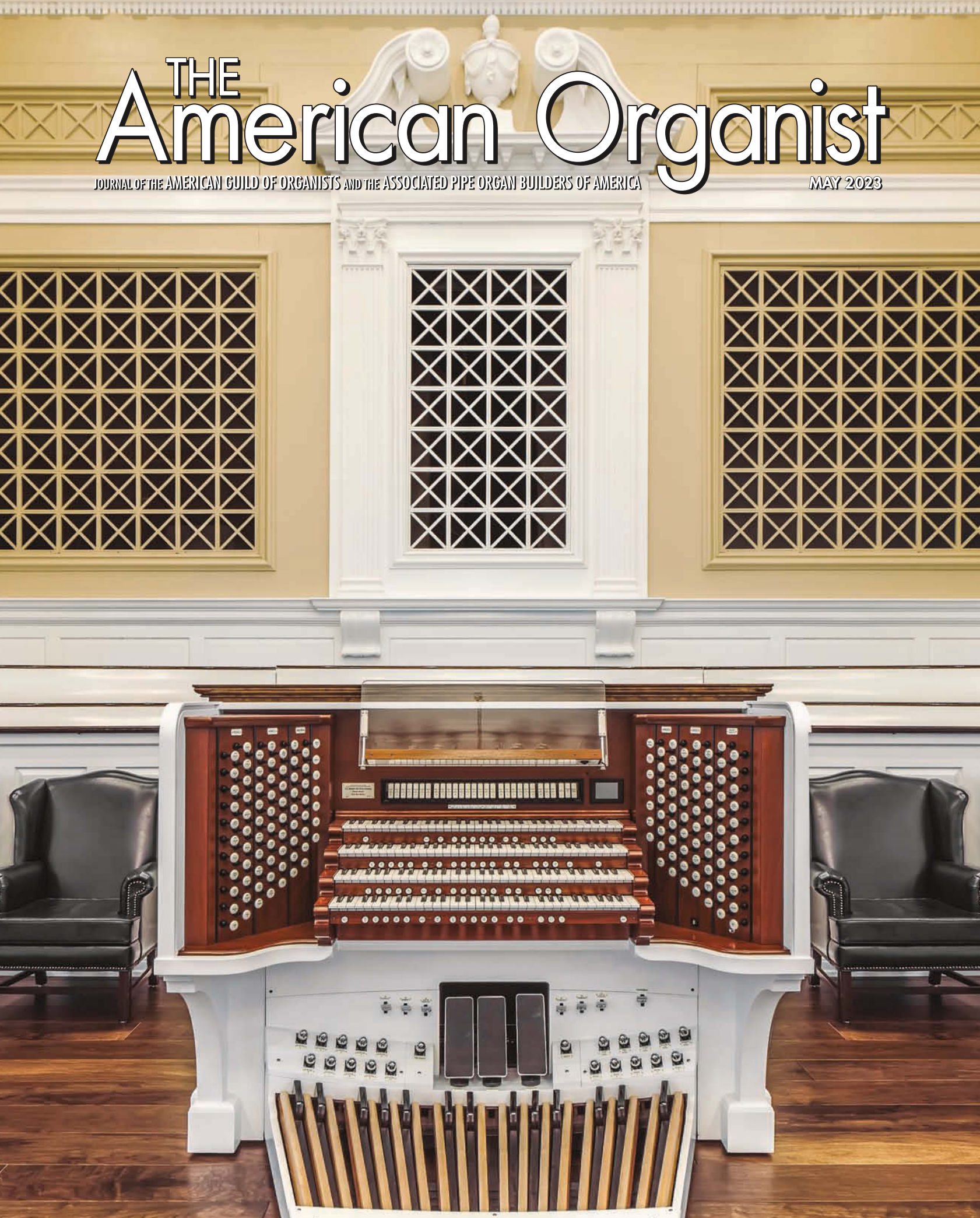


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Cover Feature

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Louisville, Kentucky

**A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company
Lithonia, Georgia**

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By Arthur E. Schlueter III

Located in Louisville, Kentucky, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is one of the largest divinity schools in the world, with several thousand students (online and in-person). Its history includes many luminaries, among them the esteemed organist Donald Paul Hustad (1918–2013), who taught there from 1966 until his retirement. I well remember hearing him in recital when I was growing up, so this project has been a full-circle moment for me personally.

