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Dissertation

**HISTORIC PIPE ORGANS IN ARGENTINA:
A HIDDEN TREASURE**

by

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i

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To my wife Mercedes Cecilia, and our children
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HISTORIC PIPE ORGANS IN ARGENTINA:

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(Order No.)

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ABSTRACT

Historic Pipe Organs in Argentina recounts the story of this unique collection of musical instruments. There were, dispersed all over Argentina, primary sources such as letters, documents, articles, and other materials which had never been gathered and reviewed in order to construct a history. In addition, there were many undiscovered pictures, letters, and documents. This combination of known and hitherto unknown sources gives this study a special magnitude and significance.

Turning to these many sources was especially important because the instruments themselves often fail to tell an accurate or complete history. Because of the economic prosperity experienced in Argentina between the years 1860 to 1930, early instruments were replaced with new Romantic-style organs: therefore, few organs have survived from the time of the colonization. Of the three supposed colonial organs in Argentina, with the exception of the remains of the *Órgano de Procesiones* at Susques, there is no conclusive evidence that these instruments actually reflect organs of the period before 1816. Even though there could be pipework dating from the eighteenth century in both the organ at the Museum in Cordoba and the Choir organ at the cathedral in Buenos Aires, especially in the

former, these instruments were built or rebuilt at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Thus, the organs central to exploring the history of pipe organs in Argentina are those of Italian, French, German, and British origin, often within a walking distance of one another. The organs selected for study include examples by internationally renowned builders such as Cavallé-Coll (France), Forster and Andrews (Great Britain), Serassi (Italy), and Walcker (Germany). Other examples include organs by unidentified builders. As had with the colonial organs, economic prosperity initiated an unintentional pattern of destruction or historically inappropriate changes to the organs located in churches where funds were available. The contrary occurred in poorer churches where necessity required that instruments be preserved in their original state; thus these organs reveal their history today. This study reconstructs their history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	v
Abstract	vi
Table of Contents	viii
List of Figures	x
List of Charts	xiii
Introduction	1
Chapter One - Early Instruments	7
1. Domenico Zipoli In Argentina	9
2. The Organ at the Museum Marqués De Sobremonte	11
3. A French Organ Builder in Argentina	17
4. Colonial Organ at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Bs. As.	19
5. An Organ for Processions	26
Chapter Two - Italian Organs	31
1. A Family of Organ Builders	32
2. Italian Organs in Argentina	34
3. The Serassi Dynasty	34
4. Serassi's Opus 699	36
5. Specifications	39
Chapter Three - German Organs	44
1. E. F. Walcker	45
2. The Walcker Organ at the Cathedral Metropolitan de Bs. As.	46
3. Special Features of Opus 263	47
4. E. F. Walcker Opus 263 Specifications	48
5. Modifications of 1887	50
6. Maestros at the Cathedral	52
7. Other Important German Organs in Argentina	58
Chapter Four - French Organs	62
1. Aristide Cavallé-Coll in Argentina	63
2. Tableau de Sommiers	68
3. Original Specifications	70
4. The Enlightenment of Argentina	71
5. Basílica del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús	72
6. Specifications	76
7. Grand Orgues de 32 Pieds	78
8. Basílica de Luján	87

9. Specifications	93
Chapter Five - British Organs	95
1. The British in Argentina 1870-1940	95
2. The Bryceson Organ at the Iglesia Anglicana All Saints	97
3. A British Organ Builder in Argentina	102
4. Specifications	
Original Specifications	103
Specifications Year 2000	104
5. Primera Iglesia Metodista de Buenos Aires	107
6. Forster and Andrews Organ Builders	108
7. Specifications	110
CONCLUSIONS	114
APPENDIX I: Other Historic Pipe Organs in Argentina	118
APPENDIX II: Document of 1820 (Córdoba)	120
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	129
VITA	132

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of South America	5
Figure 2: Map of Argentina	6
Figure 3: Organ at the Museum Marqués de Sobremonte	12
Figure 4: Organ at the Museum Marqués de Sobremonte	13
Figure 5: Organ at the Museum Marqués de Sobremonte	14
Figure 6: Colonial Organ at the Cathedral of Buenos Aires	23
Figure 7: Colonial Organ at the Cathedral of Buenos Aires	24
Figure 8: Colonial Organ at the Cathedral of Buenos Aires	25
Figure 9: Órgano para procesiones	27
Figure 10: Church of San Pedro de Susques	28
Figure 11: Some remaining parts of the Organ of Susques	29
Figure 12: Advertisement of the Poggi brother's music business	33
Figure 13: The Serassi family tree of organ builders	35
Figure 14: Serassi's Opus 699	40
Figure 15: Console of Serassi's Opus 699	41
Figure 16: Pedal board of Serassi's Opus 699	42
Figure 17: Walcker Organ at Buenos Aires Cathedral	53
Figure 18: Console of Walcker Opus 263	54

Figure 19: Walcker organ Opus 263	55
Figure 20: Console of the Walcker organ Opus 263 (left side)	56
Figure 21: Console of the Walcker organ Opus 263 (right side)	56
Figure 22: Original wind mechanism of Opus 263	57
Figure 23: Original wind mechanism of Opus 263	57
Figure 24: Iglesia del Salvador	66
Figure 25: Opus 589 at Iglesia Nuestra Señora de los Milagros	67
Figure 26: Tableau de Sommiers	69
Figure 27: Basílica del Sagrado Corazón	73
Figure 28: Interior of the Basílica del Sagrado Corazón	74
Figure 29: Cavaillé-Coll, Opus 901	77
Figure 30: Charles-Marie Widor's letter	81
Figure 31: Mutin Organ at the Convento de San Francisco	82
Figure 32: Mutin Organ at the Convento de San Francisco	83
Figure 33: Original Console at Santísimo Sacramento	84
Figure 34: Console at Santísimo Sacramento built by Tamburini	85
Figure 35: Façade of Cavaillé-Coll Mutin at Santísimo Sacramento	85
Figure 36: Cavaillé-Coll Mutin at the National Shrine of Luján	89
Figure 37: Laukhuff Console	92

Figure 38: Small organs offered by Bryceson	99
Figure 39: Organs offered by Bryceson	100
Figure 40: Program of the dedication Recital	101
Figure 41: Bryceson Organ at All Saints Anglican Church	105
Figure 42: Console of Bryceson Organ at All Saints Anglican Church	106
Figure 43: First Methodist Church of Buenos Aires	107
Figure 44: Forster and Andrews organ at the First Methodist Church	111
Figure 45: Console of the Forster and Andrews Organ	112

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Examination of the stops of the Colonial Organ	22
Chart 2: Aristide Cavallé-Coll organs imported to the American Continent	64