
The Story of the Emmanuel Organ



After over three years of sacrificial effort by the members of Emmanuel Church, the Rt. Reverend Martin G. Townsend, IX Bishop of Easton, dedicated the church's new Harrison & Harrison organ on 24 October 1993. In April of 1990, the Reverend Gregory S. Straub, Emmanuel's Rector, appointed an Organ Committee to assess the state of the church's electronic organ and to make recommendations for its repair or replacement. This group made a preliminary study, heard and played instruments built by many firms and consulted North American and European builders.

In January 1991, four members of the Organ Committee traveled to England to hear and play organs, including several built by the firm of Harrison & Harrison of Durham. After further work, study and deliberation, the committee in April 1991 recommended that the vestry award a commission to Harrison & Harrison. The quality of sound produced by the Harrison organs they had heard made a deep impression. The organs had a full and rich tone, able to support the accompanying of a choir and congregation without being shrill or harsh. The committee decided it had found the best firm and made its recommendations accordingly.

The vestry supported the recommendation to proceed if there were sufficient support within the church for the project. Response from the larger Chestertown community was overwhelmingly positive. The vestry authorized signing a contract with Harrison & Harrison, and work began on the two-manual, mechanical-action instrument of twenty-three stops, twenty-nine ranks. In October 1992, a group of parishioners traveled to England to visit the workshop where the organ was under construction. While the instrument was being built, the vestry named an Organ Fund-raising Committee to solicit donations. This group worked tirelessly to ensure that the church would meet its financial obligations for the organ. (Contributions for upkeep are still being received gratefully.)

As work on the organ progressed in Durham, termite damage was discovered in the floor of Emmanuel's nave and structural flaws in the walls of the church. Under the direction of the Junior Warden, Fred Thornberg, Chester River Contractors undertook many necessary repairs in time to receive the new organ. The vestry also named a Renovations Committee that helped redesign the chancel and sanctuary of the church to bring them into conformity with the present *Book of Common Prayer*.

In December 1992, Mark Venning, Managing Director of Harrison & Harrison, proposed assembling the organ in the Durham works before its shipment to America. He then scheduled two concerts on the organ in the factory. A group of Emmanuel's parishioners traveled to Durham in late March 1993 to hear these concerts. On a Friday evening, Garry E. Clarke, Emmanuel's Organist and Choirmaster, assisted by Mark Venning and Peter Hopps, Harrison's head voicer, played a program for an audience that included most Harrison employees and their families. James Lancelot, Organist and Master of Choristers at Durham Cathedral, played a recital the next afternoon which organists from many parts of Britain attended.

Soon after Mr. Lancelot's recital, Harrison employees dismantled and shipped the organ to Maryland. On 3 June, it arrived in Chestertown. An enthusiastic crew of parishioners helped John Oliver and Andrew Hale, who had come from Durham to assemble the organ, in moving the thousands of parts into the church. In late June, Peter Hopps arrived to continue the installation. Mark Venning joined him in early July, and in the hot, humid weather they completed work on the organ. Garry Clarke and Mark Venning played the organ for the first time at a service on 17 July 1993. It has been in use ever since, and a steady stream of visitors has come to Chestertown to hear, play and enjoy the instrument.

Harrison & Harrison, established in 1861, has built or restored organs in England for Westminster Abbey, St. Alban's Abbey and Royal Festival Hall, among other places. They have also built or restored the organs at the Cathedrals in Coventry, Durham, Ely,

Exeter, Peterborough, Wells and Winchester. The firm takes pride in the organs it has built for smaller churches, too, and especially in the new instrument at Emmanuel Church.

Now in its twenty-sixth year (2018-2019), the Emmanuel Concert Series continues to draw world-renowned organists and choirs to Chestertown.



The church was built in 1772. The organ has been designed to stand in an alcove on the north side.			
PEDAL ORGAN, 5 Stops, 2 Couplers		SWELL ORGAN, 9 Stops, and Tremulant	
	<i>Feet</i>		<i>Feet</i>
1. Bourdon	16	15. Gedakt	8
2. Principal	8	16. Salicional	8
3. Bass Flute	8	17. Cèleste (tenor c)	8
4. Fifteenth	4	18. Spitzflute	4
5. Trombone	16	19 Fifteenth	2
<i>I Great to Pedal</i>		20. Quint	1 1/3
<i>II Swell to Pedal</i>		21. Mixture	III
		22. Fagotto	16
GREAT ORGAN, 9 Stops, Tremulant and 1 Coupler		23. Cornopean	8
6. Open Diapason	8	<i>V. Tremulant</i>	
7. Stopped Diapason	8		
8. Principal	4	ACCESSORIES	
9. Chimney Flute	4	Cymbelstern (drawstop and foot piston)	
10. Gemshorn	2	Eight general piston (five duplicated by four pistons) and general cancel	
11. Sesquialtera	II	Five foot pistons to the Pedal Organ	
12. Mixture	IV	Five pistons to the Great Organ	
13. Cremona	8	Five pistons to the Swell Organ	
14. Trumpet	8	Reversible pistons to all couplers, duplicated by foot pistons	
<i>III Tremulant</i>		Balanced expression pedal to the Swell Organ	
<i>IV Swell to Great</i>			
		The pistons are instantly adjustable, with eight memories	

The manual and pedal key actions are mechanical;
the drawstop actions are electric.

The manual compass is 58 notes; the pedal 30 notes.

The electric blower supplies the wind through double rise reservoirs.