

SAINT PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

227 Bloor Street East

Casavant Organ Opus 550, built 1914, new console and revisions 1955



Fine sculptural and architectural details are a hallmark of St. Paul's Bloor Street, one of the largest Churches in Canada.

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Bloor Street, was constructed between 1909 and 1913 to a design by Edward James Lennox. This architect had already had a distinguished career and had designed Toronto Old City Hall (c. 1899), the King Edward Hotel (c. 1902), and in 1905 the Bank of Toronto at 205 Yonge Street (today the home of the Toronto Historical Board). In 1903 Lennox had been retained by the Vestry of St. Paul's to alter and expand their 1858-60 building in order to provide for the needs of the church's growing congregation. (The latter portion of the complex, today known as Cody Hall, was built in 1928.)

The historical record indicates that E. J. Lennox, upon being invited to prepare a design for the new \$150,000 house of worship, agreed but "insisted that his work be accepted as a contribution to the building fund."¹ While Lennox had designed buildings in a wide range of styles, for this assignment he chose a High Victorian Gothic vocabulary which marries well with the earlier building. Both buildings seem to respond to the influence of the English Gothicist, A. W. N. Pugin.

The original drawings show an imposing tower at the north-east corner of the building which provides a vertical counterpoint to the horizontal mass of the earlier church to the west. While this additional element was likely deleted from the final design for cost reasons, had it been built it might have afforded a presence which today is lacking in spite of the size of the nave. The nave is 14 metres (46 feet) wide and 46 metres (152 feet) long. It rises to a height of 28 metres (92 feet). The wide transepts allow two-thirds of the congregation (capacity intended to be 2500) to be seated within 21 metres (70 feet) of the pulpit.² These transepts and the chancel area are equal in height to the nave and this sheer volume of captured space contributes to a remarkable resonance, without equal in this city.

The organ was donated by Mrs. T. Gibbs Blackstock and Family in memory of Thomas Gibbs Blackstock, k.c. When Dr. Healey Willan played for the dedication in April 1914, it was believed to be the fifth largest organ in the world. St. Paul's, London and Westminster Abbey had only 77 stops, while St. Paul's, Toronto had 106.

The consultant for the first design, c.1906, was T. J. Palmer, who asked to have the



responsibility passed on to the English consultant Lt. Col. George Dixon who had worked with Palmer at St. Nicholas Church, Whitehaven, Cumbria. The English influence for this organ was considerable and Dixon listed 18 ranks of reeds that were to be “voiced in England under the direction of Lt. Col. Dixon and his

choice of voicer to be accepted by the builders, provided cost does not exceed \$2730. for the whole.”³

It has often been said that it is the consultants, and not the organ builders, who set the trends in organ building. Clause 21 of the original contract of December 22, 1910 states that “The String section on the Orchestral is to produce the same effects as the string section in the Hope-Jones Organ in St. Paul’s Church, Buffalo.” Hope-Jones was the designer of the Wurlitzer Theatre organ officially called the “Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra.” The next clause in the St. Paul contract, No. 22 reads, “The organ, when finished, to be inspected and passed upon, by Lt. Col. George Dixon, of

England; the organist of the church, or any competent authority appointed by the Chairman of the Organ Committee.”

The origin of the various ranks of reeds was clarified when Edwin D. Northrup wrote in preparation for the International Congress of Organists in 1967:



The original seating capacity of St. Paul’s Church was 2500 which was reported to be the same as that of Sir Christopher Wren’s St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. In the course of the 1991 renovations which moved the font to its current location, seating was reduced to 1800.

Healey Willan has told all who will listen that Arthur Harrison made ALL the reeds and actually Harrison and Harrison “made the Trompette Harmonique and Clarion 4 in Tuba Organ.” They gave a price of something like 27 pounds, and later sent Dixon a bill for experiments. I recall the letter said ‘Harry (brother of Arthur) and I have finally got our costs together on the experimental trumpet for St. Paul’s.’ Dixon



(Opposite) There are thirty three ranks of pipes in the gallery organ, all contained in one very large expression box. None of the pipes in this façade speak. If they did, they would be notes in the sixteen foot range, normal diapason tone from the towers and extremely keen string tone from the centre pipes.

(Above) View of St. Paul’s Bloor Street from the gardens of the Manulife Insurance Company across the street through a sculpture by Kirk Newman.



