



View of the organ case (photo credit: Toby Wellenstein)

**Schoenstein & Co.,  
Benicia, California  
First Lutheran Church,  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

## Polishing a gem

When we talk with committees today about building a new organ, we remind them that their decision will have ramifications for many generations and that insisting on top quality will be like establishing an endowment—a lasting legacy. First Lutheran's choice of an Æolian-Skinner in 1956 proves the wisdom of investing in the best—not just the “good enough.” Æolian-Skinner was the gold standard then and still is today. The majority of the most famous and highly regarded instruments in America were made by Skinner in Boston.

What makes an Æolian-Skinner so special? The answer is that the firm was always guided by people who knew and loved music. The Skinner people seemed to have an innate sense of refined good taste. This artistic impulse was supported by outstanding craftsmanship in every facet of organ building. The depth of expertise was unrivaled.

Schoenstein & Co. has a long-standing connection with Skinner. From 1907 to 1909 Louis Schoenstein, third generation member of our founding family, worked for Ernest M. Skinner, following the family tradition of broadening skills by apprenticing with other builders. Later, his son Lawrence joined Æolian-Skinner in a more permanent way at the invitation of G. Donald Harrison in 1956. He extended his “apprenticeship” for 16 years! Our company has maintained, restored, and installed numerous Skinner and Æolian-Skinner organs. We can say from decades of practical experience

that Æolian-Skinner organs deserve the reputation they have.

Our work at First Lutheran Church began in 1989 when we were asked to survey the organ for the possibility of completing stops prepared for later addition. The organ is Æolian-Skinner Opus 1342, designed in 1957, completed and dedicated by Virgil Fox in 1959. It replaced Wurlitzer Opus 2127, built for the then-new church in 1930. The builder's plan was for an enlarged Pedal division and a floating Positiv, typical of the period. In 1964, Æolian-Skinner was called back to add an 8' Festival Trumpet and a Zymbelstern. By 1989, the primary concern was to add more weight and power to the Pedal and possibly move forward with some of the other planned additions.

Our survey confirmed the need for additional Pedal weight, but revealed other points that we thought should take precedence over additions such as the Positiv. The organ suffered from an accumulation of mechanical maintenance issues and it was badly out of regulation, with poor speech and erratic balance within and among stops. This appeared to be due to a rushed installation that allowed hardly any time to finish the instrument before Virgil Fox was to arrive, as well as layout of the enclosed divisions that made the pipework so inaccessible that regulation efforts were undoubtedly hampered. Rushed installations were fairly common during the fast moving post-war boom. The overall quality of Skinner's magnificent factory voicing, however, made even the jobs finished with a lick and a promise sound quite grand. In 1990 we thoroughly serviced the organ, correcting the mechanical problems and doing some preliminary tonal work. This led us to recommend installing only the planned Bombarde



## Choir

in the Pedal and giving the instrument a thorough tonal regulation before considering any further additions. Hearing an instrument in proper balance with every stop delivering its full potential often obviates the need for more stops or changes the direction that additions might take. Furthermore, we knew that the instrument would need re-leathering and that the most efficient approach was to take care of any tonal additions along with renovation work. The Bombarde and regulation were completed in 1994.

By 2010 it was clear that the need for mechanical renovation was imminent and the church was determined to complete the instrument and at the same time rearrange the choir seating and improve the acoustic as far as possible. In consultation with committee chairman James Moore, who is also a trained organist, consultant John Ferguson, music director Michael Elsbernd, and organist emeritus Marcia Kittelson, we developed a plan to solve three musical problems that were considered truly worth addressing after years of experience with the instrument. Although the planned Positiv and additional Pedal upperwork would be nice, it was considered far more urgent to direct the tonal character of the organ towards making up for acoustical problems. After intensive acoustical study, it was determined that it was not practical from an engineering standpoint to make major changes in the building, such as strengthening the ceiling for better sound reflection. Several improvements, including removal of carpet, would make a significant difference; however, sound would not carry well from the balcony to the chancel and mid-range tenor and bass tones would not be supported as well as treble. We decided

on a program that would use the available budget to address these issues as well as honor as much as possible the original intention of a Positiv division.

