hope he has a few more organs "up his sleeve" for us in future.

Richard Brice

And thanks to Richard for securing the arrangements for visits to three most interesting organs.

Restoration of the Lewis Organ

Thomas Christopher Lewis (1833-1915) was among the leading organ builders of Victorian England. He began his career as a trained architect, expanding his entrepreneurial talents in the expanding niche markets of bell foundry and organ building. He achieved fame for the excellence of the tonal qualities he achieved in his organs and for his skill in constructing complex organs in very confined spaces. His organ for St. Marie's demonstrates both of these.

Lewis studied and was inspired by the work of the German organ building firm J. F. Schulze. Their organ builder in England was Edmund Schulze whom Lewis knew well. The Schulze firm displayed a "tonally outstanding" instrument at the Great Exhibition of 1851 which Lewis heard. Lewis developed the Schulze tonal achievement and combined this with the tonal distinctiveness of the French organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Lewis's instruments merge both these influences. A very large proportion of the organs that Lewis built have not survived. Of these, all but a tiny few have been seriously altered in tone during the twentieth century to 'improve' them with a bigger, less subtle tone to meet changed tastes. The St. Marie's organ, now fully restored, continues to display the tonal qualities originally intended.

A feature of T. C. Lewis organs is the exceptional quality of materials used to build them. Here again, St. Marie's has not suffered major alterations. The costly materials still in place include the thick spotted metal for reed and flue pipes up to 16 foot in length and the generous use of mahogany for the wind chests and the 16 foot Sub Bass pipes.

Another feature of the organ at St. Marie's is how it displays Lewis's skill



in designing complex organs for confined spaces. The organ is built on a platform measuring just 10 feet by 5 feet, between two pillars and beneath an arch.

The elaborately carved wooden case of the St. Marie's organ was designed by John Bentley, the architect who later designed Westminster Cathedral.

Thomas Lewis saw Bentley's work at the 1862 International Exhibition and they became friends. It is also likely that they worked together as architects, including work on properties owned by the Duke of Norfolk. Over time, Bentley contributed to the external design of some 40 of Lewis's organs. The fine detail in the casing of the St. Marie's organ is well worth viewing.

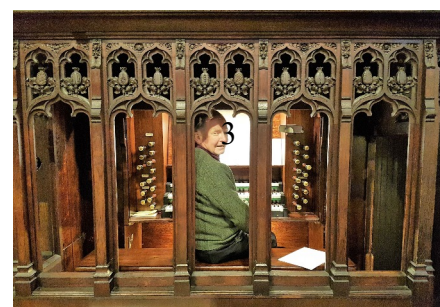
The Lewis organ of St. Marie's came about through the interest and generosity of the 15th Duke of Norfolk, Henry Fitzalan-Howard, who donated a large part of its cost. In the early 1870s, the hope of the Rector had been to expand the organ used

since 1850. However, the Duke, on one of his visits to his Sheffield home, expressed his interest in a totally new organ, towards which he would contribute £1,000. The choice of Thomas Lewis to build it may have come about through the links between the Duke and the architect of St. Marie's, Matthew Hadfield (and his architect son, Charles). Both the Hadfields and Thomas Lewis appear to have worked on expansions to the Duke's homes, including Arundel Castle. The tender submitted by Lewis's own firm was £1,095. The sale of the Knight organ raised £90, leaving only a tiny amount to be paid by the parish.

The new organ was first played for the 6am High Mass on Christmas morning 1875 when "the sweet tones...resounded through the church to the joy and delight of parishioners", and it was said at the time to be "one of the finest and most modern instruments in Yorkshire". The official opening and blessing of the organ took place on Sunday January 16th 1876 when it was blessed by the Bishop Robert Cornthwaite of Beverley, then the Catholic bishop for the whole of Yorkshire.

