The Organ Clearing House, Charlestown, Massachusetts
The Church of the Resurrection, New York, New York

"Downstairs, Upstairs"

During 1916, Casavant Frères completed 61 new organs, including Opus 665, built for the "Lower Sanctuary" of the Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul in Lewiston, Maine, incorporating many ranks of pipes from the church's previous organ built by Hook & Hastings. At that time Lewiston was a bustling center of textile and sawmills powered by the current of the Androscoggin River. As in many towns and villages in northern New England, Lewiston's population was dominated by people of French-Canadian descent, so in a town of some 15,000 people there were 17 Roman Catholic parishes—a natural American market for a Canadian organbuilder.

The Church of SS. Peter and Paul was the largest of Lewiston's Catholic churches, and while its lower church's organ received heavy use in a busy schedule of Masses, this workaday organ was not intended as a concert instrument—that role was relegated to the larger Casavant organ in the much larger "upstairs" sanctuary.

Our project for the Church of the Resurrection has been to promote that relatively simple organ from semi-rural northern New England to busy and upscale New York, and more significantly, from a downstairs to an upstairs organ.

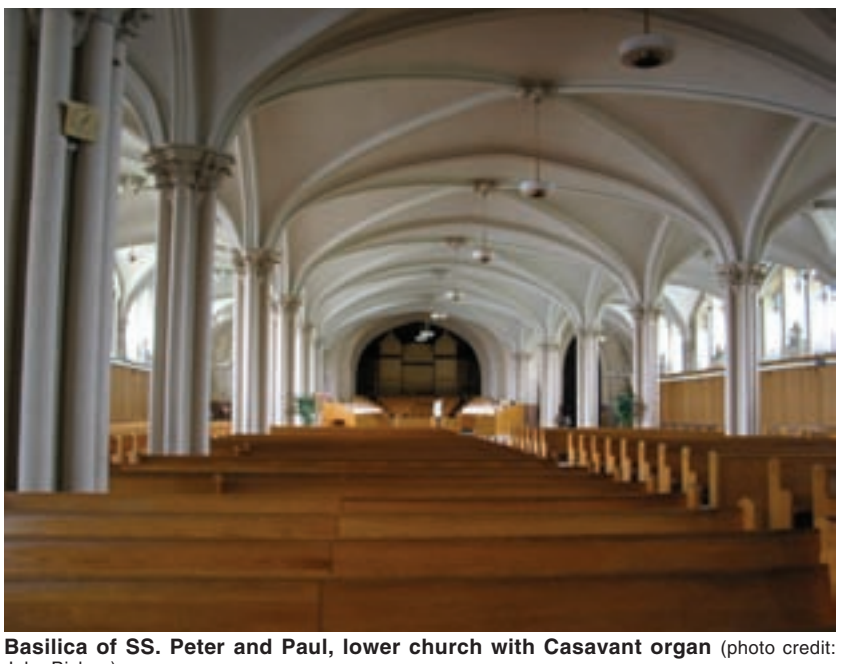
My first contact with the Church of the Resurrection was organist David Enlow's 2002 inquiry regarding the possible sale of the church's McManis organ, which had been mortally damaged by well-meaning but unenlightened carpenters, who boldly divided the never-to-be-right-again organ in order to reveal the south-facing "west" window. An electronic instrument was in use, and the sale of the pipe organ was the first germ of inspiration toward the church's acquisition of a functional pipe organ. Growing up in Toronto, Mr. Enlow had been reared on early twentieth-century Casavant organs, and it was his intention that the Church of the Resurrection should have such an instrument. When the notice of Casavant #665's availability appeared on my desk, we felt we had the right instrument for Church of the Resurrection.

Mr. Enlow and Fr. Barry Swain, rector of the Church of the Resurrection, traveled to Maine, where we met to inspect the organ. Though it had been unplayable and neglected for many years, it was clearly consistent with Enlow's vision, and ideal for use as the core of a more sophisticated organ. The sale was negotiated, the organ was dismantled and stored, and we began the process of imagination and debate over the scope and character of the new organ, choosing which voices might be retained from the McManis organ and determining which new voices should be introduced to effect the transformation.

The addition of a third expressive chamber, colorful and powerful symphonic voices such as French Horn and Tuba, several added 16-foot ranks, and a complex antiphonal layout have allowed this transformation. While the original instrument was simple and straightforward, the present instrument is complex and varied.