To augment the foundation of the Great, we added a 16' Violone and a large-scale 8' Flute Ouverte. To add some of the “sparkle” promised by the Positiv we added a Seventeenth to the Great as well as a 4' Fugara and Klein Mixtur to the Choir. A five-rank Antiphonal division was added in the chamber formerly occupied by the Wurlitzer organ. Dominated by 8' tone, its main purpose is to provide the acoustical illusion of tone from the main organ in the balcony reaching forward to the chancel. It has proved to be quite effective in this role. It is difficult for anyone in the nave to determine that the Antiphonal is playing; it simply seems to extend the “reach” of the main instrument. The division is also quite helpful in accompanying choirs that occasionally perform from the chancel. The 16' Quintaton, which was a bit light in this acoustic for the Great division, has turned out to be an ideal double for the small Antiphonal.

Our other work included a complete rebuild of the console and electrical control system, which also facilitated the addition of a few useful borrows in the Choir and Pedal. An interesting feature of the console work was the addition of a large music storage cabinet filling the space formerly taken by the electro-pneumatic combination and switching equipment! We built an entirely new expression system with vertical shades located on two sides of each expression box. These replaced the horizontal shades that opened in only one direction and had become warped over the years.

## Æolian-Skinner Opus 1342, 1959, Schoenstein & Co. 1994, 2011

GREAT (II)	
16' Violone (A)	61 pipes
8' Prinzipal	61 pipes
8' Violone (A)	12 pipes
8' Flûte Ouverte (B)	61 pipes
8' Holzbordun	61 pipes
4' Octave	61 pipes
4' Spitzflöte	61 pipes
2 2/3' Twelfth	61 pipes
2' Fifteenth	61 pipes
1 3/4' Seventeenth (A)	42 pipes
1 1/4' Fourniture (IV-VI)	318 pipes
8' Festival Trumpets	61 pipes
4' Festival Trumpets	12 pipes
Chimes (Digital - C)	
Antiphonal on Great	

SWELL (III – enclosed)	
16' Contra Viola	12 pipes
8' Viola Pomposa	68 pipes
8' Viola Celeste	68 pipes
8' Rohrflöte	68 pipes
4' Prestant	68 pipes
4' Flûte Harmonique	68 pipes
2' Octavin	61 pipes
1' Plein Jeu (IV)	244 pipes
16' Contra Hautbois	68 pipes
8' Trompette	68 pipes
8' Hautbois	12 pipes
4' Clairon	68 pipes
Tremulant	
Swell 16-UO-4	
Antiphonal on Swell	

CHOIR (I – enclosed)	
8' Spitzviol	68 pipes
8' Koppelgedeckt	68 pipes
8' Dolcan	68 pipes
8' Dolcan Celeste	56 pipes
4' Fugara (A)	68 pipes
4' Nachthorn (D)	68 pipes
2 3/4' Rohmasat	61 pipes
2' Blockflöte	61 pipes
1 1/2' Tierce	61 pipes
2' Klein Mixtur (III-IV - E)	192 pipes
16' Krummhorn (TC)*	
(notes 57-68 from Fugara)	
8' Krummhorn	68 pipes
8' Flûte Ouverte (Great)*	
8' Festival Trumpets (Great)	
Tremulant	
Harp (Digital - C)	
Celesta (Digital - C)	
Zymbelstern (F)	
Choir 16-UO-4	
Antiphonal on Choir	

ANTIPHONAL (floating – G)	
16' Quintaton	61 pipes
8' Diapason	61 pipes
8' Lieblich Gedeckt	61 pipes
8' Erzähler	49 pipes
(Lieblich Gedeckt Bass)	
4' Octave	61 pipes
Zymbelstern	
PEDAL	
32' Untersatz (New Digital – C)	
16' Kontra Bass	32 pipes
16' Bourdon	32 pipes
16' Contra Viola (Swell)	
16' Violone (Great)*	
16' Gedeckt Bass (Choir)	12 pipes
16' Quintaton (Antiphonal)*	
8' Octave	32 pipes
8' Bourdon	12 pipes
8' Violone (Great)*	
8' Flûte Ouverte (Great)*	
8' Gedeckt Bass (Choir)	
4' Choral Bass	12 pipes
4' Flûte Ouverte (Great)*	
2' Flûte Ouverte (Great)*	



**Swell**

This greatly improved the tonal egress of both Swell and Choir divisions. The pipe display was rearranged to incorporate the new 16' and 8' pipes of the Great, making quite a dramatic façade. We also did a complete mechanical rebuild with the exception of wind regulators, which had been completed earlier by the J.F. Nordlie Company, who have done excellent work on the organ over the years. Perhaps of most importance for the organ's long-term maintenance was a re-engineering of certain aspects of the layout to provide improved access for maintenance.