The seminary's original organ was built by Aeolian-Skinner as Opus 1162. Installed in 1948, it comprised 44 ranks and was prepared for numerous additions, including Solo and Antiphonal divisions. In 1962, Aeolian-Skinner expanded the instrument to 113 ranks as Opus 1162-A. In the process, the firm changed the disposition significantly, from an American Classic concept to something so different from the original plan that the organ effectively became two separate instruments—neither of them complete or complementing the other well.

Many of the 1962 additions were stops above 2½' pitch, including numerous mixtures and mutations; these stops constituted 65 ranks—over 57 percent of the total pipes. The result was an instrument with



more of a 4' pitch center, whereas the original organ had favored 8' tone.

In what may have been a cost-saving measure, some stops from Opus 1162 were repurposed in a manner that was at odds with their original design. A few examples follow:

1. The 16' Open Wood was refitted with stoppers to become a 32' Bourdon. It was rescaled, but it was never as effective as a purpose-built 32' stop, because the scale was not the same as would be found in a custom set of pipes.
2. The 16' Bombarde had new boots and tongues made for it and was retuned as a half-length 32' stop (with pipes 13–68 newly crafted), becoming a 32' Bombarde. Again, this was a tonal compromise: the scale was too small, and some of the pipes were heavily modified in an attempt to make them louder.
3. The 16' Dulciana was cut up and revoiced to become a 16' Violone. Again, there was a scaling problem with the pipes, especially the smaller ones.
4. The 16' Fagotto that was originally in the Swell division became the bass register of the manual 16' Bombarde.

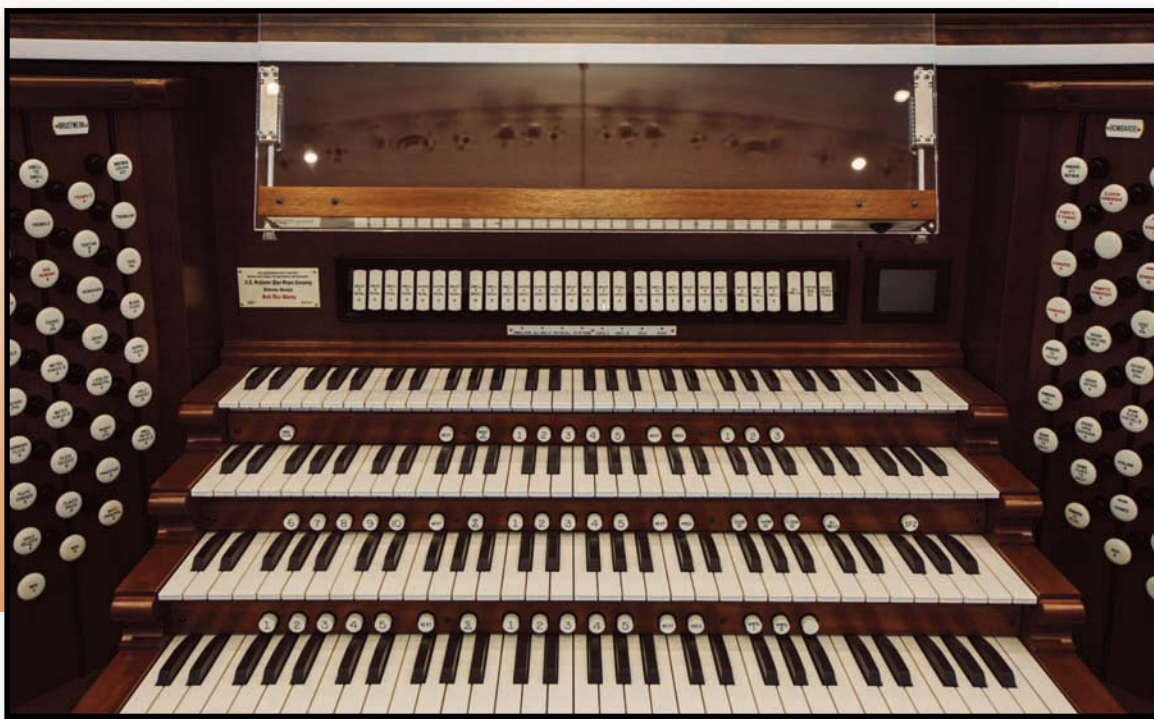
In my view, the organ did not have the cohesiveness that one would normally find in the work of Aeolian-Skinner. While it was possible to get a good sound from the instrument, this often had to be accomplished with coupled, borrowed, or duplexed registrations. A skilled organist could cover many deficiencies in this way, especially since the sheer size of the instrument allowed for many different registrational possibilities.

