



Adopt-a-Pipe Challenge

THE RESTORATION OF THE 1868 HENRY ERBEN ORGAN
AT THE BASILICA OF ST. PATRICK'S OLD CATHEDRAL



A Brief History of the 1868 Erben Organ

This organ is one of New York City's, and America's, historic gems. It was constructed by the world-renowned New York City organbuilder Henry Erben (1800–1884). It is the only intact three-manual Erben organ: the finest remaining example of America's preeminent 19th-century organ builder.

A masterpiece of musical and visual art, its nearly 2,500 pipes still speak with grandeur and eloquence. Henry Erben's factory in the 1840s was one of the largest in the city. He shipped instruments to cathedrals and churches in Havana, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, and the new territories of the American West. Erben employed skilled European and American craftsmen, some of whom signed their names to the pipes they crafted.

The Organ Historical Society cited the organ as one of the most important in the country, and it is featured in the standard History of the Organ of the United States by Orpha Ochse. It was the third organ Erben installed in the Cathedral, and he got it right: *it doesn't get any better than this!*

The Organ Today

Though most other similar organs have either been destroyed or altered beyond recognition, this organ remains largely intact. However, after nearly 150 years of pollution, smoke, and dust, the organ needs a thorough cleaning. Due to past water leaks, fallen plaster



has damaged some ranks of pipes, making them unusable or unstable. The bellows leather, some of which is original, is taped together. Cracks in the windchests attributable to temperature and humidity stresses need to be addressed. It is miraculous that it plays as well as it does: a testament to its timeless quality and design.

The restoration makes the original manual pumping mechanism functional again (see above). The mechanism's less turbulent air improves the sound, and it is a way to involve young people in performances, using forgotten "green" technology. Our adopt-a-pipe program is divided into four parts, representing the four main "divisions" of the Erben pipe organ. Each division has its own character, described below. Individual pipes have different sizes (from a few inches to 24 feet), materials (various combinations of wood and metals), and shapes (pyramids, complex conic shapes, etc.). Families may consider purchasing entire ranks of pipes: for instance, all 30 Trombone pipes.



Cost & Timeline

The restoration project, or “Erben Renewal,” consists of two phases:

- Phase I (18 months): removal, restoration, and re-installation in renovated choir loft; ongoing documentation of project; and ongoing programming and research: \$1,54400,000.
- Phase II: world-class music education and innovative performance programs for generations to come, creating a center for arts and culture in lower Manhattan, capitalizing on the Erben organ and the Basilica’s unique musical legacy, particularly with respect to opera and the nascent Philharmonic.

Adopt-a-Pipe

Great Division: This section of the organ leads the congregation and packs a punch! The Great contains fiery trumpets, brilliant mixtures, and lots of fundamental tone to fill the room. *This division contains the magnificent 16 foot Double Open Diapason--the pipes that are in the façade of the organ.* These pipes will be stenciled to the original pattern.

Pipe Length (in feet)	Name of Stop	# of Pipes	Price/Pipe
16	Grand Open Diapason (façade)	27	\$1000
16	Grand Open Diapason (inside)	31	\$500
8	Open Diapason	58	\$250
8	Gamba *	58	\$250
8	Melodia	58	\$250
8	Stopd. Diapason	58	\$150
4	Principal	58	\$100
4	Waldflote	58	\$100
2 2/3	Twelfth	58	\$100
2	Fifteenth	58	\$50
	Mixture III ranks **	174	\$50
	Sesquialtra III ranks	174	\$50
8	Trumpet	58	\$1000
4	Clarion	58	\$1,000
	Bellows Signal		\$500
	Pipes	986	
	Total		\$248,900

Swell Division: This part of the organ has a kaleidoscope of colors and effects. The Swell is enclosed in a box high above the organ. Shutters on the box open and close, controlled by the organist's foot. As the shutters open, the volume gets louder, hence, "Swell." The Swell contains the incomparably beautiful "Hautbois" (Oboe) and Harmonic Flute. Finally, there is a "tremolo" used to replicate the vibrato of a human voice ("*vox tremolo*").

Pipe Length (in feet)	Name of Stop	# of Pipes	Price/Pipe
16	Bourdon	58	\$500
8	Open Diapason	58	\$200
8	Stop. Diapason	58	\$200
8	Dulciana	58	\$200
8	Viol d'Amour [1-12 Dulciana]	46	\$200
4	Principal	58	\$100
4	Flute Harmonique	58	\$100
2	Piccolo	58	\$50
	Cornet III ranks	174	\$25
8	Cornoepen	58	\$500
8	Oboe	58	\$500
	Vox Tremolo		\$1000
	Pipes	742	
	Total		\$154,850

Choir Division: This is the most versatile division of the organ, used alone or in combination with other divisions of the organ. These pipes are designed to accompany choral singing and instrumental music. Full of rich tones and carefully voiced, it also has a Clarinet that is useful in all sorts of musical contexts, a rare “Keraulophone,” as well as a “Pyramid Diapason,” the only one of its kind left on any instrument, anywhere.

Pipe Length (in feet)	Name of Stop	# of Pipes	Price/Pipe
8	Pyramid Diapason [1-12 Mel.]	46	\$100
8	Dolce	58	\$100
8	Keraulophon [1-12 Dolce]	46	\$100
8	Stop. Diapason	58	\$100
8	Clarabel Flute	58	\$100
4	Principal	58	\$50
4	Flauto Traverso	58	\$50
2	Flageolet	58	\$25
8	Cremona [Treble]	46	\$200
8	Bassoon [Bass]	12	\$200
	Pipes	498	
	Total		\$45,450

Pedal Division: When you hear the big bass notes that rumble and shake, they come from this division of the organ. These pipes are played by the organist's feet via pedals. The organist leads congregational singing with these bass notes. The longest of these pipes is over 24 feet! The "Trombone" is a very large bass reed, brought out only on Christmas, Easter, and celebratory occasions. It is a sumptuous part of the organ's design. Another amazing stop is the Contra Gamba, a famous stop known as a "bell gamba." A remarkable piece of sculpture, it is the only intact 16' bell gamba known. Remarkably, this organ also has a 4' flute in the pedal—one of the most beautiful flutes one can hear.

Pipe Length (in feet)	Name of Stop	# of Pipes	Price/Pipe
16	Double Open Diapason	30	\$500
16	Bourdon	30	\$500
16	Contra Gamba ("Bell Gamba")	30	\$500
8	Violon Cello	30	\$250
4	Claribel Flute	30	\$100
16	Trombone	30	\$1000
	Pipes	180	
	Total		\$85,500
	Total Pipes	2406	
	Total from All Divisions		\$534,700

