



Popular Organ Music

David Briggs plays the
Organ of
Gloucester Cathedral

PRIORY

Volume 2

**POPULAR ORGAN MUSIC
FROM GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL**

Prelude and Fugue in G major

J.S. Bach

This is one of **J.S. Bach's** most extrovert and joyful organ works. Dating from his last years at Weimar (c. 1714-16) it displays a compelling youthful exuberance, which has made the "Great G major" one of his best-loved compositions. The *Prelude* is introduced by a grand *toccata*-like recitative, lasting eleven bars, developed from tonic and dominant chords. The principal motif then enters in the pedals, punctuated by repeated notes. The *Prelude* develops very much along concertante lines, moving through diverse tonalities. The *Fugue* subject, possibly inspired by the first chorus of Bach's Cantata BWV 21, with its memorable repeated notes, is developed into a movement of the utmost contrapuntal ingenuity and integrity.

Three Clock Pieces

F.J. Haydn

These charming pieces, originally intended to be heard on the hour, and played mechanically, demonstrate the beauty of three different 4' flute stops on the Gloucester organ, those of the Choir, West Positive and Great organs respectively. **Haydn** composed these pieces for use by his principal patron, Prince Eszterhazy.

Pièce Héroïque

C. Franck

César Franck's *Pièce Héroïque* was written for the opening of the Cavaillé-Coll organ at the Paris Trocadero in 1878. It is an epic and dramatic piece with two main themes - the first, urgent and sinister, in minor key, and the second, calm and serene, in the major. The glorious final page is a heroic transformation of the latter, played on the *tutti*.

Boléro sur un thème de Charles Racquet

P. Cochereau

Pierre Cochereau, who held the post of 'Titulaire des Grandes Orgues de Notre-Dame de Paris' from 1955 until his death in 1984, was one of the greatest improvisors of the twentieth-century French School. This piece was improvised for a recording on the Philips label (part of a series entitled '*L'Extraordinaire Pierre Cochereau*') at Notre-Dame in the early 1970's. It was transcribed by the present performer from disc over a period of two months in 1992. Charles Raquet was a sixteenth-century predecessor of Cochereau at Notre-Dame and it would be interesting to gauge his reaction upon hearing the improvisation of his twentieth-century successor. The work is cast in a huge arch form (crescendo-diminuendo) with the snare drum following the dynamic of the *Grand Orgue*.

Scherzo: The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Paul Dukas (1865-1935) studied at the Paris Conservatoire, and was later a highly influential professor there. His vivid, descriptive symphonic scherzo *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is without doubt his most famous composition and was immortalised by Walt Disney in his film *Fantasia*. Sadly, Dukas stopped publishing in his early forties, and, shortly before his death, he burnt over twenty years' manuscript compositions. What a tragedy for French music!

P. Dukas

Two movements from The Nutcracker Suite

Miniature-Overture

Waltz of the Flowers

Happily there has, in recent years, been a considerable resurgence in the playing of orchestral transcriptions on the organ. Indeed, many of these transcriptions are becoming established parts of the organist's repertoire. **Tchaikovsky's** ballet music for *The Nutcracker* needs hardly any introduction. The registrations used hint at the original orchestral colouring, rather than attempting to slavishly reproduce it. In this way, the musical text can be appreciated in a new light.

P.I. Tchaikovsky

arr. **D. J. Briggs**

Le Jardin Suspendu

Jehan Alain was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1911 and died at Petit Puy (near Saumur) in 1940 on active service as a motorcycle liaison rider. He came from a highly musical background: his father, Albert Alain, was a well-known composer, and his grandmother, Alice Alberty, was a talented pianist and pupil of Madame Szavady, who in turn was a pupil of Chopin. Jehan Alain had a brilliant career, first at the Paris Conservatoire (where one of his professors was Paul Dukas) and later as a composer, winning the coveted prize from *Les Amis de l'Orgue*. He had, without doubt, a highly original voice and his style is instantly recognisable. *Le Jardin Suspendu* is a delicate piece of impressionism which, with its magical harmonies, conjures up all sorts of pictures. The composer suggests that it offers the eternally sought after and inaccessible ideal and refuge of the artist.

