

St Matthew's Letourneau Pipe Organ

By John Scott



Recent articles about our pipe organ have referred to an organ 'stop' commonly called a Vox Humana (see next paragraph) being reinstalled in the organ in the near future after being in storage for just on 13 years. By way of explanation an organ 'stop' is a rank of pipes which is usually named after an orchestral instrument eg oboe, flute, trumpet etc which give the organist flexibility to play various sounds in musical pieces. For most stops there is one pipe to each note of the keyboard so there are 58 pipes being reinstalled into our organ. Some people are asking why we took these pipes out 13 years ago and are now putting them back in again! Hopefully, what follows will answer that question!

When installed in 1994 our new Canadian built 'French-style' Letourneau pipe organ had a rank of pipes called 'Voix Humaine' or more commonly referred to as the 'Vox Humana' as found on many organs by other makers. This rank of pipes or 'stop' is supposed to resemble the human voice and is most often used as a solo stop. Whilst a lovely, unique sounding stop it didn't provide support to choir or congregational music as well as the Oboe stop on the previous pipe organ (destroyed in the 1991 fire) so the Music team at the time decided to raise funds for an Oboe stop for the Letourneau pipe organ. The most economical way to install it in the new organ was to replace the Voix Humaine, putting it into storage. It has always been the intention to reinstall it when funds permitted firstly to maintain the integrity of the organ's original specification, and secondly because it is such a lovely, unique sound! Eventually in November 2007 a new Oboe stop from the organ builders, Orgues Letourneau of Canada was installed, and in keeping with our organ's French configuration it is called a 'Hautbois'. This has been an absolute asset to the organ providing so much more flexibility in choral accompaniment and voluntaries!



The long awaited reinstallation of the Voix Humaine pipes will happen within the next month or two, and for those interested in the specification of the organ it will then have 33 stops, 40 ranks of pipes - a total of 2,040 pipes!

We gratefully thank the many donors who have made this possible and especially acknowledge the very generous donation from long-serving Organist of this church, David Luxon who, in these difficult times, did not want to burden the congregation with any costs involved in this project. David as many of you know has faithfully served St Matthew's as Organist for over 60 years, and we acknowledge his generosity and his commitment!



DIGITAL PEDAL STOPS: Some visiting concert organists and some visiting church organists have commented over the years that the bass section of the organ is lacking in depth so fundraising is underway to permit the installation of some digital stops to enhance the Pedal section of the organ. At low frequencies deep pedal notes generated by sound sampling technology is usually

indistinguishable from traditional 16' and 32' pipe installations! These pedal stops are digitally sampled sounds selected from the best organs in the world. Many churches and cathedrals have taken advantage of digital stops to enhance their pipe organs because of cost and space considerations.

Quoting Fr Peter – “Both the Voix Humaine install and digital pedal stops projects have been made possible by generous donations and we are very close to seeing both realised! Every little bit counts and at tax time you might consider giving a gift that can never be taken away and that will continue to echo in the minds and memories of all fortunate to hear it! Tax deductible donations can be made through the National Trust and dedicated to that purpose”.

MASTERWORKS AT ST MATTHEW’S CD:



We have limited copies of this CD for sale at the reduced price of \$15. Sydney organist David Drury gave the opening recital of the organ in 1994 to a packed church, and returned in 1995 to record a stunning programme, including some from the opening recital, and brilliantly showing off the variety of sounds that this wonderful instrument produces. The cover notes also detail which pieces use the soon to be reinstalled Voix Humaine stop! Hear the organ as it was when one year old! ***Every cent raised from the sale of these CD's goes into the Organ Fund and will be applied towards the above projects.***

CD's are available from the Church Office or from the Church Organists: David Luxon, Malcolm Halford or John Scott.