This project has been a special pleasure for us because of the long-term relationship we have had with the congregation. Over the years, as we have taken steps towards this final completion, we have enjoyed each of our experiences in Sioux Falls. The congregation is a most active one and is deeply appreciative of good, traditional church music. We have been privileged to know and work with all their musicians throughout this period and the atmosphere has been totally supportive and most pleasant.

—*Jack M. Bethards*  
President and Tonal Director  
Schoenstein & Co.  
Pipe Organ Builders

### From the consultant

I have long been a friend of First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls and enjoyed bringing the St. Olaf Cantorei to the church many times. Thus I was delighted to be asked to help the organ committee explore options for the renovation and possible completion of its 1959 Aeolian-Skinner organ. Fortunately, the people of

First Lutheran had taken exceptional care of the instrument and while the time had now arrived for more significant mechanical and electrical upgrades, its basic integrity had been maintained.

The church's experience working with Jack Bethards and Schoenstein & Co. suggested that the firm was the logical choice to undertake a more extensive process of renewal of the instrument. Since they are highly respected for their restoration work on many Aeolian-Skinner organs, the fit was a natural. It seemed to be the ideal time to complete the preparations evidenced in the console, especially the absent Positiv division. All agreed to utilize the console preparations for an Antiphonal organ instead of adding the typical Aeolian-Skinner brightly voiced Positiv to what already was an instrument needing more gravitas in its sound, especially considering the relatively dry acoustics in the room. It has made a great difference in the effectiveness of the organ, especially as a leader of congregational song. Additional foundational sound was added to the Great and the existing Choir was provided with a complete chorus with mixture, a significant move since the Positiv division was not to be.

During the long gestation of the project, a careful study of the acoustics in the space was undertaken. It soon became evident that any major improvement to the acoustics was not structurally or fiscally possible. However, reflective surfaces in the gallery, especially directly behind the choir, were improved and have enhanced the choir's projection into the nave and enabled its members to hear one another significantly better.



**Schoenstein mill shop foreman Erik Asprey demonstrates console storage**

First Lutheran now has a warmer, more colorful organ. The strong choral tradition of the church has a more versatile accompanimental colleague and the overall sound of the instrument in the room is richer and much more satisfying. Its leadership of the congregation's singing has been substantially improved. Throughout this lengthy and sometimes frustrating process, I've been impressed by the creativity and patience of Jack Bethards of Schoenstein and the perseverance of the committee, especially its chair, James Moore, and organist Marcia Kittelson. They had a vision, never wavered, and the result more than fulfills their hopes and aspirations. Would that it always were so.

—*John Ferguson*

### From the organist

Music ministry has long been an important facet of First Lutheran's identity. It came as no surprise to me, when I joined the professional staff of this church in 2007, that the organ enjoys an active role in the leading of weekly services. Since the installation of Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1342 in 1959, only two other organists have presided at the console: the late Dr. Merle Pflueger (who designed the original stoplist in collaboration with Aeolian-Skinner representatives) and Organist Emerita and Curator of Organs, Marcia Kittelson, whose scholarship and musical

excellence cultivated appreciation for the organ and its role in Christian worship. During her tenure at First Lutheran, Marcia Kittelson took excellent care of Opus 1342, and the church owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for her careful preservation of this heritage instrument.

Given the history of the sanctuary organ, with slightly more than fifty years of service to the congregation, it was not difficult to gain the momentum to undertake its necessary renovation. Knowing the benefits in terms of overall cost, and faced with the prospect of not being able to finish the organ more than fifty years after the initial investment, the organ committee pressed forward with the tenacious and unflagging leadership of chairman James Moore. With the generosity of two lead gifts, the committee was able to finally realize the total project.

