

In The Pipeline

A large pipe organ with multiple tiers of silver pipes set against a stone wall in a cathedral. The organ is composed of several vertical sections of pipes, each housed in a wooden frame. The pipes are arranged in a stepped fashion, creating a sense of height and grandeur. The background is a dark, textured stone wall with arched windows and columns, suggesting a Gothic or similar architectural style. The lighting is warm and focused on the organ, highlighting the metallic sheen of the pipes.

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Front cover

The 1965 Rieger organ,
one of the five organs
in the organ system of
Freiburg Münster,
Baden—Württemberg,
Germany.



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FREIBURGER MÜNSTER



With a population of 231,000, Freiburg is the fourth largest city in the Baden—Württemberg district. The name Freiburg quite literally means “independent (or free) town”, because when it was founded in 1120 it was set up as a free market town.

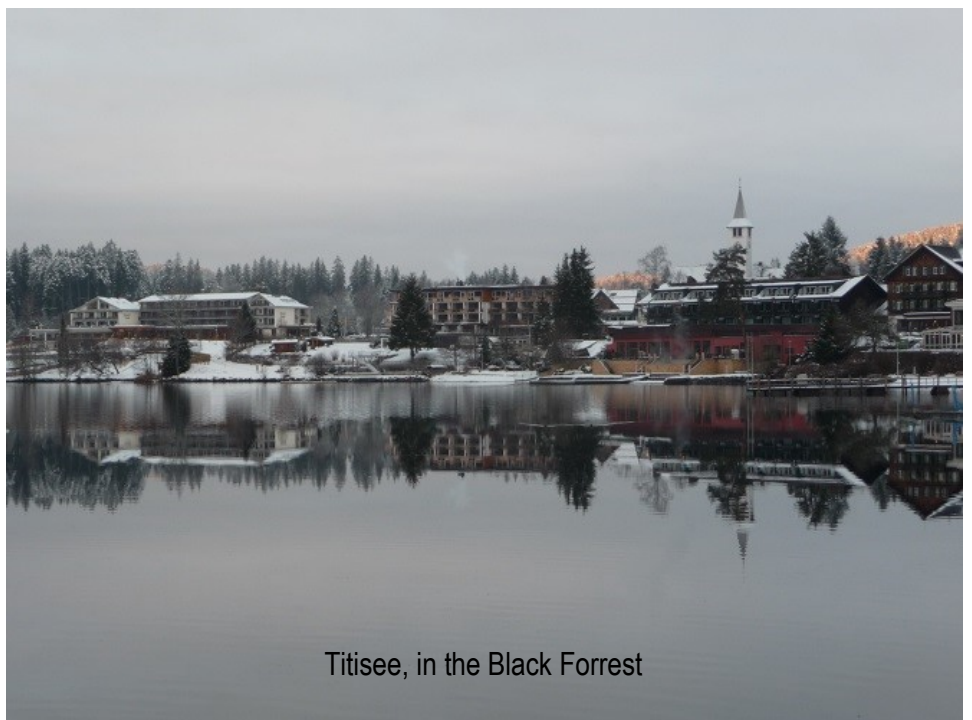
Silver made Freiburg one of the richest cities

Freiburg im Breisgau, a vibrant university city in southwest Germany, right on the edge of the Black Forest, is known for its temperate climate and reconstructed medieval old town, crisscrossed by picturesque brooks (bächle). In the surrounding highlands, hiking destination Schlossberg hill is linked to Freiburg by a funicular.

Said to be the sunniest city in Germany, it is a magnet for local and international tourists wanting to soak up the remarkable atmosphere and rich history of the place. For this reason, Freiburg is, perhaps, the capital of hiking in Germany—particularly the popular and healthy trend for Europeans to discover the pleasure of barefoot trail and outdoor walking, something that we in Australia take for granted.

in Europe, and in 1327 Freiburg minted its own coin, the *Rappenpfennig*. The silver mines were at Schauinsland, 20 km to the south of the city, a stunningly beautiful part of the Black Forrestr.

Population growth, an abundance of churches and monasteries and a university helped Freiburg to evolve from its focus on mining to become a cultural centre for the arts and sciences.



Titisee, in the Black Forrestr

Located as it is in the confluence of Germany, France and Switzerland, with Austria and Italy not far away, Freiburg became a significant centre in the expanding world of the middle ages and up to the nineteenth century. In 1827, Freiburg became the seat of a Roman Catholic archbishop when the Archdiocese of Freiburg was founded.

With a dramatic 116m spire, the incredible red limestone Gothic cathedral Freiburg Münster towers over the central square Münsterplatz. The tower has 16 bells, the oldest being the "Hosanna" bell from 1258, which weighs 3,290 kilograms.

Maree and I travelled to Freiburg and the Black Forest in the middle of winter, a wonderfully brisk time to enjoy the many festive Christmas markets that spring up in the Münsterplatz (Münster Plaza) and the streets surrounding the Freiburg Münster.

