May 5, 2020

AHG as Stewards of this Historic Carousel



The All Hallows Guild’s antique carousel



Who has ever attended Flower Mart and not at least glanced at the antique carousel, lured by the music pouring from the caliola? Who has not seen the streams of children tugging parents along, hoping for a ride on one of the friendly, unique animals or benches?

All Hallows Guild bought this 1890s traveling carousel in 1963 and we have lovingly cared for it since then. In the 1980s and 1990s a careful program of refurbishment was undertaken. Generous donors adopted an animal and chose a theme for its naming and repainting. Years later we are now embarked on another such program. The 1929 Wurlitzer caliola, or pipe organ, and its case are now completely revitalized, repaired, and ready for another century of delighting families.

We are extremely fortunate that Mr. Durward Center, owner of **Historical Instrument Restorations**, lives in Baltimore.

Mr. Center is a restoration expert for antique tower-clocks and organs, and in 1986 repaired the pneumatics and the vacuum pump for our caliola. Bit by bit, however, components of the organ were wearing and leaking, meaning that the jolly music became weaker and less true year by year.



This Heirloom was Showing its Age



Pressure pump as found

Following Flower Mart 2019, the caliola and its case were moved to Baltimore for overhaul. The organ is played with a complex system of pumps, bellows, and pipes. Mr. Center completely dismantled the organ in order to releather the pressure pump, the pallet valves and gaskets of the windchest, and the loose stoppers of the brass pipes.

While the organ was disassembled, he checked the roll frame, crankshaft, brake wheel, and friction drive for the roll frame, and replaced parts where necessary. The wood of the case had given way in several places and had to be replaced. Apparently the soundtrack of Flower Mart does not appear by magic!



Wind Chest as found showing oil damage

Skilled Artisans restore the 19th Century Gem



Pressure pump completed



Wind chest completed

Refinishing Case And Brass Pipes



All Hallows Guild decided to do a complete job not only on the organ but on its case. From Baltimore, the brass pipes traveled to Elkhart, Indiana, where they were polished and lacquered. The case went to Graham, North Carolina, to be refinished. By carefully removing layers of paint down to the original, Ms. Rosa Patton determined the earliest paint was a green crackle finish. She removed all the old layers, preserving the two oval paintings from the 1980s, applied a black base coat (see photo), and repainted the green crackle and the gold accents.

All of the organ components and the case are now reassembled and awaiting transport from Baltimore back to the Cathedral Close.

The Animals and Benches are the next stage of Restoration

We hope to send out a few at a time for this work. A new generation of adopters has signed on to support the restorations but there are still a few animal friends unclaimed.

The work on the organ, the case, and the animals of our historic carousel is specialized. We are very lucky to have contacts with knowledgeable artisans able to perform their skilled work. They will put our carousel in better than original condition to continue to entertain delighted children and support our mission as stewards of the gardens and grounds of the cathedral close.





Pillow the Camel



The joy of a carousel ride!

Please consider making a donation to our Carousel Restoration Fund

Donation Online NOW