J. Alain

Prelude and Fugue in E flat BWV 552

The *St. Anne Prelude and Fugue* frames **J.S. Bach's** *Clavierübung III* or 'Third Part of Keyboard Practice, composed for the spiritual refreshment of music-lovers and particularly connoisseurs of such work' and is unique in various ways. The *Prelude* is Bach's longest and is built up of three main ideas: the opening dotted *French Overture* rhythm, a *staccato* crotchet motif (with echoes) and a running semiquaver motif. The *French Overture* and the *Italian Concerto* styles are the major influences. The *Fugue* is in three sections and this is thought to be symbolic of the Trinity. The first section is a noble five-part *Ricercare*, the second is *manualiter* and in triple time (rather reminiscent of Frescobaldi) and the third introduces typical Bachian running semiquavers in 12/8 time. The theme is heard at the end in the pedals, before the truly climactic final cadence.

J.S. Bach

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THE ORGAN

The earliest evidence of organs in Gloucester Cathedral provides us with little information: we know only that in 1616, for instance, the organs were "very meane, and besides that very farr decayed" and in 1635, Tho. Bull was paid £1 10s. "for mendinge the organes". In 1639/40 an agreement was reached with Dallam for a new organ, further money was paid to Thomas Cooke for taking down the old organ and, despite the absence of any description of the new organ, the records indicate "approval" in 1641. The Commonwealth period took its toll and, with a gap of many years in the accounts, the next entries mention large numbers of craftsmen employed in refurbishing the Cathedral. There is no definite clue as to the fate of the Dallam Organ although records could imply the sale and then, in 1661/2, the buying back of the Organ only to be sold again in 1663, the year of the first payment to Thomas Harris for a new organ to compliment the restoration of the Cathedral services. There is also the possible implication that, upon the resale of the Organ, the Cathedral, short of money, kept the case - there is a discrepancy in the amounts of money involved in 1661/2 and then 1663 - for Harris to use in his new organ.

The Harris organ was completed in 1666 and, as a tribute to the generosity of many people who helped financially, the display pipes of the Great organ case were painted with their Coats of Arms. It was situated in a loft underneath the arch between the Choir and South Transept. Already in 1667 there were repair bills for "mending the stopps of the Chayre organ" and, following other payments, a firm contract was drawn up in 1674 between the Dean and Chapter and Thomas Harris and "Rene his sonne" for the maintenance of the organ. 1687 sees Bernard Smith being paid a large amount of money for repairing the organ and 1718 was the date when the instrument was moved to its position on the screen above the entrance to the Choir where it has stayed ever since - a remarkable achievement despite Victorian efforts to hide it elsewhere. Thomas Swarbrick (at one time in the employ of Renuus Harris) was in charge of the organ from 1708-1720 and undoubtedly undertook the removal. Other minor builders were paid varying amounts, some quite large, for repairs, and then in 1790 Robert and William Gray carried out an extensive rebuilding with the first specification being noted in the early 19th century:-

GREAT ORGAN	CHOIR ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN
GG to F (no GG sharp)	GG to F (no GG sharp)	Tenor F to F
Open Diapason	Stopped Diapason	Open Diapason
Open Diapason	Principal	Stopped Diapason
Principal	Flute	Principal
Twelfth	Fifteenth	Cornet III
Fifteenth	Vox Humana	Trumpet
Sesquialtera IV		Hautboy
Cornet (mid. C) V		
Trumpet		

More minor builders (including Flight & Robson and Flight & Barr) were employed until 1830 when J.C. Bishop made improvements and additions including pedal pipes. 1847 was notable for Henry Willis' complete rebuilding of the instrument; it was one of his earliest works and was surprisingly "Classical".

GREAT ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN	CHOIR ORGAN
CCC to F, 66 notes	CC to F, 54 notes	GG (no GG sharp) to F, 58 notes
Open Diapason	Open Diapason	Dulciana
Open Diapason	Open Diapason	Stopped Diapason
Stopped Diapason	Stopped Diapason	Principal
Clarabella	Dulciana	Flute
Principal	Principal	Fifteenth
Twelfth	Flute	
Fifteenth	Fifteenth	
Sesquialtera IV	Sesquialtera	PEDAL ORGAN
Mixture II (new)	Trumpet	CC to E, 29 notes
Trumpet (new)	Hautboy	
Clarion	Cremona	Pedal Pipes
	Clarion	

In 1888/9 Willis undertook another complete rebuilding, this time producing the kind of instrument which one usually associates with him and which became the model for many years to come, in fact until surprisingly recent times. The compass was now uniform i.e. all manuals the same compass - Gloucester (CC-A 58 notes), Pedals (CC-F 30 notes); the Great was big in sound; the Swell was slightly less in volume but could vanish to nothing and then roar with the box open; the Choir was very quiet with no register above 4' or 2' (often no principals); the Pedals were indistinct and frequently with no stops higher than 8' pitch. Wind pressures were high and the emphasis was on full diapason sound, full rounded reeds, gentle solo stops (apart from enormous Tubas) and heavenly celestes - mixtures were relatively unimportant and often contained the seventeenth, probably a left over from the 'English Classical Organ'.

