

What follows is the text of the original brochure from 1915

The Great Organ of the Panama Pacific Exposition

Built by Austin Organ Company Hartford, CT

In the Exposition celebrating the wonderful achievement in cutting the Isthmus of Panama and linking the two great oceans of the earth with a navigable canal, it is most fitting that music should be a prominent feature.

And what instrument has such majestic, sublime and diversified qualities as the organ? -- the instrument without a peer or parallel.

In the musical plans for this great celebration, a superb organ of rare excellence and magnitude is provided. The instrument is located in a specially constructed chamber, 44 feet 6 1/2 inches wide, 20 feet deep and 50 feet high, above the Festival Hall, and the Echo organ being in another chamber above the ceiling of the dome.

It has six distinct parts, viz.: Great organ, Swell organ, Choir organ, Solo organ, Echo organ, and Pedal organ; all these separate organs, so to speak, being operated separately or collectively from a movable four manual console.

The builders have shown great skill and ingenuity in the mechanism of the console, inasmuch as no air pressure or pneumatic work is required in it, its whole mechanism being electric, and its sole connection to the organ, some parts of which are at least 200 feet away, is a cable composed of hundreds of insulated wires. A most complete system of control has been provided in the adjustable combination pistons and pedals, which, at the slightest touch, immediately provide the organist with any combination of stops or tone qualities desired. The builders also have provided their latest improvement in "general combination pistons", eight in number, which can be set to give immediate changes on all manuals and pedals simultaneously; thus, at one touch, multitudes of stops instantly move, giving complete changes of tone color and power in all the organs. This is the greatest possible aid to the organist, as his combinations can all be previously arranged and one motion will give any change desired.

The exterior arrangement of the stops, couplers and accessories, with their measurements and positions, is in accordance with diagrams planned by Mr. Edwin H. Lemare, the celebrated organist, and the specifications of the organ or its scheme of stops, was designed by the Exposition authorities.

The public will be interested to know that after the Exposition is over, the great organ will be moved to the San Francisco auditorium, now being built at the new Civic center in this wonderful city. The largest pipe of this organ is the 32 CCCC of the Pedal Double Diapason. This pipe weighs over 1300 pounds, and is 32 feet in length. Special timber had to be sawed from selected logs to get planks of sufficient length and width for the construction of these pipes. This, however, is only one of the three stops of 32 foot pitch in this instrument, for there is also a 32 foot metal stop, and a 32 foot reed. The lower part of the 32 foot metal stop is on the front of the organ, visible to all, and the center pipe being CCCC, measuring 41 feet long, 20 inches in diameter, and weighing considerably over 600 pounds. These pipes are made of specially rolled heavy zinc.

From these monsters the pipes vary in size down to a fraction of an inch and a fraction of an ounce in weight.

The organ, like all other instruments of the Austin make, is built on their Universal Air Chest system, which provides absolutely perfect pressure to all pipes as well as internal accessibility to all the mechanism. The largest chest (sic) is 41 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 7 feet high. Special blowing apparatus was designed for this instrument, there being two blowers instead of one, each one of which is capable of furnishing sufficient wind for about two-thirds of the organ. Each of these blowers has a twenty horsepower direct-connected motor, and supplies air at the various pressures required. Two 20-horsepower motors are therefore required to furnish air for the instrument. These blowers were built by the Organ Power Co. of Hartford CT. A 9-volt, 40 ampere generator is also provided to furnish the current for the organ action.

To those who are not versed in organ lore, the following items may be of interest:

There are four Austin Patent-Universal Air Chests which contain the compressed air, and on which stand the pipes. These air chests can be entered by means of air locks, while the wind is on, and in the largest of these air chambers it would be quite possible to seat comfortably at tables and a serve a banquet to 75 persons. The organ weighs approximately forty tons. There are about 100 miles of wire used in the electric circuits. Over ten tons of metal is used in the construction, consisting of platinum, silver, brass, copper, lead, tin, zinc, iron, steel, bronze, and aluminum. Upward of 30,000 feet of lumber was used, consisting of Ebony, Walnut, Oak, Birch, Maple, Whitewood, Pine, and Cherry. Solid ivory was used for the draw-stop heads and keys.

The building of this gigantic and most important instrument was entrusted to the Austin Organ Co. after a most thorough investigation of the ability and merits of several of the leading organ manufacturers of the world, their instruments being deemed most satisfactory for this unparalleled celebration in the history of this country.