

Walker Digital Organ for the Crypt Chapel of Apparitions of Our Lady

If you've visited the chapel lately, you may have noticed something looks a little different in the sanctuary. If it were not for the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing, our Sunday worship would be in the chapel now, and what you would *hear* is vastly different. In late October, installation of a Walker digital organ was completed in the chapel. This organ was acquired from the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, and was used there for many years as an alternate console for their pipe organ. Given they are installing a newly refurbished pipe organ, this opportunity to acquire a used but yet sophisticated digital organ was presented to us.



When St. Patrick's chapel and upper church were completed in 1910 and 1913, respectively, both churches were furnished with pipe organs from C.S. Haskell company of Philadelphia. The upper church organ mostly incorporated pipes from the 1868 J.C.B Stanbridge organ from the second St. Patrick's building. The chapel pipe organ was located where the Book of Kells Shrine sits today. Presumably at the time of the chapel's 1954 renovation as the Crypt Chapel of the Apparitions of Our Lady, a more compact Moller Artiste pipe organ was acquired, though this is only identified through historic documents and loosely remembered by some local organists. After some time, an Allen practice organ was relocated from the rectory to the chapel; this organ was designed for a much smaller space or home practice instrument, and was inferior for filling the large lower chapel.

As some may know, a pipe organ project was commissioned for the lower chapel in approximately 2013. While funding for this project was a gift of a local foundation, sadly the project was not completed in a timely manner, resulting in exponentially higher costs to complete a proper renovation and installation of a vintage Moller pipe organ. In the keen interest to focus our efforts on an exquisite pipe organ for the upper church, I am grateful for the support of Fr. Hyacinth and the finance council to purchase the Walker organ for the chapel.

It is said that an organ should perform three duties: 1. Lead and sustain congregational singing for the Mass 2. Be suitable for playing organ repertoire that adorns the liturgy 3. Be a dynamic and flexible instrument for concerts and recitals. While I am confident the Walker digital organ can accomplish all these goals, the reality is that the use of the lower chapel is very much focused on the liturgies of the Church. Therefore, the Walker digital organ is the most practical compromise for vastly improving our liturgy and worship when using the lower chapel space.



Specification:

Great	Swell	Pedal	Couplers
8 Principal	16 Lieblich Gedeckt	32 Bourdon *	8 Gt to Pd
8 Bourdon	8 Gedeckt	16 Principal*	8 Sw to Pd
4 Octave	8 Viola	16 Bourdon	4 Sw to Pd*
4 Harmonic Flute	8 Viola Celeste	16 Lieblich Gedeckt (sw)	8 Sw to Gt
2 Octavin	4 Traverse Flute	8 Octave	4 Sw to Gt*
IV Mixture	2-2/3 Nasat*	8 Flute	4 Sw to Sw*
8 Trumpet	2 Piccolo	16 Fagotto	4 Gt to Gt*
8 Clarinet*	8 Oboe		
8 Tuba*	8 Trompette Harmonique*		
	* extra MIDI voices		

If you have interest or questions about our investment in a pipe organ for the great upper church, or would like to express interest in our music ministry at St. Patrick’s Church, please do not hesitate to reach out to music@stpatrickphilly.org

Soli Deo Gloria,

Sean