The 2016/2017 restoration of the Lewis instrument — a project whose planning began in 2013 — has been in hands of Yorkshire organ craftsman Andrew Carter and his small team, with the ongoing advice of consultant Paul Hale. Another firm had altered the note mechanism in 1978 using aluminium components in an attempt to lighten the touch. As this had not worked, Andrew Carter invited Nicholson Organs (Malvern) to re-make the key actions in the traditional Lewis manner using wood, but re-engineered to improve the touch. Nicholson's achieved this aim, the touch now being delightful. Andrew Carter carried out the remainder of the work, as a result of which the organ now looks and sounds as good as the day it was dedicated, back in 1876.

Deacon Bill Burleigh



The console hides behind beautiful carving.

Organ Scores on an iPad - Suzanne Blagg

During our recent DDOA visit to organs in Sheffield, rather than carrying a music case full of printed scores, all my pieces were stored in my iPad. I was able to view pieces and play them directly from the iPad. A number of members have expressed interest in this system. I am no expert at all, but can offer a few bits of information which I have found since buying my iPad three years ago. The one I use is a 12.9 inch *iPad Pro* which has a larger screen than the standard *iPad*. The score viewer I have been using since then is called *forScore*.

There are many music viewing apps out there, but I found *forScore* appeared to be the most solid buy for me, bearing in mind I will be using it mainly in church without Wi-Fi or a stable 3 or 4G mobile connection. Many apps are free, and some require a monthly subscription. *forScore* is downloadable from the *Apple Store* and has a one-off fee of around £20 which I preferred to do. The other advantage for me is that *forScore* does not work off a 'cloud', which some other applications do. This is a bonus for me because I need to know that the music is actually on my iPad all the time and not in a 'cloud' file store dependent on a good data connection. However, for home use only, a 'cloud-based' system could be an advantage.

When starting out with *forScore* I did find the file management system somewhat difficult to negotiate at first, but with practice, once you get used to it, it's really good, and gives you the ability to create different 'labels' allowing you to find your music easily. You can also create 'setlists' which you would use for a recital which allows you to choose your pieces from your library in the order you wish to play them and enables the performance mode to stay whilst just using page turns to go to the next piece as required.

forScore is able to import pdf files from the IMSLP online library and you can also scan any music you already own and save it as a pdf file. I only have 64GB storage on my iPad but find I can have hundreds of pieces of music saved with it only currently taking up just over 5GB. Of course, when purchasing an iPad it's often preferable to have as much memory as you can afford, but for me 64GB is perfectly adequate.



An important facility is being able to annotate your score as much as you wish without the worry of spoiling your expensive books. I find the use of coloured pens for fingerings and pedallings and the ability to highlight difficult areas a large advantage when learning a new piece. You can even add 'layers' which give you different ways of fingering or annotating the same piece of music.

There is a choice of viewing options with *forScore*. When you are in the 'performance' mode, a quick tap on the right of the screen gives you quick and easy page turns without worrying about turning on the 'annotations' mode by accident. You can set up your preferences for this, either having the turn 'animated' or just moving to the next page invisibly. You can also have a two page view if your document is scanned in 'portrait' and I find this works very well in most cases although if the music desk is very far away it may be a little

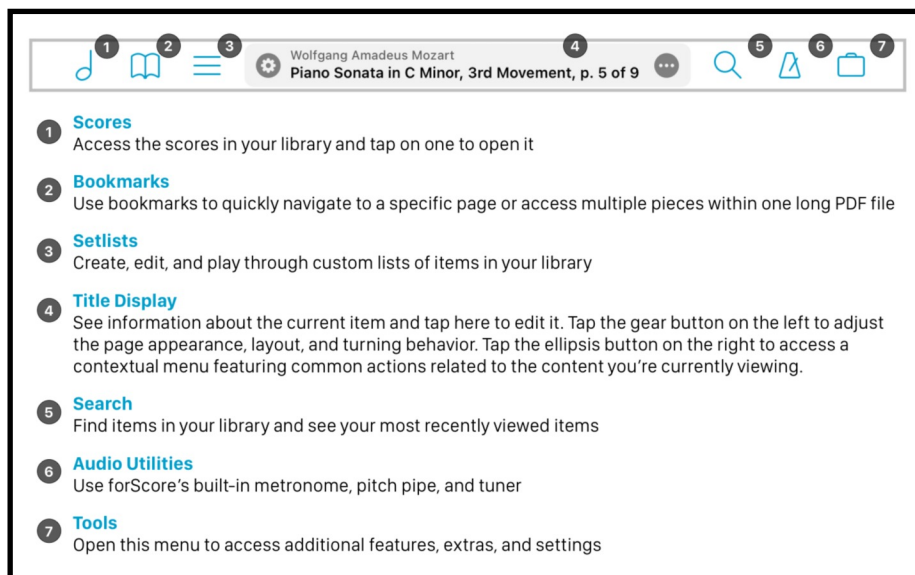
small to view comfortably this way.

