

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL



THE LEWIS ORGAN OF 1897

RESTORED BY

HARRISON & HARRISON

1991

THE organ remains essentially as built by T. C. Lewis in 1897. Henry Willis & Sons provided a new console, lowered the pitch, added stop N° 9 and altered the voicing in 1952. Comprehensive restoration was undertaken by Harrison & Harrison in two stages: the Willis console and electrical system in 1986, and the main work in 1991. The console was overhauled and upgraded in 2017.

The Cathedral authorities considered it important to retain the modern pitch, but wished to reverse the changes that had been made in the organ's musical quality. The pipes have been lengthened and the original wind pressures reinstated, so as to allow the pipes to speak naturally at the new pitch. In this way it has been possible to re-create Lewis's characteristic musical style. The evidence has been left clearly visible so that a return to the original pitch would be possible in the future.

The organ chamber is in the angle where the south transept joins the south quire aisle. The Great and Solo Organs face west into the transept, with a case designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield; the Pedal and Swell Organs speak into the aisle. The Choir Organ, originally in the main chamber, was relocated north of the choir stalls in 1952, as was the console, which formerly stood in the south aisle.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL ORGAN

Not many cathedrals possess 'thoroughbred' organs. So many instruments have been constantly altered; in the process the original designs have been obscured, and often the organs have ceased to have a distinct personality. Southwark is fortunate in having an instrument which has remained basically unaltered since it was built. It is true that far-reaching and well-intentioned efforts were made in 1952 by Henry Willis to make the organ conform to what at the time was considered to be ideal English organ tone. The 1991 restoration by Harrison & Harrison, however, aimed to re-instate the original sound by judicious revoicing of the entire organ on the original wind-pressures.

The instrument was built by T. C. Lewis of Brixton and opened in 1897. Even when it was first heard, it was considered by many to be out of date, for Lewis was a firm believer in the romantic organ in the classical tradition. He was much influenced by Schulze, the German builder who exhibited at the 1851 Exhibition, and particularly by his fine organ at Doncaster Parish Church. Apart from the two large reeds on the Solo on 12 inches, the whole organ was designed to speak on low pressures of 3½ inches - an outrage to late 19th century progressives, beguiled as they were by the possibilities of high-pressure voicing.

In this organ, Lewis realised his cherished convictions more than in any other instrument he made. A glance at the specification will reveal the startling originality of the concept. Where else in 1897 could one have found a new organ with a moderate-sized Great which boasted two 16ft flue stops, nine ranks of mixture-work and only one 8ft reed, a Choir Organ with a 3-rank mixture or a Pedal division with a true French Bombarde and three full-length 32ft stops on an instrument of only 60 speaking stops?

On hearing this organ, lovers of organ tone will be in no doubt that they stand in the presence of greatness. The instrument possesses a great variety of beautiful quiet registers including some notable families of flutes. But ultimately it is the effect of full organ that evokes the greatest admiration. Though the effectiveness of the contribution from the Swell must not be underestimated, the big sound from Southwark comes from the Great and Pedal. The bell-like grandeur and harmonic brilliance of the Diapason Chorus underpinned by the Pedal reeds and flue-work is a sound of astonishing magnificence. The organ of Southwark Cathedral is an instrument of great originality, standing firm in the great European tradition.

HARRY BRAMMA

Organist of Southwark Cathedral 1976-89

MUSIC IN SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

Music is essential in the daily work of Southwark Cathedral. The Choir of twenty boys and twelve men is unique in that the choristers are drawn from all over London – from Winchmore Hill to Croydon – since there is no choir school. In this way a vital contribution is made to the musical education of the youngsters in this great city. There are four sung services a week and the accompaniment of the superb Lewis organ has become a recognised part of the "Southwark sound" – with the rumbling of the trains and the traffic scarcely noticed. The voluntaries and improvisations form part of the regular worship and each week a lunchtime organ recital is attended by many without charge.

As the mother church of an Anglican diocese in which two and a half million people live, the Cathedral hosts many "special" services. Again the splendour of the organ enhances the worship and the grandeur of the occasion. By contrast, the consoling power of music can be felt at a memorial service, such as that for victims of the "Marchioness" disaster on the nearby river. More happily, the organ is used for the carol services of business houses, the commemoration services of schools and many of the concerts which are a feature of the musical life of London. Its versatility means that it is as effective in a gentle continuo role as in the mighty solo part of the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony.

