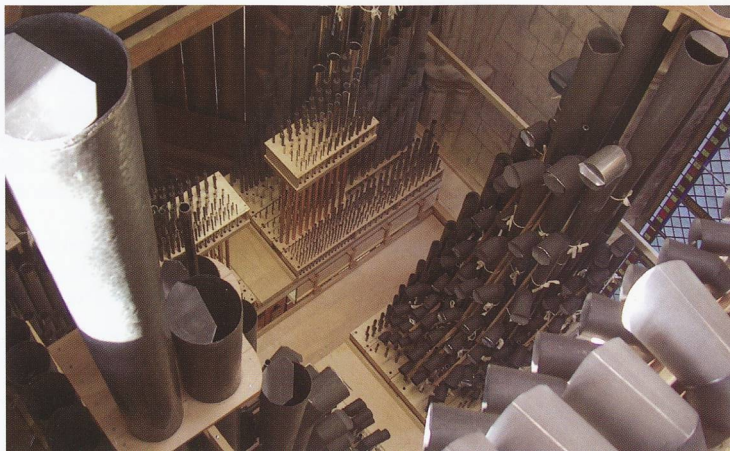


In spring 2008, BBC Music Magazine selected David to record a disc celebrating the centennial of French composers, Widor and Vierne. Recorded at St Sermin in Toulouse, France, the disc was featured on the cover of BBC Magazine in April 2008 and distributed to more than 60,000 subscribers. A DVD featuring his performance of the Widor Toccata from St Sermin, recently distributed by Chestnut Music, has received world wide acclaim. David's solo CD recordings now number 26 and include his transcription of Mahler 5, Sounds French, and Organ Spectacular, recorded on the largest church organ in the world, First Congregational Church in Los Angeles. An all-Bach recording, *Joie de Vivre*, was released in January 2009.

David Briggs now lives in Ipswich, Massachusetts and is represented by Chestnut Music. For more information about bookings, purchasing music, compositions and to order cds, please visit: www.david-briggs.org.uk



David Briggs
plays the Organ of Bridlington Priory, Yorkshire, UK

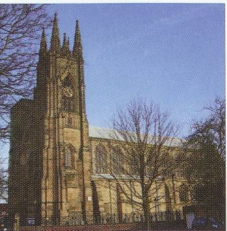


Music by J S Bach, D'Aquin, Lemmens, Franck, Widor, Vierne and Debussy

FULL SPLENDOUR

The Recording

It was with the greatest pleasure that I accepted the invitation of Michael Smith, MA FRCO (Organist of Bridlington Priory since 1987) and Andrew Moyes, the Director of Nicholson (Organ Builders) to make this, the first recording on the recently rebuilt organ at Bridlington. The instrument was rebuilt and extensively remodelled in 2006 and is now one of the most notable instruments in the whole of the British Isles. The Priory itself is the magnificent centrepiece of the 'Old Town' of Bridlington, with its attractive Georgian-fronted houses and unspoilt architecture. I had the privilege of giving a recital in the 2008 summer concert series and was impressed by the versatility and colour of the instrument. Its French (or should I say Belgian) heritage also appealed very much to my own musical delectations. The present recording was made on Tuesday 17th March 2009, when we had the luxury of the locked building all day long - so many recording sessions happen in the small hours...



The Venue

Bridlington Priory was founded in 1113 A.D. and over the subsequent centuries became one of the largest and wealthiest monastic foundations in England. The Priory owned land for many miles around and used its own fleet of ships to carry its produce, notably wool, to distant ports or markets from the local harbour. The Prior was authorised by the Pope to wear a ring, mitre and other pontifical insignia as a symbol of his authority and the monastery became a centre of pilgrimage, even attracting royalty on occasion. Music was a very important part of the

monastic liturgy and ancient records tell us that in 1450 Henry VI founded and endowed a school at the Priory for twelve choristers and a master to teach them. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in the early 16th century Bridlington Priory was plundered of its wealth and largely demolished. All that was allowed to remain was the western end of the old Priory in its role as the parish church of the local population. Nonetheless it remains a very fine building and, preserved and beautified by careful restoration, continues to inspire those who visit or worship within its walls.

The Organ

The Bridlington instrument was built by Charles Anneessens in 1889. It was a large three manual and pedal organ of 41 stops and 2,500 pipes.