One large benefit, which is rather exciting, is the ability to use 'facial gestures' to facilitate page turns. This has an obvious advantage to organists but alas I have no personal experience of its use as this feature only works with the newer iPads (ie the ones which have no home button).

Most organists use a twitch of the mouth to facilitate a page turn. You can even twitch your lips on the right side for a forward page turn, and twitch to the left for a reverse page turn, or you can just have any mouth twitch taking you forward - that's something you set up in 'preferences'. I watch a fair number of organists on *YouTube* who use this method for page turns and it does appear to work well. However, I wouldn't really know how reliable it really is until I upgrade! It is worth mentioning however the face gesture option is only available for the 'pro' software upgrade which is a subscription of around £7 per year for this feature.

If anyone is interested in this subject, I have found a *YouTube* video of a webinar posted recently by the American Guild of Organists which is very informative and would be of great benefit to anyone starting out viewing music digitally. This can be found at :- <https://youtu.be/sDKJtqVcgEg>, or you can search for it under the title *Tablets and forScore for Organists - Introduction*.

Suzanne Blagg



The title bar along the top of the screen gives you access to *forScore*'s essentials

A Local Lad 'Cum Good' - David Johnson

It was my great privilege and delight to be invited as an honoured guest to the University of Derby Degree Ceremony on the morning of November 16th to witness the receipt of the honorary degree of Doctor of Music by a former chorister of mine at St. John's, Derby - Stephen Layton.

I had known his parents for quite some while, and they were keen for their son to receive the best education possible, and since, while he was at Ravensdale Junior School in Mickleover, he had shown an aptitude for music - singing, recorder, violin and piano - they thought that membership of a Cathedral choir would be the best place to nurture his potential. His father was the Organist at the Elim Pentecostal Church in Curzon Street and realised that Stephen would need to be aware of the Anglican tradition of worship, so we arranged for him to join my choir. He did this for eighteen months, giving him a grounding which set him up for the auditions at various Cathedrals. It was Winchester that he finally chose and where he started to learn to play the organ. When his voice changed, he succeeded in gaining a Music Scholarship to Eton College, and then, the icing on the cake, the Organ Scholarship at King's Cambridge. (At the auditions for this post, Cleobury said that if he didn't get it, he could come as a singer, since he had a better voice than most of the others there).

Just after the beginning of the January Term of his last year at Cambridge, he got together the



Stephen Layton

Choral Scholars of King's and John's, added some soprano scholars, formed a band from friends in the National Youth Orchestra, and performed Handel's *Messiah* with ticket prices that were affordable by fellow students. It proved to be a great success. (Just before the rehearsal, I visited his rooms, and was amazed at the number of crates of beer, which were in readiness for the 'thirst after the righteousness').

After King's, he went to Southwark Cathedral as Assistant. There he met Ed Cunliffe, a chorister at the time and son of our former Archdeacon, who later told me, after he had seen me take a choir practice at Darley Abbey, that he realised where Stephen got some of his conducting mannerisms from..... Me! Southwark led to The Temple Church, and then to the Directorship of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge.

For the last few years his fame has become international; over

lunch he told me that in the next couple of months he had concerts in Germany, Spain, three days recording in Paris, and a concert in the Sydney Opera House.