The building is immense. It took 300 years to construct and almost all of the



builders in that time never got to see the finished product of their labour—they simply had to trust that the Münster would be completed as they had imagined. Miraculously, Freiburg's Münster was spared in the bombings during the war, and now bears witness



to over 800 years of Freiburg's history.

There are 91 gargoyles in the structure—individual figures which are tasked with protecting the building's walls from too much rainwater. But the gargoyles do more than just

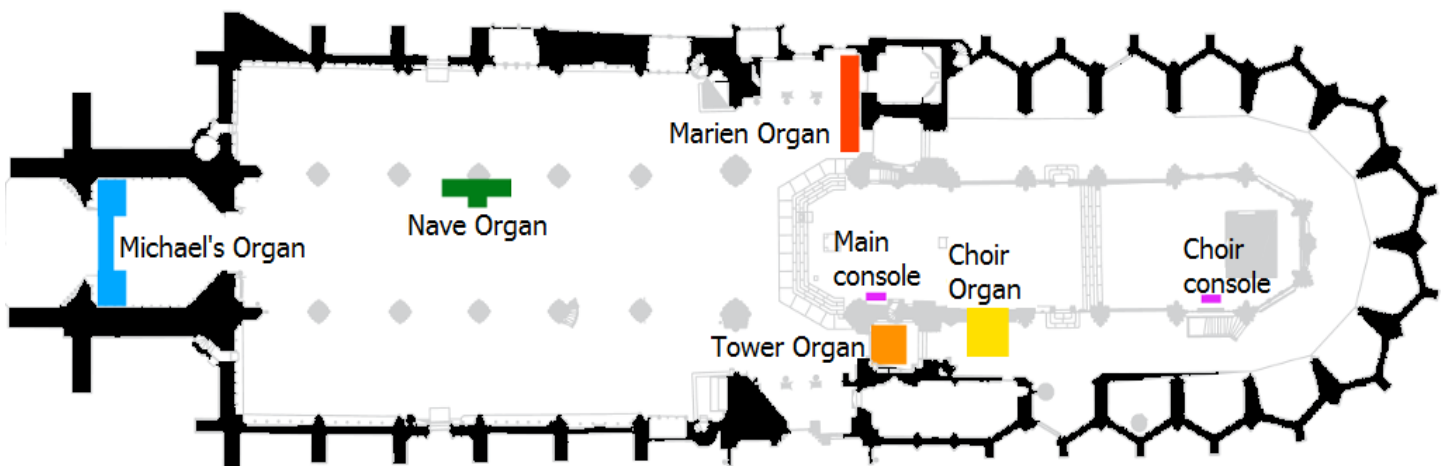


The current organ system in the Münster is one of the largest organs in the world with 167 registers, 151 sounding stops, 207 ranks and a total of 10,195 pipes, was built from 1964/65 by various excellent organ building companies. It consists of five separate organs, which are housed in different places in the

direct water away from Freiburg's landmark— they are supposed to keep evil demons away from the church. Which is why many of these eerie creatures are depicted with tortured, screaming mouths.

Münster. There are two special effect registers (Glockenspiel and Campana [bells]), seven transmissions and seven extension ranks.

In the north transept is the Marien Organ, which was built in 1965 by Rieger-Orgelbau. With its 62 registers and





numerous timbres, it is the main organ of the cathedral and was re-voiced in 2001 and regulated in 2017.

In the nave, the organ built by the Danish company Marcussen in 1964 hangs like a swallow's nest on the north wall. It has 21 registers and has a fine sound, which is particularly suitable for baroque organ music. The Nave Organ was extensively renovated in 2010.

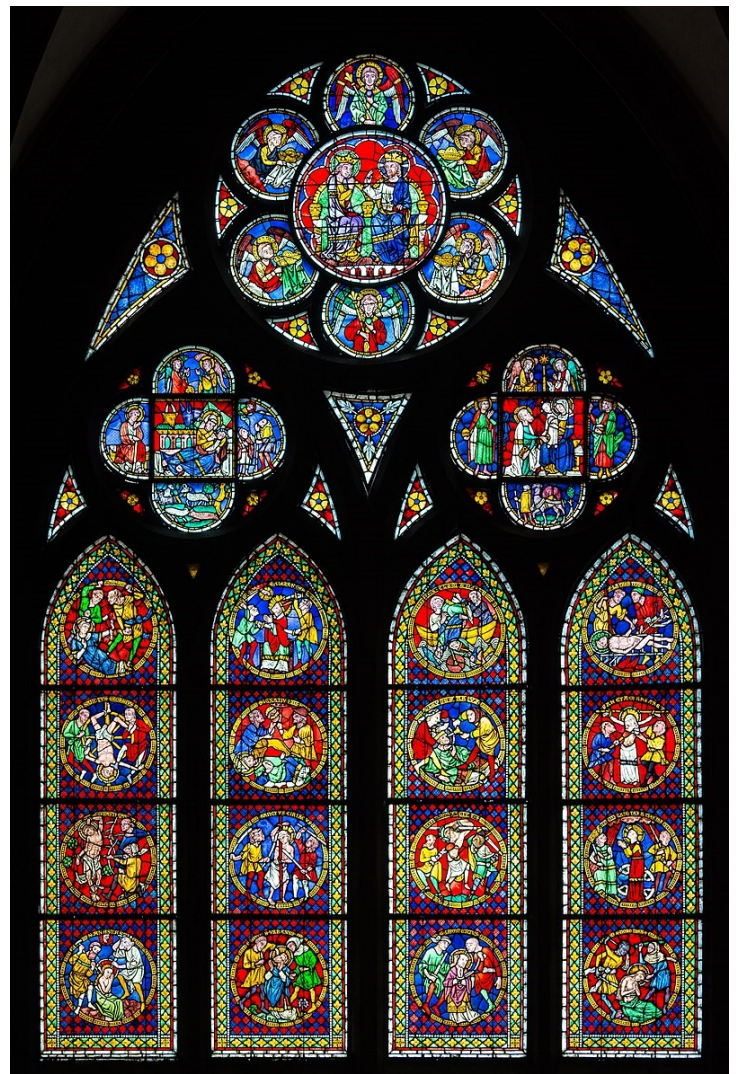
The Michael's Organ, which was built by the Swiss company Metzler-Orgelbau, has stood on the west gallery since 2008. Its 41 registers enrich the organ sound in the Münster with romantic colours and strong basic voices and reed registers.

