

# Beauty and the Beast

Paul Hale

This time the spotlight falls on two distinguished organs in the North. Each contains exquisite softer stops and a battery of electrifying reeds – beauty and the beast harnessed to great musical effect. In Glasgow University’s Memorial Chapel stands a 1928 Willis now completely rebuilt by Harrison & Harrison; in Bridlington Priory stands a much altered and augmented 1889 Anneessens, now completely rebuilt by Nicholson. Each organ was treated in a similar fashion, being replaced entirely up to the pipe-feet, with building-frame, swell-boxes, soundboards, wind system and transmission being new, most of the pipes and the two consoles being restored.

In the mid-1920s Henry Willis III returned from the USA fired with enthusiasm for the innovations of Ernest Skinner. Influenced by these,

Glasgow University Memorial Chapel specification			
GREAT ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN	CHOIR ORGAN (I-II enclosed)	PEDAL ORGAN
Double Open Diapason 16	Lieblich Bordun 16	Quintaten 16	Open Bass 16
* Open Diapason No 1 8	Geigen Diapason 8	* Violoncello 8	* Open Diapason 16
* Open Diapason No 2 8	Rohr Flute 8	Orchestral Flute 8	Bordun 16
Claribel Flute 8	Echo Viole 8	Dulciana 8	Lieblich Bordun 16
(bass from St. Diapason)	Voix Célestes (tenor c) 8	Unda Maris 8	(from Swell)
* Stopped Diapason 8	Geigen Principal 4	(bass from Dulciana)	* Principal 8
* Principal 4	Flûte Triangulaire 4	Concert Flute 4	* Flute 8
* Chimney Flute 4	Flageolet 2	* Nazard 2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	Fifteenth 4
* Fifteenth 2	Sesquialtera 12.17 II	Harmonic Piccolo 2	* Mixture 19.22.26.29 IV
* Full Mixture 15.19.22.26 IV	Mixture 15.19.22 III	* Tierce 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>	Ophicleide 16
* Sharp Mixture 26.29.33 III	Oboe 8	Corno di Bassetto 8	(from Tuba Minor)
* Trumpet 8	Waldhorn 16	Cor Anglais 8	* Trombone 16
	Cornopean 8	<i>Tremolo</i>	
	Clarion 4	Tuba Minor 8	* Stops marked with an asterisk are new
	<i>Tremolo</i>	* Tuba Magna (unenclosed) 8	

Willis developed a Skinner-inspired all-electric console with tilting tablets for couplers, pitman chests instead of slider soundboards, a compact wind system and numerous new tonalities. The 1928 Glasgow University Memorial Chapel was an early example of this new style – a sign of things to come. In later years

the Willis firm carried out tonal and action work on the organ; sadly, by the 1990s it was in a sorry state.

This rather developmental organ, which on paper promised much, was in reality compromised by its most important divisions – the Great (which was too loud) and Pedal (which had only one independent rank). By the 1990s the Great had been much revoiced, softened, and its Mixture split into two dreadful stops. It borrowed the Choir HP Tromba as its chorus reed, and its two flue doubles were also Pedal ranks. On the other hand, the Swell was utterly electrifying – immensely powerful and awesome in attack. The Choir was in reality a hugely versatile solo organ, with bold open and harmonic flutes and finely-voiced orchestral reeds. The stops that fitted least happily were the tiny-scaled Nazard and Tierce.

