

The American Organist

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COVER FEATURE
ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA
A.E. SCHLUETER PIPE ORGAN COMPANY
LITHONIA, GEORGIA



Console

From the Builder

When our firm was invited to provide a proposal to St. Mary Catholic Church, I spent several days studying the church. Built in 1867 to heroic proportions, the Gothic design of the building is evident in the panoply of columns, arches, carvings, and gildings. Plaster and other reverberant materials abound.

The stained-glass windows literally paint the church with every imaginable color and hue. The high altar is of particularly significant beauty, with its intricate details and craftsmanship of a bygone era. It was clear that any organ case designed for this space would have to be commensurate with these august surroundings. While being architecturally appropriate, another important consideration in our design was to make sure that the organ case would not overwhelm or visually compete with the altar and other sacred furnishings.

I was blessed with an organ committee that had accomplished a great deal of work prior to its consultation with or-

ganbuilders. Key decisions had been reached for a two-manual instrument with a freestanding case, the physical location of the organ in the sanctuary, and a desire for an instrument patterned after the eclecticism found within American Classicism. I was privileged to spend time traveling with the organ committee members visiting seven of the instruments built by our firm in Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. The shared listening experiences established a reference for the tonal design of the organ and cemented the bonds of the organ committee/organbuilder relationship. I especially want to thank the members of the organ committee, which included Sr. Barbara Schmitz, OSB, Mark X. Hatfield, Mrs. Pat Hart, Paul Schutz, Sr. Darlene Boyd, Dennis Russell, and Stephen McCallister.

The case design, inspired by the historical church architecture, includes elements from throughout the sanctuary. The organ is positioned between two windows in the left front corner of

the church. The footprint of the organ case is 15' wide, 9' deep, and 36' tall. The facade contains pipework from the 16' Sub Principal, the 8' Pedal Octave, and the 8' Principal. The pipes are polished with gilded pipe mouths. The organ case finish is polychromed with cream, tan, and gold elements to match the church interior.

One problem posed by the 36' organ height was its relationship to our workshop. We are blessed with a large physical plant, but our erecting room ceiling height of 34' could not accommodate the full height of the organ. This challenge was solved by engineering the organ into upper and lower support structures that stack and interlock into one united construct. To validate our engineering, the plans were reviewed, stamped, and certified by a licensed structural engineer.

Divisionally, the organ is arranged with Great and Pedal divisions positioned over the Swell. Often, stacked organs rely on the division above to form the ceiling for the lower division. One very real problem is that the sound is speaking into wind lines, reservoirs, schwimmers, organ actions, or other parts. This is not conducive to focus, or cohesive divisional sound. It also has the effect of making the above division mechanically difficult to service because of the sea of pipes located below it. This is often remedied by placing additional perch boards over the pipes, adding to the confusion of the divisional stops. Many organs are designed following this formula and suffer for it. To avoid the aforementioned issues, this instrument was built with a solid ceiling in the expressive division, and the Great was built on its own separate subfloor. This gives the Swell division a large resonant chamber for tonal development.

The Great and Pedal stops are in a diatonic arrangement under the splayed arches in the ceiling, and the swell box opens on three sides. This allows the organ to focus intra- and interdivisionally into a unified whole that minimizes the spatial differences that would normally be expected by the organ's verticality.

The chest action is electropneumatic slider with reeds on electropneumatic unit action. The wind is regulated with

dual curtain valve reservoirs, and all of the windchests are individually fitted with concussion bellows, which allow stable winding that still maintains a presence of life.

The organ specification is designed upon the classical underpinnings of principal, flute, and reed chorus structure to support a vast and varied classical and sacred repertoire. Careful consideration was given to stop design, use of mixed media (wood and metal), and variable stop scaling.

The Great is designed around a 16' principal chorus that has richness and warmth while maintaining clarity in its phrasing.

The Swell features an independent principal chorus and flute chorus. The presence of the 8' Principal allows the 8' string scales to be drawn narrower, since these stops are not needed to provide the core 8' flue foundation.

The large number of 8' stops in this instrument allows the performer numerous weights and colors. Each has a different timbre but effectively ladders with the others in a cohesive manner. The 8' tonic roots with their respective choruses, when massed into a collective whole, envelop one in warm sound that buoys the spirit without stridency or harshness.

Care was given to the design of the reeds. As is our common practice, the organ reeds were placed on individual unit electropneumatic windchests, separate tremolos, and independent reservoirs, freeing the reeds from the strictures of the manual flue wind pressures. This allows complete freedom in scale, shallot design and treatments, and tongue thickness.

The resources of the Swell division are enclosed in an expression box with 2 1/4-inch-thick walls and interlocking shades. Multiple shade motors are used to provide a full dynamic gradation of the organ stops. With this treatment, even the large dynamic registration of the full Swell and reed chorus can be effectively tamed. Stops such as coupled strings or the 8' Flûte conique and its companion céleste can be brought down to a whisper that floats in the ether.

