

The organ in Sweelinck's time.

No complete examples of the organs from Sweelinck's time have been preserved. Parts of organs from that time remain in later organs: pipes, old organ cases, sometimes windchests and parts of the action, but due to the many changes from later times we do not have a realistic impression of what organs would have sounded like in Sweelinck's time. Experts have carefully studied all preserved old organ parts. In particular, the work of Jan van Biezen and Koos van der Linde, published in "The Dutch organ in the Renaissance and the Baroque, in particular the school of Jan van Covelens", makes it clear that almost all details of the organ type discussed have been preserved, in various organs throughout the Netherlands and Germany, with which the original sound can be reconstructed. Its application in the restorations of the organs of the Laurenskerk in Alkmaar, the Pieterskerk in Leiden and the reconstruction in Lemgo lead to convincing sounding results and allow us to listen to Sweelinck's music in a way that has remained concealed for centuries.

Yet the old organs served for centuries, often relatively untouched until well into the nineteenth century. There was not enough money everywhere to replace or renovate the organ. The developments in music mainly required a larger keyboard size, registers with a different character, a more extensive pedal and later also more dynamic options. But organists were often very pleased with the sound of their old organ. The Niehoff organ from 1558 of the Grote Kerk in Gouda was placed in the smaller Lutheran Church in 1744. The organist, the organ expert Joachim Hess, wrote very highly of his organ in 1774: 'unusually beautiful in sound... manly and at the same time lovely... one voice surpasses the other in sweetness'. The case and front pipes of this organ have been preserved. In the Cathedral in Utrecht, the old organ by De Swart from 1571 was only replaced in 1831. At the organist's initiative, approximately a thousand pipes were taken over from the old pipework, a considerable part of old organ and ultimately a third of the total number of pipes in Bätz's large new organ. The sound of the organ is still strongly determined by this old pipework. It is striking that during the restoration of the Domorgel in 1974, the condition of the old pipes was usually better than that of the younger pipes. Often a single remaining old register stays until now the organist's favorite stop, such as the Open Flute 4' from 1582, as it is preserved e.g. in the Kam organ from 1854 in Brielle.

Corrigeren:

For centuries, the old organs have existed next to contemporary new construction. For example, as a youngster J.S. Bach knew Niehoff's organ in Lüneburg, by the same builder as the organ that Sweelinck played in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. Later, in Leipzig, there were probably few organs on which Bach's demanding music could be played. There were also many old organs in German cities, the tuning of which was not suitable for Bach's music. His son Carl Philipp Emanuel warns to avoid chromatic passages on organs, 'weil die Orgeln selten gut temperiert'. Even in Sweelinck's time, there would have been many older organs that did not optimally meet his musical wishes. The organ in the Oude Kerk dated back to 1545 and it is possible that it was not even tuned to a medium tone, as was common around 1600.

Het orgel was als instrument overigens nog in ontwikkeling. De Middeleeuwse structuur, waarbij op alle toetsen dezelfde klank van octaven en kwinten werd voortgebracht, leefde nog voort. Dit zogenaamde blokwerk werd geleidelijk aan opgedeeld in afzonderlijk te gebruiken registers. De voorste rij pijpen werd als eerste afgesplitst: in klank dof ten opzichte van het volledige blokwerk met alle meeklinkende boventonen, dat positie of principaal werd genoemd. Op het kleine orgel in Alkmaar heet dit register dan ook 'Doof'. Later wordt het Prestant genoemd, van het Latijnse 'praestare' (vooraan staan: de grootste pijpen die zichtbaar in het front staan). De volgende rij, Octaaf genoemd, werd ook vrij snel apart registreerbaar. De resterende kleinere pijpen werden

opgedeeld in Mixtuur en Scherp. Al deze registers stonden nog lange tijd samen op een apart klavier, dat kennelijk ook niet in combinatie met de eventueel aanwezige andere klavieren gebruikt werd. Tot in de zeventiende eeuw stond dit 'Principaal', de erfenis van het oude blokwerk, op het hoofdwerk, dat in die periode inmiddels was opgedeeld in enkele registers meer dan in de zestiende eeuw (zie Pieterskerk Leiden).