The Sanctuary is filled with the sound of the Choir Organ, which is an important instrument in the liturgy and in organ concerts. The sonorous instrument with 32 registers came from Orgelbau Kuhn from Männedorf, Switzerland, in 2019.

In the southern transept, a Turmwerk or Tower Organ with nine registers speaks from the tower chapel of the southern Hahn Tower and fills the cathedral with additional sound. This is an auxiliary organ which has a few quite rare tones. This is the newest division, and was also

built in 2019 by the Kuhn company.

The Marien, Nave and Michael's organs have their own mechanical consoles, and the Choir and Tower organs are played from one of the electric consoles. The capability to have all organs sound together from the electric-action main console and a supporting mobile console is particularly appealing and allows the



listener to experience a very special sound in the wonderful room of this Gothic building. This spatial sound is certainly one of the reasons why thousands of people attend the organ concert series every year.

It is worthwhile to explore the history and have a more detailed look at the various instruments that make up this remarkable organ system in the Münster.

The Marien Organ (St. Mary's Organ)

In 1856 Jacob Forrell proposed the building of a main organ for Freiburg Münster. His plan was for the organ to be sited in the south transept, but it was not realised.

The church did not have a main organ



until a new instrument was built in 1929 in the nave by M. Welte und Söhne Orgelbau, Freiburg. The organ was not successful, and in 1936, most of the pipes on this organ were moved to the gallery in the north transept by M. Welte und Söhne, and this organ became the main organ. The organ filled most of the transept, and was immediately to the left of the current instrument.

This north transept instrument continued as the main organ of the Münster from 1936 - 1964, undergoing some additional work in 1945/46 by Willy Dold, Freiburg. In 1964 this organ was demolished.

The current main organ of the Münster was built in 1965 by Rieger-Orgelbau.

Stoplist of the Marien Organ

I. Postiv C-g'''		II. Hauptwerk C-g'''		III. Schwellwerk C-g'''		IV. Brustwerk C-g'''	
Prinzipal	8	Prinzipal	16	Gedacktpommer	16	Holzgedackt	8
Metallgedackt	8	Oktave	8	Holzprinzipal	8	Blockflöte	4
Prinzipal	4	Rohrflöte	8	Spillpfeife	8	Prinzipal	2
Rohrflöte	4	Oktave	4	Gamba	8	Gedacktfloete	2
Gemshorn	2	Spitzflöte	4	Voix céleste	8	Oktave	1
Gemsquinte	1 1/3	Spitzquinte	2 2/3	Oktave	4	Terzian	II
Sesquialtera	II	Oktave	2	Querflöte	4	Glockenzimbel	II
Scharf	IV-VI	Kornett	V	Viola	4	Vox humana	8
Dulzian	16	Mixtur	V	Nasat	2 2/3	Cembaloregal	4
Krummhorn	8	Zimbel	III	Flautino	2	Glockenspiel	
Tremulant		Trompete	16	Terz	1 3/5	Tremulant	
		Trompete	8	Mixtur	IV		
		Klarine	4	Fagott	16	Pedal	
				Trompete	8	C-f'	
		I-II		Oboe	8	Prinzipalbass	16
		III-II		Klarine	4	Subbass	16
				Glockenspiel		Oktavbass	8
				Schweller		Gedacktbass	8
				Tremulant		Quintbass	5 1/3
						Oktave	4
						Koppelflöte	4
						Nachthorn	2
						Mixtur	VI
						Kontrafagott	32
						Posaune	16
						Trompete	8
						Zink	4
						Tremulant	
						I-P	
						II-P	



The design and the decoration of the casework of the Marien Organ was in the hands of Jakob Schmidt because the Rieger concepts were not in keeping with the historical architecture of the building; the organ work was created under the direction of Joseph von Glatter-Götz. Sixty one registers are housed in a total

of nine oak towers clustered in the north transept. The Marien organ has a mechanical console located in the middle of the organ, based on the model of Dom Bédos. The organ can also be played electrically from the main console at the Choir entrance.

