

The State of our Organ Console at St. Christine
A Report from Mr. Ronald Goulish, Director of Music

In 1994 The Music Place installed a combination Baldwin electronic organ with a computer midi and interface to play the pipe work supplied by the Wicks Pipe Organ Company. The initial setup was complicated and did not function well. Additional computer parts were needed for the pipes to speak. Numerous trips were required of the repair team to correct the installation. Finally, the Essex box was installed. It helped the computer understand the function.

In 1996, the Baldwin Company was failing and shortened the 10 year warranty of our organ to 5 years. The D431 model console which we had installed was discontinued. In 1998, the Baldwin Company went out of business and closed its factories.

In 2004, a major repair was needed as the console computer was beginning to fail. A limited number of parts were available through Dave Wade in Cincinnati, who designed the console. He has since retired as a musical engineer. I received a letter from Greg Lester (2004) who was then servicing the instrument informing me that parts were difficult to find and verifying that the computer was beginning a decline.

Recently, there have been many problems with the console. Draw knobs are in position, but nothing plays. The computer is confusing one manual and sound with another. Basically, sound choices are made and the organ "says" it will play, but then nothing happens. I expected to be long retired by the time this issues surfaced, but here I am in the middle of it. After having the console repaired on numerous occasion, I have been informed that the computer is in dire need of replacement. The last supplier of the minimal number of parts that were available has passed away, leaving nothing behind. If the computer were to fail now, there is nothing that can be done to repair it. We will simply be left without an organ.

My recommendation to the finance committee would be to replace the Baldwin console with a Wicks console. Wicks Organs are hand built and would be an actual pipe organ capable of easily replacing the current Baldwin. The difference between the two consoles is that while the Baldwin console was mass produced, the Wicks console will be produced by hand and will be an actual pipe organ rather than an electronic organ which is then adapted to play pipes, as our current console is. Pipe organs are used for centuries. For example, the organ at St. Columba Cathedral was installed in 1958 and is in prime condition. On the other hand, our organ, while it has been fitted to the pipes, many of which are visible in the sanctuary, is basically a 21 year old computer. Could you imagine using your PC for that many years?

Since the installation of the organ, L&L Electronics has been servicing the electronic portion of the organ. With no more parts available, they will no longer even return my phone calls.

I recommend the Wicks Company because they originally installed the pipes, which are of the highest quality. I have been in touch with Mr. Scott Wick, President of the Wicks Pipe Organ Company. He has been gracious in his willingness to work with us in the completion of the Wicks Combination Pipe Organ, to provide us with a console that is actually built to accompany the pipes which are already installed, rather than trying to retro-fit an already existing console to fit the pipes. The production time for a new console is seven to nine months, as it is custom designed and built to specifications. Hopefully, the new console would be installed in time for Easter of 2016.

In conclusion, St. Christine Parish is a vibrant congregation. We are a very good example of full, active, conscious participation as directed by the Vatican and the USCCB. Our Sunday Worship sings the praises of the lord, and the heart of participation is the foundation provided by the organ.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Goulish
Director of Music.