The Sonus Paradisi William Hill Sample Set – Some details about the real organ

Compiled by Iain Stinson, August 2018

The organ sampled by Sonus Paradisi in Sankt-Afra-Kirche in the Berlin suburb of Gesundbrunnen was exported to Germany from Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, England in 2012. It was originally built by William Hill for the new church of St Paul's in Burton upon Trent in 1874 and was subsequently move to Trinity Methodist Church, also in Burton upon Trent, in 1896. When Trinity Church was going to close the organ found a new home in Berlin.

The sample set was published in August 2018 for use with Hauptwerk. This short note provides some details about the history of this instrument.

St. Paul's Burton upon Trent Staffordshire was opened in 1874, according to Wikipedia. In 1871 the William Hill & Son estimate books record providing estimates to supply a three manual and pedal instrument for £897 - this was built as Job 1460. In an article in Organist Review[1], published in March 1991, Relf Clark reports the specification of this instrument in the Hill job book as follows.

Great	**Swell**	**Choir**	**Pedal**
Bdn	Bdn	Dul	Open
Open	Open	Ged	Bdn
Come Gamba	Viol de Gamba	Suabe Fl	V'cello
Stopd Dia	Stopd Dia	Picc	
Pr	Pr	Clart ten c	
12	15		
15	Mix 3		
Mix 3	Corno		
Sequ 3	Oboe		
Tr	Clarion		
	All metal pipes spotted		

As well as the usual manual to pedal couplers, there was a Swell to Great, Swell to Great Octave and Choir to Swell; the Great and Swell had three composition pedals each.

The organ was formally accepted on Easter Tuesday 1874 and reported by the local press as "a fine toned organ".

It would seem that the organ was built substantially in accordance with the stop-list in the job book. The difference between the job book specification details of the organ just before its move to Trinity Methodist Church were the replacement of the Swell Fifteenth with a Vox Celeste, the addition of a Pedal Trombone and the replacement of the Violoncello on the Pedal Organ with a Bass Flute. It is not clear when these changes were made.

The specification of this instrument in 1896 when the organ was transferred to Trinity Methodist Church given in the NPOR [2]is as follows:

Pedal

1	Open Diapason	16
2	Bourdon	16
3	Bass Flute	8
4	Trombone	16

[1] https://theburtonthree.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/hope-jone-article-march-1991.pdf

[2] UK National Pipe Organ Register may be searched at http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?DBOB . This organ specification is from http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N04943

Great

5	Bourdon	16
6	Open Diapason	8
7	Cone Gamba	8
8	Stopped Diapason	8
9	Principal	4
10	Harmonic Flute	4
11	Twelfth	2 2/3
12	Fifteenth	2
13	Sesquialtra	
14	Mixture	III
15	Trumpet	8

Swell

16	Bourdon	16
17	Open Diapason	8
18	Viola da Gamba	8
19	Voix Celestes	8
20	Stopped Diapason	8
21	Principal	4
22	Mixture	III
23	Cornopean	8
24	Oboe	8
25	Clarion	4
26	Tremulant	

Choir

27	Dulciana	8	
28	Gedact	8	
29	Suabe Flote	4	
30	Clarionet	8	Enclosed
31	Piccolo 2		

Couplers
Swell to Pedal
Swell to Great
Swell octave to Great
Choir to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Choir to Swell

Accessories
3 composition pedals each to Great and Swell

St. Paul's underwent some major modifications between 1889 and 1901 under the direction of the architect George Frederick Bodley. In 1894 the Hill organ was transferred to Trinity Methodist Church (George Street) Burton upon Trent. It was replaced by replaced by a four manual organ, the first built entirely by the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company Ltd.[3]

Bodley provided two fine organ cases which were used to house the Hope--Jones organ. Presumably the case for the Hill organ was transferred from St. Paul's with the organ to Trinity Methodist

[3] Robert Hope-Jones was responsible for significant innovations to the mechanism of pipe organs, including the development of electric action, unification etc. His tonal ideas were quite different from other English builders... He left the UK to work in the USA, working for a number of organ builders and eventually working with Randolph Wurlitzer developing the cinema/theatre organ.)