The divisions are placed inside the case

as follows: In the four pipe towers under the mechanical console is the Postiv (at the bottom) and above it the Hauptwerk, directly above the console is the Brustwerk, above in three towers the Schwellwerk and on the left in the two towers the Pedal.

During a cleaning and technical renovation of the Marien organ in the winter of 2000/2001, three registers in the swell division were replaced and parts of the great and swell divisions were reduced and reorganised. The Untersatz 32' was lying under the organ on the Michael's gallery, and there was a carillon (Glockenspiel) on the roof of the organ case. The entire organ was re-voiced as part of these measures. This work was carried out by Caspar Glatter-



Götz Orgelbau, Owingen, which was then headed by the son of the former head of the Rieger company. A basic re-intonation was carried out by Beat Grenacher, Luzern, Switzerland.

In 2008 the pipes of the Untersatz 32' were placed on new wind chests and regulated, and they are now, sensibly, part of the Michael's Organ and no longer playable from the Marien Organ.

In 2017 the Marien Organ was completely cleaned and technically revised by Rieger. There are six mechanical toe lever setter combinations and the organ has mechanical slider chests, using a double action to allow it to be electrically playable from the main console.

Stoplist of the Nave (Swallow's Nest) Organ

I. Rückpositiv C-g'''		II. Hauptwerk C-g'''		Pedal C-f'	
Gedackt	8	Prinzipal	8	Prinzipal	16
Prinzipal	4	Rohrflöte	8	Oktave	8
Rohrflöte	4	Oktave	8	Oktave	4
Gemshorn	2	Blockflöte	4	Mixtur	V
Sifflöte	1 1/3	Oktave	2	Fagott	16
Sesquialtera	II	Mixtur	V-VII	Schalmei	4
Scharf	IV-VI	Trompete	8		
Dulzian	8	Rohraffe (cane monkey)		Super I-P	
Tremulant				I-P	
		I-II		II-P	



The Nave Organ (Schwalbennest or Swallow's nest)

An organ has been found on the north nave wall from the 15th century (first mentioned in 1465). In 1545-1548 a new organ was built by Jörg Ebert in this location. Ebert came from Rothenburg ob der Tauber and had settled in Ravensburg. He was a nationally known organ builder who built organs in the Überlingen Minster (1548), the Ottobeuren Basilica (1554-57), the

Innsbruck Court Church (1555-61) and in Prague (1556).

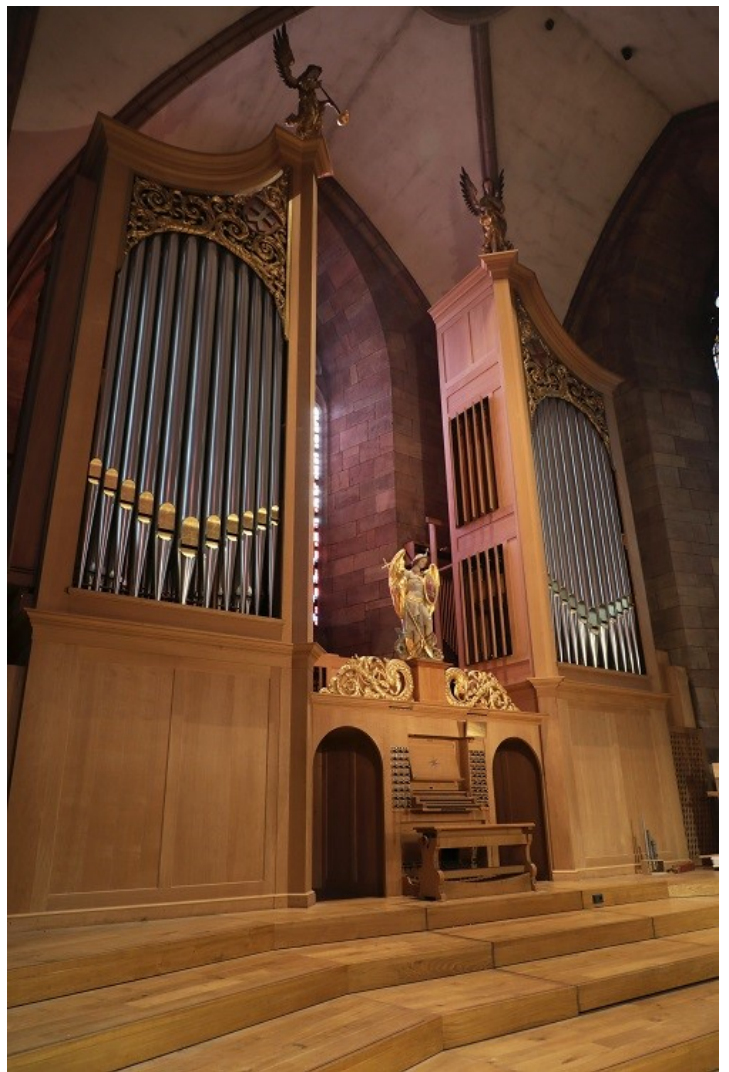
The Nave Organ has been rebuilt and reconfigured many times—up to the very large three-manual instrument by M. Welte und Söhne, built in 1929. It had 58 stops and employed electro-pneumatic action. This became the main organ of the church and was played from an electric console located in the Choir. In addition to the main organ in the nave, a high-pressure unit and a remote unit on the Michael's gallery belonged to the

