

# The Organs in St. Mary Cathedral

## Background

Music has been an integral part of the liturgies at St. Mary Cathedral since its establishment in Lansing. The organ here has always held a place of prominence, and has served to accompany the choirs throughout the worship life of the parish.

In 1904, when the church building was moved from Chestnut St. to Walnut St., there was some type of pump organ used in the liturgy. From 1913 until 1958, a temporary organ, originally built in 1872 by the Steere & Turner Co. and having mechanical (tracker) action was purchased and installed into the new church building, now located on the corner of Ionia St. and Seymour Ave. The instrument was placed in the now removed south side gallery of the church.

In 1957, Msgr. Herman P. Fedewa was offered a used organ by Mr. J.A. Hebert of the Casavant Organ Co. of Ste. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Casavant had originally built and installed this instrument in Christ Church Episcopal, Grosse Pointe, Mich. in 1930. The instrument was in fine shape, and under the direction of Fr. Gerald Boyer and Music Director, David Ferland, this instrument was recommended as an exceptional purchase.

The Casavant organ, op. 1403, had 37 stops and 40 ranks of pipes, and was purchased for \$19,850. It was installed in the same location (south transept gallery) as the previous instrument, and would remain there until 1967. During the Cathedral's 1967 renovation, the instrument was removed and relocated to the rear gallery where it now stands.



Local builder, Archie D. White, Jr. was contracted to do the work of moving and minor renovations. A new electric action console was designed, the organ rebuilt, pipes re-configured, and new blowers installed for around \$32,500. The organ was around 40 years old at the time of this project. David Ferland was the overseer and director of this project.

## Renovation

By the early 1990's, this relocated Casavant organ had been in existence for 63 years, and had served the Cathedral parish for 36 of those years. It was very much in need of a restoration and renovation project, or else the instrument would be lost forever.

In 1993 Msgr. James A. Murray (now Bishop Murray of Kalamazoo), then rector of the Cathedral Church, realizing the need for the Casavant organ to be restored, contacted the Fowler Organ Co. of Lansing, Mich. William Rowan, then Cathedral Music Director, and Brian Fowler worked together to realize the much needed renovation.

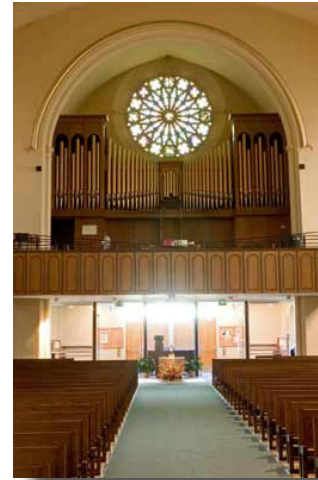
Rebuilding-renovation work included complete restoration of the mechanism, the installation of a new solid state control system, some major tonal additions, and a new "French" style console.

## Façade

The façade includes decorative wood casework, custom built, and speaking pipes from the 16' and 8' Dipason ranks. The horizontally mounted pipes are the Fanfare Trumpet, which is very powerfully voiced and used for solo purposes. While not on the highest wind pressure in the organ, they are definitely the loudest!

## The Console

The console, from which the organ is played, is built in the style of the French 19th century master builders, and is designed to place every control at the fingertips. It is also low in profile to allow the organist to direct the choir from the bench.



Keyboard naturals are of wood (sitka spruce) and the sharps polished rosewoods. Natural materials feel better to the fingers, absorb moisture so they don't become "slimy", and the wood levers are designed for the finest sense of touch and ease to the fingers. The pedal keys are hard maple with rosewood sharps. Console drawknobs, which control the various stops and couplers, are of turned rosewood.

There is a 32-level solid state combination system which allows the individual stops to be set on thumb and/or toe pistons for quick recall. Other modern conveniences include a transposer, MIDI control system, and the ability to shift the position of the Choir and Great manuals for performing music of the 19th and 20th century French school.