PETER WRIGHT

Organist of Southwark Cathedral 1989-2019

The photograph is by C.R.A. Davies

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

PEDAL ORGAN

1. Great Bass	(from 3; lowest 7 acoustic)	32
2. Major Violon	(from 4)	32
3. Open Bass		16
4. Violon		16
5. Sub Bass		16
6. Dulciana Bass	(5 stopped)	16
7. Violoncello	(from 4)	8
8. Flute	(from 5)	8
9. Viola	(from 4)	8
10. Octave Flute	(from 5)	4
11. Contra Posaune	(from 12)	32
12. Posaune		16
13. Bombarde		16
14. Trumpet	(from 13)	32

CHOIR ORGAN (enclosed)

15. Lieblich Gedackt		16
16. Geigen Principal		8
17. Lieblich Gedackt		8
18. Salicional		8
19. Dulciana		8
20. Salicet		4
21. Lieblich Gedackt		4
22. Flauto Traverso		4
23. Lieblich Gedackt		2
24. Mixture		III

GREAT ORGAN

25. Contre Viole	(17 from 4)	16
26. Bourdon	(24 from 5)	16
27. Open Diapason N° 1		8
28. Open Diapason N° 2		8
29. Flûte Harmonique	(12 from 30)	8
30. Stopped Diapason		8
31. Octave		4
32. Flûte Harmonique		4
33. Octave Quint		2 ² / ₃
34. Super Octave		2
35. Cornet		III/V
36. Mixture		IV
37. Trumpet		8

SWELL ORGAN

38. Lieblich Bourdon		16
39. Open Diapason		8
40. Rohr Flöte		8
41. Viole de Gambe		8
42. Voix Célestes	(tenor c)	8
43. Geigen Principal		4
44. Rohr Flöte		4
45. Flautino		2
46. Mixture		IV
47. Contra Fagotto		16
48. Horn		8
49. Voix Humaine		8
50. Oboe		8
51. Clarion		4

SOLO ORGAN (enclosed)

52. Flûte Harmonique		8
53. Vox Angelica		8
54. Unda Maris	(tenor c)	8
55. Flûte Harmonique		4
56. Cor Anglais	(tenor c)	16
57. Orchestral Oboe		8
58. Clarinet		8
59. Trombone		16
<i>Tremulant</i>		
60. Tuba Magna		8
61. Trompette Harmonique		8

COUPLERS

<i>I</i>	<i>Choir to Pedal</i>	<i>XIII</i>	<i>Swell to Great</i>
<i>II</i>	<i>Choir Octave to Pedal</i>	<i>XIV</i>	<i>Swell Octave to Great</i>
<i>III</i>	<i>Great to Pedal</i>	<i>XV</i>	<i>Swell Sub Octave to Great</i>
<i>IV</i>	<i>Swell to Pedal</i>	<i>XVI</i>	<i>Swell Octave to Great</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>Swell Octave to Pedal</i>	<i>XVII</i>	<i>Choir Octave to Great</i>
<i>VI</i>	<i>Solo to Pedal</i>	<i>XVIII</i>	<i>Solo to Great</i>
<i>VII</i>	<i>Solo Octave to Pedal</i>	<i>XIX</i>	<i>Solo Octave to Great</i>
<i>VIII</i>	<i>Choir Octave</i>	<i>XX</i>	<i>Swell Octave</i>
<i>IX</i>	<i>Choir Sub Octave</i>	<i>XXI</i>	<i>Swell Sub Octave</i>
<i>X</i>	<i>Choir Unison Off</i>	<i>XXII</i>	<i>Swell Unison Off</i>
<i>XI</i>	<i>Swell to Choir</i>	<i>XXIII</i>	<i>Solo to Swell</i>
<i>XII</i>	<i>Solo to Choir</i>		

<i>XXIV</i>	<i>Solo Octave</i>
<i>XXV</i>	<i>Solo Sub Octave</i>
<i>XXVI</i>	<i>Solo Unison Off</i>
<i>XXVII</i>	<i>Great to Solo</i>

COMBINATION COUPLERS

Great and Pedal pistons
Generals on Swell foot pistons

ACCESSORIES

Eight foot pistons to the Pedal Organ
Eight pistons and cancel to the Choir Organ
Eight pistons and cancel to the Great Organ
Eight pistons and cancel to the Swell Organ
Eight foot pistons to the Swell Organ
Eight pistons and cancel to the Solo Organ
Eight general pistons
One general piston for couplers
Reversible pistons: *I, III, IV, VI, XI, XII, XIII, XVIII, XXIII; 12*
Reversible foot piston: *III*
Reversible foot piston to Full Organ, with indicator
Octave coupler cancel piston
General cancel piston.
Stepper, operating general pistons in sequence
Eight divisional and 512 general memory levels

General crescendo pedal, with four memories
Balanced expression pedals to the Swell
and Solo Organs

The actions are electro-pneumatic
The manual compass is 61 notes; the pedal 30 notes

THE LEWIS ORGAN OF 1897

RESTORED BY

HARRISON & HARRISON

1991