Compass: Manuals: CC - C 61 notes: Pedal: CCC - F 30 notes
Pneumatic lever and tracker action

GREAT ORGAN

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Open Diapason | 16ft |
| Large Open Diapason | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Violon | 8 |
| Harmonic Flute | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Ocarina | 4 |
| Twelfth | 3 |
| Piccolo | 2 |
| Cornet | 2-3-4 ranks |
| Bombarde | 16 |
| Trompette | 8 |
| Clairon | 4 |

SWELL ORGAN

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Bourdon | 16ft |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 |
| Viole de Gambe | 8 |
| Voix Celeste | 8 |
| Flute | 4 |
| Flageolet | 2 |
| Piccolo | 1 |
| Mixture | V ranks |
| Trumpet Harmonic | 8 |
| Basson Hautbois | 8 |
| Voix Humaine | 8 |

CHOIR ORGAN

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Hohlfute | 8ft |
| Viola | 8 |
| Gemshorn | 8 |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Clarinet | 8 |
| Melophone | 4 |

PEDAL ORGAN

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Soubasse | 16ft |
| Grosse Open Flute | 16 |
| Quinte | 12 |
| Basse Flute | 8 |
| Basse | 4 |
| Contra Tuba | 32 |
| Tubasson | 16 |
| Bombarde | 16 |
| Tuba | 8 |

ACCESSORIES

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Great to Pedal | Ventil to Great Reeds |
| Choir to Pedal | Ventil to Swell Reeds |
| Swell to Pedal | Ventil to Pedal Reeds |
| Swell Super Octave | Tremolo to Swell |
| Choir to Great | Balanced Swell Pedal |
| Swell to Great | Six Combination Pedals |

Mainly due to the leakage of fumes into the instrument from the "Otto" gas engine, which powered the blower, causing damage to the action and reed tongues, the organ had to be rebuilt in 1909 by Abbott and Smith. They also replaced the Anneessens console, replaced the Swell Mixture with a new Contra Fagotto 16ft and replaced the gas engine with an electric motor.

In 1922 the organ was cleaned and overhauled by Hill, Norman and Beard. They installed a rotary blower and revoiced the Anneessens reeds which had lost some of their brilliance at the Abbott and Smith rebuild. Some twenty years after the Hill, Norman and Beard work the organ was unplayable due to soot from a leaking chimney flue and vandalism. A scheme was drawn up to restore the instrument and the contract was awarded to the John Compton Organ Company who commenced work in 1948. Much of the Anneessens pipework was retained and all the departments had additions. A large, extension diapason chorus was added to the Great and the Choir organ was enlarged, including the addition of a Tuba stop derived from the Pedal Tuba.

Raymond Sunderland was appointed Priory organist in 1957. Within a few years it was becoming apparent to him that the organ was deteriorating. Some of the problems with the soundboards were put down to age and other problems to unsatisfactory materials being used in previous restorations. Raymond Sunderland was a friend of Frank Bannister of Laycock and Bannister and together they worked up two schemes for the rebuilding and enlarging of the organ. After much debate and with the help of a generous bequest work started on the smaller scheme in 1967.

Much of the Compton extension work was removed and straight ranks installed. The Great diapason chorus was reinforced with upperwork by or in the style of Compton. The Compton enclosed Choir became a Solo department the rest of the Choir being added to and called Positive. Remedial work was carried out by Nicholson between 1983 and 2000 including

installation of new solid state transmission in 1992 and releathering of a double rise bellows in 1996. It was becoming obvious that the old soundboards were in a very poor state and that with all the additions over the years there were many different actions throughout the organ. The instrument was spread throughout the chamber in a rather random fashion. The upkeep was becoming expensive with the tuner spending more time on fault fixing than tuning.

Paul Hale was appointed Organ Adviser in 2000. After much discussion with Michael Smith, Priory Organist, and Nicholson the organ was rebuilt in 2006. The best of the pipework, including all the Anneessens pipework, and new Nicholson pipes have been utilised in an otherwise new organ.



