

ST PAULUSKERK, ANTWERP



St. Paul's Church, or Sint-Pauluskerk in Dutch, is a Roman Catholic church located at the Veemarkt in Antwerp. The Church is located in the old city center of Antwerp, just a few steps from the Scheldt river, in a district where formerly sailors used to live.

Its exterior is mainly Gothic with a Baroque tower while the interior is characterised by its rich Baroque decoration. It holds paintings by Antwerp's leading artists Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens as well as abundant sculpture and church furniture crafted by leading Antwerp sculptors such as

Artus Quellinus the Elder, Pieter Verbrugghen I, Jan Pieter van Bourscheit de Elder, Jan Claudius de Cock and Andries Colyns de Nole. Of particular note is the Calvary outside the Church which is made up of 63 life-size statues and nine reliefs executed in a popular and theatrical style.

The new church was completed and dedicated in 1571. In 1618 the first stone was laid of a new and enlarged choir and transept. In 1639 the new choir was consecrated by the Bishop of Antwerp. During the following decades, the interior of the church was fitted out with Baroque furniture and decoration. The Antwerp sculptor Pieter Verbrugghen I and his workshop made the oak confessionals between 1658 and 1660. The same artist made the oak organ case in the church in 1654 and together with his son Pieter Verbrugghen II he executed the designs for the high altar in 1670.





In April 1968 a fire destroyed the entire roof of the church, damaged the vaults and the interior, completely burned down the top of the Baroque tower and reduced three-quarters of the monastery to ruins. The organ was damaged in the fire.

Saint Paul's Church houses one of the most special and best-preserved historical organs in Flanders. It is the only organ in Antwerp that contains historical pipework from the 17th and 18th century on such a scale. The exceptionally richly ornamented organ case was made in Rubens's studio. The design is by Erasmus Quellin II and the carving was made by Pieter Verbrugghen the Elder.

The instrument has had a long and eventful history. Its origins date back to the middle of the 17th century. Nicolaas Van Haeghen built a new organ for the Dominican Fathers in Antwerp in the period 1654/1658. The instrument then had 42 stops, divided over three manuals. An independent pedal was not yet available. The oldest surviving pipe material dates from this period. The organ was badly damaged by fire in 1679.

In 1730-1732 the organ underwent a major transformation, carried out by the organ builder Jean-Baptiste Forceville, then living in Antwerp. He expanded the organ considerably. Two pedal towers were added to the case, giving the organ its current appearance. The largest share of the pipework in the currently configured organ dates from this period. In those years Forceville also built a second organ on the choir screen of St. Paul's Church. When this screen was demolished in 1832, the instrument was eventually sold to the parish church in Broechem. It can still be heard there.

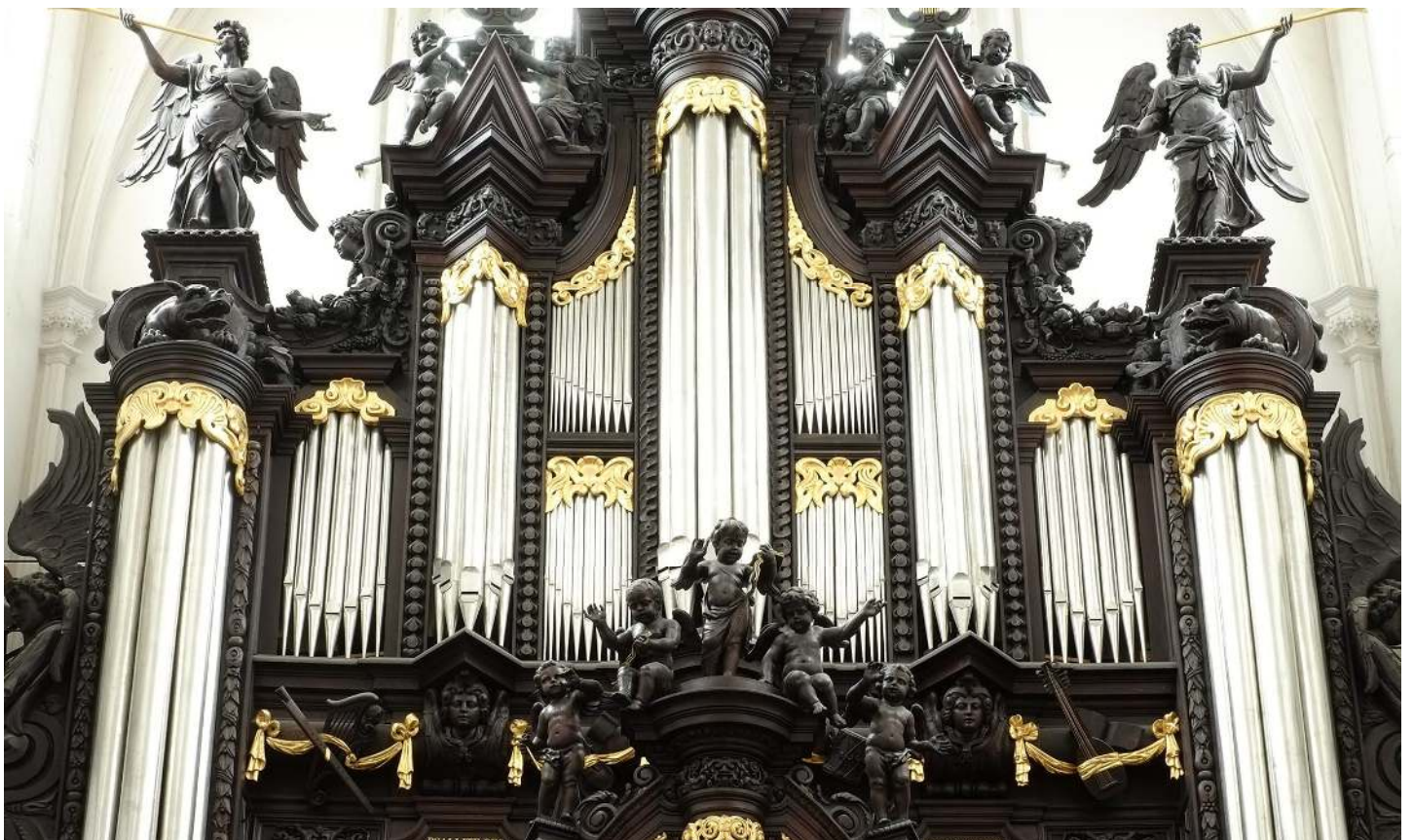
After the French Revolution, the Dominican Fathers were expelled from Antwerp, but fortunately the organ came out of this turbulent period quite



