

## Organ Terminology Boot Camp

The pipe organ is a wind instrument controlled by one or more keyboards. Electronic organs try to look and sound like the real thing, and much of organ terminology applies to both pipe and electronic instruments.

Manual - Previously, a booklet you read to get instructions. Starting today, one of the keyboards on the organ.

Great - On a two manual organ, the lower manual.

Swell - On a two manual organ, the upper manual. See how positive and uplifting the organ is?

Choir - the third manual (below the Great) on a three manual organ. On some organs this is called the Positive! (See?)

Pedalboard - The keyboard for your feet. Do not worry, playing with your feet is much easier than it looks.

Rank - a row of pipes of one sound or color, one pipe per key.

Stop - a knob or tablet used to turn a rank on or off. Pushing it in "stops" the pipes of that rank from sounding. Drawknobs, tabs or rocker tabs are all types of stops.

What are all those buttons?

1) Pistons: These remember combinations of stops for you. General pistons remember the entire organ, divisional pistons remember one division (manual or pedal).

2) Cancel button: Look for the piston, usually at the bottom right, with the 0. This cancels your registration. Use in between hymns so no one hears when you accidentally step on a pedal. And at other times.

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3) Large buttons that look like doorknobs down by the pedals: these are called "Toe Studs." We won't tell them they aren't all that great looking. They function the same way pistons do, but are used by your feet if your hands are busy playing a toccata.

**Memory levels** - If you are lucky, your organ will have memory levels. Each level will remember all of your pistons you have set. A big blessing when there's more than one organist.

**Couplers** - used to connect one division to another, usually found on stop tablets above the top manual. Their name tells you their function. The Swell/Great adds all the stops pulled on the Swell to the Great. The Great/Pedal adds all the stops pulled on the Great to the Pedal.

**Reversible** - a reversible can be a piston or a toe stud. One push brings something on, a second push takes it off. Some examples are the Great/Pedal and the Tutti which brings on the entire organ. Remember Tutti Fruity gum? All the fruits.

**Swell Pedal** - This is the thing that resembles a large gas pedal, directly above the pedalboard. In a pipe organ, this opens and closes the "shades" (think vertical blinds) of the swell "box" letting more or less sound out into the room.

**Other pedals** - All 'enclosed' divisions (Swell, Choir) have a pedal controlling the volume. On an electronic organ, there are no rooms full of pipes with shutters to open and close, so frequently the Great is also 'under expression' and there will be a pedal that controls the Great (sometimes the Great AND the Pedal together).

Generally, the expression pedal on the farthest left will correspond to the lowest manual, and so on, with the one on the far right being the crescendo pedal (see below). Remember this when you play the Tabernacle or Conference Center organs.

**Crescendo Pedal** - on the far right, this pedal gradually brings on ALL the stops on the organ, regardless of which stops are pulled. Should generally not be used in church.