

# Casavant Frères



## ***Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – Calvary Episcopal Church***

Four manuals and pedals, 97 stops, 138 ranks

Movable drawknob console, compass 61/32

Electro-pneumatic action

Opus 2729, 1963

Photographs: Tim Buchman (interior), Jeff Scofield (console)

Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was organized in 1855 in the city's then rural but developing East End. The congregation first worshiped in a church belonging to a German Lutheran congregation before building their own building in 1861. At the turn of the twentieth century Pittsburgh experienced an industrial boom that resulted in extraordinary growth for Calvary and its East End environment. As a consequence, in 1904, the Vestry acquired property for a larger building only a few blocks from the existing church and commissioned Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1943) to design a new structure. This was Dr. Cram's first major commission and he responded by designing one of the most extraordinary Gothic Revival churches in the North America. Following the completion of the church in 1907, the firm of Cram & Ferguson of Boston went on to build many of the most important churches and university chapels in the United States.

The Cruciform shaped church, with a seating capacity of 1200, measures 208 feet from the narthex to the altar wall and has a ceiling height of 55 feet in the nave. An interesting distinction for this church is that in 1921 it was the location for the first broadcast of a religious service on radio from the then new KDKA station in Pittsburgh. Music has always played an important role in the life of the parish; one of the early music directors being Harvey Gaul. One of his choristers, Donald Wilkens later became Organist-Choirmaster and served the congregation for forty years before his retirement.

In the late 1980's the church began to plan for a restoration of the interior of the building. Gerald Allen, of the firm Allen and Harbinson of New York, was teaching architecture at Carnegie-Mellon University at that time and was selected to direct the project. Through the extraordinary leadership of Dr. Arthur McNulty, then Rector, the congregation accomplished a successful capital campaign that resulted in an award-winning restoration of the main church, completed in 1993 only a year before Dr. McNulty's sudden and unexpected death. Besides returning the interior to its original beauty, an important part of the restoration consisted of caulking the tongue and groove ceiling, which resulted in a markedly improved acoustic for music. This work undoubtedly returned the sound of the room to what it would have been in 1907 when the building was first opened.

The Casavant organ, built originally in 1962 at the height of the organ reform movement in the United States, replaced an earlier instrument by Möller. The main instrument consists of four manual divisions with pedal and is located at the triforium gallery level behind two handsome Gothic style cases on both sides of the chancel. The Antiphonal is in an elevated position in the rear gallery. The design included complete ensemble structures throughout all divisions and virtually no stop extensions or borrowing. The use of 70% tin for all principal pipes and attention to details of construction and voicing made the organ an example of the best building efforts at the time. As a result, it has been used as the site of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Guild of Organists' *Organ Artists Concert Series* for decades.



During the 1991 restoration of the building, the organ was removed from the church and underwent its own renovation. Great care was taken in the work done in 1991 to keep the existing tonal qualities of the organ; in fact the main goal, from the tonal point of view, was to combine the freshness and brightness of the original with the warmth and breadth needed for symphonic and contemporary compositions and accompaniment of anthems and congregational singing. All

reed stops were completely rebuilt and wind chests were modified to operate at a slightly increased wind pressure, ensuring greater responsiveness of the playing action, tuning stability and warmth of tone. Fifteen new stops were added to the original scheme, seven existing stops were relocated within the instrument and the complete organ was carefully rebalanced within the new scheme and for the renovated acoustic. Therefore the organ retains its previous clarity while providing room-filling bass and substantial strength in the fundamental registers to support the instrument's various ensembles and inspire those who hear it and sing to its accompaniment.

The existing sixteen-foot principal pipes in the two matching chancel organ cases were gold stained with silver mouths to blend better with the warm tones of the oak woodwork that was stained to match the other woodwork in the church. The console of the 1962 instrument was located at the upper end of the chancel near the high altar. In order to provide better sight lines to the organist-conductor and to give the organist the ability to be able to better judge the balances between the choir and organ, a new console was built in 1991 and relocated to a more favorable position at the front of the choir just behind the rood screen. It was also made movable, allowing it to pass through the rood screen opening onto the new extended chancel floor in the crossing, which also provides a location for a new communion table that is close to the congregation.



