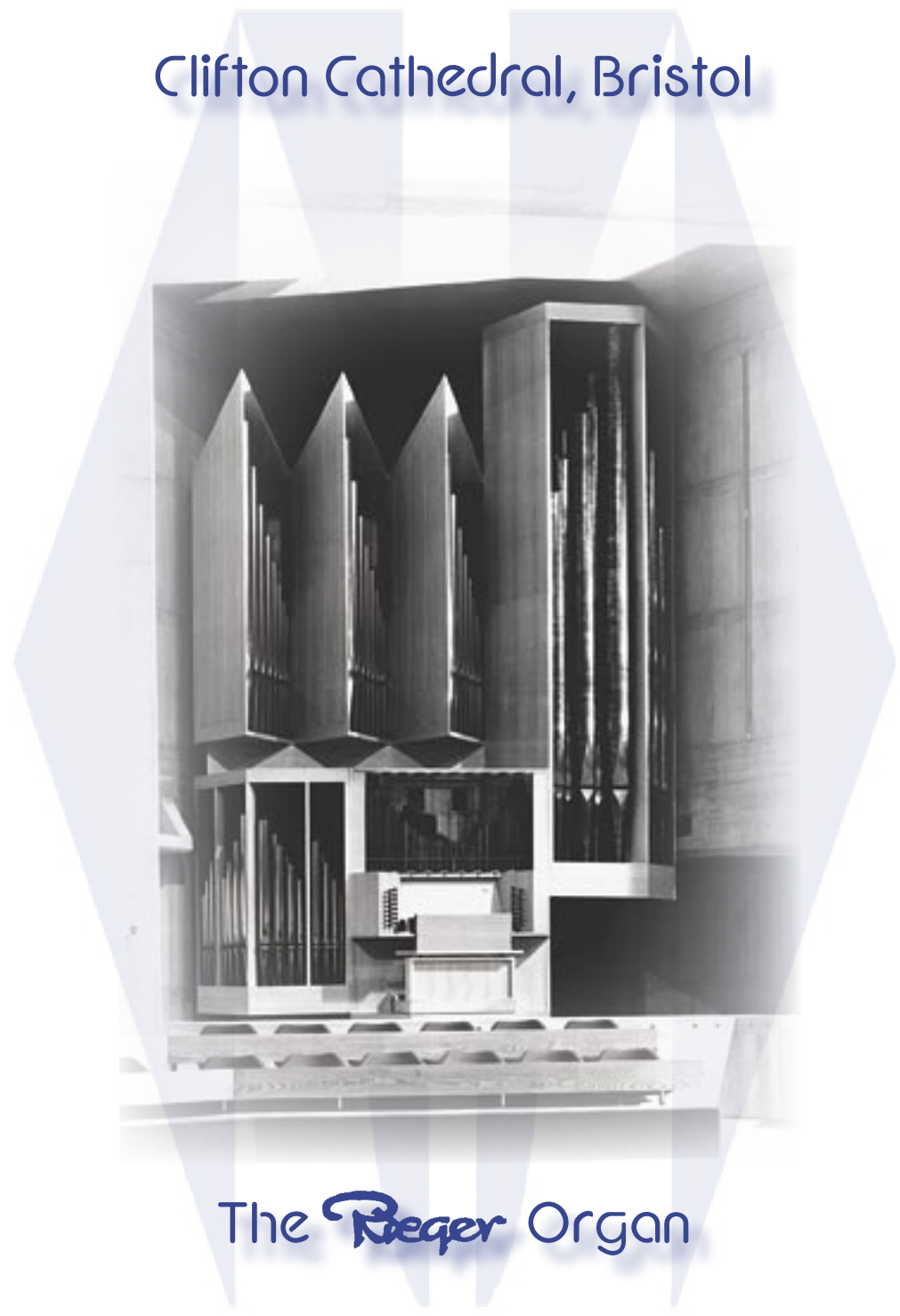


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## Clifton Cathedral, Bristol



The *Beger* 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.

The contract price in 1973 was £18,000 — the Brustwerk *Cimbel* 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 5 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 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 B B 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 opposite 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 8 foot tone.

## Specification of the Organ at Clifton Cathedral, Bristol (Rieger, 1973)

### I RÜCKPOSITIV

1	Tremulant			
2	Krummhorn	8	50% Tin	
3	Scharff	IV	75% Tin	26.29.33.36
4	Quinte	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	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	II	75% Tin	29.33
12	Terz	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>	50% Tin	
13	Holzprincipal	2	Wood	
14	Nasat	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	50% Tin	
15	Holzrohrflote	4	Wood	
16	Holzgedackt	8	Wood	

### II HAUPTWERK

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

### PEDAL

26	Schalmei	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			