The 1888/9 rebuild finally saw the removal of the console from its traditional place between the two cases and a new console was installed on the South side to facilitate the playing for services or events in either the Choir or Nave. The new soundboards were turned ninety degrees to run East/West and pneumatic action was applied to all except the Choir organ, still in the Chaire case. The large Pedal pipes were placed within the arch on the North aisle side. 1898/9 saw further additions including a Solo department

outside the main case: no attention was paid to the casework apart from expanding it where possible to fit in new pipework. 1920 saw Harrison & Harrison extend and enlarge the specification with tubular pneumatic action provided for all except the manual to pedal couplers (mechanical). A cleaning and overhaul was carried out in 1947 when the pitch was raised to C-522.

The long and complex saga of the Gloucester instrument almost reads like a potted history of the English organ building with the majority of better known builders having worked on it at some stage, and consequently doing their best or worst as the case may be. In 1968 when major work of some kind needed to be done, suddenly all the musical, architectural and liturgical problems from the 16th to 20th century converged on the Cathedral authorities who received a bewildering number of solutions from many sources. Ralph Downes was employed as Consultant and he saw two possible courses of action: 1) keep the organ largely as it was except for a few 'modern touch-ups' in specification and renew the action 2) restore the 'Great' and 'Chaire' cases - as well as making the facade pipes speak again after some 80 years' silence - and devise a totally new design, using the remarkable number of surviving Harris pipes as an integral part. Excepting Bishop's pedal pipes (probably the largest scale stop of its kind in the country) which would be placed out of sight within the screen, all pipework would be housed in the two cases: this meant the removal of everything else including the Solo Box and the lower octave of the Double Open Wood 32' which Harrison placed in the triforium in 1920. The Dean and Chapter opted for this second solution and Hill, Norman and Beard were awarded the contract.

The examination and restoration of the historic cases revealed two works of art quite different in their conception and their craftsmanship. The Chaire case is an example of fine joinery in oak by an expert cabinet maker, still perfectly sound after some 400 years. Evidence was found to suggest that at one time it was painted white with gold pointing and shading. The main case was not so well constructed and it was found in a fragile condition particularly on account of the glue and minimum number of hand-made nails, a slight deterioration of the oak and further weakening from continual rebuilding and enlarging, especially at the end of the 19th century. It was a sorry sight: the West face was resting on the parapet of the stone screen, the East front sagged, cornices were fractured, the towers were roofless and pipes protruded. To reinstate the case as a functioning part and representative expression of the instrument as a whole, it was decided to reduce the depth to 125 inches (it had

become 150 inches) and to raise the whole by 16 inches to achieve the correct visual relationship between the two cases as well as providing a feasible interior layout. The considerable painted decoration, much covered by Victorian overpainting, was brought to life again by the Honourable Miss Anna Plowden and Mr. Peter Smith who also worked on the 17th century case at Framlingham. The exuberant colours seen on the pipes and the panels are displayed in a wide variety of subjects from flowers, birds, trees, fruit and musical instruments to heraldry with many coats of arms visible including, on the centre pipe of the centre tower on the East side, the arms granted to "Trinity Church of Gloucester" in 1542. Also, below the centre tower on a carved cartouche can be found the early arms of the Abbey of Gloucester.

The new design of the instrument had one important aspect, not applicable in the 17th century, to consider: sound for both Choir and Nave. The organ had to speak two ways and therefore the soundboards were reset, as in the original organ, with the Great in the centre - three divisions: one East, one West, reeds in the middle - and Pedal either side (excepting the large Flute pipes). The Swell was situated low down in the case with shutters to both East and West: the Choir obviously stayed in situ and a Positive division for the West side was accommodated at the front of the case on a level with the Swell. This ingenious layout effectively provided two 3 manual organs, one for the Choir and one for the Nave, as well as one larger whole instrument speaking both ways.

Herbert and John Norman said: "It is important to recognise that the design and voicing of the new organ has been conceived not only as an extension of the historic pipes remaining but as part of a modern instrument conceived on the classical principles of organ design laid down in the 17th and 18th centuries. It incorporates some features of the various national schools and provision for the performance of the more romantic music of the 19th and 20th centuries into an instrument which, although eclectic in its versatility, nevertheless speaks as with a single personality".

