

ORGAN RANKS

TIP

American Guild of Organists (AGO)
Standard Console Specifications

ORDER OF STOPS

The order within each division is:
Flues 16' 8' 4' 2', Mixtures,
Reeds 16' 8' 4'.

Stops not mentioned above take their normal position according to pitch in their respective divisions.

Loudest to softest is the order within pitch groups.

(Left to right for stop-tabs, bottom to top for draw-knobs.)

THE RANK

Basic to any discussion of organ registration is the concept of the RANK, which is simply defined as a set of pipes that make up one tonal group. There are 61 pipes for a manual rank and 32 pipes for a pedal rank. (One for each key or pedal.)

PITCHES OF ORGAN STOPS

The name of the stop is imprinted on the stop tabs. The name is usually followed by an Arabic numeral and a "foot" sign — such as 8'. This pitch designation is a direct reference to the length of the longest pipe in the rank — but its main purpose is to indicate the basic speaking pitch of the rank or stop. It is easiest to relate these various pitches to standard "concert" pitch — the pitch you would hear if a key were played on the piano. Organists refer to this normal reference point as "eight-foot pitch."

- 8' = Normal "concert" pitch Middle-C will sound the same pitch as the middle-C on a piano
- 4' = ONE octave higher than 8' pitch
- 2' = TWO octaves higher than 8' pitch
- 1' = THREE octaves higher than 8' pitch
- 16' = ONE octave lower than 8' pitch
- 32' = TWO octaves lower than 8' pitch

MUTATIONS

Stops with a "fraction" sound at some tone other than the actual key played. Most mutations are either fifth-sounding ranks or third-sounding ranks.

- 2²/₃' = ONE octave and a PERFECT FIFTH
- 1¹/₃' = TWO octaves and a PERFECT FIFTH
- 1²/₃' = TWO octaves and a PERFECT THIRD

MIXTURES

Most stops control only one rank, but some stops control a "mixture" of stops. They typically combine two or more high-pitched stops that add strength and/or color to registrational combinations.