The Récit, Grand Orgue, and "major" pedal divisions are located in the rear gallery. The Positif is located in a chamber above and behind the organ console in the chancel. Enclosed with the Positif is an independent pedal Bourdon 16′, retained from the Church of the Resurrection's two previous organs (E. M. Skinner and Charles McManis), and a Gemshorn 16′ from the McManis organ, included as an extension of the original Casavant Dulciane 8′. The Solo division is located in a tightly enclosed chamber above the Positif, which speaks through a grille in the arched ceiling of the chancel. The floor plan of the Solo chamber is trapezoidal to avoid internal acoustic "slapping," and the extra hard and dense walls provide for both maximum expression and projection of tone.

Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, Lewiston, ME (with two OCH trucks) (photo credit: John Bishop)



Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, lower church with Casavant organ (photo credit: John Bishop)

Old façade (photo credit: John Bishop)

The new Solo division was inspired by the fact that the original Grand Orgue had a separate high-pressure windchest, which originally supported a Montre 8′ and a Trumpet 8′ that was missing by the time we found the organ. That Montre is now the Solo Principal, joined by three more exciting voices on high pressure. The evolved stoplist includes several unusual features that allow for especially colorful and expressive playing.

Although the Tuba is a trumpet-style voice, its powerful tone separates it from the organ's other reeds. As such, there is only one Trumpet on the manuals, the dark-sounding Récit Cor 8′. Otherwise, the organ's reeds comprise a buffet of tone color, one from each family of reed stops: Oboe, Clarinet, Vox Humana, and French Horn.

Each manual division includes 16′ tone and an 8′ Principal. There are eight independent 16′ voices—a strong ratio for a 40-rank organ. The Positif Viole d'Orchestre and Viole Celeste provide zing, in striking contrast to the singing strings of the Récit and the especially colorful Salicional of the Grand Orgue—the combined antiphonal chorus of strings creates a rich orchestral color.

The Solo Flûte Harmonique fills two roles—as an antiphonal soloist with the luscious Grand Orgue Flûte Double, and as an expressive accompaniment to its downstairs neighbor, the Positif.

The organ's console is a blend of old and new. The console cabinet, keyboards, and pedalboard are original. New stop jambs and coupler rail were built to accommodate the new voices and controls, supported by a state-of-the-art solid-state control system.

The completion of any significant pipe organ project requires the participation of many people, combining skills and experience to create an artistic whole. The Organ Clearing House's crew dismantled, packed, and stored the organ for the period between acquisition and renovation. John Bishop and David Enlow developed the concept of the organ. Jay Zoller of Newcastle, Maine (formerly of the Andover Organ Company) provided mechanical drawings. Organ Clearing House president Amory Atkins adapted and expanded the rear gallery for the new organ, constructed the chancel organ chambers, and directed the installation of the organ. OCH vice-president Joshua Wood supervised the extensive transportation program necessary to bring the organ from the workshop in Deerfield, New Hampshire to Manhattan, assisted by OCH logistics expert Dean Conry. John Bishop rebuilt the console and wired the organ. And while all members of the OCH team participated in the general installation of the instrument, Terence Atkin was on hand for nearly every day of installation while others came and went.

The revised tonal content was designed and executed by Scot Huntington of S. L. Huntington & Co. of Stonington, Connecticut. Christopher and David Broome of Broome & Co. in East Granby, Connecticut restored the original Casavant reed pipes, and provided the pipes and voicing for the two new reed voices. Eastern Organ Pipes of Hagerstown, Maryland provided the new flue pipes. Richard Nickerson of Nickerson Pipe Organ Service in Melrose, Massachusetts releathered wind regulators and tremolos. New windchests were provided by Organ Supply Industries in Erie, Pennsylvania; console controls, organ relays, and expression motors by Peterson Electro-Musical Products of Alsip, Illinois; and manual keyboards were recovered with cow bone by John Nelson Woodworking of Little Compton, Rhode Island.

In 1916, the workshops of the great organ companies employed hundreds of workers, among whom could be found every skill and ability necessary to design and build instruments of the highest quality. Today it is unusual for a pipe organ company to employ more than ten workers, and most have fewer than five. Combining the highest skills from specialized companies ensures that each facet of a complicated project can be completed expertly, and we are grateful to all those who added their skills to this project.

The dedication recital was played by Peter Richard Conte on February 22, 2011. Subsequent recitals have been played by Andrew Henderson and James Kennerly. On April 15, David Enlow played a program of organ concertos, with an orchestra directed by Stephen Simon.