**BRIDLINGTON PRIORY ORGAN
SPECIFICATION 2006**

GREAT ORGAN

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Double Open Diapason* 16 ft. | |
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Open Diapason I* | 8 |
| Open Diapason II* ^N | 8 |
| Open Diapason III | 8 |
| Violon N | 8 |
| Flûte Harmonique | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Octave | 4 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Ocarina | 4 |
| Octave Quint* | 2 2/3 |
| Twelfth | 2 2/3 |
| Super Octave * | 2 |
| Fifteenth | 2 |
| Cornet V* ^N mc. | |
| Fourniture III* 19.22.26 | |
| Scharf III* 26.29.33 | |
| Bombarde* | 16 |
| Trompette* | 8 |
| Clairon* | 4 |

SWELL ORGAN

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Lieblich Bourdon | 16 ft. |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 |
| Viola da Gamba | 8 |
| Voix Célèste tc. | 8 |
| Geigen Principal | 4 |
| Flûte Harmonique | 4 |
| Fifteenth | 2 |
| Sesquialtera II N 12.17 | |
| Mixture III ^N 15.19.22 | |
| Plein Jeu IV 19.22.26.29 | |
| Contra Basson | 16 |
| Trompette | 8 |
| Basson ^N | 8 |
| Hautbois | 8 |
| Clairon | 4 |
| <i>Tremulant</i> | |

* Stops on soundboard 1, rest on soundboard 2
Tremulant soundboard 2

POSITIVE ORGAN

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Open Diapason ^N | 8 ft. |
| Gedackt ^N | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Koppelflöte | 4 |
| Nazard ^N | 2 2/3 |
| Fifteenth ^N | 2 |
| Blockflöte | 2 |
| Tierce ^N | 1 3/5 |
| Larigot | 1 1/3 |
| Mixture IV ^N 22.26.29.33 | |
| Cromorne ^N | 8 |
| <i>Tremulant</i> | |
| Tromba | 8 |
| Tromba Clarion | 4 |

SOLO ORGAN

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Viole d'Orchestre | 8 ft |
| Viole Célèste tc. | 8 |
| Flûte Harmonique ^N | 4 |
| Clarinet | 8 |
| Cor Anglais ^N | 8 |
| Voix Humaine | 8 |
| <i>Tremulant</i> | |
| Tromba (Pos) | 8 |
| Tuba Mirabilis | 8 |

PEDAL ORGAN

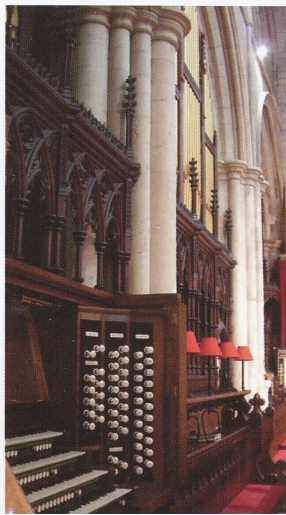
| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Double Grosse Flöte | 32 |
| Double Soubasse | 32 |
| Grosse Flöte | 16 |
| Open Diapason ^N | 16 |
| Soubasse | 16 |
| Bourdon ^N | 16 |
| Flöte | 8 |
| Principal | 8 |
| Flûtebass | 8 |
| Fifteenth ^N | 4 |
| Flûte | 4 |
| Mixture IV 19.22.26.29 | |
| Contra Tuba | 32 |
| Tubasson | 16 |
| Trombone ^N | 16 |
| Tromba | 8 |
| Schalmei | 4 |

COUPLERS

| |
|-------------------|
| Solo Octave |
| Solo Sub Octave |
| Solo Unison Off |
| |
| Swell Octave |
| Swell Sub Octave |
| Swell Unison Off |
| Solo to Swell |
| |
| Solo to Great |
| Swell to Great |
| Positive to Great |
| |
| Solo to Positive |
| Swell to Positive |
| |
| Solo to Pedal |
| Swell to Pedal |
| Great to Pedal |
| Positive to Pedal |

Stops marked^N added by Nicholson

Great & Pedal Combinations Coupled
Generals on Swell Toe Pistons
Full complement of playing aids



The Music

It seems appropriate to start with some Belgian music on what was originally a Belgian instrument - I have chosen the ebullient Fanfare in D major by **Nicholas Jacques Lemmens**. This brilliant piece shows you the powerful yet majestic *tutti* of the Bridlington organ. Lemmens was a pupil of Adolf Hesse, who was, in turn, a pupil of J S Bach. He was a brilliant organist, prolific composer and also wrote an important treatise on organ playing. In March 1849 he was appointed organ teacher at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels aged 26, and he trained young French talents, including Alexandre Guilmant and Charles-Marie Widor. In 1857 he married the English soprano Helen Sherrington (1834-1906), who in the following decade emerged as a leading English concert and operatic singer.

