

The New Organ for the First Presbyterian Church *Monterey, California*

JACK M. BETHARDS

THE WORK OF MURRAY M. HARRIS, legendary Los Angeles organbuilder whose firm built what is now the nucleus of Philadelphia's Wanamaker organ, is much admired, especially here in the West where a few of his brilliant creations survive untouched. Organist, organ technician, and historian Thomas L. DeLay, serving as the consultant for First Presbyterian Church of Monterey, California, contacted Schoenstein & Co. about a new organ. Tom told me that he had invited the committee to a church where he played a 1910 Murray M. Harris organ. This was an educational session just to show the committee the parts of an instrument and how they worked; it was not to talk about tone. In fact, he was a bit concerned that they might be put off by an "old-fashioned" instrument. Much to his surprise and delight, when he demonstrated the instrument, the committee was absolutely captivated and said "that's the kind of sound we want!" Tom asked if we could make something with a bit of the Murray M. Harris character. We could, but wouldn't it be better to have the real thing or something close to it? One of our long-term clients had an organ in storage with us that was about 90 percent from Murray M. Harris Opus 91 of 1912. We also had in stock several stops from Opus 83 of 1911. I suggested that we make a brand new reproduction Murray M. Harris organ with mostly original pipework. The two churches got together and made an arrangement favorable to both and we set out on one of our most interesting projects.

Every part of this two-manual, 26-voice, 28-rank organ is new except the original pipework. Our windchests happened to be appropriate for Murray M. Harris pipes, having a similar expansion chamber that elongates the wind path between valve and pipe toe. The entire organ is under expression speaking down the long axis of the church with Great and Pedal in one chamber and Swell in the other. The church went to great lengths to improve the organ chambers with effective insulation and temperature control. The previous

organ had suffered badly from swings in temperature. (Yes, It Happens in Monterey!)

The console is a reproduction of the Murray M. Harris style of the period. An original console was thoroughly measured and photographed. Every detail of the cabinetry is an exact match, as are drawknobs and other accessories. To give the instrument added flexibility, the console is equipped with modern playing aids of the Peterson ICS system and has a third manual that draws mainly solo stops from the Great and Swell.

Fortunately, the pipework had been well preserved over the years and not altered, and it was carefully cleaned and prepared in our voicing rooms. The stoplist is very much of the period with 69 percent of its stops at 8' pitch or below, but they are brimming with color and character. Typical of Harris organs, the upperwork adds a completely satisfying and perfectly balanced glow to the sound. The Dolce Cornet is new but based strictly on Murray M. Harris models of Salicional scale. It has found multiple uses. Of special interest, is the Harris tradition of celestes that work with either medium or soft unisons. In this organ, they are found on both Swell and Great. The tonal result is a versatile church organ fully suitable to modern demands.

Many modern instruments have been made on 18th- and 19th-century models, but this reproduction in the early 20th-century style may find a new audience for just plain beautiful tone.

The instrument was completed in February 2017 and presented in a recital on May 6, featuring five performers associated over the years with the church: Tiffany Truett Bedner, Aaron Nee, Kitty Du Vernois, organ consultant Thomas Delay, and current organist Margaret Bellisomi.

The organ project manager for the church is Walt Prowell; the music director is John Koza; the pastor is the Rev. Mark Peake.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MONTEREY, CALIF.

SCHOENSTEIN & CO.

*Incorporating pipes from
1911 and 1912 Murray M. Harris organs*

All manual ranks are 61 pipes unless noted.

Pedal ranks are 32 pipes.

*Murray M. Harris pipework

Solo: ^{GT} = Great stops; ^{SW} = Swell stops

Electric-pneumatic action



Console in the Murray M. Harris style

II. GREAT (expressive)

- 8 First Open Diapason*
- 8 Second Open Diapason
- 8 Melodia*
- 8 Unda-Maris* (t.c., 49 pipes)
- 8 Dulciana*
- 4 Octave
- 4 Flute d'Amour*
- 2½ Octave Quint
- 2 Super Octave
- 16 Trombone (ext. 12 pipes)
- 8 Tuba
- 8 Clarinet
- Tremulant
- Great 16, Unison Off, 4

III. SWELL (expressive)

- 16 Bourdon*
- 8 Violin Diapason*
- 8 Stopped Diapason*
- 8 Salicional*
- 8 Vox Celeste (t.c., 49 pipes)
- 8 Aeoline*
- 4 Fugara
- 4 Harmonic Flute*
- 2 Piccolo
- Dolce Cornet III (171 pipes)
- 8 Trumpet
- 8 Oboe*
- 8 Vox Humana (with separate Trem.)
- Tremulant
- Swell 16, Unison Off, 4

I. SOLO

- 8 First Open Diapason^{GT}
- 8 Second Open Diapason^{GT}
- 8 Violin Diapason^{SW}
- 8 Stopped Diapason^{SW}
- 8 Harmonic Flute^{SW†}
- 8 Vox Celeste II^{SW}
- 8 Unda Maris II^{GT}
- 4 Flute d'Amour^{GT}
- 8 Tuba^{GT}
- 8 Trumpet^{SW}
- 8 Oboe^{SW}
- 8 Clarinet^{GT}
- 8 Vox Humana^{SW} (with Tremulant)
- Chimes (from existing organ)
- Solo 16, Unison Off, 4
- †4' Harmonic Flute, 8' Stopped Diapason,
and Aeoline common bass

PEDAL

- 32 Resultant (16' Diapason and Bourdon)
- 16 Open Diapason* (wood)
- 16 Bourdon* (former Tibia)
- 16 Lieblich Gedeckt (Sw.)
- 8 Open Diapason (Gt. 2nd OD)
- 8 Violin Diapason (Sw.)
- 8 Lieblich Gedeckt (Sw.)
- 4 Octave (Gt. 1st OD)
- 16 Trombone (Gt.)
- 8 Trumpet (Sw.)
- 4 Oboe (Sw.)

COUPLERS

- Great to Pedal 8, 4
- Swell to Pedal 8, 4
- Solo to Pedal 8, 4
- Swell to Great 16, 8, 4
- Solo to Great
- Great to Solo 8, 4
- Swell to Solo 8, 4

MECHANICALS

- Solid State Capture Combination Action
- with:
 - ▶ 100 Memories
 - ▶ Programmable piston range for each memory level
 - ▶ 40 Pistons and toe studs
 - ▶ 7 Reversibles including Full Organ
 - ▶ Record/Playback
- Crescendo Pedal