

Work continues on the complete restoration of the Basilica pipe organ. Five years ago it became necessary to start basic repairs and identifying those sections of both the Choir/Swell and the Solo/Great divisions of the organ most in need of restoration. Due to lack of sufficient funds, the Berghaus and Bradford organ companies began mending the organ to allow it to be used for Mass but unsuitable for professional recitals.

In the fall of 2015 the Bradford organ company assumed the care of the organ with the goal of complete restoration. Work began on the Choir and Swell divisions of the organ and completed in the spring of 2017. At that time, David Rhodes of City Organ Works, LLC began work on the Solo and Great divisions. This on-going restoration was made possible due to a generous gift of over \$370,000 from the John Varrassi estate designated for the Basilica organ. The late Mr. Varrassi was a longtime former parishioner of Our Lady of Sorrows and uncle of Fr. Frank Falco, O.S.M.

The restoration work will be complete in time for the rededication of the Organ on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 16, 2018 at 3 p.m.

The 1902 Lyon and Healy pipe organ is one of Chicago's major instruments. In comparison to other large Chicago organs, it has several unique features, the most important of which is that there have been no tonal changes to the original Lyon and Healy scheme. This is perhaps pure luck since during the 1960's a movement to make organs sound more "baroque" was in vogue and pipe work was removed from many instruments to be substituted with pipework of a smaller scale and higher pitches. Luckily, this trend stopped in the 1980's and organists today are more interested in playing instruments in their original layout. This interest in historical accuracy has become widespread and as soon as the Basilica is restored to an organ that plays reliably, it will be an instrument that will draw attention to recitalists that wish to play the "real" thing.

The organ is large enough to play an immense amount of organ literature and the acoustics of the Basilica are perfect for the development of the organ sound. It is a tribute to Lyon and Healy that the instrument was built so well that it has lasted 116 years and is still playing beautifully.

Mr. Frederick Hohnman has become engaged to provide a gala organ recital celebrating the completion of restorative repairs to this 1902 Lyon and Healy pipe organ.

Concert organist Frederick Hohman is recognized as a composer of organ and choral music, a creator of organ transcriptions, a modern on-line educator, a musical instrument designer, and a classical music audio-video producer.

He has led organ concert tours taking him throughout the USA, and to the Caribbean, Australia, the UK and Finland. Appearances also included conventions of the American Guild of Organists, The Organ Historical Society, and the American Institute of Organbuilders.