

CHAPTER ONE
PRECURSORS OF THE PASI ORGAN

It is possible to consider the historical and situational context of an organ from at least three points of view: (1) the outlook of the organ historian who seeks to understand the place of an instrument in a stylistic stream or movement, (2) the vantage point of an organ builder's biographer, who attempts to establish the chronology or import of a given instrument within the builder's entire *œuvre*, and (3) an eye toward the instrument's *Sitz im Leben*, specifically its physical and cultural location. We will set aside for now the first two perspectives, since organologists are only beginning to identify the characteristics of the best of post-*Orgelbewegung* artisan organ building,¹ and a mid-career assessment of organ builder Martin Pasi's contribution to the art may be equally premature. These stories will surely be written in the future, and will be sufficiently touched upon in the subsequent chapters of this study. The present concern is to portray the historical and cultural context into which Martin Pasi's Opus 14 has been received.

¹ Stephen Bicknell, "Organ Building Today," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlewaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 85-92.

Organs of the First and Second Cathedrals

Saint Cecilia Cathedral, named for the patron saint of music and musicians, is chronologically the third cathedral of the Archdiocese of Omaha, the Metropolitan See of the Roman Catholic Church in Nebraska.² Its two nineteenth-century antecedents—and the cultic and cultural activity that flourished in and around them—foreshadowed the pioneering spirit and aspirations of those who would build a great twentieth-century cathedral and a landmark twenty-first century cathedral organ.

Saint Mary's Cathedral

The first cathedral, Saint Mary's, was a small brick structure dedicated in 1856 and made a cathedral in 1859 upon the appointment of James M. O'Gorman,³ a Cistercian monk from New Melleray Abbey in Iowa, as Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska.⁴ In his history of Omaha's cathedrals, Father James Cain described the little church's elevation in rank:

The only material change made in the little brick structure in its transition from a simple church to a cathedral was the building of a rude gallery over the entrance of the church. This gallery served as the first choir loft. When the bishop had decided to locate there permanently, a choir was organized under Vincent Burkley in 1859. A melodeon was purchased from a firm in St. Louis, and upon its arrival the first High mass [*sic*] was sung. Soon afterwards the walls of the edifice were plastered and services were enriched with the purchase of new vestments.⁵

² The other dioceses in Nebraska, the Diocese of Lincoln and the Diocese of Grand Island, are known as "suffragan" Sees, among whom the Metropolitan See ranks first among equals.

³ James Cain, "The Cathedrals of Omaha" (M.A. diss., [*sic*] Saint Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1955), 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

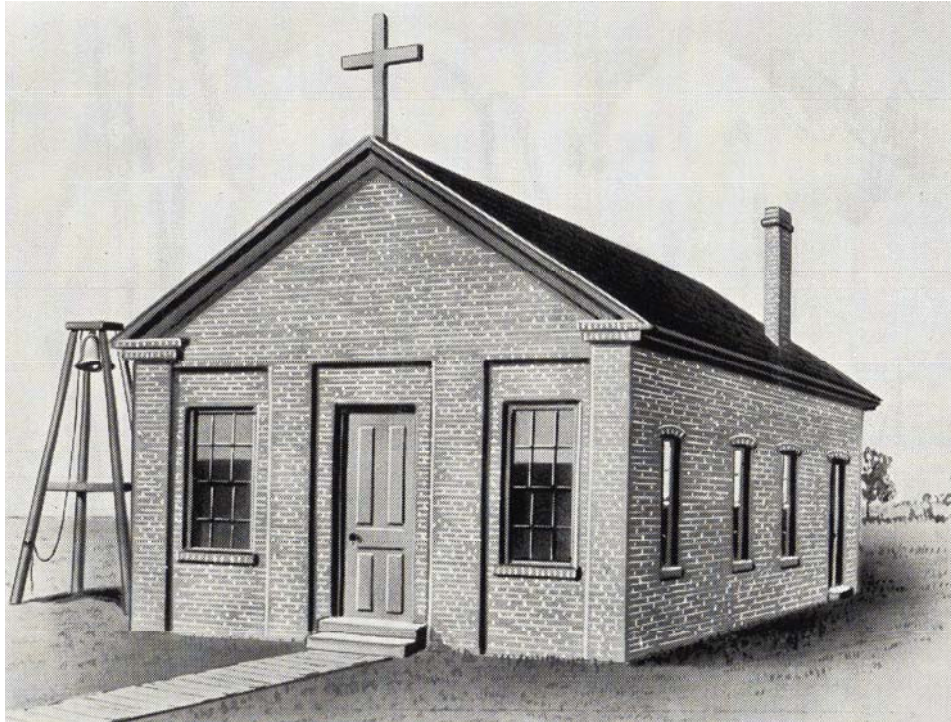


Figure 2. Saint Mary's Cathedral, Omaha
(Courtesy of Robert Harding)

The choir organized by Vincent and Theresa Burkley is said to have been the first church choir in Nebraska.⁶ The choir was comprised of the Burkley family: Vincent and Theresa Burkley, their daughter (presumably Louise), their niece Lizzie Zahringer, and their nephew, Anthony Voll.⁷ Son Frank J. Burkley recounts that “the

⁶ Memorial plate from the 1918 Casavant Bros. organ.

⁷ Frank J. Burkley, *The Faded Frontier* (Omaha: Burkley Envelope and Printing Company, 1935), 85.

choir was frequently augmented by the visits of transients and tourists on their way west.”⁸

The Burkley’s eldest daughter, Cecilia, was the first cathedral organist.⁹ Having begun her musical education in Columbus, Ohio, Cecilia Burkley completed her studies at the Sacred Heart Convent in St. Joseph, Missouri, which the migrating family had discovered *en route* from St. Louis to Omaha.¹⁰ The first official announcement in the 1864 *Catholic Almanac* of an organized parochial school in Omaha also identifies Cecilia Burkley as the first teacher of “The Male and Female School of St. Philip Neri.”¹¹

It can be assumed that the “melodeon purchased from a firm in St. Louis” was a typical American suction-type reed organ, probably with a single manual and multiple stops.¹² Another source suggests that the said melodeon was “borrowed from T. C. Goodwill for the services, after which the melodeon was transported to the Episcopalian worship house to be used by them for their evening services.”¹³ Frank

⁸ Ibid., 150.

⁹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹¹ Cain, 33. Cain also reports that no other source links this name to the school, which was known thereafter as Holy Angels School.

¹² Peter Williams and Barbara Owen, *The Organ*, The New Grove Musical Instrument Series (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 234, 243-244.

¹³ Ione Werthman, ed., *St. Cecilia’s Cathedral* (Omaha, 1981), 10; also, Frank J. Burkley, *The Faded Frontier* (Omaha: Burkley Envelope and Printing Company, 1935), 85

J. Burkley reconciles these accounts in his description of two distinct reed organs used by the little church:

The small melodeon was borrowed on Sunday mornings from a man named Goodwill and was then used in the evening by the Episcopalians whose church was on Ninth and Farnam streets, until the arrival of a small organ which was purchased in the east and came up the river by boat.¹⁴

Saint Philomena's Cathedral

There is evidence that Bishop O'Gorman changed the name of the first cathedral to Saint Philomena as early as 1864,¹⁵ but this name also transferred to a new and larger second cathedral, designed in the newly-introduced Gothic Revival style (Figure 2).¹⁶ The new Saint Philomena's Cathedral was dedicated on 29 March 1868,¹⁷ and a large pipe organ was installed there in 1869, for which the women of the parish raised \$4,000.¹⁸ The organ was built by William A. Johnson of Westfield, Massachusetts as the firm's Opus 293.¹⁹ It was the first pipe organ in Omaha,²⁰

¹⁴ Burkley, 85.

¹⁵ Cain, 32.

¹⁶ Thomas A Kuhlman., "History—The People of God in Nebraska," in *The Beauty of Thy House: The History, Art, and Architecture of Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha*, ed. Thomas A. Kuhlman (Omaha: Dorothy Tuma Photography, 2005), 113.

¹⁷ Cain, 42.

¹⁸ Ibid., 43.

¹⁹ John Van Varick Elsworth, *The Johnson Organs: The Story of One of Our Famous American Organ Builders*, ed. Donald R.M. Paterson (Harrisville, New Hampshire: The Boston Organ Club Chapter of the Organ Historical Society, 1984), 110.

²⁰ Cain, 43.



Figure 3. Saint Philomena's Cathedral, Omaha
(Courtesy of Robert Harding)

and perhaps in the state of Nebraska.²¹

A mason and construction contractor, William Allen Johnson was largely self-taught as an organ builder. His first encounter with organ building occurred in 1843 when he assisted the Boston firm of E. & G. G. Hook with an organ installation in his home town.²² Johnson began building his own organs the following year.²³ His organ building enterprise quickly grew, turning out 35 organs in the year 1869 alone. Among these was the organ for Saint Philomena's Cathedral in Omaha. While there

²¹ Elsworth, 110.

²² *Ibid.*, 18.

²³ *Ibid.*

are no known extant specifications for Johnson Opus 293, it is nevertheless possible to assemble a likely profile of this organ, which was probably more akin to Pasi Opus 14 than the latter organ's immediate predecessor, Casavant Bros. Opus 51. John Van Varick Elsworth's "Complete Annotated List of Johnson Organs" indicates that Opus 293 was in fact a large two-manual organ of 28 stops.²⁴ It was most certainly a "tracker" organ, with mechanical key and stop action and slider wind chests.²⁵ A 56-note manual compass (*C* to *g*³) can be assumed,²⁶ as well as perhaps a 30-note straight pedal board (*C* to *f*¹).²⁷ Wind pressure was probably low, between 2½ and 2¾ inches of displaced water-column.²⁸ The scaling, construction and voicing of pipes appears to have been traditional,²⁹ yielding a full but unforced sound by early-twentieth-century standards. The stoplist was most likely conservative in its retention of a fully developed principal or diapason chorus. Even if the 28 stops noted in Elsworth's catalogue included divided ranks, couplers and tremulant, the organ at Saint Philomena's Cathedral would have had a very ample specification:³⁰

²⁴ Ibid., 110.

²⁵ Ibid., 24.

²⁶ Ibid., 23.

²⁷ Ibid., 24. Elsworth observes, however, that Johnson organs from this period were known to have pedal compasses varying from 12, 31, 17, 20, 25, 27 and 30 notes.

²⁸ Ibid., 25. In comparison, Pasi Opus 14 is also voiced on relatively low pressure at just over 3 inches (79 millimeters).

²⁹ Ibid., 29. One-quarter circumference mouth widths and high cut-ups (one-quarter of the mouth width) almost precisely mirror the scales of Pasi Opus 14 (see Appendix Three).