**Grand Orgue**

Montre	16
Bourdon (Ext.) <sup>1</sup>	16
Montre	8
Bourdon	8
Violoncelle <sup>1</sup>	8
Flûte harmonique <sup>1</sup>	8
Prestant	4
Flûte à cheminée	4
Grande Tierce <sup>1</sup>	3-1/5
Quinte	2-2/3
Doublette <sup>1</sup>	2
Cornet V	8
Grande Fourniture II-III <sup>1</sup>	2-2/3
Fourniture IV	1-1/3
Cymbale IV	2/3
Bombarde <sup>2</sup>	16
Trompette <sup>2</sup>	8
Trompette royale <sup>1</sup>	8
Clairon <sup>2</sup>	4
Cloches	
Grand Orgue Unisson Muet	

**Positif**

Bourdon <sup>3</sup>	16
Montre	8
Gambe	8
Flûte à cheminée <sup>1</sup>	8
Flûte harmonique <sup>4</sup>	8
Prestant	4
Flûte à fuseau	4
Nazard	2-2/3
Doublette <sup>4</sup>	2
Quarte de nazard	2
Tierce	1-3/5
Larigot	1-1/3
Sifflet	1
Jeu de clochette II <sup>1</sup> (2-2/3, 4/5)	2-2/3
Fourniture IV	1
Cymbale IV	1/2
Ranquette <sup>5</sup>	16
Trompette <sup>1</sup>	8
Cromorne <sup>1</sup>	8
Clairon <sup>6</sup>	4
Clochettes	
Positif Unisson Muet	

**Récit**

Bourdon doux	16
Principal étroit	8
Flûte à cheminée	8
Viole de gambe	8
Voix céleste (CC)	8
Octave	4
Flûte octave	4
Octavin	2
Fourniture IV	2
Cymbale IV	1
Bombarde <sup>7</sup>	16
Trompette <sup>2</sup>	8
Hautbois <sup>2</sup>	8
Voix humaine <sup>2</sup>	8
Clairon <sup>2</sup>	4
Tremblant	
Récit 16, Unisson Muet, Récit 4'	

**Choeur**

Quintaton <sup>8</sup>	16
Salicional	8
Céleste (GG) <sup>1</sup>	8
Cor de nuit	8
Flûte conique	8
Flûte céleste (CC)	8
Gemshorn	4
Flûte douce	4
Flûte de bois	2
Cornet II	2-2/3
Petite Fourniture IV	1
Basson <sup>9</sup>	16
Trompette royale (Grand Orgue) <sup>1</sup>	8
Cor anglais <sup>9</sup>	8
Chalumeau à cheminée <sup>9</sup>	4
Tremblant	
Cloches	
Choeur 16', Unisson Muet, 4'	
Choir Pitch Diapason <sup>10</sup>	8

**Pédale**

Contrebasse <sup>11</sup>	32
Soubasse <sup>11</sup>	32
Quintaton (Ext.)	32
Contrebasse <sup>1</sup> (Open wood)	16
Principal	16
Montre (Grand Orgue)	16

<b>Antiphonal</b>		<b>Pédale (continued)</b>	
Principal	8	Soubasse	16
Bourdon	8	Quintaton	16
Octave	4	Bourdon (Grand Orgue)	16
Quinte	2-2/3	Prestant	8
Octave	2	Flûte bouchée	8
Fourniture IV	1-1/3	Octave	4
Cymbale IV	2/3	Flûte ouverte	4
Bombarde <sup>2</sup> (hooded)	16	Flûte à cheminée	2
Trompette-en-chamade <sup>2</sup>	8	Fourniture IV	4
Clairon-en-chamade <sup>2</sup>	4	Cymbale IV	1-1/3
		Contre Bombarde (Ext.) <sup>1</sup>	32
		Bombarde <sup>1</sup>	16
		Basson <sup>12</sup>	16
		Trompette <sup>2</sup>	8
		Chalumeau <sup>1</sup>	8
		Clairon <sup>2</sup>	4
		Hautbois <sup>9</sup>	4
		Cloches	
		Pédale Unisson Muet	

<sup>1</sup> New stops or pipework added in 1991

<sup>2</sup> Revoiced with new shallots and tongues in 1991

<sup>3</sup> Previously the Positif Bourdon 8', pipes 1-12 were added in 1991

<sup>4</sup> Relocated from the Grand Orgue

<sup>5</sup> Previously located in the Pédale division, pipes 33-61 were added in 1991

<sup>6</sup> Former Positif Trompette 8' with new treble pipes

<sup>7</sup> Formerly half-length, now full-length from tenor C

<sup>8</sup> Relocated from the Positif

<sup>9</sup> Revoiced with new tongues

<sup>10</sup> This stop from the previous organ is located in the corridor leading from the choir room to the nave

<sup>11</sup> Digital

<sup>12</sup> New stop using the previous Bombarde 16' resonators