

A Brief History of St. Paul's Johnson & Son Pipe Organ, Opus 503

Founded in 1849 as Grace Church, Sacramento, St. Paul's Episcopal Church laid the cornerstone of its present building in 1903. The church's first pipe organ was built by the San Francisco Firm of John Bergstrom for a building that existed previously. The Bergstrom organ was moved into the new building in 1909 and was destroyed by a fire along with much of the chancel on January 5, 1914.

Later in 1914, St. Paul's purchased an organ from Williams College – the history of that organ follows. In 1877, Johnson & Son of Westfield, Massachusetts built Opus 503 for the First Lutheran Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Historical details are sketchy from this period, but before the turn of the century the church constructed a new Romanesque-style building and sold Opus 503 to Williams College in Williamstown, MA for use in a new chapel. Two ranks (and probably some other parts) from the college's William A. Johnson organ, Opus 137 were incorporated into Opus 503. The rest of Opus 137 was sold to a private residence.

The Johnson & Son Opus 503 was installed in St. Paul's by Otto Schoenstein of San Francisco in the rebuilt chancel chamber that once held the Bergstrom organ. The dedication of the organ took place on January 10, 1915.

In addition to changes made by Schoenstein in 1914, the organ was further altered in 1927. In 1963, William A. Baker began the process of restoring the organ to its original specification, but that goal was not realized until the extensive effort of Mark Austin in 1996.

Notable recitals on this organ have been performed by Frederic Brugge in 1947; E. Power Biggs in 1965; Nancy Metzger in 1976; John Fenstermaker in 1985 and Susan Armstrong in 1988. In celebration of the most recent restoration, St. Paul's Episcopal Church hosted a series of recitals in 1996 and 1997, featuring Charles Rus, Susan Armstrong and Marian Ruhl Metson.

Organ stop lists on next page.

The organ is a tracker action, 2 manuals 58 notes and pedal 30 notes, drawknob keydesk.
It has no combination action and one bellows.

Stop list 1877	Stop list 1915	Stop list 1963	Stop list 1996
<p>Great 8' Open Diapason 8' Melodia 8' Dulciana 4' Principal 4' Waldflute 2' Fifteenth II Mixture 8' Trumpet</p> <p>Swell 16' Bourdon 8' Open Diapason 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Keraulophon 4' Violin 4' Harmonic Flute 2' Flautino II Cornet Dolce 8' Oboe (TC) 8' Bassoon (#1-12)</p> <p>Pedal 16' Double Open</p>	<p>Great 8' Open Diapason 8' Dulciana 4' Principal 4' Waldflute 2' Fifteenth II Mixture</p> <p>Swell 8' Open Diapason 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Keraulophon 8' Aeoline 4' Violin 4' Harmonic Flute 8' Hautboy (TC) (*1) 8' Bassoon (#1-12)</p> <p>Pedal 16' Double Open 16' Bourdon (*2)</p>	<p>Great 8' Open Diapason 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Dulciana 4' Principal 4' Harmonic Flute 2-2/3 Quinte 2' Fifteenth II Mixture (*3) 8' Trumpet (*4)</p> <p>Swell 8' Open Diapason 8' Gedeckt 8' Keraulophon 8' Voix Celeste 4' Chimney Flute (TF) 2' Waldflute 1-1/3 Larigot 8' Trompette</p> <p>Pedal 16' Double Open 16' Bourdon</p>	<p>Great 8' Open Diapason 8' Melodia 8' Dulciana 4' Principal 4' Flute d'Amour 2' Fifteenth III Mixture 8' Trumpet</p> <p>Swell 8' Open Diapason 8' Stopped Diapason 8' Keraulophon (*6) 4' Voix Celeste (new) 4' Violin 4' Harmonic Flute 2-2/3 Nazard (from Cornet) 2' Flautino (new) II Cornet Dolce (new) 8' Oboe & Bassoon (*5)</p> <p>Pedal 16' Double Open 16' Bourdon 8' Violoncello</p>

*1 = name change only from "Oboe"

*2 = Divided into Treble and Bass on two drawknobs

*3 = In 1963 notes 1-12 of Mixture II were discarded and the balance repitched. A Johnson design was used in supplying the present mixture in 1996. the composition of the mixture has changed as follows:

1877-1915: 1-1/3, 1(1-12); 2-2/3, 2(13-58)

1963: 1-1/3, 1 (1-46); empty (47-58)

1996: 2, 1-1/3, 1 (1-24); 2-2/3, 2, 1-1/3 (25-42); 4, 2-2/3, 2 (43-58)

*4 = The new Great Trumpet was built following Johnson scales

*5 = The Oboe/Bassoon was originally on two drawknobs. In 1963, a new small scale Trompette replaced the Oboe, which was stored and forgotten until discovered by Mr. Rik Rasmussen in 1996.

*6 = The Keraulophon borrows its lowest twelve notes from the Stopped Diapason.