³⁰ Ibid., 29-30. Elsworth's description of divided ranks "under control of two knobs" and mention of couplers, together with an e-mail message from John Panning of Dobson Organ Builders of Lake City, Iowa, interpreting the 28 stops listed in the Elsworth catalogue as "including tremulant and

Table 1. A Possible Specification for William A. Johnson Opus 293.³¹

Great		Swell		Pedal	
8'	Open Diapason	16'	Bourdon Bass	16'	Double Open Diapason
8'	Claribella	16'	Bourdon Treble	16'	Bourdon
8'	Dulciana	8'	Open Diapason	8'	Violoncello
4'	Octave	8'	Viola		Great to Pedal
4'	Wald Flute	8'	Stopped Diapason Bass		Swell to Pedal
2 2/3'	Twelfth	8'	Stopped Diapason Treble		
2'	Fifteenth	4'	Principal		
	Mixture IV	4'	Flute		
	Mixture II	2'	Flageolet		
8'	Trumpet		Dolce Cornet III		
	Swell to Great	8'	Oboe		
			Tremulant		

However Johnson Opus 293 was configured, a mechanical-action organ of 28 independent stops over two manuals and pedal would be considered ample even by today's standards. It must have seemed opulent in nineteenth-century Omaha, and in 1869 certainly would have contributed to a growing sense of "place" among Roman Catholics in Omaha's nascent civic community. A period of rapid growth and transformation between the Civil War and the historic Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898 brought together a culture of gold seekers, railroad laborers, farmers, cattlemen and packinghouse workers with an emergent citizenry cultivated in a taste

couplers" suggests a conservative estimate of the proposed specification, interpreting Elsworth's use of the word "stop" to mean "control."

³¹ Ibid. This specification is based on Elsworth's description of typical William A. Johnson stop configurations compared with a 1991 specification of the organ in Omaha's Saint Frances Cabrini Church (which contains the remains of Johnson Opus 293) in Edward Holyoke, Jr., *The Pipes of Greater Omaha* (Omaha, Nebraska: by the author, 1999), page unnumbered.

for the worlds of letters, theater and music.³² Musicians at Saint Philomena's Cathedral appear to have aspired to such cultural sophistication, demonstrated at the Cathedral's Silver Jubilee celebration in 1893, when "the choir with the accompaniment of an orchestra sang one of the grand Italian Masses of the era."³³

When Saint Philomena's Cathedral was finally closed in October of 1907,³⁴ the Johnson organ was put into storage in the basement of Saint Mary Magdalene Church until 1909 when it was installed in a new Saint Philomena's Church (now dedicated to Saint Frances Cabrini).³⁵ The organ was rebuilt with an electric action in 1950 by H. T. Depue of Omaha.³⁶ Some of the original Johnson pipes survive to this day in the organ at Saint Frances Cabrini Church.³⁷

The Third Cathedral and its First Organ

On 6 October 1907, the cornerstone was laid for the third cathedral,³⁸ dedicated to the patron saint of music and musicians, Saint Cecilia. In contrast to the Greek Revival style of the "first wave" of American Catholic cathedrals (Baltimore,

³² Kuhlman, 109-110.

³³ Cain, 54. A newspaper clipping celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Burkley's cathedral choir mentions specifically the masses of Saverio Mercadante and Franz Joseph Haydn (*The Omaha Herald*, 14 September 1889, Chancery Archives of the Archdiocese of Omaha).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁶ Elsworth, 110.

³⁷ Holyoke, page unnumbered. Data collected in 1991 by Edward Holyoke and Randy George.

³⁸ Cain, 55.

St. Louis, Cincinnati), or the “second” wave of Gothic Revival cathedrals (Boston, Providence, Hartford, Newark, Cleveland, Chicago—and Saint Philomena’s Cathedral in Omaha),³⁹ the architectural style of Saint Cecilia Cathedral was to be Spanish Renaissance Revival (Figure 3).



Figure 4. Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha
(Courtesy of Saint Cecilia Cathedral)

³⁹ Kuhlman, 113.

Omaha architect Thomas Rogers Kimball had previously supervised the design of the “plaster” or “White City” buildings for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in 1898, and had boldly presented himself to Bishop Richard Scannell as the best candidate to design Omaha’s new cathedral.⁴⁰ Kimball had studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris,⁴¹ and was imbued with Classical tradition and fundamental *Beaux Arts* principles that were to “keep him from being stampeded by any passing fads.”⁴² Louise Joyner notes that Kimball appropriated this education in making an entirely unique proposal on the Great Plains, and perhaps in the United States, even though “Spanish architecture had not figured among the accepted repertoire of eclectic sources for *Beaux-Arts* trained architects.”⁴³

Kimball convinced Bishop Scannell to accept his bold proposal by arguing that “the relative austerity of the Spanish Renaissance style enabled a tight budget to be kept without having to sacrifice dramatic impact or scale.”⁴⁴ Kimball further alluded to the opportunity for the Catholic Church to assert its primacy in the region, contending that the first non-indigenous people to come to Nebraska were Spanish

⁴⁰ Ibid., 115.

⁴¹ Joyner, Louise. “Kimball in Context,” in *The Beauty of Thy House: The History, Art, and Architecture of Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha*, ed. Thomas A. Kuhlman (Omaha: Dorothy Tuma Photography, 2005), 85.

⁴² Kimball partner William Steele in a 1934 address to the Joslyn Memorial, quoted in Joyner, 86-87.

⁴³ Joyner, 89.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 90.

and Catholic.⁴⁵ Omaha's railroad link to the Pacific further made a case for the Cathedral to be a symbol of a gateway to the West. While Kimball would later take up the "Spanish Mission" style for the new Saint Philomena's Church in 1909, he seems to have been looking to the European origins of this style in his design of Saint Cecilia Cathedral, and was fully aware of his innovation:⁴⁶

. . . a Spanish interpretation of the Renaissance is the best way to describe it. The Cathedral is one of the first, if not the first, to be built in the United States strictly following Old Country conventions.⁴⁷

The cathedral's Spanish Renaissance style weighed heavily in our decision to commission Pasi Opus 14. So did an assertion by cathedral liturgist Brother William Woeger, FSC, that the architectural vocabulary for Kimball's design is nowhere more evident than in the palace-monastery of Philip II near Madrid, *El Monasterio de San Lorenzo El Real del Escorial*.⁴⁸ Louise Joyner has since substantiated and expanded this claim, noting in both El Escorial and Saint Cecilia Cathedral the specific elements of classical severity derived from the *estilo desornamentado* or the "Herreran" style, as well as Italian Renaissance features that entered the vocabulary through Escorial architect Juan Bautista de Toledo (a disciple of Michelangelo), the Mannerist whimsy of Giulio Romano of Mantua, and the much-imitated *Serliana*

⁴⁵ Ibid. The explorer Coronado and Padre Juan de Padilla were thought to have come as far north as Nebraska in 1541 looking for Quivira, the "lost kingdom" of gold.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁷ Thomas Rogers Kimball, quoted in Joyner, 91.

⁴⁸ Joyner, 91

decorative style of the Venetian Andrea Palladio.⁴⁹ Stylistic references and specific correspondences between Pasi Opus 14 and the organs of the Escorial must wait for the forthcoming discussions of the Pasi organ's commission and its physical and tonal characteristics.⁵⁰ Let it suffice for now to note that in February 1578, Philip II of Spain commissioned not one, but four large organs from the Flemish organ builder Gilles Brebos for the 1586 dedication of the Escorial basilica.⁵¹

At the time it was designed, Omaha's Saint Cecilia Cathedral was supposed to have been among the ten largest churches in the United States, equal in size to Hereford Cathedral in England.⁵² With 1,584,000 cubic feet in volume and an ultimate total capacity of 2,500 people, the nave was expected to accommodate comfortably 1,000 and have a normal capacity of 500.⁵³ The cathedral's outside dimensions measure 255 feet in length, 158 feet in width, and 198 feet in height. On the inside, the nave is 141 feet long, 56 feet wide, and 72 feet high, with an additional ambulatory, circular apse and attached chapels, but no transepts (Figure 4).⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid., 91-100.

⁵⁰ See p. 79.

⁵¹ Guy Bovet, trans. Susan Ferré, "The 'Declaration of the Organs...' (1587) by Diego del Castillo, or The Four Organs of Gilles Brebos at the Church of Escorial," *Westfield*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (Easthampton, MA: Westfield Center, 1999), 1.

⁵² Cain, 71.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

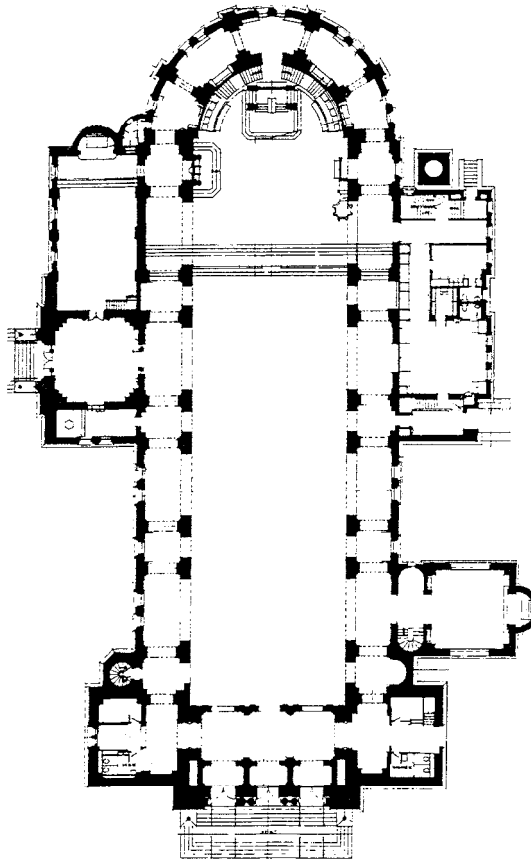


Figure 5. Footprint of Saint Cecilia Cathedral
(Courtesy of Saint Cecilia Cathedral)

In spite of the large interior volume of the cathedral, it is doubtful that the acoustical environment was ever before as favorable for music as it is today. The interior walls and piers were originally red brick and mortar,⁵⁵ covered at major events like the 1930 Eucharistic Congress with red velvet drapes, gold cloth, flags

⁵⁵ Kuhlman, 120.

and streamers.⁵⁶ When the cathedral interior was finished in 1951 under Archbishop Gerald Bergan, the walls were faced with Minnesota dolomite marble. This addition presumably changed the acoustics for the better, although the advantage was reversed with the covering of the entire ceiling with horsehair acoustical tiles, perhaps because of an emergent need for clarification of speech created by the new acoustic and an electronic public address system. When the nave was empty, the average reverberation time was four seconds; it was considerably less when full.⁵⁷ A dramatic renovation anticipating the Jubilee Year 2000 saw the restoration of the plaster ceiling, the creation of a bright, polychromatic Iberian decor,⁵⁸ and the creation of a previously unrealized acoustical environment characterized by a seven-second reverberation time when the cathedral is empty and a still-resonant acoustic of four seconds reverberation when it is fully occupied.⁵⁹

The unfinished Saint Cecilia Cathedral was first used for worship on 21 December 1916 for the installation of Archbishop Jeremiah J. Harty as Bishop of Omaha.⁶⁰ It was not employed regularly until Sunday, 25 November 1917, after a windstorm had toppled the scaffolding on 21 November, the eve of the Feast of Saint

⁵⁶ Kuhlman, 120-121.

