



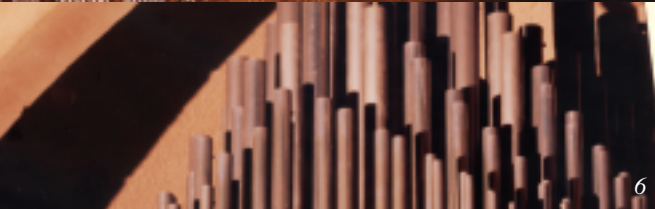
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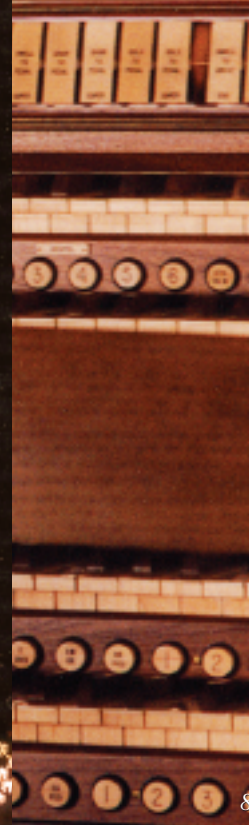
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service; (3) in 1989 First Church received a very substantial gift that would add approximately 100 additional ranks to be incorporated into the Great Organs. Richard F. Muench, longtime curator of the Great Organs, undertook the second and third parts of this work until his untimely death in 1992.

The duplicate Consoles that grace the Chancel and the West Gallery of First Church are the largest draw-knob consoles ever built in the Western Hemisphere. The Chancel console, which can be moved out into the Chancel for performances, was installed in November, 1992, and was the last masterpiece designed by the venerable Moller firm, which soon closed its doors as a result of financial problems. (Moller knowingly underbid the actual cost of these gigantic consoles so as to have the prestige of designing/building them.) The twin Gallery console, completed by former Moller craftsmen at the Hagerstown Organ Company, was installed a few months later.

Under the direction of the famed Frederick Swann, Organist-in-Residence from 1998 to 2001, First Church's Organ Curator, William Zeiler, completed the installation of Divisions in the North Transept Gallery and the South Transept Gallery, so that those attending services and concerts at First Church are now surrounded by music on four sides. Organists of note from around the world, including E. Power Biggs, Virgil Fox, Alexander Schreiner and Pierre Cochereau, to name only a few, have played the Great Organs of First Church during the past 34 years.

The Great Organs are heard in worship each Sunday at 11AM and at the great Festival Services of the year; each Thursday at free recitals during the noon hour; in the Organ Concert Series which feature artists from around the world each season; and, of course, at the famed Los Angeles Bach Festival.

Thomas Hunter Russell

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for the distinguished banker and devout churchman who guided the project to completion, was built by Herman Schlicker, with Clarence Mader and Mr. Holzgraf as consultants. Set in a free-standing case with towering copper pedal pipes on either side of the rose window, the Gallery Organ, with its clean voicing, brilliant ensembles and grand basses in its five divisions, enables the organist to capture the spirit and inspiration of the North German tradition of the 17th century.

The 11th division consists of a small Italian-style Continuo Organ, situated above the Peace Shrine (adjacent to the South Choir of the Chancel). Built by Schlicker, the crisp tones of the Continuo Organ are heard frequently in accompaniments and in large ensembles.

In 1984, in honor of Mr. Holzgraf's 25th anniversary as Resident Organist at First Church, a splendid state trumpet – to be known as the Holzgraf Royal Trumpet – was added. Extending into the Chancel high above on both sides, at the foot of the Mudd Memorial Organ, the pipes of this rank find frequent use in the rich liturgy of great festival services. This brought the Great Organs to a total of approximately 218 ranks. But that is far from the end of the story.

In 1990, First Church embarked on a program of renewal and upgrading of the Great Organs designed to meet three separate challenges: (1) recognizing that the duplicate Schlicker consoles (1969) were both technologically outdated and increasingly incapable of controlling the vast resources of the organs, the Trustees awarded a contract for the construction of two mammoth five-manual consoles to M.P. Moller, Inc., the oldest and largest American organ builder; (2) the Mudd Memorial Organ in the Chancel was in need of new wind chests and other mechanical repairs after some 60 years of

PHOTO DESCRIPTIVES

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THE GREAT *of* ORGANS FIRST CHURCH

The Great Organs of First Church, situated in the enormous vaulted Sanctuary of Los Angeles' oldest Protestant Church, together constitute perhaps the largest musical instrument existing in any Church in the world today. Now, with approximately 346 ranks, 265 stops, 233 voices, 18 divisions, and more than 20,000 pipes, the Great Organs speak down the Nave and Chancel, and from the South and North Transept Galleries with the music of the ages.

Since its founding in 1867, The First Congregational Church has played an important role in the musical and cultural life of Los Angeles. So it was appropriate that, when First Church constructed its new soaring Gothic Cathedral on West 6th Street in 1931, a new Organ would be built. In chambers high on both sides of the Chancel, the Seeley Wintersmith Mudd Memorial Organ was constructed and installed by the noted American organ builder, Ernest M. Skinner. Voiced in the style of what came to be known as the 'American Classic' school of organ building, the five divisions of that organ – controlled by a four-manual draw-knob console – served as the church's principal instrument until 1969, when it was greatly enlarged from its original 58 ranks. Unaltered in the 1969 expansion were the sturdy diapasons, lush strings, and the Skinner hallmarks, the romantic flute and reed stops of the Solo division.

The nationally known James W. Fifield, Jr., Senior Minister of First Church for 32 years, and Lloyd Holzgraf, the brilliant Organist-in-Residence at First Church from 1959 until 1998, envisioned a grand new instrument in the West Gallery of First Church, more than 200 feet from the Main Altar in the Chancel. Thus, the Frank C. Noon Memorial Organ, named