Recently, David Enlow received a message from Paul Doyon of North

Loading the console (photo credit: John Bishop)

Console

Church of the Resurrection, New York (photo credit: John Bishop)

Façade of gilded Violon pipes with 18th-century gilt wood cherubs

Carolina, who had seen recital publicity and recognized the organ his mother had played for many years in Lewiston. Mr. Doyon wrote: "My mother, Emilia Bilodeau-Doyon, played on that organ from 1920 until 1964 . . . She died in 1992 and in 2003 I returned to Lewiston to the now Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and played a short program after the Mass celebrating her 100th anniversary."

Mr. Doyon's recollections emphasize the special meanings hidden in the relocation of vintage pipe organs. Any organ is part of the fabric and life of the parish that owns it. When a church closes or a room is "re-purposed," its heritage is honored and continued when the organ finds new life in a new home. I imagine this organ was mighty surprised to wake up finding itself in the big city—as millions of stiff-necked tourists quip, "look at all them tall buildings!"

—John Bishop

Photos by Ray Stubblebine unless indicated otherwise

GRAND ORGUE (II, gallery)
16′ Violon**
8′ Principal
8′ Flûte Double
8′ Salicional
4′ Octave
2′ Doublette
Mixture III

RÉCIT (III, gallery)
16′ Bourdon
8′ Principal
8′ Bourdon
8′ Viole de Gambe
8′ Voix Céleste
4′ Principal
2′ Octavin
Mixture II + II (mixture + cornet)
16′ Basson (ext)*
8′ Cor
8′ Hautbois
8′ Voix Humaine
4′ Hautbois (ext)*
Tremolo

POSITIF (I, chancel)
16′ Dulciane (ext)**
8′ Principal
8′ Melodie
8′ Dulciane
8′ Viole d'Orchestre
8′ Viole Céleste*
4′ Flûte Douce
2′ Flageolet
8′ Clarinette
Tremolo

SOLO (I, chancel ceiling)
8′ Montre
8′ Flûte Harmonique*
8′ Cor d'Orchestre†
8′ Tuba Mirabilis*
Cloches
Tremolo
Solo sur GdOr.

PÉDALE (gallery)
(Pos. stops in chancel)
32′ Basse Acoustique
16′ Flûte Ouverte
16′ Violon (Gd. Orgue)**
16′ Bourdon
16′ Bourdon (Réc.)
16′ Bourdon Pos.**
16′ Dulciane (Pos.)**
10⅔′ Quinte**
8′ Flûte (ext)
8′ Bourdon (ext)
8′ Violon (Gd. Orgue)**
8′ Dulciane (Pos.)
4′ Violon (Gd. Orgue)**
32′ Basson Cornet (composed)
16′ Bombarde
16′ Basson (Réc.)*

*New pipes
**From prior Resurrection organs
†E. M. Skinner French Horn

Coupler rail
Gd. Orgue a Ped.
Recit a Ped.
Positif a Ped.
Solo a Ped.
Recit Aigu a Ped.
Solo Aigu a Ped.

Recit grave au Gd. Orgue
Recit au Gd. Orgue
Recit aigu au Gd. Orgue
Positif grave au Gd. Orgue
Positif au Gd. Orgue
Positif aigu au Gd. Orgue
Gd. Orgue Aigu

Recit grave
Recit unisson muet
Recit aigu

Recit grave au Pos.
Recit au Pos.
Recit aigu au Pos.
Pos. grave
Pos. unisson muet
Pos. aigu

Solo grave
Solo unisson muet
Solo aigu

Exp. Solo sur Cresc.
Gd. Orgue/ 1ier Clav. Échange

Unusual controls

Récit Mixture II + II toggle switch
This allows the player to choose which mixture ranks play when the stop is drawn. The first pair is a two-rank quint mixture, and the second a sesquialtera designed to play on its own or to combine with the first pair to form a tierce mixture. The setting can be saved to general and Récit local pistons, and is shown by indicator lights on either side of the drawknob.

Solo sur Gd. Orgue
This causes the stops of the Solo to play on the second manual rather than the first. This way, the Positif stops can play on the first manual and the solo on the second. It does not silence the Great stops.

Exp. Solo sur Cresc.
This cancels the action of the register crescendo pedal and moves the solo expression control from the Positif shoe to the Crescendo shoe.

Gd. Orgue/ 1ier Clav. Échange
This switch exchanges the first and second manuals, including the local pistons and coupler reversibles. Note the first manual is both Solo and Positif.

50 stops, 40 ranks, 2,363 pipes

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