Our firm, along with the seminary and its staff, studied the organ for many years before settling on a definitive recommendation. Serious consideration was given to leaving the instrument unchanged; however, it was recognized that this would result in an organ that still had mechanical and spatial deficiencies, as well as anachronistic tonal elements. It was ultimately deemed a much better use of resources to work toward a tonally cohesive instrument that would preserve the best features of American Classicism, as championed by Aeolian-Skinner.

The redesign of the organ includes the reuse of portions of the old chassis for some of the Pedal, Bombarde, Brustwerk, and Positiv chests. These are paired with a new chassis for the Great, Swell, and Choir divisions. The new layout places all of the divisions on the same thermocline, greatly enhancing speech and tuning stability.

The Great probably experienced the most significant changes during Aeolian-Skinner's 1962 expansion. This division has been relocated to the right-side chamber and now sits almost as originally designed. The old Cymbal was repitched, and an 8' Diapason was added as a second principal. In addition, the 16' Quintaton was moved to the Choir-Positiv, and the 16' Violone was moved to the Great. The latter stop was built from the previous 16' Dulciana, with pipes 33–73 replaced to increase the scale and match the stop to its name.

The 16' Quintaton, though relocated to the Choir-Positiv, is still available in the Great as a duplex. This allows the Great to be registered as it was historically. We have also allowed the



8' Klein Erzählers in the Choir-Positiv to be duplexed to the Great. The Great was originally built without reeds; these were all duplexed. We have added to the voices that were already available the 8' Bombarde that is enclosed in the Choir-Positiv expression box.

Opus 1162 had the Choir, Brustwerk, and Positiv divisions on the same side. These were not individually complete, and a great deal of cross-registration was required to build a full chorus. Our rebuild transformed the Choir to a Choir-Positiv and integrated the Positiv into the Brustwerk. The Choir-Positiv and Brustwerk can now be used for Germanic registrations while still blending with the instrument as a whole.

The Choir-Positiv has as its foundation the 16' Quintaton that was previously in the Great. The 8' Diapason in the former Choir was a String Diapason of very diminutive scale. It has been rescaled and is now paired with a new 4' Principal and a mixture repitched to 2'. This makes possible a complete principal chorus in the Choir-Positiv division, as an appropriate foil to the Great. We also included a new 1 3/5' Terz, 1 1/3' Larigot, and 2 2/3' Nasat to complete the Cornet and allow a panoply of different colors to be created. The old 4' Gemshorn takes its place in this division as a companion celeste to an 8' Gemshorn that was relocated from the Great. As it is voiced, the Gemshorn can also act as a small conical principal. We have also included the 8' Erzählers in this division, as well as a 4' unification for a massed string accompaniment.

The Choir-Positiv reeds include an 8' Clarinet and a new 8' English Horn, both of which are eminently useful as solo voices and add color to the ensemble. The organ received a Baroque reed chorus in 1962. These formerly unenclosed reeds, which were shared between the Brustwerk and Positiv, now find a home in the Choir-Positiv and are excellent companions to this dual-use division.

The original Brustwerk and Positiv have been combined into a single Brustwerk division, with voices that went above 4/5' replaced with other stops. The original 1/2' mixtures of the combined divisions were replaced with an 8' Trompete with German shallots, and the Sesquialtera was divided into separate 2 2/3' and 1 3/5' stops. We have retained the toeboards and stored them in the organ chamber to allow this change to be reversed if desired.

The current Swell division would be recognizable to someone who knew the earlier instrument. Many of its stops remain but are positioned for better speech. An absolutely beautiful Flute Conique is the 16' flue foundation of this division. We have placed it on a unit action to allow it to be drawn at 8' pitch, where it becomes an able companion to the Swell flute chorus.

The original Swell had only a single mutation. This oversight was remedied by moving the 2 2/3' Nazard, 2' Piccolo, and 1 3/5' Tierce from the Choir to the Swell, supplying color that was previously missing and increasing the options for solo registrations.