⁵⁷ Robert F. Mahoney, Robert F. Mahoney & Associates, Consultants in Architectural Acoustics, Boulder, Colorado, to Paul Jeffrey, Bahr Vermeer & Haecker, Architects, 26 May 1999, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁵⁸ Kuhlman, 123-124.

⁵⁹ Mahoney, 26 May 1999.

⁶⁰ Cain, 80. Harty had been Archbishop of Manila in the Philippines.

Cecilia, and severed in two the former Saint Cecilia Church that stood next to the new cathedral.⁶¹

Casavant Bros. Opus 51

In March 1918, only months after the fateful windstorm, “a magnificent new organ” costing \$10,500 was installed in the cathedral, a gift of the Francis J. Burkley family.⁶² The bronze dedication plaque reads:⁶³

THIS ORGAN ERECTED
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
IS THE OFFERING OF
FRANK J. BURKLEY
WHOSE PARENTS, VINCENT & THERESA BURKLEY,
IN 1859 ORGANIZED THE FIRST CATHOLIC
CHURCH CHOIR IN NEBRASKA,
A.D. MCMXVIII.

The organ was dedicated in a recital on 16 June 1918, by Father Gregory Hügler, O.S.B.⁶⁴ of Conception Abbey in Missouri,⁶⁵ a “musician of skill and experience,” who “through the generosity of Mrs. [*sic*] Frank Burkley” was enabled “to construct [*sic*] the organ which would serve the highest of religious services.”⁶⁶ There is no

⁶¹ Cain, 82.

⁶² Cain, 83. Typewritten notes in the Cathedral Archives by Mrs. R. J. Neary dating from February 1940 give the cost of the “organ proper” as \$10,000.00, while noting that “the organ case and front, designed by the architect, Thos. R. Kimball, was built and carried out by Joseph Dux of Chicago, and cost approximately \$8,000.00.”

⁶³ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), January 1973.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Laura Ennis, “The New Catholic Bishop Comes to One of the Most Beautiful and Finely Constructed Cathedral Churches in the Entire Country,” *Omaha Trade Review* III (July, 1928): 10.

⁶⁶ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), January 1973. This article inaccurately attributes the donation of the organ to “Mrs. Frank Burkley” (rather than Frank Burkley himself) and the building of the organ to Father Hügler.

evidence that Father Hügler was actually associated with the organ building firm. Rather, according to the donor of the organ, he acted as “organ consultant.” Frank Burkley writes, “In making a choice of organs I relied largely upon the judgment of Father Gregory, of Conception, Missouri. He is an authority on church organs, for he has been a builder of them.”⁶⁷

The Father Hügler’s recital featured “serious” organ music, as well as popular sacred choral and vocal music.⁶⁸ The program commenced with a concerto in three movements by Filippo Capocci, organist and *maestro di cappella* at the Roman Basilica of Saint John Lateran around the turn of the twentieth century.⁶⁹ The Sanctus and Benedictus of Charles Gounod’s *Messe Solennelle (Saint Cecilia)* followed, sung by the cathedral choir with tenor soloist F. A. Walsh. “The Lost Chord” by Arthur Sullivan was sung by Frank Burkley’s brother, Harry V. Burkley. Then followed organ works by Josef Rheinberger, Horace Wadham Nicholl and Felix Mendelssohn. The event concluded with the singing of “The Star Spangled Banner.”

Casavant Opus 51 was the penultimate instrument of the short-lived American branch of the famous Casavant firm, operating in South Haven, Michigan, from 1912

⁶⁷ Quoted in Ennis, 10.

⁶⁸ The repertoire noted here is recorded in an unidentified newspaper clipping in folio of Frank J. Burkley, currently in the possession of his great-grandson, Robert Harding of Omaha, Nebraska.

⁶⁹ Leopold M. Kantner, “Capocci, Filippo,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, (Accessed 14 February 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

to 1918.⁷⁰ With the exception of the original stoplist,⁷¹ all other records or drawings have been either lost or destroyed along with the other South Haven branch shop records when the plant was taken over for other lines of manufacturing toward the end of World War I.⁷²

The organ was originally composed of 37 ranks of pipes over three manuals and pedal, played by electro-pneumatic action. It was configured behind two façades in the corners of the West gallery, with the Great and Choir divisions on the South side along with the Pedal flues, and the Swell division on the North side with the Pedal reeds. The unenclosed Great stood above the Choir division.

Casavant Opus 51 was rebuilt twice in its 84-year history, first in 1957 by Harold Lucas of Wheaton, Illinois, a representative of the Aeolian-Skinner company, and again in 1978-1979 by the Neuman Organ Company of Seward, Nebraska. Significant repairs to the pitman-style wind chests had been made by Depue in 1949-

⁷⁰ Casavant Frères, “History: Important Events and Musical Milestones” (Accessed 29 May 2006), <http://www.casavant.ca/new_temp/anglais/History/historyevent.html>, and Larry Turner, “The Famille Casavant: Piping Music Around the World,” *Canada Heirloom Series*, Vol. 5 (Accessed 29 May 2005), <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/heirloom_series/volume5/volume5.htm>

⁷¹ Specification #255, 25 March 1916, Casavant Frères Archives, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.

⁷² Stephen Stoot (Casavant Frères, St. Hyacinthe) to H. T. Depue (Pipe Organ Service Company, Omaha), 6 January 1945, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha. While in this letter Mr. Stoot seems unclear about whether the South Haven plant closed in 1917 or 1918, it should be noted that Mr. Stoot himself worked at the South Haven plant from 1916 to 1918, when he joined Casavant Frères in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Regarding the location of records, organ builder Manuel Rosales related to me in the fall of 1998 that he thought the South Haven shop records may have gone to Lawrence, Kansas, where some of the South Haven Casavant employees went to work for the Reuter Organ Company.

1950,⁷³ so the work left to Lucas in 1957 was largely tonal, including the replacement of eight registers with new ranks of pipes made by Aeolian-Skinner. The 1957 renovation was clearly aimed at reorienting the organ away from its original English Romantic tonal leanings toward the eclectic “American Classic” ideal in fashion at the time. It may also have been a response to the new acoustical environment in the cathedral resulting from the addition of marble veneer to the brick columns and horse-hair acoustical tiles to the ceiling. It is also likely that a renewal of the organ was desired in anticipation of the consecration of the cathedral on 9 April 1959.⁷⁴

Comparison of the 1918 and 1957 stop lists for each division will show the extent to which Casavant Opus 51 was altered by the 1957 renovation. Beginning with the Great division, the 16’ Open Diapason, the 8’ First Open Diapason, and the 8’ Doppel Flute, along with the 8’ Trumpet, were moved to pedal chests (Table 2). Emptying the Great of its “bulk” made room for the addition of neo-classical voices such as the 16’ Quintaten, a “chiffy” 8’ Gedackt and new principal upperwork. New concussion bellows in the Great and Swell were added to stabilize what must have been less than rock-steady wind, which was fed into reservoirs beneath the wind chests by an enormous electric blower located in the bowels of the cathedral crypt.

⁷³ Invoice and hand-written note indicating payment on 6 November 1950 by Saint Cecilia Cathedral to Pipe Organ Service Company, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁷⁴ Kuhlman, 121. A Roman Catholic church is consecrated when its building is completed and all debts are paid.

Table 2. Opus 51 Specification Comparison: Great

1918 Great ⁷⁵			1957 Great ⁷⁶		
16'	Open Diapason	(1957 to pedal)	16'	Quintaten	(New)
8'	First Open Diapason	(1957 to pedal)	8'	Open Diapason	(Second Open Diapason)
8'	Second Open Diapason		8'	Gedackt	(New on Doppel Flute)
8'	Doppel Flute	(1957 to pedal)	8'	Gemshorn	
8'	Gemshorn		4'	Octave	
4'	Octave		4'	Harmonic Flute	
4'	Harmonic Flute		2 2/3'	Twelfth	(New on new chest)
2'	Fifteenth		2'	Fifteenth	(New on old 15 th)
8'	Trumpet	(1957 to pedal)		Mixture IV	(New on Trumpet chest)
				New concussion bellows	

In the Swell division, the replacement of what was perhaps a flute- or dulciana-scaled mutation complex (possibly including a third-sounding rank) with a Plein Jeu principal mixture, along with the trade of a broad English-style Cornopean for a French symphonic Trompette, pushed the organ further from its English tonal roots toward an eclectic “American Classic” sound (Table 3). Lucas also proposed replacing the 8’ Aeoline with a 4’ Geigen Octave, the 8’ Open Diapason with an 8’ Geigen Diapason, and the 8’ Vox Humana with a 4’ Clairon.⁷⁷ Msgr. Ernest Graham rejected the proposal, presumably because it would have increased the cost of the

⁷⁵ Specification #255, 25 March 1916, Casavant Frères Archives, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.

⁷⁶ Contract between Harold H. Lucas and The Cathedral of St. Cecilia, 17 May 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁷⁷ Harold H. Lucas to Msgr. Ernest G. Graham, 12 August 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

project by 20 percent.⁷⁸

Table 3. Opus 51 Specification Comparison: Swell

Swell 1918 ⁷⁹		Swell 1957 ⁸⁰	
16'	Bourdon	16'	Bourdon
8'	Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason
8'	Stopped Diapason	8'	Stopped Diapason
8'	Aeoline	8'	Aeoline
8'	Viol di Gamba	8'	Viol di Gamba
8'	Vox Celeste	8'	Vox Celeste
4'	Traverse Flute	4'	Traverse Flute
2'	Flautina	2'	Flautina
	Dolce Mixture III (1957 removed)		Plein Jeu III (New on Dolce Mixture)
8'	Cornopean (1957 removed)	8'	Trompette (New on Cornopean)
8'	Oboe	8'	Oboe
8'	Vox Humana	8'	Vox Humana
	Tremulant		Tremulant
			New concussion bellows

Changes to the Choir division were minimal, consisting only of the exchange of the 8' Quintadena for a 2 2/3' Nazard (Table 4). The new Nazard was not included in the original contract price of \$9,990.00, but Lucas offered to include it for an additional \$300.00.⁸¹ Msgr. Graham accepted the offer after rejecting the proposed

⁷⁸ Msgr. Ernest G. Graham to Harold H. Lucas, 18 August 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁷⁹ Specification #255, 25 March 1916, Casavant Frères Archives, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.

