

ACCESSORIES Manual Pistons — Toe Studs — Swell Shoes — Crescendo Pedal — Memory Levels — Console Controller — MIDI

In a previous unit it was learned that stops can also be referred to as *registers*. It is from this terminology that we use the word *registering*. To *register* a piece of organ music, it is important for the organist to choose stops (registers) that best *re*-present the historical school in which the organ work was composed. Eventually, you will study these historical schools, names of organists who flourished in these schools, and the organs available to the composers during the period of time these schools existed. Acquiring this knowledge is key in properly *re*-presenting organ works.

Manual pistons are used to set registrations for future recall. Organs that do not have pistons sometimes require a registrant, who assists pulling or pushing stops.

Manual pistons are grouped in three categories:

- GENERAL
- DIVISIONAL
- MISCELLANEOUS

General pistons are so-named because they are programmed to change stops generally, in *all* divisions of the



organ. General pistons are almost always found on the left side of the console. The Cardinal Newman Allen organ console is an exception to this rule.

Historically, *divisional pistons* controlled only the stops of its division. On most organ consoles the divisional pistons are found in the center of the console, beneath the manual division they control. On newer organ consoles, technology now makes it possible for divisional pistons to act like general pistons.

There are a number of *miscellaneous pistons* that have any number of functions based on the builder who designed the console. One example is a reversible Swell-to-Pedal piston. By *reversible*, we mean that the piston reverses its original action when the piston is pushed again.

Toe studs are pistons located above the pedals. Most of the time, toe studs on the left are duplicates of manual General pistons, though not always. Toe studs are most often used when the hands of the organist are too busy to make a registration change. As you can see on this page, toe studs take on many different shapes and styles.



Swell shoes are found under the manuals, just above the pedalboard, usually in the center. *Swell shoes* are sometimes called *expression pedals*.

Many organs are equipped with a *crescendo pedal*. This pedal is to the right of the Swell shoes, and should remain in a closed position when not in use. It should be used sparingly, *if at all*.



Most organ builders build consoles with unique characteristics that reveal the identity of the builder without looking at the nameplate on the console. For example, we know the organ builder with red felt on the Toe Studs (right) is Rufatti and/or Rodgers.

The Swell Shades in the picture on the right, shaped like



shoes, tell us that the builder is Casavant.

In the picture on the left, an experienced organist knows that the builder is Austin. The white/black stop tabs, wooden “Dutch Boy” swell shoes, and toe stud style are dead giveaways.

Console Controller — Memory Levels — MIDI

A *Console Controller* is included on most consoles built since the 1990s. The controller acts as a computer command center offering various functions depending on the type of system used e.g., you may want to transpose a piece of music... go to the Console Controller to find the transposer, etc.

Multiple *memory levels* are one of the features found in a Console Controller. Multiple memory levels allow an organist to save registrations for different events, on different memory levels. Your instructor can demonstrate.

It is important for guest organists to know whether or not there are multiple memory levels available on the organ. A guest organist should always ask permission before setting registrations on a memory level. It is important that a guest organist NEVER change the principal organist's memory settings. Changing the principal organist settings, or using memory levels for which you have not asked permission to use, is grounds for a good-old-fashioned Old Testament stoning.



MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) voices can be found on some organs, especially all-digital or digital-pipe combination organs. Sometimes MIDI voices can be found in the Console Controller or in a separate drawer or box sitting on top the organ.

Memory Levels and MIDI Boxes are found in various locations on the organ console, depending on the organ builder and design of the console.

Don't forget to check to see if the organ console has drawers under the manuals!



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