

The New Johannus Organ at St. Cecilia's Catholic Church, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

The Monarke organ from The Netherlands

The new organ at St. Cecilia Church in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, is a Monarke custom organ from Johannus Orgelbouw of Ede, The Netherlands. Johannus is the world's largest producer of digital organs, from home models to large church and concert organs, producing organs since the 1970's. The Monarke organs are the highest expression of the digital organ art today. From its beginnings in the 1980's, Johannus Organs has continued efforts in research and development to advance the art and realism of digital organ sound.

In the organ at St. Cecilia, the pipe organ sounds that are heard when the organ is played are all recordings of pipe organs in French organs. In the Johannus technique, each pipe of each organ voice is recorded. When a key on a Johannus organ is pressed, the recording of that pipe or pipes is played back. This goes for every organ voice in the instrument. So sitting in St. Cecilia's church, as the organ is played, those sounds generated in France are now making music in Wisconsin.

French tonal style

For St. Cecilia, we chose an organ of French tonality primarily because of the rich variety of warm tone colors available in this style of organ. The organ's tonal design began with the influence of Aristide Cavallé-Coll, the pre-eminent French Romantic organ builder of the nineteenth century. Certain adjustments in the specification were made to fit the French Classical tonal requirements as well as our own contemporary tastes. The result is a tonal palette that is true to the French tradition while also providing for clear and colorful realization of other tonal traditions, such as the music of J.S. Bach.

The organ is packaged in a Cavallé-Coll style console with curved stop terraces, traditional white/black keyboards and wooden stop knobs. The console cabinet is stained to match the church furniture, and the crest of St. Cecilia Church is reproduced on the back panels of the organ console. To provide an effect of "French immersion", all the draw stops and primary organ piston controls are labeled in French.

Audio System

The organ sound is produced by two speaker arrays with a total of 58 speakers plus two bass subwoofers at the rear of the Apse. Each speaker has its own amplifier, housed in an electronics cabinet that connects to the console with a single Ethernet connection. This technology in the digital organ world is as advanced today as Cavallé-Coll's famed Barker Lever technology was in his day.

About the Sound

Starting with the Principal sound, the Montre and Prestant stops convey a warmth of tone that sets the standard for the rest of the organ. Each manual division has Flute stops and a String stop at 8' pitch. These stops used in combinations with or without the Montres give the organist a tone color palette with rich variety.

It is in the Reed stops this organ really stands out. Out of the organs 52 voices, there are 15 independent reed voices. These reeds are not simply intended to be solo sounds, but are designed to be used in combinations to present a wall of sound as a tonal characteristic in its own right. Thanks to the high quality and design of the digital pipe recordings used to make these organ voices, it is possible in the reed voices to hear the quirks of individual pipe resonators as the reed voices are played. These peripheral sound characteristics become part of the fabric of the musical sound of the organ and are a treat for the listener.

St. Cecilia Church

The organ project could not have happened without the vision and support of Fr. Eric Sternberg and the members of the parish of St. Cecilia. The new St. Cecilia's Church was designed and built with outstanding musical acoustics. Sound travels evenly throughout the room, with no echoes or distortion. The placement of the organ speakers was chosen to take optimal advantage of the room acoustic.

Johannus Organs Midwest

This new organ was acquired through Johannus Organs Midwest, Matt Bechteler, President, based in Bloomingdale, IL. The organ design, tonal and audio specifications, installation plan and finish voicing were done by Gary Wood, voicer and project manager for Johannus Organs Midwest. Mr. Wood lived in Europe for 11 years, having the opportunity to play and study many classical pipe organs there. That experience is brought to bear in designing and finishing Johannus organs to sound true to their origins. The speaker arrays and the mobile platform for the console were built by Jim Stout of JDS Builders, Richfield, Wisconsin. The technical installation was carried out by Dwayne Linich of Johannus Organs Midwest, and Mark Snyder of Music Solutions Wisconsin. Thanks are due to River Architects and Kraemer Brothers Construction for coordinating construction schedules with the organ installation schedule and physical requirements.



*Stop Specification for the French voiced
St. Cecilia Organ, Wisconsin Dells,
Wisconsin, installed August 2016*

Grand Orgue	Positif	Récit	Pédale
Montre 16'	Montre 8'	Corno Dolce 16'	Soubasse 32'
Violon-Basse 16'	Flûte à Cheminée 8'	Diapason 8'	Contre-Basse 16'
Montre 8'	Salicional 8'	Cor de Nuit 8'	Soubasse 16'
Flute Harmonique 8'	Prestant 4'	Flûte Traversière 8'	Corno Dolce 16'
Bourdon 8'	Flûte à Fuseau 4'	Viole de Gambe 8'	Basse 8'
Gambe 8'	Sesquialtera II	Voix Céleste 8'	Bourdon 8'
Prestant 4'	Flûte à Bec 2'	Flûte Octavante 4'	Violoncelle 8'
Flûte Conique 4'	Fourniture IV	Nasard 2/3'	Flûte 4'
Doublette 2'	Fagotto 16'	Octavin 2'	Contre Bombarde 32'
Grande Fourniture IV	Cromorne 8'	Plein Jeu V	Bombarde 16'
Cornet V	Trompette Royal 8'	Bombarde 16'	Trompette 8'
Trompette 16'	Tremblant Positif	Trompette Harmonique 8'	Clairon 4'
Trompette 8'		Hautbois 8'	
Clarin 4'		Voix Humaine 8'	
Tremblant Grand Orgue		Clairon Harmonique 4'	
		Tremblant Récit	
Clochettes			
Récit - Grand Orgue	Récit - Positif		Grand Orgue - Pédale Positif - Pédale
Positif - Grand Orgue	Positif Graves		Récit - Pédale
Sequence - Sequence +	Positif Aigües	Sequence - Sequence +	Récit - Pédale Aigües