⁸⁰ Contract between Harold H. Lucas and The Cathedral of St. Cecilia, 17 May 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁸¹ Ibid. The contract also implies that the 1918 Quintadena would be removed in any case, and the chest prepared for the future addition of the Nazard.

additional changes to the Swell.⁸² Like the Swell division, the Choir was enclosed in a box with swell shutters. Its position below the Great and partially submerged below the impost level of the façade inhibited its projection into the nave.

Table 4. Opus 51 Specification Comparison: Choir

Choir 1918 ⁸³		Choir 1957 ⁸⁴	
8'	Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason
8'	Melodia	8'	Melodia
8'	Dulciana	8'	Dulciana
8'	Unda Maris (TC)	8'	Unda Maris (TC)
8'	Quintadena (1957 removed)	4'	Wald Flute
4'	Wald Flute	2 2/3'	Nazard (New on Quintadena)
2'	Piccolo	2'	Piccolo
8'	Clarinet	8'	Clarinet
	Tremulant		Tremulant

Efforts to “modernize” the Pedal organ seem to have focused on the development of an independent polyphonic bass division and the extension of the pedal compass from thirty to thirty-two notes (Table 5). The creation of a narrower (although still plenty wide) principal chorus in the pedal was achieved by transferring the former Great 16’ Open Diapason and 8’ First Open Diapason to the unit Pedal Diapason. It is possible that the new acoustical environment featured an improved

⁸² Msgr. Ernest G. Graham to Harold H. Lucas, 24 August 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁸³ Specification #255, 25 March 1916, Casavant Frères Archives, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.

⁸⁴ Contract between Harold H. Lucas and The Cathedral of St. Cecilia, 17 May 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

bass response, and that a large, open wood unit stop was no longer necessary, especially since the tone of the Great plenum had been lightened and brightened. Moving the Great Trumpet to the pedal allowed not only an extension of the pedalboard compass, but another octave extension spanning the 4' register.

Table 5. Opus 51 Specification Comparison: Pedal

Pedal 1918 ⁸⁵		Pedal 1957 ⁸⁶	
16'	Double Open Diapason (open wood)	32'	Bourdon (Open Wood capped) ⁸⁷
8'	Grosse Flute (extension)	16'	Diapason (Gt. 16' & 8' 1 st Diap.)
16'	Bourdon	16'	Bourdon (with 8' Doppel Flute)
8'	Bourdon (extension)	16'	Lieblich Gedeckt
16'	Lieblich Gedeckt (Swell)	8'	Octave (extension 16' Diapason)
16'	Trombone	8'	Bourdon (extension 16' Bourdon)
8'	Tromba (extension)	4'	Superoctave (extension 16 Diapason)
		16'	Trombone (plus Gt. 8' Trumpet)
		8'	Trombone (extension)
		4'	Trombone (extension)

The contract also specified that the Pedal stops would operate from the Antiphonal stop jamb.⁸⁸ This indicates that there was a provision in the 1918 organ

⁸⁵ Specification #255, 25 March 1916, Casavant Frères Archives, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.

⁸⁶ Contract between Harold H. Lucas and The Cathedral of St. Cecilia, 17 May 1957, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

⁸⁷ The 1957 contract describes the new 32' Bourdon comprised of "lower six pipes of present 16' Open Diapason capped plus resultant." Six pipes are listed for this register (as opposed to 32 or 12), which would lead one to think that these were added to the recycled Open Wood pipes. I remember this stop (which was unaltered in the 1978 renovation) as being a very loud 32' resultant, and recall thinking that there was something unusual about it, such as that it was an open wood 16' (rather than stopped) paired with an independent 10 2/3' rank. Since it was minimally useful in this configuration, I had wondered why these pipes were not simply stopped and why an independent 16' open rank would be wasted as part of a resultant. In any case, it is doubtful that the contract reflected reality in this instance.

for the future addition of an Antiphonal division, and that the original draw knob console was retained until the 1978 renovation. A 1928 quotation of cathedral organist Winifred Traynor Flanagan confirms that the organ was constructed “with the possibility of adding a chancel organ though at present it is a three manual organ in the gallery. Should the chancel organ be added it could be played separately or in connection with the gallery organ.”⁸⁹

Whatever improvements came as a result of the 1957 organ renovation, it was henceforth a very different instrument. Perhaps the further changes to the Swell division proposed by Harold Lucas would have brought about greater tonal unity in the organ. In any case, the original voices that remained (the 8’ Open Diapasons on the Swell and Choir in particular) were perhaps the most lovely.

The Musical Custodians of Casavant Opus 51

Before concluding the story of Casavant Opus 51, it is necessary to mention the musicians who were associated with this instrument during its 84-year lifespan. Winifred Traynor Flanagan, sister-in-law of the famed Father Edward Flanagan of Boys Town,⁹⁰ is clearly the dominant figure in this history. She is said to have served as organist and choir director for fifty years prior to her retirement in July of 1971,⁹¹

⁸⁸ Contract, Lucas.

⁸⁹ Ennis, 10.

⁹⁰ Francis P. Schmitt, “History of Music at Boys Town: Significance of the Boys Town Collection of Sacred Music,” *Sacred Music* 117, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 10.

⁹¹ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), August 1971 and January 1973.

though the exact length of her tenure may be a more a case of legend than precise fact. A plaque outside the cathedral choir loft gives dates of 1921-1971, while the brass caption plate below a prominent portrait of Winifred Flanagan identifies her years of service as 1918-1968.⁹² Both sets of dates are erroneous, and I will posit here what I believe to be the correct dates framing her extraordinary career at Saint Cecilia Cathedral.

The date of Winifred Flanagan's retirement is firmly established, but the circumstances surrounding the beginning of her service to the cathedral and the early years of Casavant Opus 51 have been shrouded in mystery for some time. In 1971, Mrs. Flanagan recalled:

. . . while preparing for the Feast of St. Cecilia a huge wind storm came and blew down the scaffolding that was around the Cathedral that was being built. The scaffolding crushed the little 'Pro-Cathedral.' In order to have services we had to move into the Cathedral before it was finished. That was the first time I played in the Cathedral.⁹³

This memory suggests that she may have played some kind of instrument on Sunday, 25 November 1917.⁹⁴ That she "played for the Most Reverend Jeremiah Harty" indicates that she likely continued as organist during the calendar year of 1918, enjoying the newly-installed Casavant Opus 51.⁹⁵ Assuming that there is some basis in fact for the date of 1918 on the aforementioned portrait caption, I propose that

⁹² This portrait is currently displayed in the Saint Cecilia Schola Cantorum, 3900 Webster Street, Suite 200, Omaha, Nebraska 68131.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Cain, 82.

⁹⁵ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), August 1971.

Winifred Traynor Flanagan in fact began her work as organist in 1918, and retired as organist and choir director in 1971, but was on hiatus from the early spring of 1919 until the early fall of 1925. This scenario has been corroborated by Mrs. Flanagan's daughter, Virginia Flanagan, who marks the beginning of her mother's formal tenure as coinciding with the appointment of Father James Aherne as cathedral pastor.⁹⁶

The diary of the cathedral's Dominican Sisters affirms that Fr. Aherne was appointed pastor of Saint Cecilia Cathedral on 6 September 1925.⁹⁷

The beginning of Winifred Flanagan's hiatus in 1919 from her organist duties at Saint Cecilia Cathedral is confirmed by two recently-discovered references to a heretofore forgotten but very significant figure in the history of the cathedral, Dr. Reginald Mills Silby. The first reference is nested in the handwritten *Annals* of the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa:

The training of the choir boys fell to Sister Margaret Mary for the first five weeks of school. The work was then taken up by Reverend Father Googkin, who kept it until Easter 1919 when Dr. Mills Silby took permanent charge of this choir.⁹⁸

The second is a revealing reference to Silby's appointment as cathedral organist in an Omaha newspaper article dating from sometime in the spring of 1919:

Where is the recital of Clarence Eddy to be held June 15th? There seems to be a general misunderstanding all around in regard to its being held at St.

⁹⁶ Virginia Flanagan, interview with Fr. Michael Gutsell and Kevin Vogt, Omaha, Nebraska, 22 September 2006.

⁹⁷ *Annals of the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Dominic: The Convent of Saint Cecilia, Omaha*, September 1918, Dominican Motherhouse Archives, Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, 44. Some secondary sources give the date of Fr. Aherne's appointment as 1926 or 1927 (*cf.* Werthman, 156).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, October 1918, 23.

Cecilia's cathedral. It seems, as I understand it from a variety of sources, that everybody is perfectly sincere, but that a coincidence of events just happened. Miss Winifred Traynor has been organist at the cathedral since the installation of the new organ, which was a gift of Frank Burkley.

Mr. Burkley thought it would be nice to have Clarence Eddy give an organ recital, as Clarence Eddy is one of the most celebrated of all American organists.⁹⁹ He spoke to Miss Traynor about it, who also thought so. Therefore, Mr. Burkley went on with his arrangements. In the meantime, a new organist, Mr. Silbey [*sic*], came to town; why, nobody knew. Then it was learned he was engaged to be the cathedral organist. He is a man who has held most important organ positions, both in London and in Washington, positions he could not have held without being a well-equipped musician. In the first place he is a strict churchman, and believes that churches should only be used for liturgical purposes, and he does not approve of concerts being held in them.¹⁰⁰

Silby's supposed stance on concerts in churches will be examined in light of his direction of the most ambitious series of concerts in the cathedral prior to the inaugural year of Pasi Opus 14 in 2003. The same article continues:¹⁰¹

In the second place, he thought, since he had been engaged as organist, he should have been consulted about it, as he very justly should. As it happened the cathedral organist was consulted, but it did not happen to be the same organist, and the views of the two were very different. At any rate he objected to the concert, so in all probability the recital will be held elsewhere.

Reginald Mills Silby was born in London on 8 March 1884. The son of a low-church Anglican father, and high-church mother, Silby was educated at the famed Brompton Oratory, where he encountered both the finest Roman Catholic

⁹⁹ Clarence Eddy is widely remembered today as the founder of the American Guild of Organists.

¹⁰⁰ "Where is the recital of Clarence Eddy to be held June 15?" Newspaper clipping in a scrapbook of Reginald Mills Silby, viewed on 2 August 2006, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹⁰¹ "Where is the recital of Clarence Eddy....," Silby Scrapbook.

music and rigorous Roman Catholic ideas.¹⁰² There began the process of his conversion to Catholicism and the formation of the liturgical and musical ideals that he would zealously promote throughout his life.

