

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AUDITORIUM ORGAN

The four-manual, seventy-nine rank organ in the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium was built by Casavant Freres, organ builders of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, shipped from the factory May 24, 1927, Opus 1200. The organ speaks from two chambers on either side of the stage and from the ceiling above the proscenium, through perforated grilles of composition ornament. The console is located on the right side of the auditorium in one of the proscenium boxes.

The organ was the choice of William H. Murphy, authorized by the Art Commission to select the new instrument. It was purchased at a cost of \$45,225 and installed by J.A. Hebert of Detroit. There are 5,348 pipes in the organ, of which 1,078 are reeds. The instrument, which arrived in Detroit in four railroad box cars, weighs 72,000 pounds.

Construction of the present Detroit Institute of Arts, designed by Philadelphia architect Paul Cret in the Italian Renaissance style, was begun in 1922. The marble edifice was formally dedicated, four million dollars later, on October 7, 1927, and was opened to the public the following day, replacing the former Art Museum on the southwest corner of East Jefferson and Hastings.

The formal dedication of the new Art Institute was held in the Auditorium and featured Frank L. York, dean of the Michigan Chapter, American Guild of Organists and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with Ossip Gabrilowitsch conducting. Dr. York was officially appointed to the staff of the Detroit Institute of Arts as Honorary Curator of Music, in recognition of his generous interest in the institute organ and its uses for public enjoyment.

A series of Friday evening and Sunday afternoon musical events were scheduled for the institute following the opening. The programs were arranged in two half-hour periods, with a half hour intermission for visiting the galleries.

For over two decades following the opening, the institute continued to offer the public a series of organ recitals, many of which were broadcast over radio station WWJ. Included in the distinguished roster of organists who have given recitals at the Detroit Institute of Arts organ are: Cyril Barker, E. Power Biggs, Claire Coci, Charles Courboin, Marcel Dupre, Richard Ellsasser, Marilyn Mason, William Middleschulte, Riemenscheider and Richard Ross.

The Detroit Institute of Arts remains one of the few municipally owned museums in the country today, as the bronze inscription over the main entrance so aptly states: "Dedicated by the People of Detroit to the knowledge and enjoyment of art."

*Casavant
opus 1200*