Welte organ system, allowing the vastness of the building to try and overcome the spatial problems wrought by having the organ placed in physically diverse areas. The Walcker Choir Organ could also be played with the Nave Organ via the main console.

This system was burdened with electrical problems, mainly because the technology of the day could not readily support such complex switching and wiring.

When it was rebuilt in 1965 by Marcussen & Søn Orgelbyggeri A/S, Aabenraa, Denmark, the case of the Ebert organ from 1545 was reconstructed in the broadest sense, the original case having been destroyed in the early 20th century. An accurate drawing of the organ by Jos. Felizian Geissinger in 1798 allowed the careful and authentic reconstruction of the case design, including the colours used. This new instrument is a carefully crafted reiteration of that original instrument.

The two historical sculptures, the cane monkey from 1530 by Sixt von Staufen (right at the bottom of the case) and the statue of the Virgin Mary from 1545 by Sixt von Staufen (between the two major towers of the main case, with a later ray



mandorla from 1929), as well as other ornamental figures, pipe shades and scroll work from different centuries, were again integrated into the case.

The result was an organ with a mechanical sound system based on a baroque sound concept. It hangs in the acoustically advantageous location on the northern nave wall, which has been demonstrable as its location since the 15th century. The organ has an electrical stop action in the great and pedal, as well as an originally purely mechanical stop action in the Rückpositiv. In 1985, in addition to cleaning, the electrical connection of the Rückpositiv to the main console was carried out by Fischer & Krämer, Endingen, with the addition of register and sound magnets.

Stoplist of the Michael's Organ

I. Hauptwerk C-g'''		II. Schwellwerk C-g'''		III. Solo C-g'''		Auxiliaire (floating) C-f'	
Montre	16	Quintatön	16	Bourdon	16	Tuba magna	8
Principal	I-II	Doppelflöte	8	Diapason	8		
Flûte harmonique	8	Rohrflöte	8	Viola d'Orchestre	8		
Bourdon	8	Gambe	8	Voix céleste	8		
Violoncello	8	Flûte octaviante	4	Unda maris	8		
Octave	I-II	Viola	4	Coro Viole	I-IV		
Spitzflöte	4	Octavin	2	Prestant	4		
Superoctave	2	Basson	16	Voix humaine	8		
Cornet	III	Trompette harmonique		Campane (Glocken)		Pedal	
Plein jeu	V		8	Schweller		C-f'	
Trompette	16	Basson-Hautbois	8	Tremulant		Grand Bourdon	32
Trompette	8	Clairon harmonique	4			Flûte	16
		Campane (Glocken)				Subbass	16
II-I		Schweller				Grosse Quinte	10 2/3
III-I		Tremulant				Diapason	8
Sub II-I						Cello	8
III-I		III-II				Flûte	4
						Bombarde	16
						Trompette	8
						Clairon	4
						I-P	
						II-P	
						III-P	



In 2010 this organ was thoroughly cleaned and renovated by Metzler Orgelbau, Dietikon, Switzerland, while preserving the disposition and sound intonation.

Intra-manual coupling on this organ is entirely mechanical and the mechanical slider chests feature double action so that the organ can also be played electrically from the main console in the Choir.

The Michael's Organ

After the greatly enlarged 1929 nave organ was found to be unconvincing in terms of sound in the room, despite its size, parts of the case and the pipework were moved by M. Welte und Söhne to the west tower chapel in 1936. This gallery, critically sited on the axis of the church, was called the Michael Chapel (Michaelskapelle), and since that time there has been a Michael organ in this

place. After war damage, an organ with 28 registers was built in 1965 by Späth Orgelbau AG, Ennetach and Freiburg, using parts of the case from 1929.

The Michael's organ has the important task of filling the rear area of the Münster with sound; it also works with the choir and orchestra on appropriate occasions, as an accompanying or solo instrument.

The current Michael's organ was rebuilt in 2008 by Metzler-Orgelbau AG, Dietikon, Switzerland. The old instrument from 1965 was replaced for technical and sonic reasons. The new instrument has 38 sounding registers, three manuals and pedal with four transmissions and an effect register. The action is mechanical, the stop action mechanism and the couplers are electrical. There is electric override on all mechanical actions for playing from the main console in the sanctuary. There are 2,284 pipes in the organ, including the Glatter-Götz 32ft pedal wood which was once part of the Marien Organ. The Auxiliary division (Tuba) can be assigned to any manual without coupling.

