

The History of E. M. Skinner Opus 368

In 1922, Benjamin Shelton donated a new organ to the Church of the Holy name to replace a small two-manual Hutchings instrument. Ernest M. Skinner, then at the height of his popularity, was an obvious choice as the builder, and the new organ was well received. Mr. Shelton also provided a fund, now known as the Call-Shelton Fund, to maintain the new organ.

Beginning in the 1950s and continuing through 1973, a series of tonal changes were made to our organ in an attempt to create a “modern” sound. The original console was replaced in the 1960s.

These changes did not create a cohesive nor suitable instrument for the space, and by the 1990s both the Skinner mechanism and the 1960s console were near failure and the organ barely functioned. After extensive study and consideration, the church hired Spencer Organ Company to do a sympathetic re-building of the instrument. Fortunately, Spencer Organ had already obtained a three manual Skinner console which was used at the National Cathedral from 1932 to 1938.

Since the original Great pipes had been removed from the organ and dispersed, Spencer Organ Company proposed that the Great division be re-built along tonal lines similar to later Skinner organs. The other divisions would be restored to their original specification with a few additions.

This plan has now largely been realized, though not yet completed in every detail. The vision, patience, and skill of Joseph Rotella and his associates at Spencer Organ Company have brought our Skinner organ back to life. We celebrate the generosity of Benjamin Shelton, and of the Call-Shelton Fund and the many individual donors who have made this restoration possible.

The organ chimes were given in memory of William G. Fallon, Sr by his family. They have been rebuilt with new mechanisms for reliability and vintage chime tubes for an authentic sound.

From Spencer Organ Company, Inc.

When we first saw Skinner organ Opus 368 in the late 1990s, it was a mere shadow of its former self; several stops replaced, many of the remaining changed in various ways and the original Skinner console gone. Despite these issues, it was still a Skinner organ well worth saving and we were very glad when the people at Holy Name agreed. We began with a mechanical restoration in 2001 and more recently completed most of the tonal rebuilding and the reinstatement of an original Skinner console.

We are grateful to the people at Holy Name for entrusting us with the restoration of their Skinner organ, and we commend them for their stewardship in saving this instrument for future generations. This restoration has been a long process and the results have exceeded our expectations.

Spencer Organ Company, Inc. would like to acknowledge the following individuals who put forth their talents and hard work on this project: Jonathan Ambrosino (tonal consultant), Chris Broome (reed voicer), William Catanesye, Dan Kingman (tonal finisher), Mike LeLievre, Sean O'Donnell, Joseph Rotella, Erik Spooner and others. Finally, a special thanks to Dana Sawyer whose research, project oversight and unending optimism for returning this organ to its former glory have made this project possible.

Specification of E.M. Skinner Opus 368

GREAT (61 notes)

8' Diapason	Vintage Skinner pipes
8' Flute	Vintage Skinner pipes 13-61, (1-12 – Prepared for)
4' Octave	Vintage Skinner pipes
II/III Mixture	New stop in Skinner style
8' Trumpet	(Prepared for)

SWELL (73 notes)

8' Diapason	Original 1-44, vintage Skinner pipes 45-73
8' Gedeckt	Original
8' Salicional	Original
8' Voix Celeste	Original
8' Aeoline	Vintage Skinner Pipes
4' Flute (61)	Original 13-61, vintage Skinner pipes 1-12
2' Piccolo (61)	Original
8' Cornopean	Original
8' Flügel Horn	Original

CHOIR (61 notes)

8' Gedackt	(Swell)
8' Aeoline	(Swell)
4' Flute	(Swell)
8' Clarinet	Original 13-61, Vintage Skinner pipes 1-12
Chimes (21)	Vintage chime tubes with new mechanism

PEDAL (32 notes)

16' Bourdon	Original
16' Lieblich Gedeckt	(Prepared for – will replicate missing 1922 Lieblich Gedeckt)
8' Diapason	Vintage pipes (currently shared 1-12 with Great Diapason)
8' Flute	(Ext. Bourdon – 21-32 Prepared for)
8' Still Gedeckt	(Ext. Lieblich Gedeckt – Prepared for)
4' Octave	(Ext 8' Diapason)
16' Trombone	(Ext. Great Trumpet – Prepared for)
8' Trumpet	(Great – Prepared for)

Eventually, a new façade will be installed to carry the basses of the Great Diapason and Flute, and to allow better tonal egress into the nave (which was lengthened in 1940). Also, a Great Trumpet and Pedal Trombone will be added to round out the tonal scheme.