

## **The Æolian Organ at Meadow Brook Hall**

Rochester Hills, MI

Nameplate inscribed as:     **Æolian Pipe Organ**  
                                      **No. 1444**  
                                      **The Æolian Co.**  
                                      **New York**

The organ at Meadow Brook Hall was ordered for the Dodge's new house in Grosse Pointe on July 10, 1919 at a cost of \$59,000 installed. After the death of Mr. John Dodge in 1920, Matilda Dodge abandoned plans to complete the residence in Grosse Pointe. Because of the delay, the Æolian Company was asked to delay shipment until at least December 1921. However, it was shipped on December 9, 1920 and put in storage. In 1925, Matilda married Mr. Alfred Wilson and they decided to construct Meadow Brook Hall at Meadow Brook Farms, property Matilda and John had developed in Rochester Michigan. The organ was finally installed in the Hall in 1929 at an additional cost of \$7,000. (letter from J.D. Crank, November 2, 1999.)

Æolian No. 1444 is a three manual organ of 77 stops, and approximately 76 ranks. The manual compass is 61 notes and the pedal compass is 30 notes.

The organ was equipped with two roll players. One is an Æolian player that is located in the console where the music rack is also located. It plays the standard 10-1/4", 58 or 116 hole rolls. The second is a Duo-Art roll player that plays 15-1/4", 176 hole rolls. The Duo-Art player was installed in a wall cabinet in the Organ Alcove. The Duo-Art player has been removed and is presently in storage. Over 800 rolls of the two types have been found in the Hall and catalogued. Most rolls of this era are not cut on very good paper, and are fragile, so are not usable. In 1995 a MIDI system was added to the organ to allow the organ to play without using the roll player.

The console was designed and built by the Hayden Co. of New York. It is constructed of American Oak with inlaid design of flowers, which match the elaborate inlay work in the interior of the 'family' elevator, also done by the Hayden Co. The console is unusual in several ways. The music rack is hidden and blended in with the top edge console woodwork when stored away. In use it pulls out and swings down to cover the Æolian Roll player. The roll top slides up from under the lower manual.

Inter- and intra-manual couplers are rocking tablets in the nameboard under the roll player. Division Silent controls are drawknobs on either side of the couplers.

Stop controls are horizontally rocking tablets mounted in slanted banks on either side of the manual key-desks. Pistons for a blind electro-mechanical combination system are included under the Swell (III) manual. These are 6 mechanically intercancelling thumb pistons plus a release (Off) piston. The pistons are programmed by a mechanical setter board in the main organ chamber. A set of 6 indicator lights show which piston is active. The method of registration is selected by a set of 3 mechanically intercancelling thumb pistons under the Great (II) manual. The selections are "Tablets", "Both", or "Pistons". In the "Both" position, the stops selected by the tablets and pistons are additive. Also under the great manual is a two piston control for disabling the main organ labeled "Antiph. Only" and "Off".

Foot controls include "Manual III to Ped.", "Manual II to Ped" and "Manual I to Ped" reversibles on the left. In the center is a "Tonal" (crescendo) shoe, and Antiph., Swell, Gt/Ch., and Solo swell shoes. On the right side are "All Swells" and "Sforzando" hook-downs. The swell engines are 6 stage.

Pipes of the Great/Choir, Swell, and Solo Organs are in three chambers in the basement under the 32 ft by 50 ft. Drawing Room. Sound is conducted up to the Drawing Room and Entry Great Hall by a two story section of the pipe room. Sound is heard through draped openings into the two rooms. The organ console is in an alcove between the Drawing room and Library, remote from the chamber openings. This placement doesn't allow the organist to hear the sound very well, and includes a noticeable delay from when the key is pressed. Pipes of the Main Organs are winded at 4 and 6 inches/H<sub>2</sub>O by a 7½ HP Spenser Turbine *Orgoblow* blower, which is in a double concrete-walled room adjacent to the pipe room. The main organ Chimes and Harp are located in a balcony of the 2 story pipe room at the main floor level.

Pipes of the Antiphonal Organ are located in a room on the third floor of the house. The Antiphonal Chimes and Harp are also in that chamber. The sound is conducted in an unusual arrangement down a concrete shaft past the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and then horizontally to a grill work carved in the paneling of the main staircase in the Great Entry Hall. Even with the swell shades open the sound is very faint, and almost inaudible to the organist. This disposition of the Antiphonal Organ is common in Æolian Residential organs. The Antiphonal Organ is winded at 4½ inches/H<sub>2</sub>O by a 2 HP Spenser Turbine *Orgoblow* blower located in a double concrete-walled room adjacent to the antiphonal pipe room.

The Choir organ is entirely borrowed from the Great. The Antiphonal and Solo Organs are floating and may be selected to any keyboard or Off by mechanically intercancelling buttons directly below their rocker tablet group. The main organ Chimes, main organ Harp, Antiphonal Chimes, and Antiphonal Harp are also floating and may be selected by similar buttons to any manual. There is also a selector for F (loud) or P (soft) for each. P essentially places an extra piece of felt between the striker and the chime or harp bar.