Penultimately, (I hope he doesn't mind) I'd like to quote part of his acceptance speech from the Awards Ceremony:

"It is here in Derby that I was nurtured as a musician and lover of music, so it is fitting for me to extend my thanks today both to the University of Derby for this award, and to all those in Derby and Derbyshire who took such time and care to fire a passion for music in a small boy. I remember Ravensdale Junior School, the rich repertoire that the headmaster played every single morning as we walked into Assembly, and his knowledge and enthusiasm for it. I remember David Johnson the Organist of St. John's in Bridge St., and the high standards of music and worship in which he trained me. I remember too, the Derbyshire countryside, enjoying its exceptional beauty with my Mum and Dad. I also share with you this message: Whatever your new knowledge and skills, be sure to pass it on."

Finally, having been the University Organist for fourteen years when the awards ceremonies were held in the Assembly Rooms, and having played for over eighty such occasions, it was strange processing in and out to recordings of my own playing from former times.

David Johnson

Member's Notices

Christ Church in Belper is looking for an organist or an organist / music director, to join them in the Spring of 2023.

We have a traditional SATB choir and anybody interested in either post should contact Father Jonathan Page via email fatherjpage@gmail.com or by phone on 07980 681 131.

The choir sings at the 11am Sung Mass on Sundays and rehearses at 7pm on Fridays. There are occasionally additional services, such as Choral Evensong, weddings and funerals. The post will attract RSCM rates of pay, subject to negotiation.

St George's Church, Ticknall

The PCC of are looking for a successor to the late John Rooks as Organist. The duties involve playing for a service on three Sundays per month and occasional weddings and funerals. A loyal and enthusiastic SSA choir, with their own director, sings on two Sundays per month. The church is blessed with a lovely acoustic, but more importantly, has a friendly congregation that overtly enjoys hearing the organ played (most recently by temporary volunteers). Remuneration is negotiable. Please contact: Reverend Alan Winfield, 07796 560814, curate@melbourneparishchurch.co.uk.

St Giles Church Matlock

The church would like to locate organists who could be available for covering occasional services or who would be interested in joining their rota of regular volunteers. Please contact Joan Link 07500 802172.

Baby Grand Piano

A widow wishes to give away her late husband's baby grand piano to a loving home, music school or church. Please contact the [Editor](#).

A Week in the life of Tom Howell

DDOA member Tom Howell is a first year BMus student at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) and Organ Scholar at Birmingham Cathedral. He is this year's recipient of the Edmund Stow Bursary.

Monday begins with a History lecture (my favourite!). It is a study of Western Art music, beginning with the very ancient, but with a focus on the Age of Common Practice. Currently, we are looking at German romantic operas. A lecture on performance traditions follows this. The aim is to create awareness of different performance styles and traditions exploring scores, treatises, surviving instruments, iconography and early recordings.

Wellbeing class at 12 on Mondays just generally sorts you out! Covering aspects of a musician's life such as performance anxiety, 'Looking after your Ears', music and money.

Community Engagement classes at 1.30 pm give a window into working with diverse communities in music. This term has been all about how to help people who have disabilities of one kind or another engage in music and how to apply that to our instruments. I suppose this is an especially poignant point of discussion for the organ because by its nature, it requires a relatively able-bodied person to play. The DDOA are perhaps at an advantage, compared to most, with your stunning chamber organ at ground level. Community engagement is something I'm particularly interested in and hope that at some point it can form part of my future career.

Choir Practice for the boy trebles follows this, so I get over to the Cathedral to help out. After choir, there is a seminar for organ students in the Conservatoire. Sometimes there are guest speakers and sometimes it's organ staff or even students who speak. Soon, I'll be giving a talk about Welsh choral and organ composers from pre-reformation to modern day. There are so many composers from Wales and instruments which ought to have more attention than they currently get. Might I suggest exploring Dilys Elwyn Edwards, Alun Hoddinot, Mansel Thomas, Eric Jones and Gareth Glyn?

Tuesday's performance classes are perhaps the most important



class of the week. Three students play, and they have half an hour each. These classes are ordinarily in St. Chad's Cathedral. Music from Couperin to Messiaen is played so you get a bit of everything. After this, it's usually off to the library for me, to collect some stuff to look at through the week (cup of tea, first though, of course). Having the RCO library onsite really is a game changer in terms of accessibility.