By way of complete contrast, the following three works are by J S Bach. **Johann Sebastian Bach** (21st March 1685 - 28th July 1750) was a prolific German composer and organist whose sacred and secular works for choir, orchestra and solo instruments drew together the strands of the baroque genre and brought it to its ultimate maturity. He enriched the prevailing German style with a robust contrapuntal technique, a control of harmonic and motivic organisation from the smallest to the largest scales, and the adaptation of rhythms and textures from abroad, particularly Italy and France. Many people consider him to be the greatest Baroque composer, and one of the greatest composers of all time. Revered for their intellectual depth, technical command and artistic beauty, J S Bach's works include the Brandenburg concertos, the keyboard suites and partitas, the Mass in B Minor, the St. Matthew Passion, The Musical Offering, The Art of Fugue and a large number of cantatas, of which about 220 survive.

The Chorale Prelude 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier' is a particularly beautiful example of the ornamented chorale - here played on the expressive Positive cornet séparé, one of many new tonal features added in 2006 by Nicholson. The 'Pièce d'Orgue', BWV 572, often known as the Fantasia in G, dates from 1706, while the young composer was organist at Arnstadt.

The French nomenclature on the score ('Très vite', 'Grave' and 'Très lentement') shows that Bach was truly cosmopolitan in his musical interests and influences. The first section illustrates the glittery mixtures of the Swell and Positive, the grandiose, 5-voice middle section the rich 16ft-based *plenum*, and the last section the delicate 8ft Gedackt and Larigot, again of the Positive organ. The third Bach work is the expressive 'Fantasia à 5', BWV 562, dating from sometime between 1708-1717, when the composer was Kapellmeister at Weimar. The registrations I have chosen here also reflect the French classical influence preponderant in Bach's early writing - RH Great Cornet, LH Cromorne and Cornet, and Pedal 8ft Principal. All these voices are new from 2006, but conceived with the soundworld of the French baroque very much in mind.

Under the tutelage of Marchand, the Parisian composer and organist **Louis-Claude d'Aquin** was a child prodigy. He played the clavecin for King Louis XIV at age six, and by his twelfth year he was organist at St. Antoine. He became organist of St. Paul in 1727, having won the position in a competition against the illustrious Jean-Phillipe Rameau. Additionally, Louis-Claude d'Aquin served briefly as the Organist of the Royal Chapel in 1739.

D' Aquin was known for his extreme virtuosity and improvisatory skills. Though he composed very little, his noel variations represent a highpoint in French organ composition in the 18th century.

César Franck was born in Liège, Belgium, to a father from the German-Belgian border and a German mother. His father had ambitions for him to become a concert pianist, and he studied at the conservatoire in Liège before going to the Paris Conservatoire in 1838 after private studies with Anton Reicha for a year. Upon leaving in 1842 he briefly returned to Belgium, but went back to Paris in 1844 and remained there for the rest of his life. His decision to give up a career as a virtuoso led to strained relations with his father during this time.

During his first years in Paris, Franck made his living by teaching, both privately and institutionally. He also held various posts as organist: from 1847 to 1851 he was organist at Notre Dame de Lorette, and from 1851 to 1858 he was organist at Saint Jean and St François. During this time he became familiar with the work of the famous French organ builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll, and he also worked on developing his technique as an organist and improviser.

In 1858, he became organist at the newly-consecrated Saint Clotilde Basilica, where he remained until his death. Here he began to attract attention for his skill as an improviser. His first set of organ compositions, however, was not published until 1868, when he was 46 years old, although it contains one of his finest organ pieces, the *Grande Pièce Symphonique*. From 1872 to his death he was professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory. His pupils included Vincent d'Indy, Ernest Chausson, Louis Vierne, and Henri Duparc. As an organist he was particularly noted for his skill in improvisation, and on the basis of merely twelve major organ works, Franck is considered by many the greatest composer of organ music after J S Bach. His works were some of the finest organ pieces to come from France in over a century, and laid the groundwork for the French symphonic organ style. In particular, his *Grande Pièce Symphonique*, a work of 25 minutes' duration, paved the way for the organ symphonies of Charles-Marie Widor, Louis Vierne, and Marcel Dupré.

In 1890, Franck was involved in a serious traffic accident. It was after this accident that he wrote his *Trois chorals* for organ. Franck died as a result of complications from the accident very shortly after finishing the chorales. He was interred in the Cimetière du Montparnasse in Paris.

In 1985 I had the great privilege of studying the Choral in A minor with my teacher Jean Langlais, Franck's successor at St Clotilde. Playing Franck on Franck's own instrument was an experience that remains with you for life.