Church. The details of the Hope Jones organ may be found at http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N03183

The Hope-Jones organ in St Paul's was rebuilt a number of times and details may be found in Relf Clark's article; it became unreliable and funds were not available for repair. A temporary organ was installed by Michael Thompson, a local organ builder in 1984 and in 1985 by a two manual instrument, originally built by Peter Conacher instrument (1874) from the Central Methodist church in Chesterfield. This organ was rebuilt several times before its move to St Paul's. The current specification of this instrument may be found at http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=R01519

The console and much of the pipe-work of the Hope-Jones organ were removed from the church and are reported to be displayed at the Theatre Organ Heritage Centre and Hope-Jones Museum in Lancashire (See http://www.ltot.org.uk).

The Hill organ (and presumably its case) was installed in Trinity Methodist Church by the organ builders Kirkland[4] in 1896. According to the NPOR the original Hill instrument was extended at the same time, though this is not quite consistent with the two plaques on the console. One of the plaques, dated 1903, notes the addition of the Suabe Flute 4 on the Swell (apparently using Snetzler pipe work), and the other undated plaque notes the addition of the Aeoline on the Choir division. Both of these are included in the specification dated 1896 on the NPOR. I would suspect that the instrument was moved from St Pauls, and a few years later, around 1903 underwent a major rebuild. Stops were added: the Pedal division was increased from 4 stops to 8; the Swell division was increased from 10 to 14; the Choir increased from 5 to 8 stops and enclosed and the Great organ was reduced from 11 stops to 10 stops – the Sesquialtra removed, and the Cone Gamba probably either revoiced or renamed Small Open Diapason. . It is likely that the action was changed from tracker to pneumatic action at this time, as evidenced by the number of couplers added and the inclusion of thumb and toe pistons replacing composition pedals. The NPOR includes a record based on a survey carried out in 1943 which may be found at http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N04942

In 1982 this instrument was rebuilt by a local organ builder, M. C. Thompson of Burton upon Trent. Details of the organ after this work may be found at http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=G01463. The organ gained some additional stops including the Tuba, the Choir division was augmented with some mutations and the pedal gained some stops (probably by extension from existing ranks) and the action electrified.

Details of the organ in Trinity Methodist Church are reported on the Birmingham Organist's Association website archive (dated October 2009). http://www.bhamorgan.org.uk/organs/088.htm This credits the organ as being built by Alfred Kirkland(1896) but notes that much of the pipework was by William Hill.

When Trinity Church as to close the organ was exported to 2012 to Sankt-Afra-Kirche in the Berlin suburb of Gesundbrunnen https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Afra_(Berlin). (http://www.institut-philipp-neri.de/berlin-st_afra.html) The organ was restored and rebuilt by the Czech organ builder Rieger-Kloss Organ Building, Krnov (http://www.rieger-kloss.cz/), in 2014 and was consecrated on November 22, 2015. There is an interesting time-lapse YouTube video of the organ being installed in Berlin: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUgjlhPHSJA and a newspaper article: https://www.morgenpost.de/berlin/article207289381/Eine-Orgel-mit-drei-Motoren-und-einem-Computer.html (in German) about the instrument.

[4] This is probably Alfred Kirkland who became established in Holloway Road London (moving from Wakefield).

Specification of the organ / sample set showing probable origin of each stop.

