

The Henry Erben Organ, First Baptist Church, Lewiston, Maine

The *Journal* of Wednesday, 6 July 1870, reported that "The new organ just completed by Henry Erben of New York, is now in its place in the choir of the beautiful First Baptist Church audience room on Bates street, in this city. We had the pleasure to-day of inspecting it and hearing its voice. The best musical critics in New York have pronounced very heartily in its favor, and the unprofessional cannot but agree with them with all cordiality. The architecture is gothic, the case of solid walnut with heavy carved gothic finials. The front range of pipes are plainly gilded. The architectural effect of the organ is fine and cannot but pleasantly impress the beholder. The following interior description gives a good idea of the capacity of the instrument—

"The organ has two manuals, from CC to A, 58 notes; 29 stops, 3 pedal stops. The great organ has 12 stops; the swell has 10 stops. There are 3 couplers; two composition pedals, one swell pedal. The organ has about 2000 pipes. The stops are as follows:—

"GREAT ORGAN—Open diapason; gamba; keraulophon; melodia; stop diapason bass; harmonic flute; principal; twelfth; fifteenth; mixture; trumpet; cremona.

"SWELL—bourdon; open diapason; dulciana; stop diapason bass; stop diapason treble; principal; piccola; cornet; hautboy; vox tremulo.

"PEDALS—Double open diapason, 16 feet; bourdon, 16 feet; violoncello, 8 feet; couplers, sw. to gr. and sw. to ped. and gr. to ped.; two composition pedals, one to bring on full great organ, the second to take off chorus stops. The compass of the pedals is CCC to F—30 notes.

"The woods used in the interior of the instrument are mahogany and black walnut—the most efficient for the service demanded. The slides are all of mahogany.

"The organ is 27 feet high, 10 feet deep, and 21 feet wide. The largest pipes are 16 feet long.

"The organ is valued at \$6000. The church organist is Mr. E. W. Hanscom.

"Our readers are aware that an organ concert is to be given Thursday evening at the First Baptist Church, on the occasion of the first public test of the instrument in this city. Prof. Wilcox [Willcox] of Boston, is to preside as organist, one of the best organists in the country. The occasion will be double attractive. We were delighted this morning with a private trial of the instrument. Its volume and capacity, as well as the sweetness and harmony of its tones, render the new instrument one which we are rejoiced the church has been enabled to secure; and which it is a credit to the city to hold. Let the audience room be filled to overflowing to welcome this superb organ."

On the 7th, the day of the event, the *Journal* informed its readers of

"...the programme of the organ concert of the Bates street Baptist Church, this evening, Dr. John H. Wilcox [Willcox] of Boston, organist:—

1. Offertoire, Batiste.
2. Andante, from the "Military Symphony", Haydn.
3. Overture—Lestocq, Auber.
4. 'Improvisation,' displaying the beautiful solo stops and the full organ.
5. Elevation, Wely.
6. Overture—"La Barcarole", Auber.
7. Representation of a Thunder Storm, J. H. Wilcox.
8. Overture—"Fra Diavolo", Auber."

The next day, the *Journal* reported on the recital.

"The Organ Concert at the First Baptist church last evening, passed off very pleasantly. The audience was not so large as the committee would have been glad to have seen, but the house was decently well filled. The organist, Dr. Wilcox [Willcox], had selected such a programme as displayed to good advantage all the qualities of the instrument, and the performance seemed to justify the expectations that had been formed."

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