Charles-Marie Widor was born in Lyon, to a family of organ builders, and initially studied music there with his father, who was an organist himself. The French organ builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll, reviver of the art of organ building, was a friend of the Widor family: he arranged for the talented young organist to study in Brussels, with Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens for organ technique and with François-Joseph Fétis, director of the Brussels Conservatoire for composition.

In 1870, with the combined lobbying of Cavallé-Coll, Charles Gounod and Camille Saint-Saëns, the 26-year-old Widor was appointed as organist of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, the most prominent position for a French organist. The organ at St-Sulpice was Cavallé-Coll's masterwork; the instrument's spectacular capabilities proved an inspiration to Widor. Widor remained as organist at St-Sulpice for 64 years until the end of 1933. He was succeeded in 1934 by his former student Marcel Dupré. Meanwhile, in 1890 he succeeded César Franck as organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire; he later gave up his post in organ to become composition professor in 1896.

Widor had several students in Paris who were to become famous composers and organists in their own right, most notably Louis Vierne, Charles Tournemire, Darius Milhaud (who was to later strongly influence jazz pianist Dave Brubeck), Marcel Dupré, Alexander Schreiner, and Edgar Varèse. Albert Schweitzer studied with him, especially from 1899, and master and pupil collaborated on an annotated edition of J S Bach's organ works published in 1912-14. Widor, whose own master Lemmens was an important Bach exponent, encouraged Schweitzer's theological exploration of Bach's religious music.

The second movement of the *Symphonie Gothique* (Op. 70, of 1895), entitled 'Andante sostenuto', is one of Widor's most-beloved pieces. The whole symphony was primarily inspired by the great Basilica of St Ouen, in Rouen. In this performance, the outer sections show off the beautiful cantabile quality of the Bridlington Flutes and Bourdons and the middle section sounds particularly sumptuous on the rich 16ft and 8ft foundations - what an opulent luxury to be able to draw six 8fts on the Great!



About his composition Debussy wrote:

The music of this prelude is a very free illustration of Mallarmé's beautiful poem. By no means does it claim to be a synthesis of it. Rather there is a succession of scenes through which pass the desires and dreams of the faun in the heat of the afternoon. Then, tired of pursuing the timorous flight of nymphs and naiads, he succumbs to intoxicating sleep, in which he can finally realize his dreams of possession in universal Nature.

Debussy changed the course of music forever with his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. The composition was inspired by the poem *L'après-midi d'un faune* by Stéphane Mallarmé, and later formed the basis for a ballet choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky. Composer-conductor Pierre Boulez even dates the awakening of modern music from this score, observing that "the flute of the faun brought new breath to the art of music." It is a work that barely grasps onto tonality and harmonic function.

The opening flute solo is one the most famous passages in musical modernism, consisting of a chromatic descent to a tritone below the original pitch, and the subsequent ascent.

Although it is tempting to call this piece a tone poem, there is very little musical literalism in the piece; instead, the languorous melody and shimmering orchestration as a whole evoke the eroticism of Mallarmé's poem.

The work is called a prelude because Debussy intended to write a suite of three movements – Prelude, Interlude, and Final Paraphrase – but the later two were never composed.

The *Prélude* at first listening seems improvisational and almost free-form; however, closer observation will demonstrate that the piece consists of a complex organization of musical cells, motifs carefully developed and traded between members of the orchestra. A close analysis of the piece yields a deep appreciation of the ultimate compositional economy of Debussy's craft.

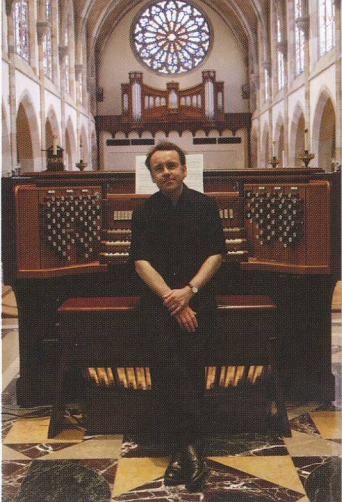
The main musical themes are introduced by woodwinds, with delicate but harmonically advanced underpinnings of muted horns, strings and harp. Recurring tools in Debussy's compositional arsenal make appearances in this piece: bracing whole-tone scale runs, harmonic fluidity without

lengthy modulations between central keys, tritones in both melody and harmony. The development of the slow main theme moves fluidly between 9/8, 6/8 and 12/8 meters. Debussy explores voicings and shading in his orchestration brilliantly, allowing the main melodic cell to move from solo flute to oboe, back to solo flute, then two unison flutes (yielding a completely different atmosphere to the melody), then clarinet, etc. Even the accompaniment explores alternate voicings; the flute duo's soaring, exotic melodic cells ride lush rolling strings with violas carrying the soprano part over alto violins (the tone of a viola in its upper register being especially sumptuous). And, in the first minute of the piece, Debussy mischievously throws in a bar of complete silence, giving the listener the opportunity to explore the musical quality of negative space within a gentle flowing river of sound. This organ transcription was made by Alexandre Cellier, himself a pupil of Debussy.