For the first time, the Michael's organ now has a solid casing made of untreated oak. The existing carvings, pipe shades and the angel figures were carefully cleaned, restored and reintegrated into the new organ.

Interestingly, in the 1965 Späth organ the design was for electric slider chests which was playable from the previous main electric console, plus a separate console had been installed on the

Michael's gallery from which the Hauptwerk and Pedal of the Nave Organ could be played, as well as the Marien Organ via a crescendo pedal. All of these contrivances became redundant in the advent of the new main console which we will review in a moment.

The Choir Organ

Nikolaus Schuble built the first documented organ in the Choir in 1811/13, replacing (ostensibly) a "smaller organ" which is described in the archives as built by the Freiburg organ builder Muderer in 1595. The disposition of that organ is not known. Schuble's organ was 14 registers, one manual and pedal.





The organ was replaced and considerably enlarged in 1881 by the renowned organ builder E.F. Walcker, Ludwigsburg. The Walcker organ used cone chests and was entirely mechanical action. It was converted to electro-pneumatic action and incorporated into the organ system with the 1929 Welte rebuild of other organs in the church.

The choir organ was replaced in 1964 with a new organ by Rieger Orgelbau, Schwarzach, Vorarlberg, Austria. At this time the Walcker organ was completely removed and broken up. This organ reverted to mechanical slider chests, but a mechanical console for the choir organ was not desired for aesthetic reasons and the Choir Organ was played exclusively from the main electric console.

In 2019 a new choir organ was built by Orgelbau Kuhn AG, Männedorf, Switzerland. It completely replaced the instrument from 1964 so that the composite sound of all the organs in the system would be unified. The Rieger organ has been preserved and moved to another parish church in the diocese.

The new choir organ fills the large space of the cathedral with sound and has a very important function for accompanying the congregation and the choirs in the liturgy. As a concert instrument, it integrates harmoniously into the organ quartet of the Freiburg Münster and brings fascinating new timbres into the magnificent church.

The 1964/65 chancel organ originally stood in the first bay of the north side of the chancel. In the course of alterations to the choir in 1990/91 the organ underwent considerable changes, and was placed in a new case on the gallery in the first bay of the chancel on the south side. In view of the expense of an impending overhaul, it was decided that a new organ should be built.

The new organ was installed in the same location and was given two facades, exactly like E.F. Walcker's chancel organ that stood here from 1881 – 1964. The main facade faces the chancel, the lateral facade faces the passage leading round the chancel.

The organ has 32 registers, 24 are straight stops, three are by transmission and five by extension. There are 1,676 pipes in the Choir Organ. Although there is a Choir console, it is not for the Choir

Stoplist of the Choir Organ

I. Hauptwerk C-g'''

Bourdon	16
Prinzipal	8
Philomele	8
Gedackt	8
Octav	4
Flauto dolce	4
Quinte	2 2/3
Doublette	2
Mixtur	IV
Trompete	8

II. Schwellwerk C-g'''

Lieblich Gedackt	16
Flûte harmonique	8
Bourdon	8
Gambe	8
Voix céleste	8
Geigenprincipal	4
Nasard	2 2/3
Piccolo	2
Terz	1 3/5
Fourniture	IV
Basson	16
Trompette	8
Hautbois	8
Voix humaine	8
Schweller	
Tremulant	

Pedal C-f'

Contrabass	16
Subbass	16
Principal	8
Gedacktbass	8
Octav	4
Bombarde	16
Basson	16
Posaune	8

The Tower Organ has been installed in an old chapel that had been used as an archive room in the southern lateral tower on the opposite side to the Marien Organ. The sound flows out through the chapel window into the nave, and swell shutters on the window allow the whole division to be under expression.

The organ is played from the general

Organ—it is a mobile console which controls the entire organ system and draws on the resources of other organs in the church for services that are held in the High Choir area and for concerts and recitals.

The Tower Organ

The organ in the Hahn Tower is the newest addition to the church, and is an auxiliary division which has been designed to supplement the Marien Organ. Due to the specification and scaling, the Marien Organ is lacking in a certain fullness and warmth of tone in the lower and middle ranges, which the new auxiliary division strengthens, whilst supplementing it with characteristic reed stops that were not previously available. It adds sound to the area of the crossing and provides solitary individual voices to the overall organ system.

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console and is free from assignment to the layout of the keyboards. These stops can be used in any stop setting configuration. Slider and cone windchests are used with electrical key and stop action.

The new Choir Organ and the Tower Organ enrich the already diverse organ system with individual voices full of character. The large Choir area of the church has again been given an instrument that fills it with sound and that literally sets the tone for both liturgy and concert. The subtly integrating and yet completely independent intonation has created an ensemble of outstanding beauty that worthily complements all the organs in the Münster.

