

Wahl Organbuilders has designed a new practice organ, now under construction for Groton School in Massachusetts. With two manuals and pedal, the instrument contains four ranks of widely-varying character to provide distinct variety for such a small instrument.

The instrument's tonal core is the lower manual 8' Fugara. A string with principal leanings, the Fugara provides a foundation of open tone. The bass octave is of Haskell construction to continue open tone to the lowest notes. The 4' Gemshorn is a tapered hybrid principal, made all the more useful for being available on both manuals. The sharing, by channel dividers, allows either or both manuals to use this stop at any time. To save space, the Gemshorn's lowest seven notes are borrowed from the Fugara's tenor octave.

In addition to the shared Gemshorn, the upper manual is home to the 8' Lieblich Gedact, a stopped rank of narrow scale and daringly high cutup. Here is a register of uncanny clarity and piquancy, whose vibrant zing is equally capable of solo lines as of dense chordal accompaniment. The fourth rank, a fully-independent 8' Pedal Bass, is a generously-scaled wood Gedact.

These four resources are marshaled by a mechanism elegantly economical in design. Having but three elements between finger and pipe, the key action is immediate and responsive — gratifying to play, and sustaining years of careful practice without fatigue or boredom. Full modern key compasses allow preparation of all music as well as the option of octave transposition.

The entire instrument is contained within a hardwood casework. The front is solid with doors, while the sides and back have grillwork to allow good tonal egress while protecting the pipework. A simple internal dolly allows the instrument to move away from the wall for service access. The instrument fits beneath an 8' ceiling.

As with our earlier practice instruments, we designed this organ on the assumption that it may be relocated many times (as seven other Wahl instruments already have been moved eight times since their original installations). Our design allows for ready relocation; only the fewest possible elements require disassembly for moving. The electric blower supplying the wind is housed within the instrument, and requires only a standard 110-volt wall outlet.

Daniel Moriarty is Groton School's Chapel Organist and Director of Choral Music. Jonathan Ambrosino serves as consultant to the School for pipe organ projects.

Wahl Organbuilders is building a twin to the Groton organ on speculation. We welcome enquiries for its acquisition.

Five-Stop Practice Organ

Series of Two Organs

Groton School
Groton, MA

Manual I

8 Fugara
4 Gemshorn

Manual II

8 Lieblich Gedact
4 Gemshorn

Pedal

8 Bass
I-Pedal Coupler
II-Pedal Coupler

Key compass: 61/32

Dimensions: 94" h, 58" w, 35 d
(excluding keyboards and pedalboard)