

# The Kimball Organ in St. Louis Church

## HISTORY

The organ of St. Louis Church, Buffalo, New York, was built in 1903 by the W. W. Kimball Company of Chicago, Illinois, as their opus 3329. The instrument was designed in consultation with John B. Singenberger, and the appearance of the facade is the work of the architects of the church, Schickel and Ditmars. Originally containing 30 stops with 33 ranks of pipes, the cost of this organ was \$7,000.00. It was dedicated in concert on November 24, 1903 by Gaston Dethier, a famous organist based in New York City.

In 1952, the Tellers Organ Company of Erie, Pennsylvania was contracted to rebuild this organ. The original tubular pneumatic action was converted to electro-pneumatic action, the windchest pneumatic actions were recovered with new leather, and a new console was installed. The organ was also enlarged by 8 ranks of pipes, giving it a new total of 35 stops. The cost of the work was \$10,500.00. The church's organist, Louis Huybrechts, played the rededication recital on October 29, 1952.

In spite of repairs and rebuilding, this organ has been plagued by chronic mechanical problems caused by poorly designed pipe valves. In October 1987, pipe organ technician William Kurzdorfer began the project of rebuilding the chest action. Lasting approximately five years, this work included recovering the 2,455 action pneumatics with a good grade of rubber cloth, and eliminating the original brass disc pipe valves. They were replaced with standard felt and leather valves to insure reliable functioning of the Kimball windchest action. All other perishable action parts were also renewed.

Other work during this time included replacing missing pipes damaged by care less maintenance, reversal tonal changes that had taken place in 1952, and adding seven additional stops. One is in the pedal division (the 16' Posaune), and was made by the famous American organ builder E. M. Skinner. The organ has 2600 pipes distributed over 44 stops (49 ranks) as of October 1999.

This organ *is* one of the oldest Kimball instruments still in its original home. It still retains 98% of its original pipework, its original two bi-fold reservoirs and its patented windchests. The added stops were carefully matched to the style of the original design.

Finally, in spite of a persistent legend, this Kimball organ was not exhibited in the Pan Am Exposition. A 1901 organ by New England builder Emmons Howard was ordered by and built for St. Louis church. That instrument was first exhibited in the Pan American Temple of Music, but recently discovered minutes of the trustees meetings prove that the Howard organ was too large for the space available in the rear gallery. With installation in the church impossible, the organ finally was installed in the old Buffalo Music Hall at Elmwood and Virginia Streets.

## SPECIFICATION

### CHOIR ORGAN

8'	Geigen Principal
8'	Concert Flute
8'	Dolce
4'	Geigen Octave
4'	Rohr Flute
2'	Piccolo
8'	Clarinet Tremolo
16'	Choir to Choir
4'	Choir to Choir
16'	Swell to Choir
8'	Swell to Choir
4'	Swell to Choir

### GREAT ORGAN

16'	Open Diapason
8'	Open Diapason
8'	Doppel Floete
8'	Flauto Traverso
8'	Viola da Gamba
4'	Octave
4'	Hohl Flute
2 2/3'	Octave Quint
2'	Super Octave
III-IV	Mixture
8'	Trumpet
4'	Great to Great
16'	Swell to Great
8'	Swell to Great
4'	Swell to Great
16'	Choir to Great
8'	Choir to Great
4'	Choir to Great

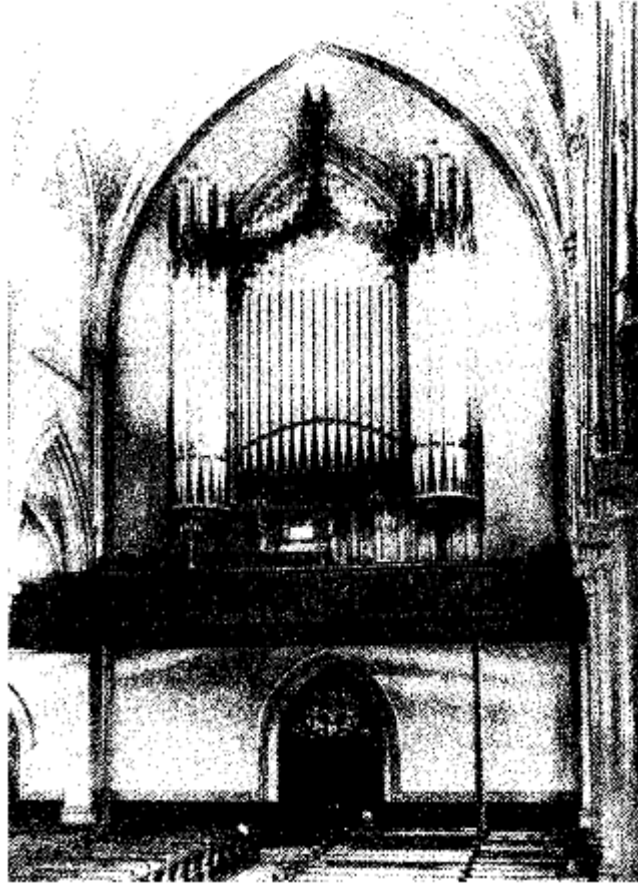
### SWELL ORGAN

16'	Bourdon Bass
16'	Bourdon Treble
8'	Open Diapason
8'	Stopped Diapason
8'	Salicional
8'	Gemshorn
8'	Aeoline (celeste)
4'	Flute Harmonic
2'	Flageolet
IV	Diapason Mixture 8' Cornopean
8'	Oboe Bassoon
8'	Vox Humana Tremolo
16'	Swell to Swell
4'	Swell to Swell
8'	Choir to Swell

### PEDAL ORGAN

32'	Open Diapason (Resultant)
16'	Open Diapason
16'	Montre
16'	Violone
16'	Bourdon
16'	Lieblich Gedeckt
8'	Diapason
8'	Bourdon
8'	Violoncello
4'	Octave
2'	Flautina
III	Mixture
16'	Posaune
8'	Trumpet
8'	Great to Pedal
4'	Great to Pedal
8'	Swell to Pedal
4'	Swell to Pedal
8'	Choir to Pedal
4'	Choir to Pedal

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