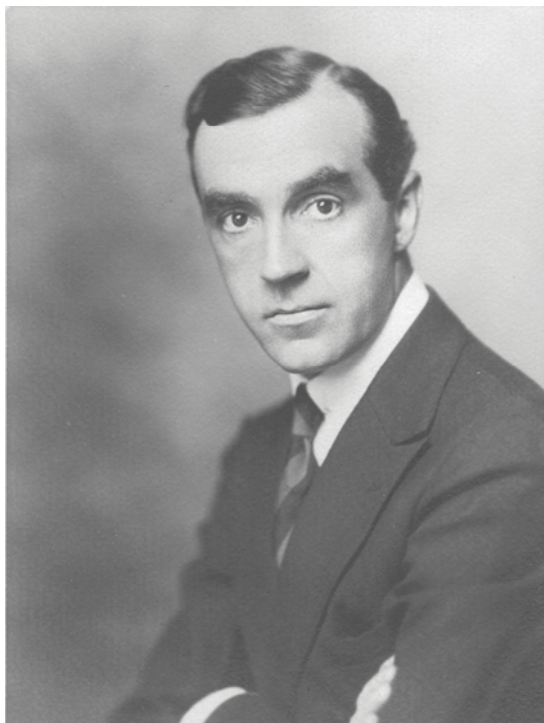


Figure 6. Reginald Mills Silby
(Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. Stewart)

In 1903, at the age of eighteen, Silby was appointed assistant director of music at Westminster Cathedral under Sir Richard Runciman Terry.¹⁰³ He immigrated to

¹⁰² Reginald Mills Silby, "My Conversion," *The Baltimore Catholic Review*, 19 January 1918.

¹⁰³ Obituary: Dr. Reginald Silby, Organist, Composer, *New York Times* (New York), 14 January 1954, 29.

the United States in 1909 to serve as organist of Saint Patrick's Church in Washington, D.C., where he remained until a brief stint in the Canadian armed forces during World War I and his subsequent appointment to the Omaha cathedral in 1919. It was Archbishop Jeremiah J. Harty who appointed Silby to Saint Cecilia Cathedral, and who remained Silby's friend and patron throughout their concurrent terms of service.¹⁰⁴

Silby's brief tenure at Saint Cecilia Cathedral apparently made an enormous impact on ecclesiastical and cultural life in Omaha between 1919 and 1925, all the more ironic in that local appreciation of his legacy seems to have been quickly submerged after his departure. A newspaper headline in May 1919 reads, "Social Circles Welcome Wife of New Organist at St. Cecilia's Cathedral."¹⁰⁵ The subsequent article notes that Dr. and Mrs. Silby had arrived in Omaha six weeks prior or approximately one week before Easter.¹⁰⁶ Clippings from society page articles during the next few years show that the Silbys socialized among the most affluent and prominent of Omaha's citizens.

The Silbys' societal "splash" was quickly followed by a musical one. By July 1919, Dr. Silby had organized and trained a "Choral Society of St. Cecilia's Cathedral" which he presented in a Sunday afternoon public concert at the local Good

¹⁰⁴ Salient letters from Archbishop Harty concerning the beginning and end of Silby's tenure in Omaha are in the personal possession of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart. They are not currently available for the purposes of research.

¹⁰⁵ Clipping from *Omaha World Herald*, Sunday, 25 May 1919, in scrapbook of Reginald Mills Silby. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Shepherd Convent. The program was prophetic of the musical revolution to come at Saint Cecilia Cathedral: Gregorian chant and polyphonic motets and mass movements by the likes of Cornelis Verdonck, Edward Elgar, Giovanni Croce, Jacob Arcadelt, Robert Lucas de Pearsall, Silby's mentor Sir Richard Terry, and Silby himself.¹⁰⁷ By November, the Cathedral Choir and the "Boys of the Schola Cantorum" were exhibited in a "Great Musical Celebration in Honor of St. Cecilia" featuring "Liturgical Music by the Great Masters of the Superb Polyphony of the 17th Century, Organ Solos, [and] Gregorian Music."¹⁰⁸ The "great masters" included those mentioned above as well as Handel, Palestrina, Victoria, Bach, Casali, Dubois and Mozart.¹⁰⁹

By October of the following year, Silby was prepared to launch a Monthly Music Festival, Sunday afternoon concerts intended to demonstrate the best of Catholic sacred music.¹¹⁰ By the following month, the devotion of Benediction was appended to the end of the concert, no doubt to provide a sacral context for the concert performances. While the goal of a concert every month was not realized, twenty-two such concerts of sacred music were mounted between October 1920 and September 1925. These concerts featured Silby at the cathedral organ and various

¹⁰⁷ Concert Program, Choral Society of St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 27 July 1919. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹⁰⁸ Concert Promotional Flyer, 23 November 1919. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹⁰⁹ Concert Program, 23 November 1919. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹¹⁰ Concert Program, 3 October 1920.

combinations of the cathedral choirs: a Gallery Choir of men and women singing primarily polyphony, a Sanctuary Choir of boys singing Gregorian chant, and a Girls' Song Club.¹¹¹ The concerts eventually came under the auspices of the "League of Catholic Organists," an organization founded by Silby to assist musicians in both city and country parishes.

Silby's zeal for the renewal of chant and polyphony and the pursuit of an ambitious musical program is evident in the following report from 1923 on "Music in the Cathedral," a far cry from the enthusiasm for the "grand Italian Mass" sung twenty years earlier at Saint Philomena Cathedral's Silver Jubilee or the excerpts from the operatic Gounod *Messe Solennelle* sung at the 1918 organ dedication:¹¹²

In reviewing the work of the Cathedral choirs during the year 1923, we are able to say that their repertoire has been practically doubled. The following new Masses have been heard during the year: "Missa Euge Bone," for six voices, by Christopher Tye, an Elizabethan composer of the early part of the sixteenth century. A very brilliant modern Mass for six voices by Ludwig Ebner; also a Mass by the well-known American composer, Alessandro Yon, who is at present American organist of St. Francis Xavier's church [*sic*], New York City. Of famous motets, the following have been sung in the Cathedral: "Laudate Dominum," for five voices, by the Flemish composer, Sweelinck; also "O Sacrum convivium" by the same composer. "Hodie Christus natus est," for eight voices, by Palestrina. These are particularly fine works, which are seldom heard in our churches for many and sufficient reasons. A memorable occasion in the Cathedral last year, took place on Good Friday, when the service, known as the Three Hours' Agony, was sung to the true Liturgical [*sic*] music of the Church. This was a record day of work for the choirs, as they were singing for seven hours altogether. You will say perhaps, "Well, why can't other choirs do the same?" to which we answer: "They

¹¹¹ Reginald Mills Silby, "Music at the Cathedral," typewritten notes, not dated. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever F. (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹¹² Cain 54.

never will be able to unless they sing the true Liturgical [*sic*] music of the Church, because this is the only music of which they will never tire.”¹¹³

Silby’s vision of Roman Catholic church music was utterly aligned with that of his mentor, R. R. Terry, and the practice under which he had been formed at Westminster Cathedral. Sir Richard Runciman Terry was organist and director of music at Westminster Cathedral from 1901 until 1924, when he resigned over increasing criticism of his bold choice of repertoire,¹¹⁴ a strange parallel to the trouble his protégé “across the pond” would experience in another year. Terry had been responsible for the revival of Latin liturgical music of Tudor England, including works of Byrd, Tallis, Philips, Dering, Sheppard, Tye and others.¹¹⁵ Moreover, he established in England a musical tradition and practice for the entire Roman liturgy based on the *Motu proprio* of Pope Pius X, “so that the Use of Westminster offered and example to Roman Catholic church musicians unequalled anywhere outside Rome itself.”¹¹⁶ The practice at Westminster remains today the “gold standard” for the implementation of the ideals of Pius X’s reform and the conservation of the Church’s *Thesaurus musicae sacrae*, specifically the corpus of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Silby, Reginald Mills, “Music in the Cathedral,” *St. Cecilia Cathedral Parish Yearbook 1923* (Omaha: St. Cecilia Cathedral, 1923), 49.

¹¹⁴ J. A. Fuller Maitland, H.C. Colles, Peter Platt: ‘Terry, Sir R.R.’, *Grove Music Online* (Accessed 2 March 2006), <<http://grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.27710>>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Martin Baker, “A Musical Heritage at Risk,” *The Tablet* (Accessed 18 February 2006), <<http://thetablet.co.uk/cgi-bin/register.cgi/tablet-01148>> The date for the beginning of Terry’s tenure

Like Terry, Silby was a tireless proponent of the musical reforms of Pope Pius X's *Motu proprio* of 1903, *Tra le sollecitudini*, promulgated the same year that Westminster Cathedral was founded and the very year that Silby apparently came under Terry's influence.¹¹⁸ Terry biographer Hilda Andrews even attributes the westward-moving fame of Terry and the new, polyphonic tradition at Westminster to Silby's immigration to America.¹¹⁹

A full treatment of Silby's work as a choral conductor and composer, even limited to his time in Omaha, is beyond the purview of this study. However, the vein of newfound documentation—including programs of concerts mounted between 1919 and 1925—yields a profile of Silby's activity as an organist in Omaha and provides insight into his musical custody and use of Casavant Opus 51 (Table 6).

Three points of interest emerge from an examination of the extant programs from this period. First, the organ literature performed does not match the choral repertoire promulgated by Silby in terms of idiomatic authenticity, artistic greatness, or earnest adherence to liturgical norms. The preponderance of transcriptions and "light" repertoire seems incongruous with the learned rigor of the choral literature presented in liturgical and devotional contexts. However, performance of transcriptions on the organ was the order of the day, and Silby simply may not have

is invariably given as 1901, coinciding with the establishment of the choir school and not the opening of the cathedral.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Hilda Andrews, *Westminster Retrospect: A Memoir of Sir Richard Terry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 104.

thought about the organ in the same way that he did the choir. While the organ was given pride of place among other instruments in ecclesiastical legislation, its repertoire and use were not codified in the manner that the norms for vocal and choral music in the Church were prescribed.

