

Pipe Organ



Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, built in 1905, is an impressive building of Romanesque style, and is a fine venue for its large pipe organ. Viewed from the entrance foyer, the organ casework provides a dramatic visual effect for the observer. It occupies a prominent position in the sanctuary, with the organ proper behind the choir stalls, and the console behind the central pulpit. The facade pipes are painted a clean grey colour, with gold mouths, and the mitred tops of the Orchestral Trumpet are visible between facade pipes and the Swell box shutters. Two small side galleries each contain a set of show pipes, but although they are non-sounding they assist the aesthetics of the choir and organ area. The instrument has 3 manuals and pedals, 40 speaking stops and 9 couplers, and a total of approximately 2250 pipes.

The organ is an ideal instrument for liturgical and concert purposes. As a church organ, it serves well in leading the singing of hymns and responses. It enables choral works to be accompanied to great effect and with relative ease, and it copes wonderfully with voluntaries and improvisations. Because of the responsive action, the comprehensive specification, the comfort of the console, the straight-forward capture system, and the acoustics of the building, St. Andrew's organ is a very suitable organ for performing a wide range of the organ repertoire - renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary styles.

THE ORIGINAL ORGAN

The organ was originally built for the new Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church building by Mr. W.G. Rendall of the Austral Organ Works of Sydney. Mr. Rendall's tender at a cost of 1440 pounds was accepted by the church authorities in October 1903 on the condition that the work be completed within 12 months. The organist at that time was Mr. C.H. Allen. Unfortunately the organ

was not completed within 12 months, and even when it was first used, on the 17th September 1905, almost a year late, the organ was in an incomplete state. By that time St. Andrew's had a new organist, Mr. J.L. Phillips.

According to a report in the Daily Mail on the 10th March 1906, the organ had 31 speaking stops and 7 couplers, with a total of 1656 pipes. It also had a great innovation - an electric blower! The action too was innovative but troublesome. It was an early form of electric action. In August 1906, the Brisbane firm of B.B. Whitehouse was called in to convert the organ action to the more familiar tubular-pneumatic action. By February 1908, the organ had a new console, new action and an extra Open Diapason 8' stop on the Great.

ADDITIONS IN 1922

In 1922, during the term of organist Dr. Robert Dalley-Scarlett, more stops were added to the organ. An enclosed chest, playable from the existing Choir manual, was installed above the left side of the choir stalls to contain a Vox Humana and Clarinet, from the Swell and Choir departments respectively. A Clarion 4' rank was added in place of the Vox Humana on the Swell, and a Bourdon 16' replaced the Choir Clarinet. Further, the Swell Cornopean 8' was used a Double Trumpet 16' (to tenor C only), a Tuba 8' was added on a new chest for the Choir manual, a mixture was added to the Great, and an Acoustic Bass 32' was devised for the Pedal. At the same time, Super Octave and Sub Octave Couplers were added to the Swell department.

RELOCATION OF CONSOLE IN 1935

With the original position of the organ console adjacent to the organ itself, conducting the choir from the console was not possible. Hence, in 1935, the choir stalls were extended to allow the relocation of the organ console closer to the pulpit, so enabling the organist to conduct the choir. According to a report in the Telegraph on 30th September 1935, the organ was cleaned and overhauled at the same time. All of this work was carried out by Whitehouse Brothers, and the organist at the time was Mr. Herbert Cannon.

NEW ACTION IN 1941

In 1941, the organ action was converted from tubular-pneumatic to electro-pneumatic, and necessarily a new console was installed, once again by Whitehouse Bros.

MINOR WORK IN 1959

During the term of organist, Mr. Hugh Brandon, in 1959, an Orchestral Oboe 8' was put on the enclosed choir chest in place of the Vox Humana. At the same time, the reeds were cleaned, repairs to pipes were effected where necessary, and pipes inspected with respect to the voicing. The work was done by the English firm, J.W.Walker & Sons at a cost of 503 pounds.

A MAJOR REBUILD IN 1983-4

Church records contain much correspondence between the church officers and Whitehouse Bros., the regular maintainers of the organ, during the latter half of the 1970's, in relation to a possible rebuild of the organ. By the end of the 1970s, the condition of the organ had deteriorated considerably. Some stops on the Swell, Choir and Pedal were unusable, many notes on the Swell were silent and the wind system (bellows and wind trunking) was reduced in effectiveness by a surfeit of air leaks. The rebuild did not eventuate due to Mr Kevin Whitehouse's illness. In 1982, after some frustrating episodes with organ breakdowns, Mr. H.W. (Bert) Jarrott was called in to effect emergency repairs and give an appraisal of the condition of the organ.

Later in 1982, it became known that the Australian subsidiary of J.W. Walker & Sons (U.K.) located in Sydney were likely to establish a branch in Brisbane if an initial large-scale contract could be secured. Mr. David Hudd, of J.W. Walker & Sons (Aust.), inspected the organ and subsequently submitted a quote for the rebuilding of the organ to the specification of the organist, Steven Nisbet. Negotiations with Walker's also involved the Secretary of the Organ Committee, Mr. David Vann, and in November 1982 a contract was signed for the rebuild at a cost of \$87,983 plus freight costs.

The rebuild was carried out over the period March 1983 to June 1984 by Mr. David Hudd and his apprentice Mr. Simon Pierce for J.W. Walker & Sons (Aust.). Pipe voicing was done by Mr. Paul Fulcher initially in the Walker workshop in Sydney and later in situ. The facade pipes were stripped, cleaned and repainted by a team of volunteers from the church at the Premier Blinds factory - courtesy of David Vann.