Pedal organ

Resultant Bass	32′	Kirkland
Open Diapason	16′	**Hill**
Violone	16′	Thompson
Bourdon	16′	**Hill**
Echobass	16′	Kirkland
Principal	8′	Kirkland Octave Diapason
Viola	8′	Thompson
Bass Flute	8′	**Hill**
Choral Flute	4′	Thompson
Trombone	16′	**Hill**
Tromba	8	Kirkland Trumpet

Great Organ

Bourdon	16′	**Hill**
Open Diapason	8′	**Hill**
Open Diapason Small	8′	Kirkland but possible revoiced Hill Cone Gamba
Stopped Diapason	8′	**Hill**
Gamba	8′	**Hill**
Principal	4′	**Hill**
Harmonic Flute	4′	**Hill**
Twelfth	2 2/3′	**Hill**
Fifteenth	2′	**Hill**
Mixture	III	**Hill**
Trumpet	8′	**Hill**
Tuba	8′	Thompson

Swell Organ (enclosed)

Bourdon	16′	**Hill**
Open Diapason	8′	**Hill**
Rohr Flute	8′	Thompson but probably Hill Stopped Diapason
Salicional	8′	Kirkland but probably Hill Viol da Gamba
Voix celeste	8′	**Hill**
Vox Angelica	8′	Kirkland
Gemshorn	4′	Kirkland but probably Hill Principal
Suabe Flute	4′	Kirkland; Said to be Snetzler pipes (memorial stop)
Fifteenth	2′	Kirkland
Mixture	III	**Hill**
Double Clarinet	16′	Thompson but possible Kirkland Contra Fagotto revoiced
Cornopean	8′	**Hill**
Oboe	8′	**Hill**
Clarion	8′	**Hill**
Tremulant		

Choir Organ (enclosed by Kirkland; Only Clarinet enclosed in Hill Organ)

Gedact	8′	**Hill**
Viol d'Orchestre	8′	Thompson but probably Kirkland French Gamba
Aeoline	8′	Kirkland (memorial stop)
Flute	4′	Kirkland but probably Hill Saube Flote
Nazard	2 2⁄3′	Thompson
Piccolo	2′	**Hill**
Tierce	1 3⁄5′	Thompson

Larigot	1 1⁄3′	Thompson
Orchestral Oboe	8′	Kirkland
Clarinet	8′	**Hill**
Tuba	8′	Thompson (duplex from Great Organ)

Couplers

Great Suboctave	Rieger-Kloss
Great to Pedal	**Hill**
Swell Octave	Kirkland
Swell Suboctave	Kirkland
Swell to Great	**Hill**
Swell to Choir	Kirkland
Swell to Pedal	**Hill**
Swell Octave to Great	?**Hill**
Swell Suboctave to Great	Kirkland
Swell Octave to Choir	Thompson
Swell Suboctave to Choir	Thompson
Swell Octave to Pedal	Thompson
Swell unison off	Rieger-Kloss
Melodie Swell to Great	Rieger-Kloss
Choir Octave	Thompson
Choir Suboctave	Thompson
Choir to Great	Thompson
Choir to Pedal	Kirkland
Choir Octave to Great	Thompson
Choir Suboctave to Great	Rieger-Kloss
Choir Octave to Pedal	Thompson
Choir Unison off	Rieger-Kloss
Melodie Choir to Swell	Rieger-Kloss
Gr & Ped Comb Cpld	Kirkland & Sonus Paradisi

The following summarises the like origin of the pipework in the instrument.

Division	**Current**	**Hill**	**Kirkland**	**Thompson**
Pedal	11	4	4	3
Great	12	10 possibly 11	1 possibly 0	1
Swell	14	9 possibly 12	6 possibly 3	2 possibly 0
Choir	10	3	3 possibly 4	4 possibly 3

The core of the organ is still a Hill instrument with the Great and Swell divisions being largely intact from the Hill specification. The Swell mixture includes the 17th (Tierce) from the lowest note through the tenor register and thereafter is a quint mixture. The Great Mixture is a quint mixture and probably was when the organ was built as the Tierce would have been provided by the Sesquialtra (removed when the organ transferred to Trinity Methodist Church).