Accompanying evensong on Tuesdays is the organ scholar's night to shine. Evensong is the highlight of my day and this term we've had lots of verse services. I feel that the building particularly lends itself to organ music of the English Baroque. Girls and lower voices sing on Tuesdays, boys alone on **Wednesdays**. There is a particularly beautiful personality to the rhythm of cathedral life in Birmingham especially as the weekday Evensongs follow a bespoke liturgy with a shorter order of service containing only one canticle; depending on the canticle, this gives the atmosphere of Vespers or Compline. The building is, in my opinion, the most beautiful in the whole of Birmingham, the organ case, the windows.

This week, I've been privileged to have an organ lesson with Martin Schmeding, the visiting professor from Leipzig, Germany. We covered Widor *Symphony no. 5, Andantino quasi allegretto*. He brought such a lyricism to the piece and suggested some thumb glissandi with which I totally agree. Then, the next morning for performance class, *BuxWV 139*. Martin suggested for the first fugue, a 4' Principal in the manuals accompanied by a soft 8' reed in the pedals and some manual changes throughout. I love this colourful style of registering Buxtehude. I played from my copy of the new Breitkopf edition. It is due to the generosity of the DDOA

that I have been able to invest in this set; I really feel immensely privileged to be able to play from this score.

Thursdays are a quiet day in the conservatoire so I get on with my FRCO paperwork, practice and piano teaching.

I also have improvisation lessons from Ronny Krippner to look forward to this week. Last time, we covered variations on *Veni Creator Spiritus*, looking at the speed of harmony changes, 'surprise chords' at cadences, toccata-like figures, mediant relationships and Messiaen's tritone-esque relationships.

And, as a special treat, I'm going with the early music department this **Friday** to the Bate collection at Oxford and the Ashmolean museum. I really am in my element! This week is just fabulous!

Ordinarily, my day off is **Saturday**. If I'm fancying a quiet day, I'll get the train to Bournville, walk around the arboretum whilst listening to the carillon recital. Carillons and Chimes are a great passion of mine and I am currently compiling a "Chime Hymnal" which will be published by the Carillon Society of Britain and Ireland. It is to include hymns for all liturgical seasons, general hymns, a liturgical index and written out English Method Ringing. A particular influence into deciding a successful aesthetic in this book has been my own access to good quality editions.

Due to the DDOA's very kind bursary, I have been able to own my own copies of music I hold particularly dear to my heart that I couldn't previously afford. For example, the Byrd *Musica Britannica* volumes. Especially useful as I have been asked to play for a wedding in the Kings Chapel of the Savoy, London and a Byrd *Fantasia* has been requested!

Some exciting things to anticipate are, the release of a CD from Chichester Cathedral, on which I recorded the organ works of Thomas Weelkes, a RBC trip to France in the summer and this weekend, Birmingham Cathedral Choir will be in St David's, Wales singing the services. I simply can't wait!

Tom Howell

Registering French Romantic Organ Music on an English Organ - Peter King

The French Romantic Organ

The three manual divisions are terraced dynamically:

Grand Orgue (G or GO), Positif (P), Récit (R)

The manuals are usually placed in that order at the console – but not if the Positif is a 'Positif de dos' (eg S Ouen, and S Merri, for which Saint-Saëns wrote his *Fantaisie i in Eb*).

Principal sounds:

- Fonds
- Flutes (Bourdon, Flûte, etc)
- Célestes
- Anches (ie chorus reeds)
- Tutti

Quieter reeds:

- Hautbois
- Clarinette/Cromorne
- Voix Humaine (+Tremblant)

All of this is available on most English organs of comparable size, but voiced differently: French organs tend to be louder, especially the reeds which are usually more pungent than English reeds. The *Hautbois* is often like a mini *Trompette*, the *Cromorne* is usually pretty rough; reeds are usually quite fiery. French organs tend to have more reed stops than their German or English equivalents and they often dominate the tutti – in fact they are often, virtually reed organs.

Célestes are usually louder than English Swell *Célestes* – and played without a flute, unlike in England where the *Célestes* are often joined by a *Stopped Diapason* or *Lieblich Gedackt*.