What to do? Well, I felt as consultant that it seemed right to respect as much of the 1928 concept as possible, though in various key areas we determined to do better. The first and main concept was to replace the whole of the spoiled Great pipework. New slider soundboards were fitted to aid blend and remove much of the hectoring nature of the

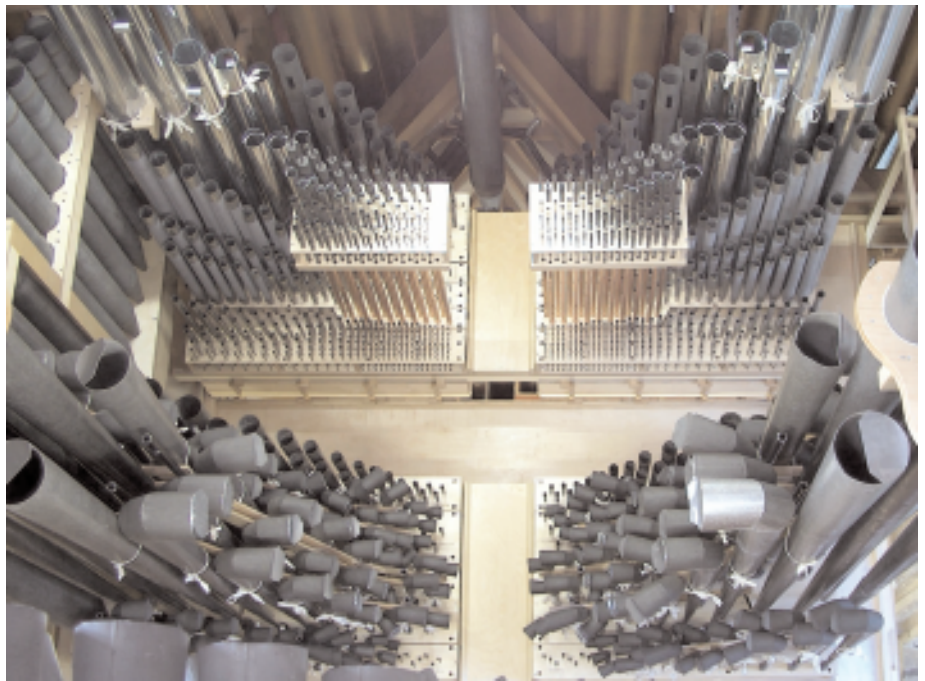


Glasgow University Memorial Chapel  
Willis 1928, Harrison & Harrison 2005

speech of the old pitman chests. A new reservoir-based wind system does its job well, provides excellent tremulants, and is generally pleasantly steady without being 'dead'. The new swell boxes are truly impressive – as they need to be, for both enclosed departments need very careful balancing to the unenclosed departments.

The new Great, with its two Mixtures and delicious flutes, sings into the Chapel in a musical and less boldly-projected manner than the Swell. The Great Trumpet has a relaxed freshness which contrasts nicely with the heavy pressure Willis reeds in the rest of the organ. The Pedal is now more fully-developed, with a slider soundboard for all ranks but the two 16ft flues, and an additional 16ft reed for chorus use. The new Choir mutations are large-scale flutes which balance the bold 8.4.2. flute chorus. The replacement Willis III-type Choir Violoncello can be used with any of the flutes and mutations, offers a rich 'cello solo and is perfect when incorporated with the Great and Swell 'fonds'. The Choir Tromba is renamed Tuba Minor (the pipes were stamped 'Tuba' in any case), and a glorious new Willis-scale Tuba Magna has been mounted horizontally on top of the swell boxes. Willis' polished mahogany console has restored most beautifully, a new combination system and sequencer being neatly incorporated.

The organ in The Priory Church, Bridlington was built in 1889 by the Belgian firm of Charles Anneessens. A three-manual and pedal mechanical-action instrument, it was built on the



*Bridlington Priory  
Anneessens 1889, Nicholson 2006*

north side of the chancel, a spacious site with tremendous height.

In 1909 a revision of the organ was carried out by Abbott & Smith. They replaced the mechanical action with tubular pneumatics, and attempted to smoothen the tone of the organ and add weight and sonority to it. A 1949 Compton electrification extended the Great Double Open Diapason to provide a larger Great, the Swell was somewhat brightened and the Choir Organ transformed from seven stops into a vast 24-stop extended department. A new detached stop-knob 3-manual Compton console was fitted; there were 77 speaking stops. Less than twenty years later dissatisfaction with the organ was

clearly being shown by Raymond Sunderland, the distinguished Priory organist of the time. This led to another even more complex rebuild by the Yorkshire firm of Laycock & Bannister in 1968 – their last and largest organ.