### **Inter and Intra-manual Couplers**

The following couplers are provided in the nameboard above the manuals.

#### **Left Group**

Man III to Ped  
Man II to Ped  
Man I to Ped  
Man III Octave to Ped  
Man II Octave to Ped  
Man III to Man II  
Man I to Man II  
Man III to Man I  
Man III Sub to Man II  
Man III Octave to Man II  
Man I Sub to Man II

#### **Right Group**

Man III Sub  
Man II Sub  
Man I Sub  
Antiph. Sub  
Man III Octave  
Man II Octave  
Man I Octave  
Antiph. Octave

## Stop Controls.

Names of Stops in an Æolian residence organ are designed for people who are not trained organists. Below are the names as they appear on the rocker tablet. When a pitch is not specified it is 8'. In Æolian naming "Deep" and "High" indicate 16' and 4', but tablets on this instrument have the pitch also specified. Classical pipe names are rarely on the tab. Æolian used the word "vibrato" for celeste ranks, again for the benefit of non-organists. The organ is tuned to 436 Hz as was common in 1919. Information in parentheses below is our additional information. Stops that are not a borrowed stop have a small dot in the upper right corner of the stop tab. All ranks not otherwise noted (\*) are enclosed.

### Great Organ (II)

1. Dulciana Deep 16
2. Diapason F
3. Diapason MF
4. Flute F
5. Flute P
6. String MF
7. String F
8. String PP
9. Vibrato String P
10. Flute High 4
11. Piccolo 2
12. Mixture Diapason (III)
13. Clarinet
14. Trumpet

### Swell Organ (III)

15. Flute Deep 16
16. Diapason F
17. Flute P
18. Flute Quintadena
19. String PP
20. Vibrato String P
21. String P
22. String MF
23. Vibrato String MF
24. String F
25. Vibrato String F
26. Vibrato Dulciana MF
27. Flute High 4
28. Flageolet 2
29. Mixture String
30. Bassoon Deep 16
31. Vox Humana P
32. Vox Humana F

33. Clarinet
34. Oboe
35. Orchestral Oboe
36. Trumpet

### Choir Organ (I) (entirely borrowed from Gt)

37. Diapason (3)
38. String F (7)
39. String MF (6)
40. String P (9)
41. String PP (8)
42. Flute F (4)
43. Flute P (5)
44. Flute High 4 (10)
45. Piccolo 2 (11)
46. Clarinet (13)

### Solo Organ (floating)

47. Diapason
48. Vibrato String II
49. Flute
50. Clarinet
51. Trumpet

### Pedal Organ

52. Diapason Deep 16 \*
53. Dulciana Deep P 16 \*
54. String Deep 16
55. Flute Deep F 16
56. Flute Deep P 16
57. Flute
58. String F
59. Bassoon Deep P 16

60. Trumpet Deep F 16

### Antiphonal Organ (floating)

61. Flute Deep 16
62. Diapason
63. Flute F
64. Flute P
65. String PP
66. Vibrato String P
67. String MF
68. Vibrato String F
69. String F
70. Flute High 4
71. Mixture String
72. Trumpet
73. Oboe
74. Clarinet
75. Vox Humana

### Antiphonal Pedal Organ

76. Flute Deep F 16
77. Flute Deep P 16
78. Main Chimes \*
79. Main Harp \*
80. Antiphonal Chimes
81. Antiphonal Harp \*

### **The Æolian Roll Player**

The Æolian roll player is based on the original 58 hole pattern developed for reed organs and some pianos. 58 hole rolls can play 58 of the 61 notes of standard organ keyboard. By adding a second row of 58 holes to the roll reading mechanism, the mechanism can play the Great and Swell keys independently. Rolls of both 58 and 116 holes are somewhat interchangeable, but only 116 hole rolls can provide the control for two manuals of an organ. The roll player in the console of Æolian No. 1444 is a 116 hole machine. Two lever controls are inside the player case – a Unison, Normal, Reverse control and a Tempo control. In the Unison position both manuals are controlled by both sets of holes. In the Normal position the Great is controlled by the lower row of holes on the player and the odd numbered holes of the roll, and the Swell is controlled by the upper row holes on the player and the even numbered holes of the roll. In the Reverse position the Great and Swell are controlled by the opposite set of holes. In this instrument there is also a switch in the Choir Stop group labeled “Upper – Lower” that we believe allows Choir Stops selected to be played by either set of holes. The Æolian rolls have no registration capability, so someone must sit at the console and follow the stop recommendations that were sometimes printed on the rolls as they scrolled by. The player is powered by air pressure from the organ. An Æolian Ventil draw knob left of the player turns on the air to the player. An Æolian Reroll draw knob right of the player provided a high speed air motor to re-wind the roll.

### **Duo-Art Roll Player**

The Duo-Art, with its larger 176 hole count could also control the registration and swell expression as well as controlling the pedal notes. The center section of the roll (holes 33 to 148) are for the key action and are the same as, and could also read the smaller Æolian rolls with an adapter. The Duo-Art player has been disconnected and removed from the Organ Alcove cabinet and is currently in storage.

### **Compiled for Meadow Brook Hall by:**

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