However, French churches, and Cathedrals are usually bigger than their English counterparts, taller, and much more resonant – and the organ is placed higher up the building than is usually the case in England. Hence organs voiced in the French manner are often unsuccessful in English churches, which tend to be smaller and have drier acoustics than their French counterparts, and the voicing sounds oppressive.

On English organs it is sometimes possible to add a little 'garlic' to the sound, either by using a stop other than the immediate English equivalent, eg:

- *Orchestral Oboe*, or small *Trompette* rather than the Swell *Oboe*, or adding a 4' flute or string
- Solo *Viole Célestes*, rather than the Swell strings
- Adding a 4' *Flute* or *Gamba* to a *Clarinet*
- Playing a 4' *Harmonic Flute* down an octave for an 8' *Flute Harmonique* if there is only a *Stopped Diapason*. Or coupling up several *Stopped Diapasons* (or *Lieblich Gedackts*)

Note that the *Flute* 8' on the Pedal is a big open flute, not a stopped flute.

In Exeter Cathedral eg, the Solo *Orchestral Oboe* is a fabulous stop and makes an excellent *Hautbois* or even *Trompette*; and the Swell strings are very quiet indeed (almost inaudible without the octave coupler), but again the Solo *Viole Célestes* make an excellent substitute for French strings. Also, sadly, there is no 8' open or *Harmonic Flute* on the organ, so one of the above substitutes must be used (or, in the Nave, the Minstrels Gallery *Stopped Diapason* is huge so makes a passable substitute).

Deciphering the copy

French composers often give quite specific instructions as to registration; occasionally, they give few or none. Composers usually denote which manual is to be played by writing either **G**, **P** or **R** next to the relevant stave. If both hands are to be on the same keyboard the instruction **G**, **P** or **R** is written between the staves.

PR means playing on the Positif with the Récit coupled, **GP**, on the Grande Orgue with the Positif coupled, **GPR**, playing on the Grand Orgue with all three manuals coupled.

"Fonds" means the 8' stops: Montre (Diapason or Principal), Gambe, Flute & Bourdon – this may include the Hautbois on the Récit, but not other reeds.

"Anches préparées" means that the reed stops are drawn, but not sounding until the reed "ventil" is engaged – a primitive sort of combination pedal. Often the Mixtures are on the same ventil as the reeds.*

Stops indicated in brackets indicate that they are to be drawn ready for later use, but only brought on by use of the ventil where subsequently indicated.

Many manual instructions in French music are often in reality a guide to dynamics, so moving from **GO** to **P** means getting a level quieter, and quieter still onto the **R**; conversely moving from **R** to **P** (especially if the keyboards are coupled) means getting louder, and to the **GO**, louder still.

Interpreting instructions on an English organ

On English organs the Choir, or Positive, is usually quieter than the Swell, often considerably so. So, rather than sticking to what's written in the copy, the player must adapt if he is to achieve the effect intended by the composer. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- 1 Using the Swell as the **P** and the Choir as the **R** – though this is unlikely to work without an enclosed reed on the Choir. This method is tricky if the player envisaged the **R** & **P** being adjacent. In this case the player must sometimes abandon hope of imitating French manuals and just go for dynamic variation on whichever keyboards are close together.
- 2 Using the Swell as the **P** and the Solo as the **R** – this often produces good results and has the added advantage of placing the three manuals in the same relative position as on most French Romantic organs
- 3 Using the Swell 8' reed when the **R** is required and adding the 16' & 4' reeds when the Positif is required. Or using the *Oboe* for **R** and *Trumpet* for **P**
- 4 Using the Swell for **R** and a little Great for the **P**.

All these methods are compromises, but the thing to bear in mind is that often the stipulated keyboard is merely code for dynamic level, so adding or subtracting from one manual may give the desired effect.

* One of Cavaillé-Coll's innovations in organ design was to place reeds and mixtures on a separate chest from that for the flues. This allowed separate control of the wind supply (often at a higher pressure) with a 'ventil' foot pedal.

On the **R**, dynamic instructions are often a direction as to the state of the Swell shutters, eg, *Récit fonds et anches pp* means full swell, box closed!