The east loft (above) contains the Great and Swell Organs, both double-decked and also the Pedal Open Diapason 32' and Bourdon 16' pipes.

The west loft (right, inset) contains the Choir, Orchestral and Tuba Organs and also the Pedal 32' Reeds and Contrabass 16' and percussions.

The stops in the left side jamb (right) visible here, are those of the Swell, Pedal and Echo Organs. The manual key covering is ivory.



refused to pay and was furious and his handwriting showed it. But J. C. Casavant paid it and they incurred a loss of \$1300 alone on the reeds. The Great Reeds were to be mitred and hooded and toned like St. Paul's, Edinburgh. Northrup also explains "The Bombardon 32', Ophcleide 16' and Posaune 8' were from Jones and Blossom, and were made by the late William Gyple Jones, who only this year died at the age of 92. He was a choir boy under Robert Hope Jones at Birkenhead, and through Hope Jones (no relation) got into the organ business, and has taught most of the fine reed voicers in England, with the exception of Willis. This was the FIRST metal 32' made in England and was to be 'like Carlisle Cathedral carried down an octave'. Cost 88 pounds! Jones also did the Great Reeds 16-8-4, the Swell Trumpets 16-8-4, the Tuba Sonora and Quint Trombone 5 1/3'. Mr. Frank Wesson was a Willis voicer who did a bit of moonlighting to put bread on his table, and so the old man sacked him. At the time, Dixon wrote that he did not think Wesson's slight hearing defect would hinder him and he voiced the Tuba Trombone 16, the Tuba Mirabilis and Clarion.

In 1956 a new four-manual console given in memory of Mrs. T. G. Blackstock by her family was installed and a tonal revision and mechanical restoration was supervised by E. D. Northrup of Casavant and organist Dr. Charles Peaker. None of the English reeds were changed nor were they changed during the subsequent revisions of 1981-82 when the organ was cleaned and partially revoiced under the direction of organist John Tuttle and Alan T. Jackson. New expression shutters were added to direct sound of the Swell Organ to the chancel and the canvas dust cover over the Great Organ was changed to

fiberglass to reflect sound. The remote, electro-pneumatic note relays and combination machines were replaced with a Corlis solid-state system to improve the response of the action. Soon after, in 1985 a recording⁴ dedicated to Ross B. Elliot was made by John Tuttle featuring the *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue*, composed in 1916 by Dr. Willan for the St. Paul's organ.

During 1991 the organ was shut down for a major revision of the chest action and wind system. All of the manual windchests were converted from Ventil stop action to Pitman action. This increased the responsiveness of the key action and allowed the fitting of swimmer wind controls. The larger wind reservoirs were then disconnected or removed and the noise from the high pressure organ wind became almost inaudible.

Only the Echo Organ in the gallery retains the original action and wind system. Even the hand-wound electric chest magnets remain in use. The original four-manual console has been moved to the gallery and will be made operative by 2002 when new electronic controls will be installed for the whole organ. Organist Eric Robertson will use it as an Antiphonal accompaniment when the choir sings from the gallery. For 45 years the console stood in the basement choir room where Dr. Peaker used to do silent practice. "I still practise on it – 'heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter'. As its cadences roll through my mind I think of the men who have played it; Hollins and Vierne, those blind virtuosi from Edinburgh and Paris; Farnam, Dupré, MacMillan, Sir William McKie of the Abbey and my own distinguished predecessors – Maitland Farmer, the Late T. J. Crawford, and that most eminent musician, Dr. Healey Willan. Nor could I forget Dr. Alexander Davies who filled in so well at each interregnum."⁵

CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

- 1914 Organ installed, 4 manuals, 106 stops, 116 ranks.
 1955 New console and remote coupler & combination actions and tonal revisions, 23 ranks of new pipes, new chest magnets except for Echo Organ.
 1970-76 Organ leathering replaced as needed.
 1981 Organ cleaned, new Corlis solid state couplers and combination action installed, new chancel-side Swell shutters added, minor revoicing of flues, reeds restored, blowers overhauled.
 1991 All main wind chests except the Echo converted to Pitman type action and schwimmer winding, new Great Cymbale chest, Swell and Pedal reeds cleaned and all flues and reeds regulated.
 1996 Re-leathered all console combination pneumatics.