Under the guidance of project consultant John Ferguson, the organ committee confidently engaged Schoenstein & Co. to proceed with the renovation and completion of Opus 1342. From the outset, the committee sought to preserve the Aeolian-Skinner aesthetic, while blending in new pipework with the existing stoplist. The committee's decision to entrust the work to this firm began in the 1990s, when Schoenstein & Co. added a pedal reed and completed necessary regulation work. Furthermore, Schoenstein's connection to Skinner and Aeolian-Skinner

### First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

32'	Bombarde (Digital – H)	
16'	Bombarde (I)	32 pipes
16'	Contre Hautbois (Swell)	
8'	Trompette (I)	12 pipes
8'	Krummhorn (Choir)	
4'	Clairon (I)	12 pipes
4'	Krummhorn (Choir)	
	Antiphonal on Pedal	

#### Couplers

Great to Pedal 8  
Swell to Pedal 8, 4  
Choir to Pedal 8, 4  
Swell to Great 16, 8, 4  
Choir to Great 16, 8, 4  
Swell to Choir 16, 8, 4

#### Note

1. Antiphonal does not couple with divisions on which it is drawn.
2. Festival Trumpets do not couple. Flûte Ouverte on Choir does not couple.
3. Percussions couple. Chimes couple down one octave on the Pedal.

#### Peterson ICS System

Combination Action  
100 Memories with digital read-out  
13 General pistons  
6 Duplicate general toe studs  
6 Great pistons, 1 Great cancel piston  
6 Swell pistons, 1 Swell cancel piston  
6 Choir pistons, 1 Choir cancel piston  
6 Antiphonal pistons, 1 Antiphonal cancel piston  
6 Pedal toe studs, 1 Pedal cancel toe stud  
1 Set piston  
1 General cancel piston  
Piston Sequencer Option

#### Reversible Actions

Great to Pedal piston and toe lever  
Swell to Pedal piston and toe lever  
Choir to Pedal piston and toe lever  
Antiphonal to Pedal toe lever (new)  
Swell to Great piston  
Choir to Great piston  
Swell to Choir piston  
Sforzando I piston and toe lever with indicator  
Sforzando II piston and toe lever with indicator

#### Special Controls

Great/Choir Transfer  
Pedal to Manual on/off Great  
Pedal to Manual on/off Swell  
Pedal to Manual on/off Choir  
Crescendo Pedal with indicator  
Two balanced Expression pedals  
Great keys separation switch – 4 positions

Note: Sforzandi and Crescendo are programmable on each memory level.

#### Notes

- A New pipes and chest 2011
- B New pipes on Quintaton chest 2011
- C New Walker 2011
- D New chest 2012
- E New pipes 2012
- F New Der Zimbelstern 2011
- G Former prepared Positiv. All new except Quintaton pipes formerly on the Great and Zimbelstern formerly in the main organ 2011
- H New Walker 1994
- I New pipes and chest 1994
- ° New borrow

via Louis Schoenstein and his son, Lawrence, who worked for G. Donald Harrison, naturally affirmed this decision.

From the beginning of the committee's discussions with Jack Bethards, President and Tonal Director of Schoenstein & Co., it was clear that we could accomplish astounding results with a strikingly conservative approach. Acoustically, it was determined that an Antiphonal organ would be a more appropriate way of rendering the prepared division. Housed in the chancel, the Antiphonal organ lends valuable support to the cantor, choirs, and congregation at the crossing and front portions of the nave. The Quintaton 16', formerly the basis for the gallery Great, now takes its place as a foundation for the Antiphonal organ. The ability to draw the Quintaton separately in the Pedal as well as a manual stop makes it a fine addition to the new colorful foundation stops.

Further enhancements to the Great and Choir divisions were also desired; the Great lacked an appropriately scaled 16' to support the principal chorus, and the Choir division, while ideal for the accompaniment of choirs and solo vocalists, lacked a chorus that could contrast with the Swell. Added support to the Great division is offered by a new Violone at 16' and 8' pitch, an 8' Flute Ouverte, and a 1 1/2' principal-scaled Seventeenth. With the appropriate foundation tones now in place, the existing mixture, a 1 1/2' IV-VI Fourniture, makes sense to the ear. The additional mutation stop, when combined with the existing 2 3/4' Twelfth, allows for a contrasting Sesquialtera to the Choir.

Joining the existing pipework in the Choir are a new 4' Fugara and 2' Klein Mixtur. While modest, to be sure, these two additions give the Choir a firm identity, and a fine contrast to the Swell plenum. The ability to make the existing Krummhorn speak at 16' to tenor C adds further gravity to the division.

