

## **The organ of the church Saint-Etienne-du-Mont (Paris)**

The first stone of the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont was laid in 1517 and it was consecrated in 1626. The marvellous organ case, by Jehan Buron, was built between 1631 and 1633. The first great organ was built between 1630 and 1636 by the organbuilder Pierre le Pescheur. It was a thirty-stop instrument with a 16' Montre and a 16' bourdon, four 48-note manuals and a separate 32-note pedal. Heavily damaged by fire in 1760, it was rebuilt by the organ builder Somer in 1766, who died before the work was completed. François-Henri Cliquot completed the work by adding an oboe to the Positif, another to the Récit and a 16' bombarde to the pedal. It was repaired by Dallery and John Abbey, and in 1863 by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, who gave it a thorough overhaul with an entirely new expressive 42-note Récit and a reduction to three manuals (see ACC composition). He retained the 51-note Positif and reinstated C sharp in the GO and Positif. The organ thus transformed by Cavaillé-Coll had 39 stops, and was inaugurated by César Franck on 27 April 1863 in the company of Auguste Durand (Saint-Roch) and Charles Hess (Nancy). Ten years later Cavaillé was commissioned to rebuild the organ, and Charles Mutin took over its upkeep until 1908, when Théodore Puget succeeded him in this task. Puget increased the pedal to 30 notes, enriched the Récit from the first octave down and added five combination pedals.

Beuchet-Debierre then carried out a major restoration, with a new electric console located on a side gallery to save space for the new stops: the Echo windchest was placed in the organ's stair tower and the gallery was reinforced by a huge 10-metre-long iron beam at the request of the architect of the Monuments Historiques.

In total, the organ cases contain 56 stops. The other stops are located in the drum of the west door (Bourçons and Flûtes de Pédale), the stair turret of the gallery (Echo) and in the narthex. Most of the pipework therefore dates from the 1930-1956 expansion of the organ by Beuchet-Debierre.

39 stops predate 1930 (in the GO, Récit and Pédale) but have been extensively reworked. In the Positif and Écho, the pipework is entirely by Beuchet-Debierre 1930-1956 (except for the 8' Cromorne in the Positif). The progressions were reconsidered by Gonzalez in 1975.

The following pre-date the nineteenth century and are in their original places: the Cornet Vrang of the Grand-Orgue, the Cromorne 8' of the Positif, the Hautbois 8' and the Voix Humaine 8' of the Récit, and the pedal reeds of Fr-H Cliquot (Bombarde 16', Trompette 8' and Clairon 4'). 6 stops are by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, 1863: the Bourdon 16' and 8', the Montre 8', the Flûte Harmonique 8' and the Prestant 4' from the GO and the Trompette 8' from the Récit.

Victor Gonzalez contributed 3 stops in 1975: the Grosse Mixture IIrangs from the GO, the Trompette en Chamade 8' from the Echo and the Bassoon 32' from the Pedal and its extensions. Maurice Duruflé, who had been behind Beuchet's far-reaching changes, expressed his dissatisfaction with the pleins-jeux furnishings and cymbals, which "tend to sag from 3rd C onwards (...) Moreover, the thinness and acidity of their tone in the upper register make them unsuitable for blending with the basses," added Duruflé.

In 1991, Bernard Dargassies carried out a revision.

With 89 stops, it's the fourth largest organ of Paris