

The Organ of the Chapel of Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage

The organ of the chapel of N.D. de l'Hermitage, inaugurated and blessed on September 26, 1990, is only the little brother of an already large family... the 9th instrument, probably! While leafing through the Annals of Brother Jean-Alphonse and especially "volume 5", I had fun reconstituting this family of instruments which had the joy of singing in the various chapels of the Hermitage. So, before looking at the latest addition, let's do a little history!



1824: Un orgue de Barberie ?

In the first temporary chapel in the oak woods, there is no question of an organ, you might say, seeing as there wasn't even a roof for the assembly! Well, think again. There were a! Even the neighbors came to hear it! Witness this inhabitant of the Moulin de Soulage who wrote to his family on September 6, 1824: *"Yesterday I went to Vespers in the Bois de Coulaud to see what we are doing, rather than out of devotion. They are truly the druids of ancient times. Some*

are in the woods, others in pre. The people of Layat come out of their house and come and sit down at the bottom of their earth, with their book. They are at Vespers. Finally, it deserves to be put in the gazettes. They have organs like the singers of Paris."

In the second "temporary" chapel located on the first floor (currently "room of the mission"), Brother François mentions this organ "small portable organ that Father Courveille had brought and that was used for the services."

"Above the front door, there was a statue of the Virgin placed in a niche that could see from the whole chapel. This niche had an opening at the bottom which gave in a small cabinet where they had placed the small organ which played during the services of the Sundays and holidays.»

This is how Brother François speaks of the organ in his description of the third chapel blessed, on August 13, 1825, by Father Dervieux, parish priest of Saint Pierre de Saint Chamond. This organ mentioned twice is also called "small cylinder organ" in another passage. Was it a pipe organ? Was there a keyboard or was it some sort of barrel organ? I would lean more towards the latter explanation, since the dictionary defines the barrel organ as "having a cylinder". It was replaced in 1849 by a harmonium! No doubt this time, everyone sees what it is!

1874: Brown organ with 6 stops

In 1874, Brother Jean-Alphonse said this:

"A man named Brun de Saint Chamond had a 6-stop organ which was worth around 4,000 francs. He offered it to the House and pardoned him 2,000 francs. The organ was accepted and placed at the head of the stalls near the choir, on the Epitre side (on the right looking at the altar).

R.F. Louis-Marie having come to the Hermitage and having heard this instrument was saddened."

"L'Hermitage takes precedence over the Mother House" (Saint Genis), he said to his Assistants at return: this is not in order. He instructed dear Brother Euthyme to make a subscription to acquire the beautiful 18-stop organ which the chapel of the Mother House has enjoyed for several years."

On a sheet of paper, we find this, written in 1877:

"The organs come from Canon Brun of Lyon, they were donated by his nephew Irénée Brun, for 2,000 francs. which he left for the chapel. Later, they were restored by Mr. Beaucourt from Villeurbanne: 2,000 fr. These 2,000 fr. are paid by various people. Then torn to pieces by a filibuster: 1,300 francs. Restored again by Mr. Merklin: 2,000 fr. Finally reassembled in 1899, in the gallery of the restored chapel: 3,000 fr. »

In 1878 he wrote:

"The organ given by Mr. Brun had been made by one of these chaplain uncles at the Primatiale who had left it to him when he died. We said that Mr. Brun sold it to the House for 2,000 francs. This organ was restored, enlarged, refurbished and placed in a small gallery, in the new chapel, removed from the Gospel. It was used to enhance singing and ceremonies. It was quite sufficient for such an audience and such a vessel."

Again, in 1885, he spoke of the organ again:

"We have seen that to enhance the services of the church, a small cylinder organ was first used, which was replaced by a harmonium in 1849. We said that it made room for a 6-stop organ in

1874 that it was replaced in a gallery of the current chapel in 1878. In 1883, a so-called organ builder showed up here and offered to repair this instrument by adding several games, for 100 francs, his food during the operation and payment for the necessary materials. We thought we could trust him. He dismantled the organ, worked on it more or less for three months and disappeared without having received the 100 francs. above-mentioned. Since then, the various parts of the instrument have remained scattered. Currently, we are using a 2,000 franc Médiaphone. invoiced by Messrs Dumont, Lelievre et Cie at Andelys. We are in the process of acquiring an 8-stop organ which will come from Mr. Merklin's factory in Lyon."

Megalomania...?

Why does an organ restored in 1877 need repairs 6 years later? Have the Brothers been fooled by Maison Beaucourt? Why add stops to an organ which in 1878 satisfied everyone? Megalomania? Surprising for Brothers who lived frugally! Would it not rather be the same madness as the Curé of Ars for whom nothing was good enough for the service of the church!

1899: Orgue Merklin.

At the turn of a page, we are informed that it was Brother Romain who "had the organ gallery built (demolished in 1988) and had magnificent organs installed, succeeding the Médiaphone which he himself played on. offices! » These magnificent organs were made from the "remains" of the Brun-Beaucourt organ, but restored and enlarged. Merklin in Lyon is responsible for this work. Renowned house which built or restored a large part of the region's instruments!