Table 6. Organ Repertoire Performed in Silby's Concerts, 1919-1925¹²⁰

Title	Composer	Organist
Aria in A major	Bach	Silby
Aria in D minor	Bach	Silby
Aria in E minor	Bach	Silby
Prelude and Fugue in D minor	Bach	Silby
Prelude and Fugue in E minor	Bach	Francis Burkley
Prelude and Fugue in G minor	Bach	Silby
Prelude in B flat minor	Bach	Silby
Symphony (from <i>Christmas Oratorio</i>)	Bach	Silby
Trio in G major	Bach	Francis Burkley
Variations on the theme "Adoro te devote"	Capocci	Silby
Fuga	Casini	Silby
Cantilene religious	Dubois	Silby
Adagio from "New World" Symphony	Dvorak	Silby
Chanson de matin	Elgar	Silby
Prelude to "The Dream of Gerontius"	Elgar	Silby
Caprice	Guilmant	Grace O'Brien
Largo	Handel	Silby
We Come in Bright Array	Handel	Silby
Sehnsucht (from <i>Lyric Suite</i>)	Krause	Silby
Pastorale	Leybach	Silby
Allegretto un poco agitato	Mendelssohn	Silby
Berceuse Slave	Neruda	Silby
Volga Boatmen's Song	Nevin, transc.	Silby
Serenade	Schubert	Silby
Improvisations on submitted themes	Silby	Silby
Grand Choeur in D	Spence	Silby
Gavotte, Interlude, March and Minuet	Swift	Silby
Arietta	Coleridge Taylor	Silby
Chanson Triste	Tschaikowsky	Silby

¹²⁰ Concert Programs, 1919-1925. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

The second item of note is that Silby began to improvise at the Sunday concerts beginning in 1923, extemporizing in the European manner upon themes submitted by friends and colleagues. This practice must have elevated the place of organ art in these musical presentations and in the local milieu of sacred music. It may also have been aimed at increasing Silby's rapport and esteem among his musical peers as well as the edification of the members of the League of Catholic Organists.

The third element revealed in these programs is that Silby was evidently teaching young organ students, and these students were accomplished enough to be presented in public. The young organists named in the programs of Sunday afternoon sacred concerts were Miss Grace O'Brien and Master Francis Burkley, son of Harry V. Burkley and nephew of Frank Burkley.¹²¹

Looking back to the aforementioned recital by Clarence Eddy canceled upon Silby's arrival and juxtaposing Silby's purported views on concerts in churches with the ambitious and persistent calendar of non-liturgical musical "happenings" in the cathedral over six years, it is appropriate to wonder whether or not Silby was entirely forthright and consistent in his views. Inquiry into Silby's personal testimonies and scholarly writings and detailed analysis of his liturgical and concert programming throughout his career are more likely to reveal a highly refined ethos of sacred concerts in churches as an opportunity to expose and share the cultural goods of the

¹²¹ Young Francis Burkley went on to teach music theory at the Julliard School in New York and eventually entered the priesthood.

Church rather than to provide a venue for artists. Perhaps this is why Marcel Dupré performed twice in Omaha in 1922 and 1923, but never at Saint Cecilia Cathedral. Dupré visited and played the cathedral organ and was a guest of Dr. and Mrs. Silby,¹²² but his recitals were held at First Presbyterian Church and First Central Congregational Church.¹²³ Both churches had excellent organs and organists and were certainly worthy venues for presenting the world's greatest organ virtuoso. But why would a famed Parisian Catholic organist who had inaugurated the organ at Westminster Cathedral not perform at Saint Cecilia Cathedral?

Silby's tenure in Omaha was unfortunately marred by a purported scandal in 1925, which may have been the reason that local memory of him nearly passed into obscurity. In July of that year, a near riot broke out within the cathedral parish as a throng of parishioners sought to have Silby ousted. The kaffuffle apparently resulted from rapidly escalating outrage over a standoff between Silby and a group of girls who were to graduate from the Cathedral High School. The situation was exacerbated by well-known tensions between Silby and the cathedral rector, Father George A. Smiskol.¹²⁴

While sensational tabloid journalism held sway in newspaper reports of this scandal, it is possible to detect a deeper cultural conflict at the root of the controversy. Silby clearly had the unqualified support of Archbishop Harty, members of the

¹²² "Marcel Dupre [*sic*] Charmed by Organ in Omaha Church," *Omaha World Herald*, 21 December 1922.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Omaha Daily News* (Omaha), 13 July 1925.

cathedral choir, and several influential citizens and cathedral parishioners, among which were those with names such as Burkley, Creighton and Nash.¹²⁵ The opinion of his supporters attested to his personal character, his professional competence and his faithfulness to the Catholic musical tradition:

We have been members of the gallery choir of St. Cecilia's cathedral for periods ranging from one to six years and have come in close contact with the choir director, Dr. R. Mills Silby. We wish, at this time as a public expression of our feeling toward Dr. Silby and toward his work as choir director, to say that in our estimation he is a man of sterling character, a choir director of rare excellence and a thorough student of church music.

It is our opinion that those who malign him do so through lack of understanding rather than with aforethought.

The music sung in the cathedral under Dr. Silby is that prescribed by the constituted authorities of the Catholic church [*sic*] and is known as liturgical music. Liturgical music is that particular style of music which the pope in Rome has decreed shall be sung during the mass. Since the pope has decreed that we shall have this music it then becomes the duty of every good Catholic to accept it just as we accept a federal law, whether or not it is to our liking. Certainly Dr. Silby is not domineering in thus carrying out the wishes of his superiors. In conclusion we wish to state that we find in Dr. Silby an honest, upright and intelligent man as well as an accomplished master of music.¹²⁶

The defense of Silby's choice of music is worthy of note, since the public objections to him were said to have been "based principally upon personal grounds."¹²⁷ It is reasonable to deduce that behind the 1925 row over Silby was, in part, a war of class and culture. Monsignor A. M. Colaneri, Diocesan administrator

¹²⁵ *Omaha Daily News* (Omaha), 14 July 1925.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *The Omaha Evening Bee* (Omaha), 14 July 1925.

and founding pastor of Saint Cecilia Parish, went so far to say it was a clash between “the Irish and the English.”¹²⁸

With Archbishop Harty away and fatally ill in California, Silby left Saint Cecilia Cathedral in September of 1925, as did Father Smiskol. Silby returned at the end of the month to conduct the Cathedral Gallery Choir in a concert commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Palestrina. The concert was held not at the cathedral, but at Saint Joseph’s Church.¹²⁹

Silby went on from Omaha to serve the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia, to teach liturgical music at Villanova College and Maryknoll Seminary, and polyphony and Gregorian chant at the Berkshire Music Center.¹³⁰ He served the Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola in New York for twenty years, cultivating a distinguished church music program there from 1934 until his death in 1954.¹³¹ In the wake of great professional success, and in spite of difficulties near the end of his tenure at Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Dr. and Mrs. Silby were known to say in their later years that their time in Omaha was among the happiest of their lives.¹³²

¹²⁸ *Omaha Daily News* (Omaha), 13 July 1925. Colaneri was in fact very close to the Silby family, at the time even the godfather of the Silby’s infant daughter. A revealing hand-written letter from Colaneri to Silby expressing personal support is in the possession of Mrs. Lever (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart, but is not currently available for the purposes of research.

¹²⁹ Concert program, 27 September 1925. Courtesy of Mrs. Lever (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart.

¹³⁰ Silby obituary.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Mrs. Lever (Gwynneth Silby) Stewart, Philadelphia, telephone interview by author, 3 April 2006.

After Silby's departure, Winifred Traynor Flanagan reemerged as cathedral organist and choir director, most likely coinciding with Fr. Aherne's appointment as cathedral pastor in September 1925.¹³³ She had most certainly assumed these roles by the time the new bishop, Joseph F. Rummel, arrived in 1928.¹³⁴ Her tenure was thereafter uninterrupted until her retirement in 1971, and, including a year during the episcopate of Archbishop Harty, thus spanned forty-seven years.¹³⁵

While she did not have the international musical pedigree of her predecessor, Winifred Traynor Flanagan's formidable talent was recognized early by her pastor and future brother-in-law, Father P. A. Flanagan, and several other priests in the city.¹³⁶ As a young woman, she simultaneously served several parish churches as organist and choir director,¹³⁷ and seems to have been the logical local choice to assume the post of cathedral organist when Casavant Opus 51 was installed in 1918.¹³⁸

The young Winifred Traynor studied organ with the organist of Omaha's All Saints' Episcopal Church, James Herbert Simms,¹³⁹ who had himself been assistant

¹³³ Virginia Flanagan, interview with Fr. Michael Gutsell and Kevin Vogt, Omaha, Nebraska, 22 September 2006.

¹³⁴ Ennis, 10.

¹³⁵ That this number has over time been rounded up to fifty is a testament to Mrs. Flanagan's unique place in the history and institutional memory of Saint Cecilia Cathedral.

¹³⁶ Virginia Flanagan, interview with Fr. Michael Gutsell and Kevin Vogt, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 August 2006.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ "Where is the recital of Clarence Eddy....," Silby Scrapbook.

¹³⁹ Flanagan, 24 August 2006.

organist at Chichester Cathedral while he was a student in England.¹⁴⁰ She later studied with Omaha organist Martin Bush, and during summers traveled by train to New York to continue her musical education there.¹⁴¹ Father Gregory Hügler, O.S.B., also mentored her in the fine points of Catholic liturgy and sacred music in preparation for the cathedral's hosting of the National Eucharistic Congress in 1930.¹⁴²



Figure 7. Winifred Traynor Flanagan
(Courtesy of Saint Cecilia Cathedral)

¹⁴⁰ Sara Mullin Baldwin, ed., *Who's Who in Omaha 1928* (Louisville, Kentucky: Robert M. Baldwin Corporation, 1928), 180.

¹⁴¹ Flanagan, 22 September 2006.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

According to her daughter, Winifred Flanagan acquired an expert knowledge of the Church's liturgy and its musical requirements and was able to advise clergy and musicians alike on such matters.¹⁴³ She was highly regarded by her peers and had the distinction of being one of only three organists in Omaha to have earned the degree of Associate of the American Guild of Organists.¹⁴⁴ She was the first recipient of Medal of Saint Cecilia, awarded to her in 1952 by Father Francis Schmitt at Boys Town.¹⁴⁵ This honor would later be bestowed upon the likes of Jean Langlais and Flor Peeters.

Detailed accounts of Winifred Flanagan's life and work remain to be recorded in oral histories by surviving singers of her time,¹⁴⁶ but traces of evidence give a clear impression of her earnestness and zeal for Catholic sacred music. Most of the music scores and octavos from the Flanagan era are extant in the Cathedral Music Library, although they are rapidly deteriorating. Caecilian movement masses and motets make up the lion's share of the collection, interspersed with historical polyphony and a smattering of modern compositions, no doubt the influence of Father Schmitt and the

¹⁴³ Flanagan, 22 September 2006.

¹⁴⁴ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), June or July 1971. A clipping of an article "Organist Part of Historic Events" exists, but the June and July issues from 1971 are missing from the Cathedral Archives.

¹⁴⁵ *Caecilia*, September/October (Omaha, 1952), 247.

