



Basil
POLEDOURIS

Conan the Barbarian
transcribed for organ

Philipp Pelster



Basil Poledouris (1945-2006)

Conan the Barbarian

Transcribing Basil Poledouris's 1982 Conan score for the pipe organ

Conan the Barbarian is a 1982 adventure film, directed and co-written by John Milius. It was his intention to create an opera in the form of a film. Since the opera contains very little dialogue, he used the music to support the story-line. The music composed by Basil Poledouris (1945-2006) conveys a sense of power and energy but also expresses many tender moments.

Film scores are played by only a few organists. They are usually to be found as encores or excerpts. Transcribing this unique music for the pipe organ was both challenging and motivating. Today, many film scores are supported by computer software and electronic sound effects. By contrast Basil Poledouris simply used a conventional orchestra. It is a fact that numerous orchestral colours found in his score are impossible to reproduce on the organ. For example, there is extensive use of percussion instruments. With the unique possibilities of the pipe organ, however, even the decisive drum parts of the first movement *Anvil of Crom* could be integrated. Another challenge was the frequent use of glissando effects in the *Pit Fights* movement, produced by the pedals. This accelerating movement is reminiscent of the *Rowing of the galley slaves* composed by Miklós Rózsa for his 1959 *Ben-Hur* score. The chief aim of a transcription should be to make it sound as though originally it had been written for organ. And indeed, playing Poledouris's score on this instrument is like generating a completely new musical experience.

The idea of playing a classic film score on this instrument is a new approach to the future of the pipe organ. This music will inspire those who have not yet discovered the instrument.

Philipp Pelster

About the instrument

Philipp Pelster's vision to transcribe and record the score of *Conan the Barbarian* on the Glatter-Götz/Rosales organ in Claremont, California, fulfills the vision of the Organ Committee, Consultant and Organ Builders when the instrument was conceived and designed in 1995. It was desired that this organ would inspire creativity and innovation in compositions, performances and recordings. Philipp Pelster's new recording has accomplished this at a very high level of creativity with meticulous technique and delightful entertainment.

The Glatter-Götz/Rosales organ in Claremont was the first of several collaborations between the two firms. The Glatter-Götz team brought decades of experience in the intricacies of creating a superbly built organ with a precise tracker action, excellent winding and with the customization needed for installation into the Claremont Congregational Church. Rosales Organ Builders contributed tonal design concepts and technical details unique to its legacy of distinctive instruments. The voicing by the Rosales staff was performed on site over a period of ten months. Dramatically housed in casework designed by Graham Tristram of Edinburgh, Scotland, the instrument visually states its intention to fill the nave with clear sonority while gracefully harmonizing with the building's architecture.

Manuel J. Rosales

Specification and technical details of the organ, Claremont United Church of Christ, Claremont, California, USA

Completed 1998 by Rosales Organ Builders, Inc., Los Angeles, California, USA,
and Glatter-Götz Orgelbau GmbH, Pfullendorf, Germany

Mechanical key and electric stop action

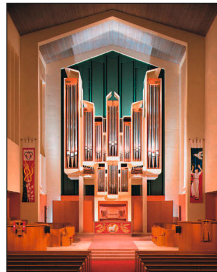
I. Manual, Positiv C-c''''		II. Manual, Great C-c''''		III. Manual, Swell C-c''''		Pedal C-g'	
Principal	8'	Principal	16'	Bourdon	16'	Untersatz	32'
Gedeckt	8'	Principal	8'	Diapason	8'	Praestant	16'
Gemshorn	8'	Flûte harmonique	8'	Bourdon	8'	Flûte	16'
Octave	4'	Rohrflöte	8'	Viole de gambe	8'	Subbass	16'
Hohlflöte	4'	Gamba	8'	Voix céleste	8'	Octave	8'
Nasard	2 2/3'	Octave	4'	Aeoline	8'	Flûte	8'
Octave	2'	Spitzflöte	4'	Unda Maris	8'	Gedeckt	8'
Waldflöte	2'	Octave Quint	2 2/3'	Principal	4'	Choralbass	4'
Tierce	1 3/5'	Superoctave	2'	Flûte octaviante	4'	Mixture V	5 1/3'
Larigot	1 1/3'	Mixtur IV-VIII	2'	Nasard	2 2/3'	Contre Bombarde	32'
Mixture IV-VI	1 1/3'	Cornet V	8'	Octavin	2'	Bombarde	16'
Cromorne	8'	Bombarde	16'	Tierce	1 3/5'	Basson	16'
Chamade	8'	Trompette	8'	Plein jeu harm. II-IV	2'	Trompette	8'
		Clairon	4'	Basson	16'		
<i>Tremulant</i>				Trompette harm.	8'	<i>Positiv to Pedal</i>	
<i>Zymbelstern</i>		<i>Tremulant</i>		Hautbois	8'	<i>Great to Pedal</i>	
<i>Harp</i>		<i>Chimes</i>		Voix humaine	8'	<i>Swell to Pedal</i>	
<i>Swell to Positiv</i>		<i>Positiv to Great</i>		Clairon	4'		
		<i>Swell to Great</i>					
				<i>Tremulant</i>			