Louis Vierne was born in Poitiers, France in 1870. He studied at L'Institut des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris (1880-90) and was influenced by Franck and Widor. Vierne obtained the Premier Prix d'Orgue at the Paris Conservatoire in 1884. He was appointed Organist of Notre-Dame de Paris in 1900 and toured in Europe and the USA (1920-30). Previously, he, like Gabriel Fauré, was an assistant to the organist Charles-Marie Widor at Saint-Sulpice in Paris. His output for organ includes six symphonies, '24 Fantasy Pieces' (which includes his famous 'Carillon de Westminster'), and '24 Pieces in Free Style', among other works. There are also several chamber works (sonatas for violin and cello, a piano quintet and a string quartet for example), vocal and choral music, and a symphony in A minor for orchestra.

Louis Vierne composed his First Symphony for Organ in 1898, two years before his nomination to the tribune at Notre-Dame de Paris. The final is rightly one of his most famous pieces. In this performance, the Bridlington Solo Tuba Mirabilis crowns the *tutti* for the last chord... Vierne suffered a stroke while giving his 1750th organ recital at Notre-Dame de Paris on the evening of June 2, 1937.





David Briggs is an internationally renowned organist who has built a world-wide reputation as an innovative musician and dazzling performer. Increasingly sought after for his orchestral transcriptions and his art of improvisation, his performances are known for their musicality, virtuosity and ability to excite and engage audiences of all ages.

David studied organ with Jean Langlais in Paris. The first British winner of the Tournemire Prize at the St Albans International Improvisation Competition, he also won the first prize in the International Improvisation Competition at Paisley. At the age of 17 he obtained his FRCO (Fellow of the Royal College of Organists) diploma, winning the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Having held positions at Truro and Hereford Cathedrals and King's College, Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar, David Briggs is Organist Emeritus at Gloucester Cathedral, where he directed the music for eight years. While at Gloucester, he oversaw the complete rebuilding of the Cathedral organ by Nicholson, and directed the Three Choirs Festivals, conducting some of the UK's finest professional orchestras, notably the Philharmonia.

A gifted and inspirational teacher, David regularly gives masterclasses at the Royal Northern College of Music and at Oxford and Cambridge. He is frequently invited to serve on international competition juries, and was Chairman of the Jury at Nurnberg in June 2007.

Beginning with his powerful transcription of Mahler 5 in 1998, David's compilation of organ transcriptions of orchestral symphonies has grown to include Tchaikovsky 4, Schubert 8, Bruckner 7 and Ravel's Daphnis and Chloe. In November 2007, Mahler 6 premiered in New York City, followed by a premiere in Germany in June 2008. These transcriptions are becoming increasingly popular and have been praised by critics for helping make organ music accessible to broader audiences.

David Briggs is also a prolific composer and his works range from full scale oratorios to works for solo instruments. Commissions include a setting of the St. John Passion for choir, chamber orchestra and soloists; Symphony 'Missa pro defunctis'; a setting of the Solemn Requiem Mass; Four Concert Etudes; and a Cello Sonata. 'Dreamworld', a song cycle for tenor and piano, his 'Requiem', and transcriptions of Tchaikovsky 4 and Schubert 8, have been released on his independent music label, **Chestnut Music**.

David's schedule includes more than 50 concerts a year. In 2004, he was one of three international recitalists invited to celebrate the reopening of the organ at the Royal Albert Hall in London and on July 4, 2008, David played a solo recital in the Hall. Other recent engagements include National Cathedral in Washington, DC, Notre Dame in Paris, Severance Hall in Cleveland, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, in the UK, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral in London, King's College, Cambridge and St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Bartholomew's in New York City. David is frequently asked to perform improvisation to silent films such as Phantom of the Opera, Nosferatu, King of Kings, Hunchback of Notre Dame, Jeanne d'Arc and Fritz Lang's Metropolis.