Stoplist of the Tower Organ

I. Hauptwerk C-g'''

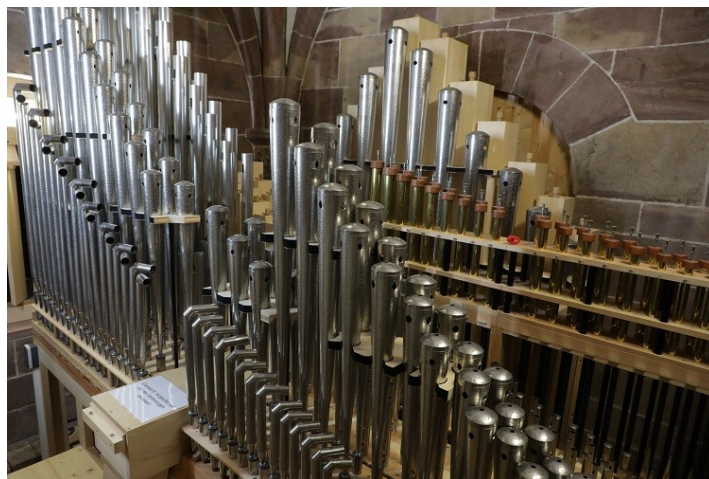
Bourdon	16
Violon Diapason	8
Flauto mirabilis	8
Bourdon	8
Hohlflöte	4
Schweller	
Tremulant	
Sub Aux	
Super Aux	
Äqual Aux ab (Unison Off)	

Lingualwerk C-g'''

Bourdon	16
Bourdon	8
Horn	16
Horn	8
Clarinet	8

Physharmonika C-g'''

Bourdon	16
Bourdon	8
Physharmonika	8
Windschweller Physh.	



manuals was placed in the Lower Choir. This formidable console (seen at right) was equipped with a fourfold setter combination. It was built by the Eisenschmid company and stood in the Münster until 1964. It was sold in 1965.

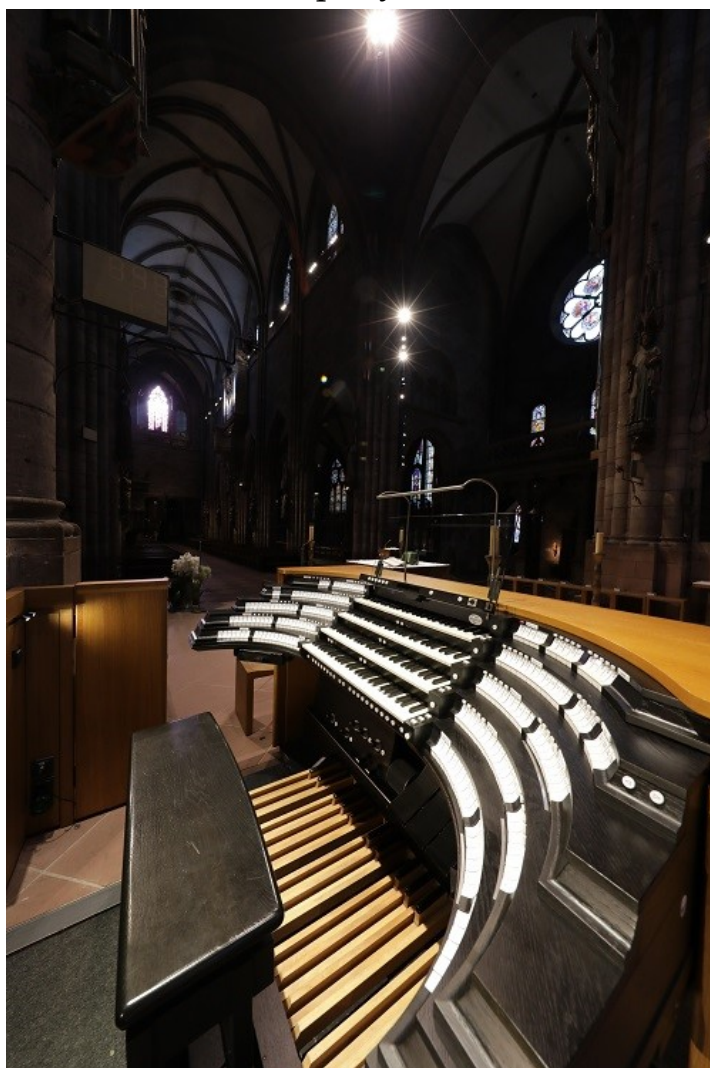
To integrate the four new organs in 1964/65, a new console was built, again by the