Enclosed within the Swell are the resources for a compounded string organ. These stops include

the aforementioned Flute Conique, a Viole de Gamba and Celeste, a Flauto Dolce and Celeste, and a newly added two-rank Muted Violes stop at 8' and 4'. Individually, these stops are lovely, and when combined en masse with the 8' Vox Humana, they create an iconic sound that envelops the listener and is emblematic of the ethereal side of the American Classic aesthetic.

The Swell reeds are built to Aeolian-Skinner's usual high standard. They are the backbone of the division, and in massed registration they fold hand in glove into the chorus. Individually, stops such as the 8' Hautbois have a plaintive, singing quality. While the reeds were very well built, with their age, we discovered that the weights on the reed tongues were coming unglued. This required a painstaking process of disassembly, removal and reattachment of the weights, and re-assembly, followed by methodical work with the voicing machine to preserve the reeds' sound and speech.

The Bombarde division from Opus 1162-A was relocated to the right chamber space; its pipework is unaltered. We have added a duplex from the 16' Bombarde to provide a different weight in the 8' line. We have also added an 8' Grand Diapason and 4' Grand Octave. These are designed to pair with the large Bombarde mixture that serves as a tonal cap for the instrument.

The independent Pedal division remains largely as envisioned in Opus 1162-A, but with a few key changes. The 32' Bombarde was originally a 16' reed that Aeolian-Skinner turned into a half-length 32' stop. This was never successful, and the pipes had been mutilated over the years in attempts to make the stop more than it was. We built new pipes for the lowest octave and added additional length to the original pipes. We also made changes to the tongues, shallots, wind pressure, and chamber location, so that this voice now properly undergirds the 115-rank instrument.

The 32' Bourdon of Opus 1162-A was built by stoppering the original 16' Open Wood. It was never successful in this register, due to its scale and its location in the chamber. With this in mind, we replaced the bottom twelve notes with digital ones that are voiced to match the 16' Bourdon. This facilitated the relocation of the 16' Bourdon and permits unimpeded speech for the 16' Contre Basse. As doing so can be controversial, we have made minimal use of digital voices. We did include a digital 16' Open Wood in the specification, along with digital Chimes and Harp. There was not space for these, and we wanted them to be in the specification for an instrument of this size and stature.

Aeolian-Skinner's consoles have always been one of their hallmarks. We were very careful to maintain this console's original look, feel, and build quality. It was fitted with new keyboards and now includes a number of features that were not available when the instrument was first built, including multiple levels of memory, a transposer, a piston sequencer, blind checks, a playback/record feature, programmable vents, crescendos, sforzandos, etc.

For the critic, the inevitable question is whether the instrument is an unaltered Aeolian-Skinner. The simple answer is no, but it is important to note that the organ was already significantly changed in the firm's 1962 expansion. Moreover, other builders subsequently altered winding, wind pressures, relays, wiring, combination actions, and even some pipework.

It must be acknowledged that our company has made changes to this organ. While this will be a source of consternation for some and a cause for celebration among others, I hope that most will recognize that our intent was to espouse the idea of the Aeolian-Skinner organ in our work. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's aim was to honor past stewardship of the organ by reviving the instrument. It was not to be an organ locked in time, but rather one that fully supports the ongoing worship life of the seminary.

How do we refer to this changed instrument and its identity? We believe it lives in a world between a new organ and a rebuilt one, and it is our hope that it will remain associated with Aeolian-Skinner. I believe the best description is that it is an American Classic instrument in the Aeolian-Skinner tradition.

As always, I am thankful to our staff for their dedication and for doing the finest work that I could ask for. In addition to myself, staff members who worked on this project include Art Schlueter Jr., president; John Tanner, vice-president of production; Marc Conley, production supervisor; Marshall Foxworthy, engineer; as well as Jeremiah Hodges, Josse Davis, Al Schroer, Dallas Wood, Peter Duys, Kerry Bunn, Cliff Frierson, Ruth Sandoval, Oscar Sandoval, Yolanda Sandoval, Elio Lopez, Sara Lopez, Kymoni Colbourne, Joshua Sandoval, Marcus Hill, Dustin Dalton, Jayden Kemp, Preston Wilson, Tammy Curry, Shan Bowen, Patricia Conley, Carl Morowitz, and Andrew Atkinson.