The specification quoted below was drawn up by Ralph Downes who also determined the pipe scales and voicing. The whole complex scheme was, and possibly still is, controversial, regarded by many who knew 'the old organ' as an outrage. However, there can be no comparison between the two: we are considering two totally different instruments. Not that there is a physical choice, of course, but bearing in mind the historical importance and a vast repertoire from all ages now recognised, the present musical instrument is a worthy one indeed.

SPECIFICATION

Compass: Manuals C - A 58 notes. Pedals C - G 32 notes.

Principals	Wide-Chorus		Narrow-scale and Reeds	
GREAT				
Open Diapason (East) H	8	Gedecktpommer	16	Posaune W 16
Open Diapason (West) H	8	Spitzflute (West)	8	Trumpet W 8
Octave (East) H	4	Bourdon h	8	Clarion W 4
Prestant (West) h	4	Stopped Flute h	4	
Quartane, 12.15 (West)h	2 2/3	Flageolet	2	
Mixture IV-VI h	1 1/3	Cornet (middle C)	IV	
CHOIR				
Principal H	4	Stopped Diapason	8	Cremona 8
Fifteenth	2	Chimney Flute	4	Tremulant
Sesquialtera	II	Nazard	1 1/3	
Mixture III	1/2			
SWELL				
Principal	4	Chimney Flute	8	Salicional (conical) 8
Mixture IV	1	Open Flute	4	Celeste (conical) 8
Cimbel	1/5	Nazard (conical)	2 2/3	Fagotto H&H 16
		Gemshorn	2	Trumpet W 8
		Tierce	1 3/5	Hautboy (part W) 8
				Vox Humana (part W) 8
				Tremulant
WEST POSITIVE				
Doublette	2	Gedecktpommer	8	
Cimbel III	1/2	Spitzflute	4	Tremulant
		Nazard (stopped)	2 2/3	
		Tierce	1 3/5	
		Larigot	1 1/3	
PEDAL				
Principal (ext.)	WH 16	Flute B	16	Bombarde W 16
Octave	hW 8	Sub Bass W	8	Trumpet W 8
Choral bass	H&H 4	Stopped Flute	8	Shawm 4
Mixture IV	2 2/3	Open Flute	2	

H= Thomas Harris h= small number of Harris pipes B= Bishop 1831
W= Willis H&H= Harrison 1920 All other pipework new.

Usual accessories including 4 pistons to West Positive, 4 Generals, 6 pistons to other departments, all available on four channels.

DAVID BRIGGS

DAVID BRIGGS became Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral in June 1994.

Born in Birmingham in 1962, he was a chorister in the Cathedral Choir, won a Music Scholarship to Solihull School and led the viola section of the National Youth Orchestra, where he was awarded the Bulgin Medal for Musical Excellence. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists at seventeen, winning five prizes and the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. As Organ Scholar of King's College, Cambridge, he toured the Antipodes, Belgium, Holland and Germany and made many broadcasts and recordings with the Choir, also receiving a Countess of Munster Scholarship to study with Jean Langlais in Paris.

In 1989, after four years as Assistant Organist of Hereford Cathedral and two Three Choirs Festivals, he was appointed Master of the Choristers and Organist at Truro Cathedral, becoming the youngest Cathedral Organist in the country. Under his direction, the renowned "Father" Willis organ was restored and the Choir made several successful broadcasts and recordings. He was deeply involved with the Three Spires Festival and the Royal School of Church Music and, as in Hereford, conducted his own choir and orchestra.

He remains in great demand locally, nationally and internationally as a recitalist, recording artist, adjudicator, course director and tutor, particularly an improvisation. He has won First Prizes in both the Paisley and St. Alban's International Improvisation Competitions and, following publication of the first of his transcriptions of Cochereau's *Improvisations*, was invited to give memorial recitals in Notre Dame and La Madeleine, Paris, in 1994. He has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts for his services to music, is a member of the Council of the Royal College of Organists, and a visiting tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music.

In August 1995 he conducted his first Gloucester Three Choirs Festival to much critical acclaim. Future plans include two American tours (East Coast, July 1996, and West Coast, February 1997) and two tours of Australia and New Zealand (with the Gloucester Cathedral Choir, April 1997, and as a solo recitalist, November 1997).