

From the *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday, 18 December 1862

## **THE BELFAST MUSICAL FESTIVAL**

### **INAUGURATION OF THE GRAND ORGAN IN THE ULSTER HALL**

It has often been remarked that events long anticipated are sure to involve disappointment; but, like many sayings valuable for their general truth, this remark is by no means universally applicable. Belfast has long anticipated the inauguration of the grand organ in the Ulster Hall; has waited long to see its vast proportions and hear its pealing harmonies; and yet the reality has not in any respect fallen below the expectations even of the most sanguine.

It was known some months since, that, with a liberality as princely as it is rare, a gentleman long and honourably connected with Belfast had presented to the Ulster Hall Company a sum sufficient to purchase an organ, which is not only one of the largest in the United Kingdom, but which in tone, power, and variety of resources is equal to any instrument in Great Britain.

For a time the name of the generous donor was concealed from everyone save the Chairman of the Company, W. T. B. Lyons, Esq., through whom the munificent offer was made; but at length it became known to whom the company and the public were indebted. The organ was the gift of Andrew Mulholland, Esq., D.L., J.P., of Springvale – a gentleman liberal as the light, whose hand was never slow when a good object was to be forwarded, and whose purse was never closed when any philanthropic purpose was to be achieved.

One of Mr. Mulholland's principal objects in presenting the organ to the Ulster Hall Company was, as the address to his Excellency properly stated, to give an opportunity to the working classes to hear from time to time the best music from a truly splendid instrument, at such a rate as would enable the humblest artisan to enjoy advantages which even the opulent could but rarely purchase until now.

The massive instrument has been erected; and no one who heard it last night, as it now whispered soft as a silver flute, now pealed loud as the angry thunder, could fail to recognise not only the greatness of the instrument itself, but its special adaptation to the purpose which it was intended to accomplish. It is a concert in itself; and, under the hands of the accomplished gentleman who is to preside at it, many a time will it delight thousands of the artisans of Belfast assembled to listen to its marvellous and charming strains.

The instrument which was inaugurated last night consists, in point of fact, of five distinct organs, each capable of separate action, or of combination with any or all of the others. In each organ there are numerous stops, each stop representing a distinct variety of tone. This will be understood from the names of some of the stops, as "trumpet", "oboe", "piccolo", although the names of others are not so indicative of their qualities.

Of the five organs, as we have termed them, four are acted on by means of key-boards, one above the other, and slightly overlapping, so that the most distant of the four is within easy reach of the performer. The fifth is the pedal organ, and is worked wholly by the feet. Each organ can in a moment be connected with the others, by means of what are called couplers,

also acted on by the feet; and the effect of this arrangement is, that the performer, having coupled all the organs, can, by simply touching a pedal, depress all the corresponding notes on the four key-boards. In the five organs there are 62 stops, and no less than 3,368 pipes, of which it is possible that at least one-fourth could be harmoniously in operation at one moment, although the volume of sound under such circumstances might be rather much for ordinary ears.

The instrument is fed by three great bellows, each worked by two men; but we presume that, at some future time, a small steam-engine will be erected to perform the duties of those now indispensable living accessories. There is this advantage about the steam-engine, that it will not, on any great emergency, strike, as did its well-known human predecessor, because the organist declines to share his praise with his unseen assistant.

Having thus stated in terms free from technicality, the main peculiarities of the organ, we shall give the composition of the instrument for the benefit of the curious in these matters:—

#### **FOUR MANUALS, CC TO G, FIFTY-SIX NOTES.**

##### **GREAT ORGAN**

<b>1</b>	Double Open Diapason (Metal)	16 Feet
<b>2</b>	Open Diapason	8
<b>3</b>	Open Diapason	8
<b>4</b>	Gamba	8
<b>5</b>	Stopped Diapason (Wood)	8
<b>6</b>	Quint (Metal)	8
<b>7</b>	Octave	4
<b>8</b>	Harmonic Flute	4
<b>9</b>	Twelfth (Metal)	3
<b>10</b>	Fifteenth	2
<b>11</b>	Full Mixture, 4 ranks,	2
<b>12</b>	Sharp Mixture, 3 ranks,	1
<b>13</b>	Double Trumpet	16
<b>14</b>	Posaune	8
<b>15</b>	Trumpet	8
<b>16</b>	Clarion	4

The great organ is distinguished for its bold and massive tone, and is in itself adapted to military compositions, grand marches, or powerful choral effects. Next come the