The finished organ opens a new chapter in the life of First Lutheran and Opus 1342. With the renovation and completion accomplished, the church members have answered the call of the 1956 organ committee—continuing to invest well in those things that ensure a worthy legacy

of faith—even as other “steeple are falling” in favor of fleeting trends. Towering over the east balcony is an instrument of stately beauty, completely at home with its Gothic surroundings. In this context, I believe one starts to hear the organ—first by sight. When played, it sounds like one expects it should—with grace, exquisite beauty, and majestic power. It was rededicated in a public recital played by Grammy Award-winning organist Paul Jacobs, chairman of the organ department at the Juilliard School, to a capacity audience on December 4, 2011.

On behalf of the organ committee, I wish to extend our deepest appreciation to Jack Bethards, Louis Patterson, and the entire staff at Schoenstein & Co. First Lutheran has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with this firm since the early 1990s, and it is a joy to see the progress over the years that continues to make Opus 1342 an ever more perfect instrument. The finished organ has exceeded what many of us thought possible, and we could not imagine a more satisfying relationship than that which we have enjoyed with the professionals at Schoenstein & Co.

—Michael J. Elsbernd  
Director of Music Ministry  
& Principal Organist

### From the chair of the organ committee

When the organ committee recommended the purchase of an Aeolian-Skinner in 1956, they probably knew how well the instrument would serve the church beyond their lifetimes. They probably did not know that the organ would still be unfinished 50 years later. Purchased at a cost of \$52,000, the organ as installed and dedicated was missing reeds, a mixture, and upperwork in the Pedal division, as well as a Positiv division, all of which could have been added at the time for another \$12,000.

As Opus 1342 approached its fiftieth anniversary in November 2009, a new organ committee, formed in 2007, had two goals: to complete the instrument, and to do everything necessary to keep the organ in service for another 50 years.

Having worked with Jack Bethards and Schoenstein & Co. in the early 1990s on a reed addition to the Pedal and other tonal regulation of the entire organ, the committee had no trouble deciding to move forward with Schoenstein. With the invaluable help of John Ferguson, our consultant and long-time friend of First Lutheran, we quickly agreed on the scope of work. It took longer to find our way through the political processes and to raise the money needed to finish the project, but with help from many faithful members, we did.

In the end, we made the instrument mechanically current, added 12 ranks of pipes, and ensured that the organ should serve First Lutheran Church long beyond those of us on the committee. The results exceed our expectations in every way: the Antiphonal division enables the sound of the organ to fill the room for the first time, the new 8' stops add warmth and richness of tone without changing the organ's identity as an Aeolian-Skinner, and all of the new stops add impressive tonal color and versatility.

Jack Bethards, Louis Patterson, and everyone at Schoenstein have been always timely, responsive, and professional. Their work is simply excellent, and speaks for itself.