Accessories

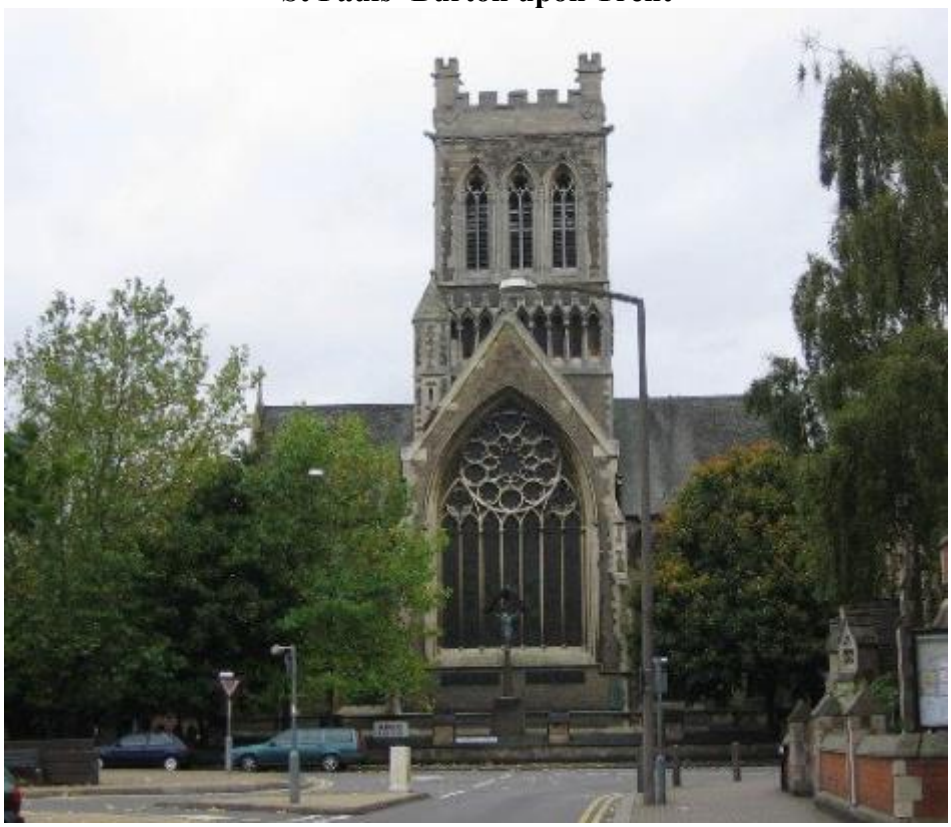
The original Hill organ would have had expression "pedals" for the Swell and Choir Clarinet – these may have been "trigger pedals rather than balanced pedals. Subsequent rebuilds have provided balanced expression pedals for the Swell and Choir.

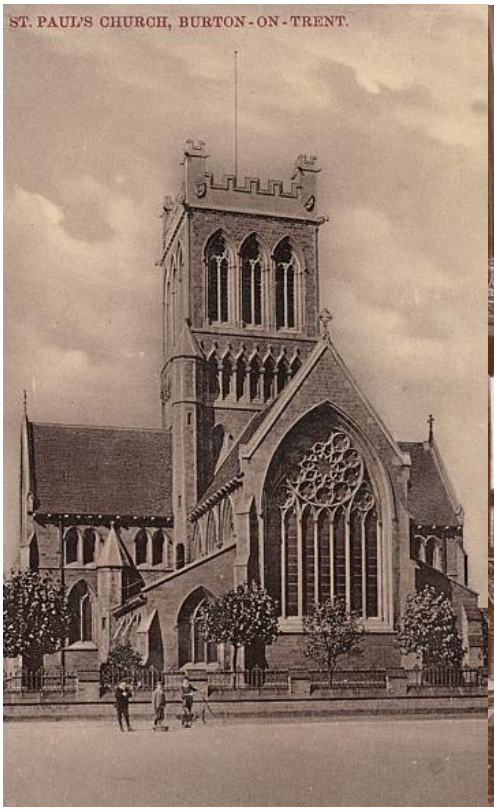
The original Hill organ had three composition pedal to each of the Swell and Great divisions. The Kirkland rebuild provided 4 pistons per division and reversible pistons and toe pistons for Gr-Pd. There are were six pistons to each division following the Thompson rebuild. In Berlin the organ has 8 combinations for each division (twenty levels of memory), 64 general combinations and a

crescendo pedal. The Sonus Paradisi virtual organ includes 8 pistons per division, 8 general pistons and a crescendo pedal: these may be supplemented by Hauptwerk's stop sequencer, and the master and reversible pistons.