Philipp Pelster

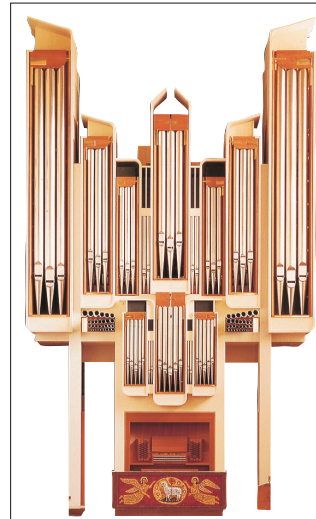


Photo: Janusch Cieminski

Philipp Maximilian Pelster was born in Wuppertal in 1984. He studied organ and church music at the Salzburg University Mozarteum with several professors, primarily Daniel Chorzempa. He continued studies at the Basel Hochschule für Musik in 2008 with Martin Sander. In 2010 he graduated with a Master's degree in organ. Further studies in musicology at the Karlsruhe Hochschule für Musik and the University of Salzburg led to an additional Master's degree. In 2014 he received his doctoral degree from the Karlsruhe Hochschule für Musik with a thesis on Max Reger's pupil Hermann Grabner (1886-1969), an influential German music theoretician. In 2006 Philipp Pelster was appointed organ consultant for the Archdiocese of Salzburg. Since 2013 he has been working as a lecturer in musicology at the Karlsruhe Hochschule für Musik.



Organ photos © Glatter-Götz Orgelbau GmbH



Director and co-writer John Milius's intention with the 1982 adventure *Conan the Barbarian* was to create an opera in the form of film. With its power, energy and moments of tenderness, Basil Poledouris's music supports the storyline in a similar way to a work written for the stage. The superb Glatter-Götz/Rosales organ in Claremont, California was designed to inspire creativity and innovation, and Philipp Pelster's vision in making a complete film-score transcription especially for the unique possibilities of this instrument transforms the orchestral colours of the original to generate a completely new and richly rewarding musical experience.

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POLEDOURIS
(1945-2006)

Conan the Barbarian

transcribed for organ by Philipp Pelster (1982/2014)

1 Anvil of Crom	2:44	9 Conan Leaves Valeria / The Search	6:09
2 Riddle of Steel / Riders of Doom	5:57	10 The Mountain of Power	3:39
3 The Gift of Fury	3:40	11 Recovery	2:31
4 Column of Sadness / Wheel of Pain	3:52	12 The Kitchen	2:27
5 Pit Fights	2:51	13 The Orgy	4:27
6 Alantean Sword	4:12	14 Funeral Pyre	4:49
7 Theology / Civilization	3:31	15 Battle of the Mounds	5:16
8 The Wifeing	2:29	16 Orphans of the Doom / The Awakening	5:51

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

Philipp Pelster, Organ

Recorded on the Glatter-Götz/Rosales organ at Claremont United Church of Christ, Claremont, California, USA, on 19th and 20th May, 2014 • Producer: Philipp Pelster • Engineer: Ron Streicher (Pacific Audio-Visual Enterprises, Pasadena, California, USA) • Console assistant: Bettina Leitner • Organ tuning: Manuel J. Rosales
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