As in 1922 and 1949, so once again in 1968, the organ became a reflection of its times. It was greatly brightened: as the Great was apparently considered still too soft, a second Great chorus added, its two mixtures being of penetrating brilliance. Much extension was done away with, the Swell brightened further with a 5-rank mixture, the unenclosed Choir organ reformed as a pseudo-Baroque Positive and the enclosed Choir turned into a Solo Organ.

## Bridlington Priory specification

GREAT ORGAN	GREAT ORGAN (continued)	SWELL ORGAN	POSITIVE ORGAN	SOLO ORGAN (1-6 enclosed)	PEDAL ORGAN
\* Double Open Diapason 16	Scharf 26.29.33 III	* Lieblich Bourdon 16	\ Open Diapason 8	Viole d'Orchestre 8	* Double Grosse Flöte 32 A
+* Bourdon 16	* Bombarde 16	* Open Diapason 8	Gedackt 8	\* Viole Celeste (t.c.) 8	* Soubasse 32 B
Open Diapason I 8	* Trompette 8	* Stopped Diapason 8	Principal 4	\ Flûte Harmonique 4	* Grosse Flöte 16 A
Open Diapason II 8	* Clairon 4	* Viole de Gamba 8	Koppelflöte 4	\ Clarinet 8	\ Open Diapason 16
+* Open Diapason III 8	<i>Tremulant</i>	* Voix Celeste (t.c.) 8	\ Nazard 2 $\frac{2}{3}$	\ Cor Anglais 8	* Soubasse 16 B
+* Violon 8		Geigen Principal 4	\ Fifteenth 2	\* Voix Humaine 8	\ Bourdon 16
+* Flute Harmonique 8		* Flûte Harmonique 4	Blockflöte 2	<i>Tremulant</i>	* Flöte 8 A
+* Bourdon 8		* Fifteenth 2	\ Tierce 1 $\frac{3}{5}$	Tromba (from Positive) 8	Principal 8
Octave 4		\* Sesquialtera 12.17 II	Larigot 1 $\frac{1}{3}$	Tuba Mirabilis 8	* Flute Bass 8 B
+* Principal 4		\ Mixture 15.19.22 III	\ Mixture 22.26.29.33 IV		\ Fifteenth 4
+* Ocarina 4		Plein Jeu 19.22.26.29 IV	\ Cromorne 8		* Octave Flute 4 B
Octave Quint 2 $\frac{2}{3}$		\ Contra Basson 16	<i>Tremulant</i>		Mixture 19.22.26.29 IV
+* Twelfth 2 $\frac{2}{3}$		* Trompette 8	Tromba 8	* Anneessens, or part Anneessens	* Contra Tuba 32 C
Super Octave 2		Basson 8	Tromba Clarion 4	+speaking into the chancel	* Tubasson 16 C
+* Piccolo 2		* Hautbois 8	(ext. Tromba)	\ Nicholson	\ Trombone 16
* Cornet (middle c) V		Clairon 4			Tromba (from Positive) 8
Furniture 19.22.26 III		<i>Tremulant</i>			Schalmei 4



## **Carol Williams**

*San Diego Civic Organist*

### **2006 Concerts in the UK**

**Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Lincoln Cathedral*

**Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm**  
*Hull City Hall*

**Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm**  
*Oxford Town Hall*

**Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Cartmel Priory, Nr. Grange Over Sands,  
Cumbria*

**Wednesday May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Walter Alcock Recital*  
*Salisbury Cathedral*

**Wednesday July 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 pm**  
*St. David's Cathedral, Haverfordwest*

**Monday July 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*All Saints', Hastings*

**Thursday November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Reading Town Hall*

**Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Canterbury Cathedral*

**Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross,  
Crediton, Devon*

**Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm**  
*United Reformed Church, Gainsborough,  
Lincs*

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*In the UK, Carol Williams is represented  
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## **The John Hill Memorial Concerts – May 2006**

HSBC is delighted to support five Tuesday lunchtime concerts in May in memory of John Hill.