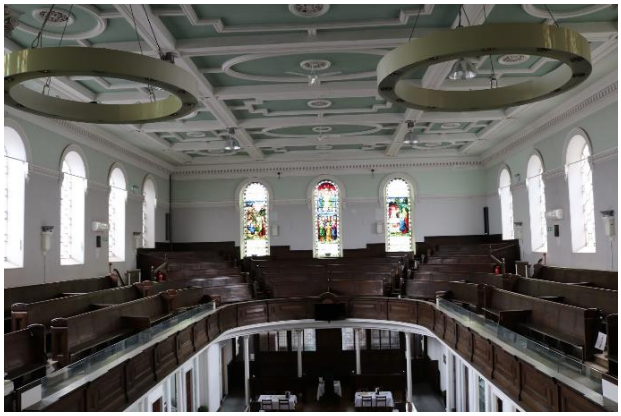
Sonus Paradisi web page:
http://www.sonusparadisi.cz/en/organs/england/william-hill-english-organ-model.html

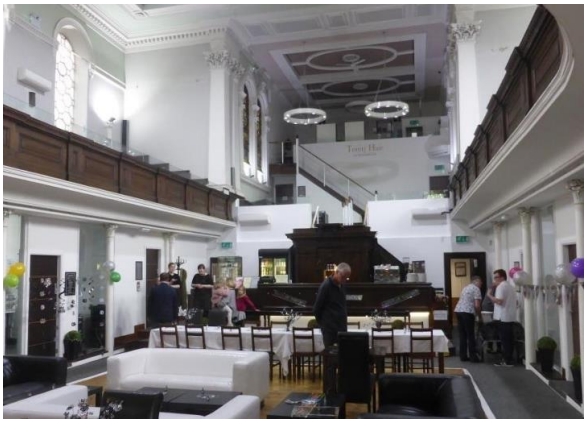
St Pauls' Burton upon Trent

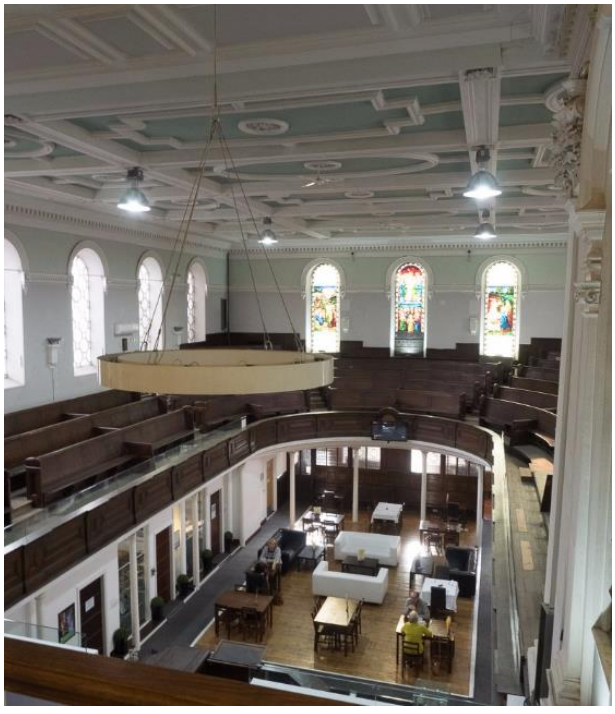




Trinity Methodist Church Burton on Trent (now a restaurant)







The organ in Trinity Methodist Church, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire, UK.

The organ in Trinity Methodist Church, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire, UK.

The organ in Sankt-Afra-Kirche in Gesundbrunnen, Berlin, Germany.


3. Internationale Hill-Orgel-Tage
St. Afra ◆ Graunstr. 31 ◆ 13355 Berlin ◆ Bhf. Gesundbrunnen


52 - 53
49b - 51a