Célestes pp with Pedal 32' – often an English Double Open Wood is too loud ☹. Quieter 32' stops are so much more useful; and they still tend to make their presence felt in loud music. The same applies to 32' reeds, fun though the big ones be!

Beware the Swell/Pedal. Franck, eg, had no R/Pd coupler. The *Trompette* & *Hautbois* can sound very strong in the bass and dominate the texture. Much French music recommends Stopped flutes 16' & 8' uncoupled. The *Récit*/Pedal coupler is seldom, if ever, used when the *Voix Humaine* is drawn.

Franck also had no **R** to **GO** coupler; the **R** had to be coupled to the **GO** by coupling the **R** to the **P** and the **P** to the **GO**.

Some composers mark registrations which take account of the idiosyncrasies of their own instrument. At S Sulpice eg, the *Récit* speaks more clearly into the building than any other division. This is because it is high above the case directly under the stone vault, and the other divisions are masked behind huge wooden statues placed in front of pipe mouths. Widor's registrations take account of this.

Concerning the *Récit* of Franck's organ at S Clotilde, Jean Langlais used to say "The *Trompette* sounds like an *Hautbois*, and the *Hautbois* sounds like a *Gambe*" – hence Franck asking for *Hautbois* and *Trompette* to be used together. *

French, German & Spanish horizontal reeds are chorus reeds, not solo Trumpets.

As always there is one over-riding rule:

experiment, listen and register accordingly.

In the Introduction to his *Twenty-four Pièces de Fantaisie*, Louis Vierne writes:

"The registration is by no means inflexible. It is rather an indication of general colouring. It can be modified according to the possibilities offered by the instruments on which they are to be performed. It is no use saying that the artist must refrain from any jarring, picturesque and odd effect unjustified by the character of the music. This is elementary artistic principle in every interpretation aiming at accuracy.

According to the size of the locality and quickness with which the organ responds to the touch, the movement may be slightly more or less rapid..."

In other words:

experiment, listen and register accordingly.

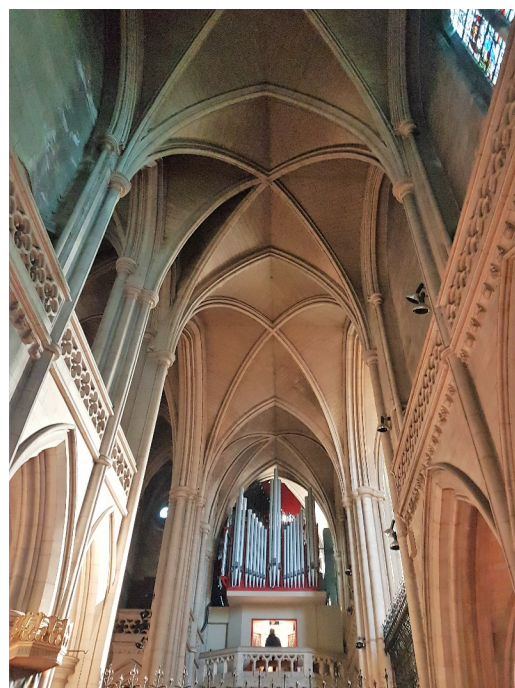
Peter King

These notes, reproduced by kind permission, accompanied a seminar presented by Peter King at St Stephen's Church, Bournemouth as part of the South Wessex Organ Society Annual Winter Course 2023.

* The 'finesse and sweetness' of the *Trompette* and *Hautbois* stops on Franck's organ at St Clotilde was one of the points considered by Pierre Pincemaille in John Maxwell-Jones' article on page 6 of the [Newsletter, May 2022](#).



Peter King



Peter's seminar included a recital of works by Ropartz, Saint-Saëns, Gigout, Widor, Mulet, Guilmant and Franck on the organ of St Stephen's, Bournemouth (Hill, 1915 3 manuals & pedals, 44 stops)



An example of the Cavallé-Coll system of foot levers controlling couplers and vents (red)

Items of news or articles for the May / June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 24th April**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Andy Storer, may be reached via mail@derbyorganists.co.uk Please visit the DDOA Website www.derbyorganists.co.uk for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.