The lunchtime recitals will take place at St Lawrence Jewry, Gresham Street, London EC2, starting at 1.00pm and lasting for about an hour.

The performers are:

<b>May 2</b>	<b>Ashley Grote</b>
<b>May 9</b>	<b>Chris Whitton</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Daniel Hyde</b>
<b>May 23</b>	<b>Christian Wilson</b>
<b>May 30</b>	<b>Robert Houssart</b>

Throughout his career with HSBC, John maintained his musical interests, being appointed organist in cathedrals as far apart as Kuwait and Calcutta and also playing in many churches of varied denominations. It was his interest in helping talented young organists that led to HSBC supporting this concert series in his memory.

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A stopped 32ft octave was added to the Pedal Grosse Flöte 16ft, to beef-up the Compton 32ft polyphone. The voicing was forthright and the resulting effect undeniably exciting. An imposing but essentially empty 16ft case was added, facing up the north aisle.

Despite the major work undertaken in 1968 (which included a spacious 4-manual oak console with curved jambs, retained in the 2004–6 Nicholson reconstruction) the organ continued to require repairs to the Anneessens soundboard, pipes, wind supply, under-actions and swell engines and boxes. Although the organ had a fine national reputation (based mainly on the prodigious scale of the 32ft reed), it bore no close inspection – aural or physical. Tonally the mild Anneessens fluework was overwhelmed by the later additions, which were in themselves polar opposites, from the hooty hectoring of Compton's heavy pressure Great Open No. 1 to the ear piercingly loud and stratospherically high-pitched mixtures added in 1968. The manual to pedal borrowings left the Pedal with no independent stops other than the original three ranks at various pitches, the gargantuan Tubasson and a new Mixture. The organ had become too spread out to integrate or project.

The church, organbuilders and consultant (Paul Hale) came to feel that the only logical approach was to start again structurally, make the whole organ new up to the pipe-feet, eliminate significant extension or borrowing, and ensure that the instrument projected much better down the nave. In addition, as the Priory has always maintained an excellent choir, seated in its spacious chancel stalls, the organ needed also to be able to accompany them in the fullest manner possible.

Guiding principles were: (1) that the Anneessens pipework must once again sound as its maker intended and form an integrated and balanced whole; (2) that all pipework would wherever possible stand together on slider soundboards; (3) that the main portions of the instrument would be contained within two bays; (4) that the Great would be divided into two, the relatively gentle Anneessens flues speaking across the chancel as a choir accompanimental Great, the remaining louder ranks becoming a 'nave' Great, speaking west behind the north aisle case; (5) that the 32/16 Tubasson rank would move east into the third bay so that its tone would not dominate the ensemble; (6) that the Positive would be remade with a full Diapason chorus, new wide-scale

mutations and a true Cromorne; (7) that the Pedal would gain a smaller 16ft chorus reed and a smaller Bourdon as well as independent 16, 8 & 4 Principals; (8) that the Solo would gain more colourful stops; (9) that the 1968 mixture-work would be revised downwards and (10) that the Anneessens Great/Choir soundboard be preserved within the organ.

The outcome has surpassed all expectations. The instrument blends and speaks with a unity which totally belies the varied provenance of the pipework. The principal choruses are wonderfully full, rich and bright, the west-speaking main Great filling the nave with tone, whilst the 'Anneessens' Great has regained its original character and freshness. Balances between departments are just as one might hope, while 'colour' stops are now all of appropriate scale and treatment. The powerful Swell and Great chorus reeds speak with a real Gallic accent, whilst the vast Pedal Tubasson rank now fits so well into the whole that it is arguably too polite in its new position: you can't win them all...

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