1. "Lennox gave plans for St. Paul's Church," *Mail and Empire*, 19th April, 1933.
2. *Edward James Lennox Builder of Toronto*, Marilyn M. Litvak.
3. Contract, Casavant F.L. 1910.
4. Frank Cairns of St. Paul's produced the LP record, WRCI-4968. A CD version was made in 1989 by Gothic Records Inc. G 48629.
5. Dr. Charles Peaker, *The Globe & Mail*, Nov 24, 1956.

**Casavant Organ Opus 550,
 built 1914, new console and
 revisions 1955**

GREAT ORGAN	FEET	PIPES
1 Gross Geigen	16	61
2 Diapason I (old No. 2)	8	61
3 Diapason II (old No. 3)	8	61
4 Geigen Principal	8	61
5 Waldflote	8	61
6 Rohrflote	8	61
7 Spitzflote	8	61
8 Quintflote	5-1/3	61
9 Octave	4	61
10 Geigen Octave	4	61
11 Flute Triangulaire	4	61
12* Flute Ouverte	4	61
13 Octave Quinte	2-2/3	61
14 Super Octave	2	61
15* Fourniture IV	1-1/3	244
16* Cymbale III	1/2	183
17 Contra Tromba	16	61
18 Tromba	8	61
19 Octave Tromba	4	61
Tuba to Great		
Great Super		
Great Unison Off		
Chimes from Orchestral		
Harp from Orchestral		
Célesta from Choir		

SWELL ORGAN (ENCLOSED)

20 Double Stopped Diapason	16	73
21 Horn Diapason	8	73
22 Stopped Diapason	8	73
23 Viola da Gamba	8	73
24 Voix Céleste (1-12 new 1955)	8	73
25 Octave Gamba	4	73
26 Lieblichflote	4	73
27 Flautina	2	61
28* Plein Jeu V	2	305
29 Oboe	8	73
30 Vox Humana	8	73
Tremulant		
31 Double Trumpet	16	73
32 Trumpet	8	73
33 Clarion	4	73
Tuba Organ Coupler		
Swell Sub		
Swell Unison Off		
Swell Super		
Chimes from Orchestral		
Harp from Orchestral		
Celesta from Choir		

CHOIR ORGAN (ENCLOSED)

34* Quintaton	16	73
35 Spitzprincipal	8	73
36 Cor de Nuit (new 1962)	8	73
37 Viole de Gambe	8	73
38 Salicional	8	73
39 Vox Angelica Ten. C	8	61
40 Spitzflote	4	73
41 Zauberflote	4	73
42* Nazard (new chest)	2-2/3	61
43* Blockflote (new chest)	2	61
44 Tierce	1-3/5	61
45* Larigot (new chest)	1-1/3	61
46* Sifflole (new chest)	1	61
47* Zimbel IV	1	244
48 Contra Fagotto	16	73
49 Clarinet	8	73
Tremulant		
Tuba Organ Coupler		
Choir Sub		
Choir Unison Off		
Choir Super		
Harp from Orchestral		

50	Celesta			
	Chimes from Orchestral			
ORCHESTRAL ORGAN (ENCLOSED)				
51	Contre Viole	16	73	
52	Flute Harmonique	8	73	
53	Quintaton	8	73	
54	Viole d'Orchestre	8	73	
55	Viole Céleste Ten. C	8	61	
56	Concert Flute			
	Harmonique	4	73	
57	Viole Octaviante	4	73	
58	Piccolo Harmonique	2	61	
59	Cornet			
	de Violes III	2-2/3	183	
60	Corno de Bassetto	16	73	
61	Cor Anglais	8	73	
62	Hautbois d'Orchestre	8	73	
	Tremulant			
	Tuba Organ Coupler			
	Orchestral Sub			
	Orchestral Unison Off			
	Orchestral Super			
63	Chimes	25		
64	Harp	44		
	Celesta from Choir			

TUBA ORGAN				
(ENCLOSED WITH ORCHESTRAL)				
65	Principal	4	61	
66	Grand Fourniture			
	V	2	305	
67	Trombone	16	61	
68	Tuba Sonora	8	61	
69	Trompette			
	Harmonique	8	61	
70	Quinte Horn	5-1/3	61	
71	Clarion Harmonique	4	61	
72	Tuba Mirabilis			
	(unenclosed)	8	61	
73	Tuba Clarion			
	(unenclosed)	4	61	

ECHO GREAT (ENCLOSED)				
74	Contra Gamba	16	73	
75	Open Diapason	8	73	
76	Salicional	8	73	
77	Harmonic Flute	4	73	
78	Horn	8	73	