##### **CHOIR ORGAN**

<b>1</b>	Gedact (Wood)	16 Feet
<b>2</b>	Cone Gamba (Metal)	8
<b>3</b>	Keraulophon (Metal)	8
<b>4</b>	Stopped Diapason (Wood)	8
<b>5</b>	Octave (Metal)	4
<b>6</b>	Lieblich Flute (Metal)	4

7	Gemshorn Twelfth (Metal)	3
8	Flautina (Metal)	2
9	Dulciana Mixture, 2 ranks,	2
10	Bassoon	16
11	Clarinet	8

In this part of the instrument softness and delicacy prevail, and it is peculiarly suited for the purpose indicated by its name – the accompaniment of the choral services in cathedral churches. We come next to the

### SOLO ORGAN

1	Lieblich Gedact (Wood and Metal)	8 Feet
2	Harmonic Flute (Wood and Metal)	4
3	Piccolo (Metal)	2
4	Vox Humana, in a separate swell box (Metal)	8
5	Tuba	8

This part of the instrument is generally played with one hand, whilst the harmonics are filled up on one of the remaining key-boards; and it will be frequently used in connection with the “swell organ”, in which are the following stops:–

### [SWELL ORGAN]

1	Bourdon & Double Diapason (Wood and Metal)	16 Feet
2	Open Diapason (Metal)	8
3	Stopped Diapason (Wood)	8
4	Salcional [ <i>sic</i> ] (Metal)	8
5	Octave (Metal)	4
6	Suabe Flute (Wood)	4
7	Twelfth (Metal)	3
8	Fifteenth (Metal)	2
9	Full Mixture, 4 ranks (Metal)	2
10	Double Trumpet (Metal)	16
11	Horn (Metal)	8
12	Trumpet (Metal)	8
13	Oboe (Metal)	8
14	Clarion (Metal)	4

The swell is a very powerful and effective organ, but is enclosed in a great case, the front consisting of a number of valves, which can be simultaneously opened or closed. Thus the sound is muffled, or apparently thrown to a distance, and again swells out at the will of the player. In *crescendo* passages it is indispensable. Lastly, we have to notice the giant of the instrument – the pedal organ – which ranges from CCC to F – thirty notes in all. Its composition is as follows:–

**[PEDAL ORGAN]**

<b>1</b>	Double Open Diapason (Wood)	32 Feet
<b>2</b>	Open Diapason (Wood)	16
<b>3</b>	Violon (Wood)	16
<b>4</b>	Bourdon (Wood)	16
<b>5</b>	Octave (Metal)	8
<b>6</b>	Violon (Wood)	8
<b>7</b>	Twelfth (Metal)	6
<b>8</b>	Fifteenth (Metal)	4
<b>9</b>	Trombone (Wood) [ <i>sic</i> ]	16
<b>10</b>	Clarion (Metal)	8

The pedal organ, as we have said, is worked exclusively by the feet; and a skilful performer, in playing upon it with rapidity, goes through an amount of exertion which the uninitiated could scarcely credit. We give, lastly, the list of couplers, and the summary of stops and pipes:—

		<b>STOPS</b>	<b>PIPES</b>
<b>1</b>	Swell to Great                      Great Organ	16	1176
<b>2</b>	Solo to Great                        Choir Organ	11	660
<b>3</b>	Great to Pedal                      Swell Organ	14	952
<b>4</b>	Swell to Pedal                      Solo Organ	5	280
<b>5</b>	Solo to Pedal                        Pedal Organ	10	300
<b>6</b>	Choir to Pedal                      Couplers	6	-
		<b>62</b>	<b>3368</b>

Four Composition Pedals to Great Organ.

Three ditto to Swell.

The Great Composition to act also on Pedal Stops.

Pneumatic action to Great Organ and Couplers.

Tremulant to Solo Organ.

Those only who have examined minutely the mechanism of a great instrument such as this can comprehend the vast amount of detail which goes to make up the perfect whole. The organ, it should be added, is from the establishment of Messrs. Hill & Son, London, the first builders in Great Britain, and second to none in the world. Just over the rows of manuals is a solid semicircular plate of oxydised silver, manufactured by Messrs. Hunt & Roskell, London, and bearing in a scroll in the centre the words, “Presented to the Ulster Hall Company by Andrew Mulholland, Esq., Springvale.”