The Main Console

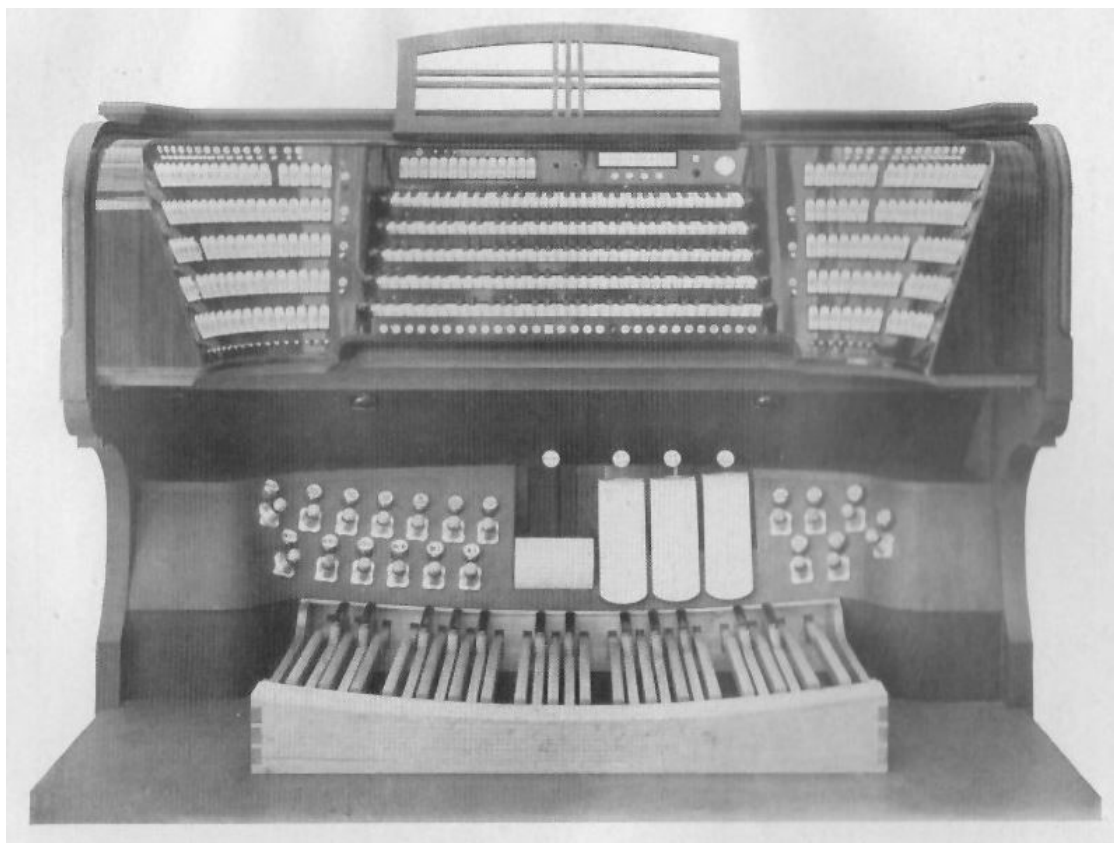
A main console, from which the various organs can be played together, has existed in the Münster since 1929. It was installed in the Lower Choir almost exactly where the current main console is located. The console was built by Welte and put into operation in connection with the new large organ system, which was created on the occasion of Catholic Day in 1929. For the first time it was possible to play several of the organs together from a distance and thus to accompany the liturgy and congregation with surround-sound. The console remained here until 1936 when it was rebuilt along with the organ system redesigned. The console moved to the west gallery next to the newly created Michael's organ.

In 1936 a new main console with five

Eisenschmid company. This was a more



up to date console with four manuals, but its dimensions were still relatively large and high, so it was replaced by a new, more compact console in the course of the redesign of the altar area in the years 1987-1990. This console was



built by Fischer & Krämer, Endingen. Most of the electrical action and combination technology, particularly the cabling and networking of the organs, and the conversion to a BUS system by Freiburger Orgelbau Späth took place in 2008, but the electrics of the main console itself were not altered.

Due to technical problems and unreliability, a new main console was built in 2013 by Klais Orgelbau, Bonn. In the same context, the work on the action technique of the organs that had already started in 2008 was continued, so that all systems are now at the same technical level. Finally, numerous technical

innovations and new playing aids were implemented in the new main console. Among other things, the world's first recording and playback system was developed with which the organist can record his pieces and listen to them in the church via a remote control and also edit and save the register combinations.

In addition to being able to draw resources from every one of the multitude of divisions of this gigantic organ, intra-manual coupling and every other modern convenience has been incorporated into this organ.

Parallelling the main console, another electric console is available which is





manuals and the pedal, and coupling for the individual organs to each other, can be incorporated into registration settings.

The register action and the playing aids are operated on this console via two large touch screens. Almost all functions of the main console can be controlled on this mobile console, and the general crescendo has multiple settings so that this device becomes a very flexible tool in this instrument.

The organ system is truly a magnificent multi-faceted instrument, built on historical knowledge and experience, using

normally located in the High Choir to accompany Vespers and other services held there, but is totally mobile and can be placed at other locations in the building. This console was built by August Laukhuff, Weikersheim, in 2019. Free assignment of the individual organs and divisions within the organs to the

the basis of five very different organs and blending them together to provide the array of complimentary resources most organists can only dream about. To hear and to play the organ system of the Freiburger Münster is a bucket-list experience of a lifetime.

Bruce Duncan



With technical help from the following web sites:
<https://www.muensterorgel.de/>
<https://www.orgelbau.ch/>
<https://die-orgelseite.de/>

Photographs by Bruce Duncan, Martin Doering and Kuhn Orgelbau.

An invaluable historical reference has been "Die Orgeln im Freiburger Münster", Dr. Jan Kühle

