

MULLER PIPE ORGAN COMPANY

PO Box 353 • Croton, Ohio 43013 • 800.543.0167 • www.mullerpipeorgan.com

St. Mary's Catholic Church Columbus, Ohio

**Two manuals, 33 stops, 38 ranks
1902 William Schuelke
Tonal Restoration 2001**

The pipe organ at St. Mary's Catholic Church, located in historic German Village of Columbus, Ohio, was built by William Schuelke Organs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. An agreement was signed on May 2, 1901 to erect, complete, and have the organ ready for use on or before November 12th of the same year. The cost of this organ was \$5,000 plus the previous organ in exchange (the previous organ is reported as being built locally and purchased at the time the church was built ca. 1868). The organ was dedicated in July of 1902, shortly before Schuelke's death. Of approximately 160 organs built by William Schuelke Organs, this example is one of perhaps thirteen still known to exist.

On November 12, 1895, patent number 549690 was issued to Schuelke for a membrane windchest with tubular pneumatic action. This action was in use at St. Mary's until 1941. At that time, the tubular pneumatic action was converted to electro-pneumatic, but the patented membrane chests remained intact. A new console was installed at the same time, all at a cost of \$2,975.

Research and consultation with several sources led to the decision that these windchests should be replaced. Inherent problems existed in the original design of the windchests; the speech characteristic of the upper range of the pipes was adversely affected and the chests would be difficult and costly to restore. In addition, a new console had been installed in 1941 and the original reservoir system was replaced in 1974. It was determined that enough mechanical change had previously occurred to compromise the integrity of a complete restoration. The best option was to proceed with a comprehensive tonal restoration and to install new and modern components, including a custom drawknob console built by Muller.

Our goal, then, was to restore this historically significant organ as a definitive tonal example of early twentieth century American organ building. Thankfully, all but a few individual pipes are still original to the instrument. Extensive restoration work was completed on each pipe. Repairs were made to correct damage caused by age and abusive tuning techniques. Although it was necessary to install tuning sleeves on cone tuned pipes, scrolls were retained wherever possible. Wood pipes were fitted with new, volume-regulating wood feet.

To provide a stronger foundation for the active music program at St. Mary's Church, minor specification changes were made and the organ was re-pitched to the more common A=440 Hz. Tonal balances and volume levels were set, and the historic, early twentieth century sound of the organ was re-established.