

THE CATHEDRAL ORGANS

No other single musical instrument has the power, the near-orchestral range and the sonic variety of a great organ. Grace Cathedral's 7466-pipe Aeolian-Skinner instrument, the Charles B. Alexander Memorial Organ (1934), is one of the first and finest American classic style organs, and is among the largest church organs in the West. Although listed as Opus 910A of Ernest M. Skinner, America's greatest organ designer of the early 1900s, the Alexander organ was largely designed by Englishman G. Donald Harrison (1889-1956). One of Aeolian-Skinner's first major organs in the west, it was one of the earliest and finest examples of what Harrison dubbed the "American classic organ". Balancing Baroque and orchestral sounds by using a broad mix of pipes and stops, the classic organ could express the eclectic repertoire of church music that developed following the more sentimental Victorian era while retaining the crisper sounds of earlier styles.

When built, the organ had five divisions; Choir, Great, Swell, Solo and Pedal, and 6077 pipes. Thanks to the interest and generosity of Harrison and his successor Joseph S. Whiteford, additions and minor tonal alterations were made in 1952 and 1956, raising the total to 7286 pipes. Swain & Kates made further alterations ca. 1959. Display pipes in the lower screen openings were removed in 1962. Two new divisions by Casavant Freres of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, were installed in 1974, one in the distant cathedral gallery and the other (the now silent bombarde), in the apse. A tuba section was added in 2000 making the current pipe total 7466. The console, too, went through several incarnations. In 1968 the original console was replaced with a solid-state system by Rufatti Fratelli of Padua, Italy. The organ itself was mobilized in 1984, so that it could be rolled onto the choir floor and turned to any position for concerts. An electrical "umbilical chord" links it to the 20-horsepower turbine pump in the crypt. Edward M. Stout, Bay Area organ curator emeritus, now retired, worked with often-limited resources to restore and repair the great organ during his 42-year tenure. In 1998 the venerable firm of Schoenstein and Co., San Francisco organ builders since 1877, created a new digital control console. Today, the organ is the fifth largest in California (by manuals and ranks) and the fiftieth largest in the world.

The organ has two spectacular English oak screens (1935), designed by cathedral architect Lewis Hobart were carved by Romanian-American master carver Samuel Berger. Weighing a total of 14 tons and assembled without metal nails or screws, their carved detail includes robed figures holding songbirds, angel musicians playing instruments, and dragons. Below, chorister angels with songbooks are joined by blowing figures representing the organ action. On the central bosses, support figures hold shields with the instruments of Christ's Passion. Halfway up the central side mullions are four cheeky monkeys.

Grace Cathedral has two additional organs, the Chapel of Grace Aeolian-Skinner (1930) and the William Davis hand-pumped organ (1862). The 1422-pipe chapel organ, originally an Aeolian product (Opus 1738), was the first to have its console shipped across the nation by air express. In 1951 Aeolian-Skinner upgraded the organ (Opus 1151). The fine organ screen is also by Hobart and Berger. The hand-pumped Davis organ, made in New York for St. Paul's Church, Benicia, CA, was

restored in 1973 and is among the oldest California organs still in use. It is on wheels and is rolled out for concerts.

For further information contact the cathedral archivist Michael Lampen at michaell@gracecathedral.org.

Organs Specifications

Main Organ- (125 ranks, 7466 pipes, 7 divisions, Aeolian-Skinner opus #910)

GREAT (II unenclosed) (north choir chamber, *reeds* in south chamber) (1525 pipes)

16' Diapason- 61, 8' First Diapason- 61, 8' Second Diapason- 61, 8' Flûte Harmonique- 61, 8' Rohrgedeckt- 61, 8' Gemshorn- 61, 5 1/3' Quint- 61, 4' Octave- 61, 4' Principal- 61, 4' Flute- 61, 2 2/3' Twelfth- 61, 2' Fifteenth- 61, 2' Blockflöte- 61, 1 3/5' Tierce- 61, 1' Italian Principal- 61, 2' Fourniture IV- 244, 1" Cymbal III- 183, 16' *Double Trumpet*- 61, 8' *Trumpet*- 61, 4' *Clarion*- 61, 8' *Tuba Major*- 61, Unison Off, 4' Great to Great

SWELL (III, expressive) (south choir chamber except first 4 ranks listed, which are in north choir chamber) (1839 pipes)