1903, dispersion...

Four years later, "towards the end of June 1903, the organs were sold for 4,000 francs. to the priest from Saint Genis-Terrenoire (village near Saint Martin-la-Plaine). They were worth 15 to 20,000Fr. They were dismantled by two workers of Mr. Bourbon, postman from Lyon and reassembled by him in the gallery of the parish church where they appear and function very well."

The Médiaphone was sold to the church of Boën-sur-Lignon.

1940: Orgue Dunand

Between 1903 and 1942, it was once again the reign of the harmonium!

In 1940, the Dunand organ was installed, for the sum of 90,000 francs.

" 1 June 1st, the feast of Pentecost, Brother Henri-Emile released the still unfinished organ: the May 31, 1903 Pentecost, he had played on the old one, before everyone left. »

"The new organ," says Brother Henri-Emile in his notes, "is less complete than the old one (13 current games against 18); however, it is well worth it because it is built according to the progress of modern technology. » (I cite here a small mimeographed and anonymous booklet found in the "archives" and entitled "Various documents on the Hermitage"!).

1963: restoration by Merklin

In 1963, it was completely dismantled, restored, and increased by the Merklin house in Lyon for a sum of 20,000 francs. A full stop was added but placed 2 meters above the organ's windchest: the result, being small, and therefore very sensitive to temperature variations, it was practically always out of tune!

The trumpets placed under a stained-glass window were constantly blocked by insects... On the other hand, the electromagnets placed by Mr. Dunand in 1940 held up until 1988: he noticed this himself while he was restoring the organ of Saint Pierre!

However, not everything that was metal pipe resisted.

This organ has provided numerous services: 48 years of fidelity in a chapel where its predecessors did not remain in place for long! The removal of the platform that supported him hastened his death!

Composition of the Merklin organ (1963): 14 real stops: Grand organ:	Narrative :	Pedal :	Combinations:
Bumblebee 8 Sweet flute 4 Watch 8 Provider 4 Doublet 2 Plain Set 3 to 4 rows Trumpets 8 Bugle 4	2 row cymbal Nighthorn 8 Conical flute 4 Nazard 2 2/3 Straight of Nazard 2 Tier 1 3/5 Cornet 5 rows Oboe	Subbase 16 Bass 8 Flute 4 Trumpet 8 Bugle 4	Tirasses G.O. Ped in 8 Tirasse Récit-Péd in 8 Tirasse Récit-Péd in 4 Reed Calls Tutti Seesaw expression Free combination

1990 : Orgue Saby

I now quote Henri Bin:

"It was appropriate to take up the problem of the organ at N.D. de l'Hermitage. The organ builder Pierre Saby, from Saint-Uze (Drôme) called for consultation, proposed another new organ small dimensions, but of a quality that can defy centuries, with a construction classic and fully mechanical traction."

The buffet was designed by Bernard Tillet, an architect who is also an organist.

The sculptures are by Monsieur Faure.

This organ has 962 pipes, divided into 12 real stops.

Composition :	Positive	Pedal	Combinations
Grand organ: Watch 8 Bumblebee 8 (game dating from 1879) Provider 4 Conical flute 2 Supply 3 to 4 rows Trumpet 8	Bumblebee 8 Chimney flute 4 Doublet 2 Sesquialtera 2 rows 2 row cymbal	Bass 16 Flute 4 (borrowed from the Watch) Trumpet 8 (borrowed from the G.O.)	Pedal ties Accomplishment of keyboards Trembling soft Shutters with manual pull to positive

This organ sounds good in the new chapel. It's a real pleasure to hear him and make him sing. It offers the organist and the audience a whole range of uses ranging from the softest playing to accompany a soloist to the dazzling tutti enhanced by trumpets to introduce or prolong the celebration!

May your spirit inspire them!

In closing, I cannot help but mention the prayer of blessing of Wednesday September 26, 1990: *“God who has made man capable of expressing through music his joy and his sorrow, we pray to you, deign to bless this organ thanks to which our hearts and our voices will be more united in celebrating you; also deign to bless all the musicians who will make it sound: may your Spirit inspire them so that they give glory to your Name and support the singing of the assembly. And as this instrument only provides music from the multitude of its pipes, and the richness of its timbres, make of all the members of your Church, one people, the Body of your Son, He who reigns for centuries of centuries! Amen!”*

Brother Jean-Louis Vialaton

Historical summary:

1824: cylinder organ

1849: harmonium 1874: Brown organ on the epistle side (6 stops)

1877: Brun organ restored by Beaucourt and replaced in the gallery on the Gospel side (8 stops?)

1883: dismantled by a “filibuster”!

1885: Mediaphone, a sort of harmonium?

1899: organ restored by Merklin (8 stops after Fr. Jean-Alphonse 18 stops after Fr. Henri-Emile) 1903: organ sold to Saint Genis-Terrenoire, Médiaphone sold to Boën-sur-Lignon

1940: Dunant organ (13 stops)

1963: Merklin organ (21 stops but 12 real)

1990: Saby organ (14 stops but 12 real)