New parts for the organ including electric blower, wind regulators, wind chests, console, and ranks of pipes, were shipped from J.W.Walker & Sons factory in Suffolk, England, and arrived in December 1983. Tonal finishing was carried out during late May and June 1984. The Organ Dedication Service was held on Sunday 8th July 1984, and the Opening Organ Recital was performed by Steven Nisbet on Saturday 28th July, 1984, with associate artist Margaret Russell, mezzo soprano.

Although there had been many modifications to its specification, the organ in St. Andrew's, up to 1983, had some deficiencies in relation to the specification to fulfil its purposes. It had to function

as a liturgical and concert instrument, to lead the congregation and accompany the choir, and also play a wide spectrum of organ music, so the revised specification was drawn up with this in mind. In general the principal choruses needed to be completed with better mixtures and the pedal division had to have its many gaps filled. (The previous pedal specification only had one stop above 16' pitch.)

On the Swell, a 3rd rank (2' pitch) was added to the mixture, the two string ranks were swapped back to their correct positions, and the Gemshorn was renamed correctly as an Octave 4'. On the Great, the 2nd Open Diapason 8' was transferred to the Pedal, the Keraulophone 8' was remodelled as a mutation (Twelfth 2 2/3'), the 3 rank mixture was transferred to the Pedal division and a Furniture IV mixture was added in its place.

On the Choir, the Bourdon 16' was assigned to the Pedal department, and the Clarinet 8' was brought down from the gallery chest to the main choir chest. The 8' Orchestral Oboe 8' was transferred to the Pedal, the Dulciana 8' was remodelled to a Tierce 13/5', the open Diapason 8' was deleted in favour of a new Principal 2', and a new Nazard 2 2/3' was added. A new Orchestral Trumpet 8' was put on a separate chest (with its own blower) and the old Tuba 8' was sold to The Southport School for its chapel organ.

On the Pedal division, a new chest was made to accommodate the Principal 8' (extended to a 4' Fifteenth) taken from the Great second Open Diapason, Bass Flute 8' (extended to Flute 4') taken from the Choir Bourdon 16', the Mixture III from the Great, and the Schalmey 4' taken from the Choir Oboe.

REFINEMENTS IN 1998-2000

In 1998, the Solid State Logic capture system was expanded to include general combinations - eight pistons on each of eight levels. In the middle of 2000, renovations were made to the interior of the church building. As well as making a larger dais, the choir platform was lowered, the height of the brickwork between the pulpit and choir area was lowered, with the result of providing greater egress of the sound of the Pedal department. Also, an entrance was made from the pulpit to the choir area, and the console was moved off-centre (to allow the choir conductor to conduct from a central position), and rotated 90 degrees to allow the organist to see the dais and the entry foyer.

With its comprehensive specification the organ performs magnificently in worship, ceremonial occasions and concerts, in accompaniment and solo performances. The principal choruses are warm and bright, the flutes have their own individual charm, the chorus reeds are showy, and the solo reeds have tremendous character. In all dynamics from ppp to fff, the organ has the capacity to capture one's attention and provide inspiration for the soul. It is an effective instrument for the ministry of music.

ORGANISTS OF SAINT ANDREW'S

C.H.Allen - 1899 to 11 March 1904

J.L.Phillips - 1904 to 1907

S.G.Benson - 1907 to 1913

R.S.Siemon - acting organist during Mr. Benson's absence. P.S.Templeton - acting organist before Dr. Galway arrived.

Dr. Victor E.Galway - December 1913 to 1919.

P.S.Templeton and Mr. Ayscough - acting organists, 1919.

Dr. Robert Dalley-Scarlett - 1920 to June 1932.

Mr. Ayscough, Percy Brier, Mr. Willesdon, Herbert Cannon, and R. & K. Best assisted during 1920-22.

Herbert Cannon - 1932 - acting organist for 6 months

Harold Rogers - December 1932 to October 1935

Herbert Cannon - October 1935 to 1945.

Sydney May - acting organist while Mr. Cannon did F.R.C.O.

Stuart Sawers - assisted during Herbert Cannon's term.

Hugh Brandon - 1945 to December 1978.

Noel Clark and Roger Marks - acting organists during absences of Mr. Brandon.

Steven Nisbet - assistant organist March to December 1978.

Dr Steven Nisbet - organist from January 1979 to present.



ORGAN SPECIFICATION

GREAT

Double Diapason 16 Wald Flute 4

Open Diapason 8 Twelfth 2 2/3
Clarabella 8 Fifteenth 2
Principal 4 Fourniture IV
Trumpet 8

SWELL

Bourdon 16 Swell Sub Octave
Violin Diapason 8 Swell Super Octave
Viola da Gamba 8 Swell Unison Off
Vox Celeste 8 Tremulant
Lieblich Gedackt 8
Octave 4
Harmonic Flute 4
Piccolo 2
Mixture III
Cornopean 8
Clarion 4

CHOIR

Rohr Gedackt 8
Lieblich Flute 4
Nazard 2 2/3
Principal 2
Tierce 1 3/5
Clarinet 8
Orchestral Trumpet 8

PEDAL COUPLERS

Acoustic Bass 32 Great to Pedal
Open Diapason 16 Swell to Pedal
Violone 16 Choir to Pedal
Bourdon 16 Swell to Great
Principal 8 Choir to Great
Violon Cello 8 Swell to Choir
Bass Flute 8
Fifteenth 4
Flute 4
Mixture III
Contra Fagotto 16