16' Lieblich Gedeckt- 73, 8' Geigen- 73, 8' Stopped Diapason- 73, 8' Gamba- 73, 8' Vox Celeste- 73, 8' Echo Celeste II- 134, 8' Flauto Dolce- 73, 8' Flute Celeste 61, 4' Principal- 73, 4' Harmonic Flute- 73, 4' Spitz Flute- 73, 2 2/3' Nazard- 61, 2' Fifteenth- 61, 1 3/5' Tierce- 61, Plein Jeu III- 183, Sharff III- 183, 16' *Posaune*- 73, 8' *Trompette Harmonique*- 73, 8' *Cornopean*- 73, 8' *Oboe*- 73, 8' *Vox Humana*- 73, 4' *Clarion Tremulant*- 73, 16' Swell to Swell, Unison Off, 4' Swell to Swell, Zimbelstern- 6 bells

CHOIR (I, expressive) (south choir chamber) (1248 pipes) (Erzahler and Kleine Erzähler stops invented by Skinner)

16' Gemshorn- 73, 8' Viola Pomposa- 73, 8' Viola Celeste- 73, 8' Melodia- 73, 8' Lieblich Gedeckt- 73, 8' Erzähler- 73, 8' Kleine Erzähler- 61, 4' Gemshorn- 73, 4' Lieblich Flute- 73, 2 2/3' Nazard- 61, 2' Piccolo- 61, 1 3/5' Tierce- 61, 1' Siffelöte- 61, 1' Zimbel III-IV- 213, 8' *Trompette*- 73, 8' *Clarinet*- 73, 8' *Tuba Major*- 61, *Tremulant*, 8' Harp- 49 bars, 4' Celesta, 16' Choir to Choir, Unison Off, 4' Choir to Choir

SOLO (IV, expressive) (south choir) (633 pipes)

8' *Tuba Major* (not enclosed)- 61, 8' Flauto Mirabilis- 73, 8' Gamba- 73, 8' Gamba Celeste- 73, 4' Harmonic Flute- 73, 8' *French Horn*- 61, 8' *English Horn*- 73, 8' *Tuba Mirabilis*- 73, 8' *Clarion Tremulant*- 73, 16' Solo to Solo, Unison Off, 4' Solo to Solo

BOMBARDE (Casavant Freres, 1974- floating, unenclosed) (apse) (1038 pipes) (unused as of 2002)

8' Montre- 61, 4' Octave- 61, 2' Doublette- 61, Cornet V (Tenor C)- 245, Mixture VII- 427, 16' *Bombarde*- 61, 8' *Trompette*- 61, 4' *Clarion*- 61

PEDAL (south choir, except where noted) (541 pipes, Aeolian opus #)

32' Diapason- 39, 16' Open Bass (from 32'), 16' Diapason- 32, 16' Bourdon- 32, 16' Lieblich Gedeckt (Swell), 16' Violone- 44, 16' Gemshorn (Choir), 16' Gamba (Great 16' Diapason), 10 2/3' Quint- 32, 8' Octave- 32, 8' Flute- 32, 8' Still Gedeckt (Swell 16'), 8'

Cello (from Violone) ,6 2/5' Grosse Tierce- 32 ,5 1/3' Octave Quint- 32, 4' Super Octave- 32', 4' Flute- 32, 2' Blockflöte (Great), 4' Mixture III- 96, 32'

Contre Bombarde- 68 ,16' *Bombarde* (from 32') ,16' *Posaune* (Swell) ,8' *Trompette* (from 32') , 4' *Clarion* (from 32')

GALLERY (Casavant Freres, 1974- floating, unenclosed) (648 pipes)

16' Pedal Principal- 32, 8' Diapason- 56, 4' Octave- 56', 2' Fifteenth- 56 , 1 1/3' Mixture VIII- 448

Chapel of Grace Organ (1421 pipes, Aeolian opus #1738, enlarged by Aeolian Skinner, opus #1151)

Great division (enclosed separately) (508 pipes)

Principal 8, Gedeckt Pommer 8, Gemshorn 8, Gemshorn Celeste 8, Spitz Principal 4, Gemshorn 4, Plein Jeu III Rks.

Swell division (706 pipes)

Lieblich Gedeckt 16, Viola Pomposa 8, Viola Celeste 8,

Koppelflöte Prestant 4, Koppelflöte 4, Octavin 2, Koppelflöte 2, Sesquialtera II Rks., Trompette 8, Rohrschalmei 4, Zymbelstern

Pedal division (208 pipes)

Montre 16, Gemshorn 16, Lieblich Gedeckt 16, Principal 8, Lieblich Flöte 8, Choral Bass 4, Contre Trompette 16, Trompette 8, Clarion 4

Davis Organ (182 pipes) (for concert use)

Stop diapason bass 8, Open diapason 8, Flute 4, Principal 4, Principal bass 4, Fifteenth 2 (originally Dulciana 8)