ECHO SWELL				
(ENCLOSED WITH ECHO GREAT)				
79	Viole de Gambe	8	73	

80	Voix Céleste Ten. C	8	61	
81	Gedackt	8	73	
82*	Erzähler	8	73	
83	Unda Maris Ten. C	8	61	
84	Lieblichflote	4	73	
85	Dolce Cornet V	8	341	
86	Contra Oboe	16	73	
	Tremulant			

ECHO PEDAL (ENCLOSED)				
87	Diapason	16	32	
88	Gamba (from #74)	16	—	
89	Bourdon	16	32	

PEDAL ORGAN				
90	Double Open			
	Diapason	32	28	
	(4 polyphonic)			

91	Diapason (from #90)	16	12	
92	Subbass	16	32	
93*	Contrebass	16	32	
94	Geigen (from #1)	16	—	
95	Viole (from #51)	16	—	
96	Gedackt (from #20)	16	—	
97	Quintaton			
	(from #34)	16	—	

98*	Gemshornquint	10-2/3	32	
99	Octave	8	32	
100*	Principal (ext. #93)	8	12	
101	Viole Octave			
	(from #51)	8	—	
102	Stopped Flute			
	(ext #92)	8	12	

103	Still Gedackt			
	(from #20)	8	—	
104*	Octave Quinte			
	(ext #98)	5-1/3	12	
105*	Superoctave			
	(ext #99)	4	12	
106*	Choralbass (ext #93)	4	12	
107*	Flute (ext #92)	4	12	
108*	Blockflote			
	(new chest)	2	32	

109	Fourniture III			
	(new chest)	2	96	
110*	Harmonics II	1-3/5	64	
111	Bombardon	32	32	
112	Ophecleide			
	(ext #111)	16	12	
113	Trombone			
	(from #67)	16	—	

114	Posaune (ext #111)	8	12	
115	Clarion (ext #111)	4	12	

Tuba Organ Coupler
Harp from Orchestral
Chimes from Orchestral
Celesta from Choir

COUPLERS (IN TABLETS)
Great, Swell, Choir, Orch. to Pedal
Unison, Super
Tuba to Pedal Unison
Swell, Choir, Orch to Great Sub,
Unison, Super
Swell, Orch. to Choir Sub,
Unison, Super

Choir, Orch. to Swell Unison
Swell, Choir to Orch. Unison
Echo Couplers (in stop knobs)
Echo Great and Swell to Pedal
Unison, Super
Echo Swell to Echo Great Sub,
Unison, Super
Echo to 4th Manual Unison
Echo Great Sub, Super
Echo Swell Sub, Unison off, Super
Echo Couplers to Main Organ
Echo Pedal to Pedal
Echo Great to Great
Echo Great to Choir
Echo Swell to Great
Echo Swell to Swell
Echo On, Main Organ Off
reversible tablet and piston
Echo On tablet

ORDER OF KEYBOARDS
Orchestral (upper)
Swell
Great
Choir (lower)
Balanced Pedals (in order, right to left)
Crescendo, Orch. & Tuba, Swell,
Choir, Echo
Indicators
Full Organ
Crescendo
Wind, Voltmeter
Swell Nave Shutters On Light
Adjustable Combination Pistons
Corlis Solid State System, 16 levels
Generals - 12 thumb, 1-10
duplicated on toe
Pedal - 6 thumb and toe pistons
Great, Swell, Choir, Orch - 6

thumb pistons
Tuba 4 thumb pistons
Echo Great, Swell 2 thumb
pistons
General cancel piston
Adjuster
Reversible Pistons
Great to Pedal thumb and toe
Swell, Choir, Orch, Tuba to Pedal
thumb
Swell, Choir, Orch., Tuba to Great
thumb
Orch. to Swell thumb
Swell to Choir thumb
Full Organ thumb and toe
Great and Pedal Combination
rocker button

ANALYSIS				
	STOPS	RANKS	PIPES	REAL STOPS
Great	19	24	1464	19
Swell	14	18	1242	14
Choir	16	19	1279	16
Orchestral	12	14	974	12
Tuba	9	13	793	9
Pedal	26	12	500	9
Echo Great	5	5	365	5
Echo Swell	8	12	780	8
Echo Pedal	3	2	64	2
Totals	112	119	7461	94

*New pipes in 1955