

Specification of the Organ at Clifton Cathedral

(Rieger, 1973)

I Rückpositiv

1 Tremulant		
2 Krummhorn	8	50% Tin
3 Scharff 26.29.33.36	IV	75% Tin
4 Quinte	1 ¹ / ₃	50% Tin
5 Gemshorn	2	50% Tin
6 Koppelflote	4	50% Tin
7 Principal	4	75% Tin
8 Metallgedackt	8	50% Tin

III Brustwerk [enclosed]

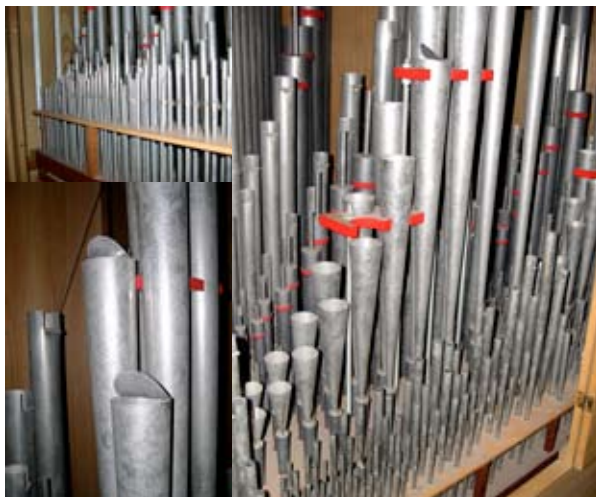
9 Tremulant		
10 Regal	16	50% Tin
11 Cimbel 29.33	II	75% Tin
12 Terz	1 ³ / ₅	50% Tin
13 Holzprincipal	2	Wood
14 Nasat	2 ² / ₃	50% Tin
15 Holzrohrflote	4	Wood
16 Holzgedackt	8	Wood

II Hauptwerk

17 Trompete	8	50% Tin
18 Mixtur 19.22.26.29	IV-VI	75% Tin
19 Superoctav	2	75% Tin
20 Sesquialter 2 ² / ₃ + 1 ³ / ₅	II	50% Tin
21 Octav	4	75% Tin
22 Rohrflote	8	25% Tin
23 Principal	8	75% Tin
24 III-II		
25 I-II		

Pedal

26 Schalmey	4	Brass
27 Fagott	16	Wood
28 Octav	8	75% Tin
29 Subbass	8	Wood
30 Principal	16	Copper & 75% Tin
31 III-Ped		
32 II-Ped		
33 I-Ped		



Clifton Cathedral



The Rieger Organ

The Organ at Clifton Cathedral, Bristol, UK

The Cathedral organ is a three-manual pipe organ built by Rieger Orgelbau of Austria for the opening of the Cathedral in June 1973. The specification was drawn up by Joseph von Glatter-Götz, then managing director of Rieger, in conjunction with John Rowntree of the Society of Saint Gregory Organ Advisory Group. It has 1,830 pipes.

The contract price in 1973 was £18,000 – the Brustwerk Cimbels being donated by Herr Glatter-Götz at his own expense. It was originally intended that the organ from the pro-Cathedral (a 19th-century Vowles instrument) would be installed in the new Cathedral, transformed into a row of pipes on a shelf suspended above where the choir would have been in that scenario. Part of the unfinished shelf can be seen to the left of the organ, as can the original console position to the right – a hexagonal space now often used by the Cantor.

The design of the case for the Rieger organ was by Herr Glatter-Götz, and reflects the triangles, hexagons and the proportions (1:√3) on which the design of the Cathedral building is based. The case is made of ash, great care having been taken to match the wood throughout the Cathedral to the extent that it was sourced from all over Europe. The pedal pipes have the copper flamed to complement the scheme. Copper was more economic as a pipe metal than lead or tin in 1973.

There are 26 speaking stops, with no extensions or duplexing. The keyboard, pedal and stop action is completely mechanical. Apart from five reversible foot pedals to the couplers (situated to the left of the swell pedal) there are no playing aids whatsoever. There is no III/I manual coupler. The keyboards are reversed with white sharps and ebony natural keys. The pedal board is a hybrid of the RCO standard pedal board specification (concave and radiating) and a straight pedal board

as would have been found in earlier organs. The pedals extend to F and the manuals to G. The blower is a Swiss Meidinger model and the wind supply to the chests of the Schwimmer form.

The Cathedral building has two acoustic zones: one for music on the Sanctuary and one for speech in the Nave. The organ echoes this design with the tone cabinets projecting towards the Nave, apart from the Rückpositiv which speaks into the Narthex and thus supports singing on the Sanctuary and has as a consequence more indirect sound (reverberation) in the Nave. Originally the Brustwerk was to have been unenclosed, but this was felt to be a little too uncompromising and, after much discussion, it was encased in glass shutters. The Werkprinzip tonal design, with narrow scaling and tone cabinets, is ideal for the acoustic with its warm resonance.



Although of modest proportions and scale for a thousand-seat room, it speaks with great clarity (largely due to a neo-Baroque voicing style) and control (due to a sensitive, atmospherically compensated, mechanical action). It is the only instrument of its type and size in the South West of England, and attracts recitalists, recording artists and students from throughout the UK and abroad. You are welcome to contact the Cathedral Music Department about available recordings.

The organ enhances the liturgy with colour of tone, and is the sole instrument used to accompany the Solemn Mass each Sunday – quite a challenge, given the lack of pistons or other playing aids. This is the character of the organ: uncompromising and challenging, exciting to play – and consequently to hear – as the organist tackles all kinds of repertoire with an 18th century Austrian musical accent.



The great organ historian BB Edwards wrote: 'I was allowed to play this for an hour. Superb... I would not, however, want to play it regularly in liturgical use.' John Norman in *The Organs of Britain* wrote phrases such as: 'a model of achievement [with a] strong personality'.

The Specification overleaf gives the stop numbers as they are numbered at the console and the manual numbers as they are usually designated, numbering upwards from the Rückpositiv. The single numbers refer to the length in feet of the lowest pipe of the rank, the mixture stops showing the number of ranks in the mixture of harmonics allied to the fundamental eight-foot tone.

Contact

Stephen Bryant, Cathedral Organist
music@cliftondiocese.com www.cliftonms.com
+44 (0)117 946 7456

or via

The Music Service · Clifton Cathedral House
Clifton Park · Bristol · BS8 3BX · UK