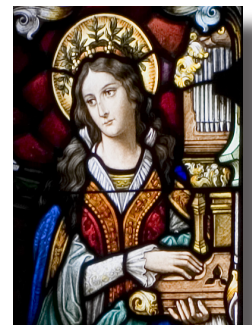
## Voicing

The voice of the instrument takes its inspiration from the original Casavant design which was influenced by the great English Cathedral instruments. Also incorporated are influences from the Germanic school, particularly the clarity and definition of speech, and the French school's fiery reed voices and singing harmonic flutes.

## Summary

In restoring this beautiful instrument, the Cathedral parish saved countless thousands of dollars in replacement costs, and preserved a fine instrument from being trashed! In addition, the Cathedral realized its' mission to the city of Lansing and to the diocese as a leader, and model for Roman Catholic worship and good stewardship. This instrument will serve all who hear for many years to come.

*This brochure containing information about the history of the Cathedral organ and some details of its renovations, were prepared from two write-ups found at the Cathedral but without authors listed: some pages containing a history of the organs in the Cathedral and encouraging the renovation and preservation of the instrument, and a paper entitled "St. Mary Cathedral Pipe Organ". Some words and phrasing were revised in the preparation of this brochure.*



— Michael Dulac



## St. Mary Cathedral Organ Specification

Casavant 1933, op. 1403 / Fowler 1997

Three Manuals & Pedal, 50 Ranks, electro-pneumatic action

### GREAT ORGAN

16' Double Diapason	8' Æoline
8' Diapason	4' Octave
8' Flute Harmonique	4' Traverse Flute
8' Bourdon	2' Octavin
8' Gemshorn	V Plein Jeu
4' Octave	16' Fagott
4' Hohlflute	8' Trompette
2 2/3' Twelfth	8' Hautbois
2' Fifteenth	8' Vox Humana
IV Mixture	4' Clarion
8' Trumpet	Tremulant
8' Fanfare Trumpet (Ch.)	16' Swell
Chimes	Unison Off
	4' Swell

16' Great  
4' Great  
Unison Off  
Swell to Great 16' 8' 4'  
Choir to Great 16' 8' 4'

### SWELL ORGAN

16' Bourdon	8' Geigen Principal
8' Diapason	8' Spire Flute
8' Rohr Bourdon	8' Dolce
8' Viole de Gambe	8' Unda Maris
8' Viole Celeste	4' Geigen Octave
	4' Koppelflute
	2' Italian Principal
	II Sesquialtera
	III Sharp Mixture
	8' Clarinet

8' Fanfare Trumpet	8' Octave (ext. Double Diapason)
16' Choir	8' Bass Gedeckt (ext. Subbass)
Unison Off	4' Choralbass (ext. Oct.)
4' Choir	4' Flute (ext. Bass Ged.)
Swell to Choir 16' 8' 4'	32' Bombarde (ext. Trbn., 1-12 elect)
Great to Choir	32' Contra Fagott (ext., Fag., 1-12 elect)

### PEDAL ORGAN

32' Double Open Wood (ext., 1-12 resultant)	16' Trombone
32' Grand Bourdon (1-12 elect.)	16' Fagott (Sw)
16' Open Wood	8' Tromba (ext. Timbn.)
16' Double Diapason	4' Fagott (Sw)
16' Subbass	Great to Pedal 8' 4'
16' Bourdon (Sw)	Swell to Pedal 8' 4'
	Choir to Pedal 8' 4'

### ACCESSORIES

SSL combination action, 32 memory levels  
Full compliment of divisional and general combination pistons and toe studs.  
Programmable crescendo  
Transposer  
Great - Choir Manual Transfer  
Midi control system and performance record system.

French style terraced console in oak with mahogany interior, bone natural keys with rosewood sharps, maple and rosewood pedalkeys and turned rosewood drawknobs with ivorine inserts.

Balanced shoes for Swell and Choir expression.

Chimes (graduated large scale Deagan)  
Cymbelstern (8 bells)  
Rosignol



# The Organs in St. Mary Cathedral



# A Brief History