¹⁴⁶ Whatever papers of Winifred Traynor Flanagan that survived had for a time been in the possession of Virginia Flanagan, but have now been either lost or dispersed among the children of Virginia Flanagan's twin brother, Larry Flanagan, and have not been available for purposes of research.

Church Music Workshops at Boys Town between 1953 and 1969.¹⁴⁷ The conservative *St. Pius X Hymnal* appears to have been installed in the cathedral on her watch.¹⁴⁸ Particularly noteworthy is the abundance of “part books” in the library, which Mrs. Flanagan is said to have preferred over full-score octavos. Equally conservative was her attempt to “English” the masses and motets of Lassus in anticipation of and in response to the introduction of the vernacular language into the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴⁹ As sole cathedral organist for the better part of the twentieth century, Winifred Flanagan jealously guarded the cathedral organ as a treasure, so much so that as a schoolboy, Vatican titular organist James E. Goettsche had to steal into the cathedral at night to play the organ.¹⁵⁰

For at least a decade following Winifred Flanagan’s retirement, Saint Cecilia Cathedral was served by a rapid succession of musicians: Sister Claudette Schiratti, R.S.M. (the first full-time cathedral liturgist), Joseph Bevens, Tony Aiperspach, Bill Bailey, Bob Miller, Theresa Stroh, Rich Herbst, Monsignor Francis P. Schmitt, Claire Campbell, Sister Marie Juan Maney, O.P., Jim Weeke, Nick Behrens, Gerald Kaminski, and Linda Fineran.¹⁵¹ It was during this period that Father Paul Peter

¹⁴⁷ Schmitt, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Schmitt refers to copies of *The Saint Gregory Hymnal* “installed” by Winifred Flanagan suggesting a donation of copies from the cathedral. It is the *St. Pius X Hymnal* from the period that survives in the cathedral’s music library.

¹⁴⁹ Winifred Traynor Flanagan, Music Manuscripts, Library of the Saint Cecilia Schola Cantorum, Omaha.

¹⁵⁰ James E. Goettsche, in a presentation made to musicians of the Archdiocese Omaha, 27 September 2004, Omaha.

established an “Organ Repair Fund” to restore the again-failing Casavant Opus 51.¹⁵²
The fund initially contained only \$125.¹⁵³

The central figure connected with the organ during this time is Sister Marie Juan Maney, O.P., music teacher in the cathedral schools from 1966 to 1979.¹⁵⁴ She was (and is still today) a first-rate educator, impresario and organist, holding a graduate degree in organ from the Catholic University of America.¹⁵⁵ Between 1974 and 1978, she organized gala “Elizabethan Dinners,” eventually bearing the name “Ye Olde Christmas Feaste.”¹⁵⁶ The proceeds from these events benefited the Cathedral Organ Fund. Benefit concerts by local organist Roger B. Arnold and the famed Boys Town Choir padded the coffers so that by the beginning of 1978 the fund had grown to over \$25,000.¹⁵⁷ A contract was signed with the Neuman Organ Company of Seward, Nebraska, to again overhaul Casavant Opus 51, this time at a

¹⁵¹ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), August 1971, December 1973, October 1974, December 1975, December 1976, March 1977, January 1978, and August/September 1979.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, January 1973.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, December 1973.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, September 1972 and August/September 1979.

¹⁵⁵ Recital Program “Welcome Home! A Procession of Organists Past,” 19 October 2003, Archives of the Saint Cecilia Schola Cantorum, Omaha.

¹⁵⁶ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), January 1975, November 1975 and August/September 1979.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, February 1977, October 1977 and January 1978.

cost of \$34,756.¹⁵⁸ The remaining funds were quickly raised, thanks to Sister Marie Juan's efforts and the success of the Elizabethan Feasts.¹⁵⁹

The End of Casavant Opus 51

The final round of work on the organ began in the summer of 1978,¹⁶⁰ including the cleaning of all pipes, re-leathering of the reservoirs, repairing the wind chests and reed pipes, replacing two ranks of pipes and completely rebuilding the console.¹⁶¹ The Swell 8' Vox Humana was exchanged for a 4' Principal, and the Choir 2' Piccolo was traded for a 2' Principal, clearly an attempt to fulfill the musical need for complete principal choruses in every division, left unfulfilled in the 1957 renovation.¹⁶²

On Sunday, 5 November 1978, an "Organ Appreciation Concert" was held featuring organist Roger B. Arnold, Minister of Music of Omaha's First Central Congregational Church,¹⁶³ playing to an audience of over 700 people.¹⁶⁴ Arnold held the Master of Sacred Music degree from Union Theological Seminary and a

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., January 1978.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., February 1978.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., July 1978.

¹⁶¹ Donald A. Neuman, to Father Paul F. Peter, 15 September 1977, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha. It was at this time that the console draw knobs were replaced with stop tabs.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Program, "Roger B. Arnold in an Organ Appreciation Concert," 5 November 1978, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁶⁴ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), December 1978. This article erroneously reports the date of the concert as November 9.

Licentiate from Trinity College, London, and had been a musical fixture in the Omaha community since 1959.¹⁶⁵ The concert program featured selections spanning the liturgical year (Table 7).¹⁶⁶

Table 7. Organ Appreciation Concert, 5 November 1978

PROGRAM	
Roger B. Arnold, Organ	
Tocatta and Fugue in D minor	J. S. Bach
Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme	J. S. Bach
Byzantine Suite No. 8: Noël	Henry Mulet
Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern	Sigfrid Karg-Elert
Chorale and Prelude: Herzliebster Jesu	Crüger / Brahms
O Mensch, bewein' dein Sünde gross	J. S. Bach
Heut' triumphiret Gottes Sohn	J. S. Bach
Erschienen ist der Herrlich' Tag	D. Buxtehude
Plainsong, Prelude & Chorale: Veni Creator	J. S. Bach
Prayer to Our Lady (Gothic Suite)	L. Boëllmann
Chorale Fantasy: Nun danket alle Gott	S. Karg-Elert
Choral in A minor	César Franck

Neuman's addition in 1979 of a new 8' Trumpet on an offset chest mounted above the Great division completed the project.¹⁶⁷ Winifred Flanagan was reported to say in 1978 that she remembered the "fantastic" trumpet on the Great of the original cathedral organ, but did not remember why it was removed in 1957.¹⁶⁸ Its long-

¹⁶⁵ Program, 5 November 1978.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ *Cathedral Chimes* (Omaha), February 1978. As has been shown, the original Great 8' Trumpet was removed to make room on the chest for a new Mixture.

awaited replacement was made by the reed pipe maker Trivo, Inc. of Hagerstown, Maryland.¹⁶⁹ With this addition Casavant Opus 51 found its final form:

Table 8. Final Specification of Casavant Opus 51¹⁷⁰

Great		Swell	
16'	Quintaton	16'	Bourdon
8'	Diapason	8'	Open Diapason
8'	Gedackt	8'	Stopped Diapason
8'	Gemshorn	8'	Viol D'Gamba
4'	Octave	8'	Vox Celeste
4'	Harmonic Flute	8'	Aeoline
2 2/3'	Twelfth	4'	Principal
2/	Fifteenth	4'	Flute Traverse
	Mixture IV	2'	Flautina
8'	Trumpet		Plein Jeu III
		8'	Trompette
		8'	Oboe
			Tremulant
Choir		Pedal	
8'	Diapason	32'	Contrabass (Resultant)
8'	Melodia	16'	Open Diapason
8'	Dulciana	16'	Bourdon
8'	Unda Maris	16'	Lieblich Gedeckt (Swell)
4'	Waldflute	8'	Octave (Extension Open Diapason)
2 2/3'	Nazard	8'	Bourdon (Extension Bourdon)
2'	Principal	4'	Octave (Extension Open Diapason)
8'	Clarinet	16'	Trombone
	Tremulant	8'	Trompet (Extension Trombone)
		4'	Trompet (Extension Trombone)

¹⁶⁹ Information provided by organ builder Rodney Levsen.

¹⁷⁰ Holyoke. Data collected in 1990. The Pedal 32' Contrabass is wrongly assumed to be derived from the 16' Open Diapason (cf. note 86 on page 26).

The organ continued its service during the 1980s and 1990s at the hands of organists Gerald Kaminski (until 1988) and Patrick Burkhart (from 1988 to 1997), both of whom held full-time appointments as Cathedral Music Director. The music ministry of Saint Cecilia Cathedral thrived again under full-time, professional leadership, with the Cathedral Choir making tours to Rome and New York City. By 1997, however, the organ was again suffering from mechanical problems.

An interim year between music directors occurred in 1997-1998, and it fell to Father Joseph Wray, associate pastor of the cathedral, to inquire about the possibility of rebuilding or restoring the organ. Jacquelin Rochette of Casavant Frères, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and regional Casavant representative Carroll Hanson of Iowa City visited Saint Cecilia Cathedral in November of 1997 to inspect the organ and begin drafting a proposal.¹⁷¹ Casavant Frères submitted a proposal on 27 December 1997,¹⁷² specifying a new organ of 59 ranks, of which only 21 percent would be comprised of pipe work from the old organ.¹⁷³ A now-lost letter from Mr. Rochette accompanying the proposal explained Casavant's reluctance to recycle pipes made by the one-time South Haven firm.¹⁷⁴ Hanson further dismissed the work done in 1957,

¹⁷¹ Carroll Hanson, to Father Joseph Wray, 6 October 1997, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁷² Deduced from correspondence of Kevin Vogt, to Carroll Hanson, 27 November 1998, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁷³ Casavant Frères, Specification No. 341-GSCR-59, photocopy [undated], Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha. The original proposal and accompanying letter from Mr. Rochette are now lost.

¹⁷⁴ In this letter, Rochette alluded to different standards and voicing styles between that of the one-time South Haven firm and those of the modern Casavant firm in Quebec.

opining that “the original specification [of 1918] did have a better sense of tonal architecture relative to the cathedral’s space.”¹⁷⁵

My arrival at the end of July 1998 to assume the post of director of music and cathedral organist at Saint Cecilia Cathedral marked the beginning of an earnest endeavor to repair or replace Casavant Opus 51. The proposal by Casavant Frères was ultimately rejected in favor of another,¹⁷⁶ thus ending the cathedral’s long association with the Casavant firm.¹⁷⁷

Just as the abandoned 1869 Johnson Organ found a new home in 1909 in a nearby parish church,¹⁷⁸ it was determined that Casavant Opus 51 should also remain in the Archdiocese of Omaha as part of its cultural heritage. In July of 2002, Saint Cecilia Cathedral donated the organ to Saint Patrick’s Parish in Fremont, Nebraska. On July 29, 30 and 31, Father Owen Korte and members of his parish in Fremont assisted the Levsen Organ Company in dismantling the cathedral organ and removing it from the cathedral. It has since been stored in the basement of the old Saint Patrick’s Church where it awaits eventual rebuilding into a new organ for the recently-built new Saint Patrick’s Church.