The generously scaled 16' Trombone with leathered Willis tuba shallots plays a dual role as a manual solo voice, as well as a Pedal stop. Speaking on high wind pressure, it has a round fluidity with an appropriate gravitas over full organ and a noted absence of clangor when used as a solo voice. As a Pedal stop, it provides a solid fundamental foundation without excessive éclat.

Additional undergirding to the Pedal comes from an ample number of 16' ranks, as well as additional independent stops in the 8' and 4' registers. To provide additional weight and color choices for the performer, the indepen-

dent Pedal was augmented with additional duplexes from the manual divisions. This allows stops such as the enclosed 16' Flûte conique to play a valuable role when weightless accompaniment is required.

Early on in discussions with the church, it was decided not to consider any digital augmentation to the Pedal. We supported the church's decision but still wanted to provide a 32' acoustic wave under the organ. To accomplish this, we provided several resultant pitches at 32'. With generous independent wind supplies and unit actions allowing pitches to be drawn from various stops, the harmonic series resultant is particularly effective at simulating a light 32' reed under larger registrations.

The resources of the organ are controlled by a two-manual drawknob console. Built in the English style, the console sits on a rolling platform for mobility. The console exterior is built of white oak with an interior of mahogany and ebony. The console features modern conveniences for the organist, such as multiple memory levels, programmable Crescendo and Sforzando pedals, transposer, and MIDI.

Our tonal philosophy is to "build instruments that have warmth not at the expense of clarity and clarity not at the expense of warmth." We were able to voice the organ in a gentle unforced manner within a room that sculpted every sound. The church acoustics promote clean, clear, unforced speech. Careful attention was given to the overall dynamics and treatment of the upperwork.

The tonal finishing was accomplished by a team consisting of Peter Duys, John Tanner, Bud Taylor, Marc Conley, Fred Oyster, and Daniel Angerstein. During a process that spanned months and included repeated trips to the church, these dedicated men worked diligently to breathe life into the specification and scales provided to them.

I want to thank my father and company founder, Arthur E. Schlueter Jr., whose continuing role as artist, mentor, and president provides the ongoing oversight for our firm.

I also extend thanks to our gifted team of organbuilders. Staff members who contributed to this project include Rob Black, Steven Bowen, Kelvin Cheatham, Marc Conley, Patty Conley, Shan Dalton, Michael DeSimone, Tony DiLeo, Peter Duys, John Green, Jeremiah Hodges, Patrick Hodges, Ruth Lopez, Wilson Luna, Tom Magee, Jeff Moore, Mike Ray, Norma Renteria, Chad Sartin, Barbara Sedlacek, Joe Sedlacek, John Tanner, Bud Taylor, and Bob Weaver.

In closing, I have to admit that I was completely in awe of this worship space from my first visit. There is no doubt that this is a holy space, conducive to thought and prayer. The hours I spent in

quiet contemplation in this church leave me personally humbled. With this instrument's completion and dedication, I remain humbled and give thanks to God that I have been given the skills and passion of an organbuilder.

ARTHUR E. SCHLUETER III
Tonal and Artistic Director

From the Director of Music

We are fortunate to celebrate our liturgies in a beautiful, historic, sacred space that is acoustically magnificent. It was the vision of the church and the members of the organ committee that any new pipe organ built for that space would make a significant statement regarding our various liturgical needs and would look as if "it had always been there."

Throughout our discernment process, we solicited bids from several builders. After reviewing the various proposals and materials that were submitted, it was unanimously decided that the A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company had truly listened to the needs expressed by the committee and had provided a proposed instrument to reflect them.

Working together with the staff was a pure joy, and the professionalism, expertise, and respect shown by everyone who worked on this project were exemplary in every way. The organ with which we have been blessed has enhanced our liturgical celebrations significantly. It supports and encourages the assembly's song and is capable of a great dynamic range from the softest voluntary to the power and grandeur needed to accompany a full congregation enthusiastically praising God in song.

We feel we have built a testament to the glory of God that will serve the musical needs of our church for generations to come. In the words of the great organ master J.S. Bach: "Soli Deo Gloria!"

MARK X. HATFIELD

From the Director of Liturgy

The music at St. Mary Catholic Church was one of the factors that initially drew me to the parish some 15 years ago. In those days, we had a console piano, an electric piano, and an aging pipe organ in the loft. The organ, which dated from the early 1940s, had received barely adequate maintenance over the years to keep it playable. This organ had been designed to accompany only a small choir in the loft and was never envisioned to be an instrument that could support congregational singing. It certainly was too small and not versatile enough for most organ literature.

When the decision was made to eliminate the choir loft (for safety reasons) and the organ with it, it was unclear if there would be a replacement instrument anytime in the immediate future.