The organ builders discovered other pipe shapes with which new sounds could be produced. The names of these registers told something about the sound, in some cases, especially with the reeds, directly intended as an imitation of existing wind instruments such as Dulcian, Kromhoorn, Trumpet and Gemshoorn. The flute registers were popular, with wider pipes than the old principals, and made in all kinds of positions, one or more octaves higher, but also in fifth positions, with names such as: Holpipe, Quintadeen, Open Flute, Nasard and Sifflet.

These registers were placed above the Principal, where behind the front there was usually enough space for an extra windchest. This top drawer eventually got its own keyboard - the upper part - so that the registers placed on it could be played separately.

In addition to the main work, a backwork was often added to the balustrade, as a reduced version of the main work, which sounded an octave higher. This work featured a small principal (with Principal, Octaaf, Mixtuur and Scherp) as well as several flutes and reeds, often complementary to those of the Bovenwerk.

De omvang van de klavieren was meestal van F tot a''. Met die toetsen kon de meeste klaviermuziek gespeeld worden. Het hoofdwerk had in de laagte soms een extra octaaf, zodat de onderste toon F-contra was. Dit gaf de mogelijkheid om op dat klavier naar keuze in twee liggingen te spelen, op 16' hoogte of een octaaf hoger in 8' ligging. Het hoofdwerkklavier, dat tussen de andere twee klavieren in lag, was dus langer dan het rugwerk- en bovenwerkklavier. Het was echter wel symmetrisch geplaatst, zodat de toetsen niet recht onder elkaar lagen: de c van het hoofdwerk lag op dezelfde plek als de f van rugwerk en bovenwerk. (afb.81 uit vB I) Het is daarom niet waarschijnlijk dat het hoofdwerk tezamen met de andere klavieren werd bespeeld. In echo-passages moest de organist dus altijd een klavier 'oversteken' om tussen forte en pianoklavier te wisselen. Er waren ook geen koppelingen vanaf het hoofdwerk, incidenteel wel van het bovenwerk aan het rugwerk, zodat alle fluiten en tongwerken gecombineerd konden worden.

The pedal was attached to the main body and therefore produced the same sound. Sometimes there were some private registers. Usually this was only a Trumpet 8' and possibly, as in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, an extra register such as the Nachthoorn 2', which was used to clarify a cantus firmus in the bass. Until well into the eighteenth century, this register was standard on the pedal of the larger organs.

To give an overview of the possibilities that Sweelinck had on his organ in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, here is the disposition:

Hoofdwerk, FF, GG, AA-g'', a''

Prestant	16'
Octaaf	8' + 4'
Mixtuur	
Scherp	

Rugwerk, F, G, A-g'', a''

Prestant	8'	Quintadeen	8'	Regaal	8'
Octaaf	4'	Holpijp	4'	Baarpijp	8'
Mixtuur	Sifflet	1 1/3'	Schalmei	4'	
Scherp					

Bovenwerk, , F, G, A-g'', a''

Prestant 8'	Holpijp 8'	Trompet 8'
	Openfluit 4'	Zink D 8'
	Nasard 2 2/3'	
	Gemshoorn 2'	
	Sifflet 1'	
	Cimbel	

Pedaal: F, G, A-c', aangehangen aan onderste octaaf hoofdwerk

Nachthoorn 2'	Trompet 8'
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After Sweelinck's death, the organ further developed with features that would become the standard for later organs. Some new registers appeared (Sesquialter, Superoctaaf 2's and Vox Humana), while older ones disappeared (the Cymbel and reeds such as Zinck and Baarpaal). The manual range increasingly started on C and continued in the treble until C''', so that the range became four octaves. The pedal increasingly acquired a bass function with its own registers.

In the north of the Netherlands and Germany, relatively many old organs from the 16th and 17th centuries have been preserved. The Dutch influence played a role, but there were also differences with the original northern organ type, which can also be heard in the recordings from Kantens and Osteel. We hear a clear difference, especially in the Principal registers. The Dutch Principals were often built in double choir, with two equal pipes per key, which gives a singing, intense tone. The German Principals from that period are single choir and have a rather soft and melancholy character. The lack of double choir also gives a different sound in the plenum: clear and transparent. The equality of the different works, including the pedal, was established earlier in Germany. The third keyboard was more often a chest piece here, where an upper piece was common in the Netherlands.

Because Sweelinck had a lot of contact with North German organists who came to study with him in Amsterdam, it is interesting to listen to the Northern organ type on these CDs. Sweelinck's students will also have played his works after returning home and used the possibilities of their own instruments.