Arthur Schlueter III is vice president and tonal director of A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky
A.E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company • Lithonia, Georgia

Four manuals, 115 ranks

II. GREAT

16 Violone
 16 Quintaton (Ch.)
 8 Diapason
 8 Principal
 8 Violone (ext.)
 8 Klein Erzähler Celeste II (Ch.)
 8 Flute Harmonique
 8 Bourdon
 4 Octave
 4 Rohrflöte
 2½ Octave Quint
 2 Super Octave
 2 Blockflöte
 1⅓ Terz
 1½ Fourniture IV–VI
 ¾ Scharf IV
 16 Contre Bombarde (Ch.)
 8 Bombarde (Ch.)
 16 Bombarde (Bom.)
 8 Trompette Harmonique (Bom.)
 4 Clarion Harmonique (Bom.)
 Chimes
 Great Unison Off
 Great 4

III. SWELL (enclosed)

16 Flute Conique
 8 Geigen Diapason
 8 Rohrflöte
 8 Viole de Gambe
 8 Viole Celeste
 8 Flute Conique (ext.)
 8 Muted Violes II
 8 Flauto Dolce
 8 Flute Celeste
 4 Principal
 4 Harmonic Flute
 4 Muted Violes II (ext.)
 2½ Nazard
 2 Piccolo
 1⅓ Tierce
 2 Plein Jeu IV
 ¾ Acuta III
 16 Contre Trompette
 8 Trompette
 8 Hautbois
 4 Clairon
 8 Vox Humana
 Tremulant
 Swell 16
 Swell Unison Off
 Swell 4

I. CHOIR-POSITIV (enclosed)

16 Quintaton
 8 Diapason
 8 Cor de Nuit
 8 Gemshorn
 8 Gemshorn Celeste
 8 Klein Erzähler
 8 Klein Erzähler Celeste
 4 Weit Principal
 4 Nachthorn
 4 Klein Erzähler Celeste II (ext.)
 2½ Nasat
 2 Principal
 1⅓ Terz
 1½ Quint
 1 Sifflöte
 2 Klein Mixture IV
 16 English Horn (TC)
 8 Clarinet
 8 English Horn
 16 Dulzian
 8 Krummhorn
 4 Schalmey
 8 Bombarde
 Tremulant
 Zimbelstern
 Harp
 Choir-Positiv 16
 Choir-Positiv Unison Off
 Choir-Positiv 4

IV. BRUSTWERK

8 Spitzprinzipal
 8 Holzgedeckt
 8 Muted Violes II (Sw.)
 4 Praestant
 4 Koppelflöte
 2½ Nasat
 2 Lieblich Principal
 2 Blockflöte
 1⅓ Terz
 1½ Quint
 1½ Tertian II (TC)
 1 Gemshorn
 8 Trompete
 Tremulant
 Brustwerk Unison Off

BOMBARDE (floating)

8 Grand Open Diapason
 4 Grand Octave
 1½ Grande Fourniture IV–VI
 16 Bombarde
 8 Bombarde (ext.)
 8 Trompette Harmonique
 4 Clairon Harmonique
 8 Trombe (ext. Ped. Bombarde)
 8 Trompette en Chamade (prepared)
 Bombarde Flues to Great
 Bombarde Reeds to Great
 Bombarde to Swell
 Bombarde to Choir-Positiv
 Bombarde to Pedal
 Bombarde off Brustwerk

PEDAL

32 Soubasse
 16 Open Wood
 16 Contre Basse
 16 Soubasse
 16 Violone (Gt.)
 16 Flute Conique (Sw.)
 16 Quintaton (Ch.)
 10½ Quinte
 8 Octave
 8 Violone (Gt.)
 8 Bourdon
 8 Flute Conique (Sw.)
 8 Quintaton (Ch.)
 5½ Spitz Quinte
 4 Super Octave
 4 Nachthorn
 2 Octavin
 4 Mixture III
 1½ Scharf IV
 32 Contre Bombarde
 32 Harmonics
 16 Major Bombarde (Bom.)
 16 Bombarde
 16 Contre Trompette (Sw.)
 16 Dulzian (Ch.)
 8 Bombarde
 8 Dulzian (Ch.)
 4 Bombarde
 2 Kornett
 Chimes