—James E. Moore  
Chair of the organ committee

Photo credit: Louis Patterson, unless indicated otherwise

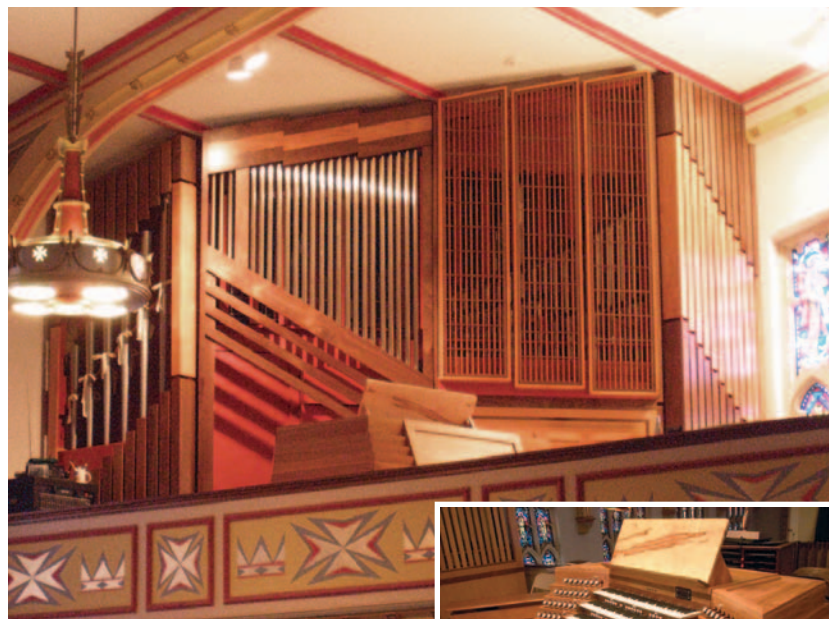


Photo credit: Randall Karstens

### R. Karstens Organ Works, Columbus, Ohio Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Lake Park Lutheran Church had a two-manual pipe organ built by the Steiner-Reck Organ Company of Louisville, Kentucky. The organ was built for the church's 75th anniversary, and has served the congregation well. Over the years, some maintenance and tuning issues developed, and the congregation felt that there were some sounds they wanted to add to the tonal scheme of this instrument.

Twenty-five years later, in conjunction with the church's centennial celebration, and with the help and enthusiasm of the growing congregation, the organ has been rebuilt and completed. The committee, formed in January 2008 and headed by organist Mel Robbert, received a variety of bids, but was impressed not only by R. Karstens Organ Works' bid, but also by owner Randall Karstens' understanding of the church's needs.

Construction began in August 2009. The existing organ was left intact, with some exceptions. Karstens performed a general cleaning, as well as mechanical and pipe repairs, remedial voicing, and

replaced the electrical relay with a new one from Solid State Organ Systems. The former Swell division was re-purposed as a Positiv, with the removal of the swell shades as well as the replacement of the original Gemshorn Celeste with a 2' Principal. The former Gemshorn Celeste was then transplanted into the new Swell as the 4' Spire Flute.

Along with the Swell, a new organ console was built, with three manuals and pedal, to play the existing organ and the new division. The organ console is constructed of solid cherry with walnut accents. About one-third of the materials in the rebuilt organ are new.

The congregation is most excited about the versatility of the instrument, the selection of stops, and its ability to fill the space. The organ was dedicated on Sunday, February 7, 2010 as part of Sunday services played by Mel Robbert. The entire congregation has high hopes that it will lead them through the next hundred years.

—Randall Karstens



Violone hoisted by Erik Asprey and Dave Beck on the bottom, and Oliver Jaggi and Mark Hotsenpiller on the top (photo credit: First Lutheran Church)

## R. Karstens Organ Works, Ltd 2010

24 stops, 28 ranks, 1,722 pipes

Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

<b>GREAT</b>				2 3/4'	Nasat	existing	68
8'	Principal	existing	56	2'	Principal	new	56
8'	Rohr Floete	existing	56	1 1/2'	Terz	existing	56
8'	Spitz Floete	existing	80	1 1/2'	Quinte (ext)		
4'	Octave	existing	56	III	Mixture	existing	168
4'	Spitz Floete (ext)			16'	Cromorne	existing	80
2'	Spitz Floete (ext)			8'	Cromorne (ext)		
IV	Mixture	existing	224	4'	Cromorne (ext)		
8'	Trumpet	existing	68		Cymbelstern		
	Chimes	existing					
<b>SWELL (enclosed)</b>				<b>PEDAL</b>			
16'	Bourdon	new	80	16'	Violone (ext, Sw)		12
8'	Viola	new	68	16'	Subbass	existing	56
8'	Viola Celeste (TC)	new	56	16'	Bourdon (Sw)		
8'	Bourdon (ext)			8'	Viola (Sw)		
4'	Spire Flute	existing	56	8'	Flute Bass (Subbass)		
4'	Octave Virole (ext)			8'	Bourdon (Sw)		
2'	Hohl Flute	new	61	4'	Choral Bass	existing	32
16'	Bassoon	new	80	4'	Gedackt (Subbass)		
8'	Trumpet new, hooded, unencl.		61	16'	Trumpet (Gt)		12
8'	Oboe (ext)			16'	Bassoon (Sw)		
	Tremulant			8'	Trumpet (Sw)		
	Swell to Swell 16			4'	Trumpet (Sw)		
	Swell to Swell 4			4'	Oboe (Sw)		
	Unison Off			<b>Couplers</b>			
				Swell to Great			
				Positiv to Great			
				Swell to Positiv			
				Great to Pedal			
				Swell to Pedal			
				Positiv to Pedal			
				<b>POSITIV</b>			
8'	Gemshorn	existing	68				
8'	Gedackt Pommer	existing	56				
4'	Gemshorn (ext)						
4'	Traverse Flute	existing	56				