¹⁷⁵ Carroll Hanson, to Kevin Vogt, 5 November 1998, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁷⁶ Kevin Vogt, to Carroll Hanson, 27 November 1998, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁷⁷ Carroll Hanson, to Kevin Vogt, 2 January 1999, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁷⁸ Saint Frances Cabrini Church, Omaha. (Cain, 57.)

A final concert was held on 20 January 2002 to pay tribute to the instrument that had served the local Church continuously for 84 years (Table 9). Robert Harding, great-grandson of Frank J. Burkley, assisted in planning a program of music that included pieces performed on the 1918 Dedication Recital.¹⁷⁹ Among these were movements of Charles Gounod's *Messe Solennelle* ("*Saint Cecilia*"), a work that has figured prominently in the cathedral's choral repertoire throughout the century. Franck's *Prélude, Fugue, Variation* was performed using a score that had belonged to Winifred Traynor Flanagan.

Table 9. Final Concert of the Casavant Organ, 20 January 2002, 2:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Kevin Vogt, Organ
The Saint Cecilia Cathedral Choir
David Batter, Choirmaster
Michael Lyon, Tenor
Jennifer Gilg, Soprano

† *As at the 1918 Dedicatory Recital*

<p>The Star Spangled Banner† Hymn to Saint Cecilia Toccatina and Fugue in D minor, BWV 665 The Lost Chord† How Brightly Beams the Morning Star There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth Prélude, Fugue, Variation Messe Solennelle: Sanctus & Benedictus† Symphony No. 1 : Final</p>	<p>Richard Proulx Johann Sebastian Bach Arthur Sullivan Dietrich Buxtehude Felix Mendelssohn César Franck Charles Gounod Louis Vierne</p>
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¹⁷⁹ Robert Harding, to Br. William Woeger, F.S.C., fax transmission, 5 December 2001, Schola Cantorum Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha, Nebraska.

Auxiliary Organs

In addition to the main organ in the West Gallery, Saint Cecilia Cathedral has been served by three small pipe organs located either in one of its two chapels or the cathedral sanctuary. The main ancillary chapel in Saint Cecilia Cathedral is the Lady Chapel, known since the early 1940s as “Our Lady of Nebraska Chapel.”¹⁸⁰

Austin Opus 1812

The earliest known organ in the Lady Chapel was a compact cabinet organ built by the Austin Organ Company in 1932 for the G. A. Volland Funeral Home in Hastings, Nebraska (Table 10).¹⁸¹

Table 10. Specification of Austin Opus 1812 (1932)¹⁸²

Great		Swell		Pedal	
16'	Open Diapason (<i>c⁰</i>)	16'	Claribella	16'	Contra Bass
16'	Contra Viole (<i>c⁰</i>)	16'	Contra Viole (<i>c⁰</i>)	16'	Dolce Bass
8'	Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason	8'	Open Diapason
8'	Claribel Flute	8'	Claribel Flute	8'	Flute
8'	Salicional	8'	Salicional	8'	Viole
4'	Octave	4'	Octave	4'	Super Octave
4'	Flute	4'	Flute	4'	Flute
4'	Salicet	4'	Salicet	4'	Viola
2 2/3'	Nazard	2 2/3'	Dulcet	2'	Octave Flute
2'	Super Octave	2'	Dulcet		
		1 3/5'	Dulcet		
			Tremolo		

¹⁸⁰ Kuhlman, 120. The chapel was so named for the statue entitled “Our Lady of Nebraska” or “Our Lady of the Corn” by sculptor Albin Polasek.

¹⁸¹ Holyoke. Data compiled in 1993.

¹⁸² Ibid.

It is known that this organ was removed from Saint Cecilia Cathedral in 1998,¹⁸³ but the date it was acquired by the cathedral is uncertain. Winifred Flanagan solicited a proposal on 27 February 1952, from the Andover Organ Company of Methuen, Massachusetts, for a new organ to serve Our Lady of Nebraska Chapel.¹⁸⁴ This was to be an “improved model” of an Andover studio organ that she encountered at an “Organ Institute” in 1950 (Table 11).¹⁸⁵

Table 11. Proposal by Andover for a New Lady Chapel Organ¹⁸⁶

Great		Positiv		Pedal	
8'	Rohrflöte	8'	Gambe	16'	Quintade
8'	Gambe	4'	Rohrflöte	8'	Rohrflöte
4'	Spitzprinzipal	2 2/3'	Nasard (Rohrflöte)	8'	Gambe
4'	Rohrflöte	2'	Superoctave (Spitzpr.)	5 1/3'	Quinte (Rohrflöte)
2'	Superoctave (Spitzpr.)			4'	Spitzprinzipal
	Mixture IV			4'	Rohrflöte
				2'	Superoctave (Spitzpr.)

¹⁸³ Austin Opus 1812 was removed from Our Lady of Nebraska Chapel in the spring of 19998 to make room for another instrument. As a result of a misunderstanding, the party engaged to move and store the organ presumed ownership in exchange for the removal, and the instrument was sold before it could be reclaimed. (Br. William Woeger, F.S.C., to Kevin Vogt, telephone conversation, 1 April 2007.)

¹⁸⁴ Thomas W. Byers, Andover Organ Company, to Mrs. M. J. (Winifred) Flanagan, 6 March 1952, Cathedral Archives, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. This proposal suggests that the organ would have had electro-pneumatic action and some unification, but would be have the “clear qualities of low pressure voicing.” Such an instrument was to have reflected the “classical” tonal scheme in vogue at the time, and would have been consistent with the changes made to Casavant Opus 51 in 1957.

It is unknown if this organ was intended to replace Austin Opus 1812 or if the Austin organ was procured instead of the Andover. It is clear, however, that the Andover proposal was to be part of the interior decoration project anticipating the completion and consecration of the cathedral.¹⁸⁷ The organ was to cost around \$7,000,¹⁸⁸ but it was never realized.

Bedient Opus 38

In 1993, Brother William Woeger, F.S.C., commissioned a positive organ from the Bedient Organ Company of Lincoln, Nebraska, in honor of Archbishop Daniel E. Sheehan on the occasion of his retirement. The organ is Bedient’s Opus 38, and is comprised of three stops on one manual with a pull-down pedal. It is one of the firm’s stock designs known as “The Boston” (Table 12).

Table 12. Specification of Bedient Opus 38 (1993)

Manual		Pedal
8’	Gedeckt	Manual permanently coupled to Pedal
4’	Rohrfloete	
2’	Prestant	

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. The letter from Andover indicates a desire to coordinate the design of the organ with the decorative work in progress at the time: “The most practical solution to the problem of architectural disposition of the organ would be for us to collaborate with the Rambusch firm on the design of the casework, we being familiar with the acoustic requirements as well as the architectural usage of pipes as decorative materials; they being familiar with the treatment of ecclesiastical woodwork, particularly in your own chapel. This part of the project could then well be executed by Rambusch as a part of their general decorating work there.”

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

This organ sits on a movable platform and has been employed at several locations in the cathedral nave and sanctuary, and in the adjacent Nash Chapel (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Bedient Opus 38
(Courtesy of Bedient Organ Company)

Bedient Opus 60

A seven-stop Bedient organ, Opus 60, was installed in Our Lady of Nebraska Chapel in May 1998, replacing Austin Opus 1812 (Figure 9). This organ was purchased with funds bequeathed to the cathedral from the estate of Robert G. Miller, Jr., long-time cantor and assistant organist at the cathedral. The organ was planned in

consultation with cathedral organist Patrick Burkhart before his departure in August 1997, and was installed during the subsequent interim year under the watch of Brother William Woeger, F.S.C.¹⁸⁹

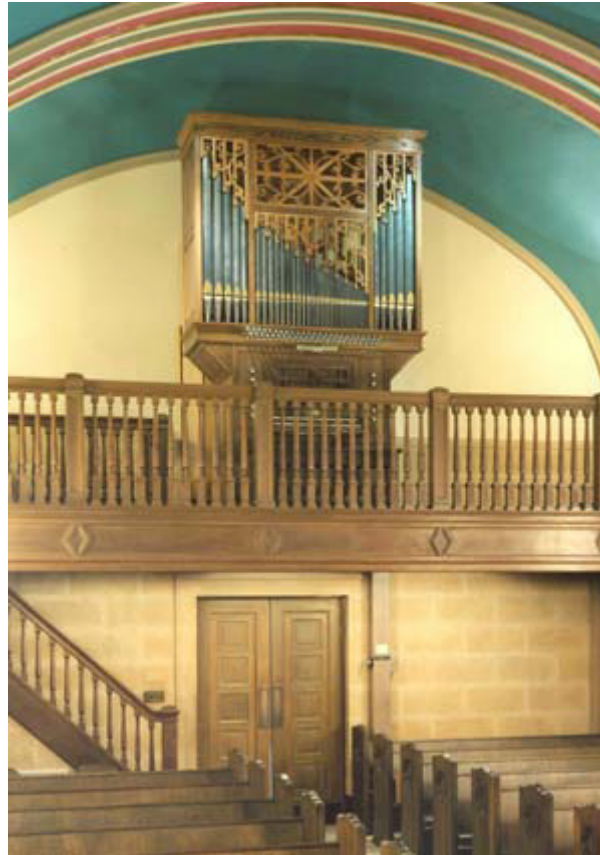


Figure 9. Bedient Opus 60
(Courtesy of Bedient Organ Company)

Bedient Opus 60 is also one of the firm’s stock models, this one named “The Houston.” Its specification is distinctive in its inclusion of a Spanish-style regal

¹⁸⁹ Bedient Opus 60 was actually installed the very day I interviewed for the position of Director of Music and Cathedral Organist.

called a “Dulzaina,” mounted horizontally (*en chamade*) on the impost of the organ (Table 13).

Table 13. Specification of Bedient Opus 60 (1998)

Great		Positive		Pedal	
8'	Rohrflute	8'	Gedeckt	16'	Subbass
4'	Principal	8'	Dulzaina		
2'	Octave		(regal, <i>en chamade</i>)		
1 1/3'	Quint				
2 2/3'	Sesquialtera II (c ¹)				

From pioneer beginnings, through fits and starts, bursts of inspiration and determination, plateaus of stability and faithfulness, cataclysmic upheavals and patient periods of renewal, the organs of Omaha’s Roman Catholic cathedrals have attended the festivity of parochial and diocesan churches and symbolized their traditions of faith. Reciprocally, the rich cultural texture of human life and creativity has “breathed life” into these artifacts. This is the context into which a new cathedral organ has been borne to attend the festal moments of human life, to symbolize the procession of cultic and credal traditions, and to receive its own breath of life from generations to come.