**St. Mary Catholic Church
Evansville, Indiana
A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company
Two manuals, 38 ranks**

We did make plans, though, for a new instrument placed off the nave, closer to the chancel and much closer to the assembly. We were just unsure when and if it would ever happen. But donors in the parish came through within the span of two years, and we were able to proceed. Construction began in February 2011. Ours is a busy church, used for daily Eucharist, other prayer services, and for what seemed like double our normal number of funerals and weddings this year. The organ crew, to a person, were obliging and understanding with all these comings and goings.

The Schlueter Pipe Organ Company did a marvelous job throughout, from designing and building an organ case that looks like it has been in our church from its 1867 beginnings to creating a magnificent instrument that aids our choral program and supports the assembly in its song from basic plainsong to traditional and modern hymnody. It truly is a fine work of art, but more importantly, it is an instrument that accompanies and supports the ritual worship of an assembly at prayer. We are most thankful to God.

STEVE MCCALLISTER

From the Pastor

The celebration of the Roman Catholic liturgy has always been the priority at St. Mary Catholic Church. We have been blessed for more than 25 years with a liturgy committee that works tirelessly to create a prayerful, musical liturgy. For years, we have had a full-time director of worship, an associate director of music, and a choir that is committed to serving the assembly in reaching "full, conscious, and active participation" in the liturgy.

When our strategic plan called for a second restoration of our sacred space, and our small pipe organ failed us in 2006, we were determined to add a new pipe organ that could serve our musical liturgy and the people of God. By the grace of God, we formed an organ committee that led us to design a unique pipe organ that could serve our needs into the 21st century.

After a year of study, we committed to the A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company to build our new organ. This beautiful instrument fits seamlessly into our sacred space and has enhanced our musical liturgy in praise and thanks to God. It was a joy to work with the designers, the artists, the builders, the installers, the tuners, and the voicers who created a wonderful sound in our Gothic church.

This instrument is a tribute to this assembly of believers who love great music, and it bespeaks the glory of God in our midst. We are most blessed.

REV. STEPHEN P. LINTZENICH

GREAT

- 16 Sub Principal
- 16 Flûte conique (Sw.)
- 8 Principal
- 8 Geigen Principal
- 8 Bourdon
- 8 Flûte conique (Sw.)
- 4 Octave
- 4 Harmonic Flute
- 4 Flûte conique (Sw.)
- 2½ Twelfth
- 2 Super Octave
- 1½ Seventeenth
- 1½ Mixture IV
- 16 Basson-Hautbois (Sw.)
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Cromorne
- 8 Tromba (Ped.)
- Tremulant

SWELL

- 16 Flûte conique
- 8 Principal
- 8 Gedeckt
- 8 Viole de Gambe
- 8 Viole Celeste
- 8 Flûte conique
- 8 Flûte conique céleste
- 4 Principal
- 4 Chimney Flute
- 2½ Nazard
- 2 Block Flute
- 1½ Tierce
- 2 Plein Jeu IV
- 16 Basson-Hautbois
- 8 Trompette
- 8 Hautbois
- 8 Voix humaine
- 4 Clairon
- 8 Tromba (Ped.)
- Tremulant
- Swell to Swell 16
- Swell Unison Off
- Swell to Swell 4

PEDAL

- 32 Resultant (F)
- 32 Resultant (P)
- 16 Sub Principal (Gt.)
- 16 Subbass
- 16 Flûte conique (Sw.)
- 8 Octave
- 8 Geigen Principal (Gt.)
- 8 Bourdon
- 8 Flûte conique (Sw.)
- 4 Choral Bass
- 4 Chimney Flute
- Mixture IV
- 32 Harmonics
- 16 Trombone
- 16 Basson-Hautbois (Sw.)
- 8 Tromba
- 8 Trumpet (Gt.)
- 8 Hautbois (Sw.)
- 4 Clarion (Gt.)

COUPLERS

- Great to Pedal 8
- Great to Pedal 4
- Swell to Pedal 8
- Swell to Pedal 4
- Swell to Great 16
- Swell to Great 8
- Swell to Great 4
- MIDI on Pedal
- MIDI on Great
- MIDI on Swell

COMBINATIONS

- Ten general pistons and toe studs
- Great pistons 1-5
- Swell pistons 1-5
- Pedal pistons 1-4
- Great to Pedal piston and toe stud
- Swell to Pedal piston and toe stud
- 32 Resultant F toe lever
- 32 Resultant P toe lever
- 32 Harmonics toe lever
- Sforzando piston and toe stud
- Piston sequencer, multiple next and previous pistons and toe studs
- Set piston
- General cancel piston

FEATURES

- MIDI
- Transposer
- Clear, lighted music rack; pedal light
- Adjustable bench
- Keyed motor control
- Tracker-touch keyboards with silver key contacts (silver key wipes)
- Electromechanical drawknobs and tilting tablets
- Movable platform



Photos: Gray Photography, Evansville, Ind.
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