undamaged. Because the main organ had fallen into disuse, Jean-Joseph Delhaye was asked to restore the instrument. Delhaye carried out the restoration in 1824. Despite the changes (extension of the manual, new wind chests for the keyboards, and others) Delhaye remained largely faithful to Forceville's concept. He left the pipes untouched to a great extent, only most of the reeds were made new by Delhaye. When making additional pipes for the extension of the keyboards, Delhaye closely matched the material of Van Haeghen and Forceville. In 1843 François-Bernard Loret placed a free-standing console on the lower rood screen. The old wedge bellows were replaced by a storage bellows with pumps. After this transformation, minor changes will take place over the coming decades with regard to the mechanics and the wind supply. Thus, the mood

was brought to the modern pitch and a barker machine was placed for the main work. Fortunately, little was changed in the disposition.

From 1955 onwards, the organists Specht and Bank worked on the organ, especially the pipework. The organ was severely damaged in the fire of the church in 1968. Several repairs took place afterwards. However, the great distance between console and organ had resulted in a very complicated mechanism, which was easily disrupted. All these factors, coupled with a neglect of maintenance, led to the complete unplayability of the main and the echo organs in the early 1990s. Extensive restoration took place to return the organ as near as possible to the 1824 restoration between 1993 and 1996 by Ghislain Potvlieghe-De Maeyer and Jean-Pierre Draps. Among other things, the old console was reconstructed





Various problems in the field of wind supply, mechanics and intonation of the pipework mean that the instrument is no longer in a concert-worthy condition today. It can still be heard in the various liturgical celebrations. It is a pity that an instrument of such European class is in this condition. It is therefore to be hoped that a future restoration, surrounded

and the pitch was returned to its original state. However, the temperament remained even. Potvlieghe built a new instrument on the choir hall, on the site of the old wind supply, to enable interplay at the modern pitch.

Restoration of the beautiful organ case was undertaken by the Vandekerckhove Brothers from Ingelmunster. Loret's free

-standing console from 1843, one of the earliest examples in Belgium, is on display in the crypt of the church. The organ is accessible via the second balcony level.

The current condition of the instrument is such that a new restoration is necessary.

by international expertise, will restore this exceptional heritage to all its glory.

Bruce Duncan

Information from:

<https://muziekinsintpaulus.be>

<https://www.orgel.nl>

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

Hoofdwark: (C-f3)	Rugpositief: (C-f3)	Echo / Onderwerk:	Pedaal: (CD-b0 / d1)
Montre 16	Holpyp 8	Holpyp 8	Prestant 16
Bourdon 16	Fluyt traveer 8 S	Prestant 4	Quintadena 16
Prestant 8	Prestant 4	Fluyt 4	Fluyt 8
Holpyp 8	Fluyt 4	Nazard 3	Prestant 4
Quintadena 8	Viola da Gamba 4	Doublet 2	Bombarde 16
Grand Nazard 6	Nazard 3	Veld-Fluyt 2	Trompet 8
Octaef 4	Doublet 2	Cornet 3 st	Clairon 4
Fluyt Traveer 4	Veld-Fluyt 2	Cromhorn 8	
Fluyt 4	Tiers 1 3/5	Trompet 8	
Double Tierce 3 1/5	Fournituer 4st	DManuaalkoppel :	
Nazard 3	Cornet 4 st	Groot orgel- Positief	
Doublet 2	Trompet 8	Pedaalkoppel : Pedaal-	
Fournituer 5 st.	Vox Angelica 8	Groot orgel	
Cimbal 4 st.	Basson-Hautbois 8 B/D	Toonhoogte : A= 413	
Cornet 6 st		Hz	
Bombarde 16			
Trompet 8			
Vox Humana 8			
Clairon 4			