



**CREATING NEW  
RESONANCES**

PROJECTS 2021-2024

A close-up photograph of several organ pipes, showing their cylindrical shape and the metal bands that hold them together. A large, semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, partially obscuring the pipes. The background is a light, neutral color.

## THE ORGAN, BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

It resonates its pipes loud and clear, but also our stones and our hearts. Ancient voice of the Church, carrying emotions and beauty, the Abbey of Saint-Maurice's Great Organ is a unique instrument. Rare. Necessary. In the richness of its resonances, it welcomes us, speaks to us of eternity. It challenges our faith and our world which has lost its bearings.

TODAY WE INVITE  
YOU TO ENTER  
INTO ITS HISTORY.



# 70 YEARS OF DARING AND GENEROSITY

**5000 pipes, 72 stops,  
3 keyboards. Created by  
Kuhn Organ Builders,  
the Abbey of Saint-  
Maurice's Great Organ is a  
magnificent story of shared  
daring and generosity.**

It all started in March 1942. A boulder fell from the cliff, destroying the bell tower and organ of Saint-Maurice's basilica. So, our stones and hearts could continue resonating, the canons quickly obtained a modest harmonium, which they bought at a hospital.

In 1945, when the war had just ended and financial burdens were considerable, the canons, attached to their Abbey's musical tradition, started to investigate the possibility of building a church organ with around thirty stops. Céline Bugnion-Lagouarde shared this vision, which was a daring one in the context of the post-war difficulties. She decided to dedicate a part of her fortune

to provide the basilica with an organ of excellence, both for liturgy and concerts. It would take two years to draw up the plans.

**ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup>  
OF MARCH 1950,  
THE NEW ORGAN  
RESONATED FOR THE  
FIRST TIME IN THE  
HEART OF THE  
BASILICA.**

## SOME DATES

**1942** Destruction of the  
basilica organ by  
a falling rock

**1944** Patronage of  
Céline Bugnion  
Lagouarde

**1950** Inauguration of the  
basilica's Grand Organ

### **CÉLINE BUGNION LAGOUARDE**



© ACY.

Born in Biarritz in 1873, Céline Bugnion-Lagouarde lived in Aix-en-Provence and then in Lausanne, where she liked to organise musical and literary meetings. Eminently cultured, this «photographer and brilliant pianist\*» immortalised figures such as Maurice Ravel.

**She regularly came to  
Saint-Maurice, and her gift of  
70,000 Francs changed the history  
of the basilica's organs.**

\*Darius Milhaud, Notes without music



## IN 2021, MOVING TOWARDS NEW RESONANCES



© Alexandre Derivaz

**For 70 years, the Abbey of Saint-Maurice's Great Organ has brought together people, eras and repertoires. It is one of the last remaining organs of this period in French-speaking Switzerland and is in need of major work.**

Canons, patrons, organ builders... Inspired by their love of music, their generosity, and their know-how, contributed to making the Abbey of Saint-Maurice's Great Organ what it is today: an instrument of rare excellence, mixing 19th-century French organ craftsmanship tradition with classical elements. Its infinite possibilities and its incomparable

musical brilliance have attracted organists from all over the world, and made demanding works resonate. Throughout the years, the quality of the organ has deteriorated. **In order to revive it and let it spread outside its walls, the Abbey of Saint-Maurice Foundation is launching a vast fundraising campaign in 2021.**



### TESTIMONY

**PIERRE AMOYAL,**  
virtuoso violinist

*«I had the chance to meet Canon Georges Athanasiadès, who shared with me his passion for the Abbey of Saint-Maurice's Great Organ, an extraordinary instrument which he often compared to my 1717 Stradivarius violin. Its restoration will bring something unique and unparalleled to music lovers and musicians all around the world.»*



Canon Georges Athanasiadès

© Séverine Rouiller



## THE FACE OF A NEW ORGAN

**There are some types of music that possess the power to carry you back into a blissful memory of the past. A melody disrupts your senses and carries you to another world, often that of bygone childhood, sometimes that of a more recent time.**



**Gérard Felley,**  
Partner of Lombard Odier & Co

Almost half a century ago, I entered the doors of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice for the first time. As a young schoolboy, I walked down the apse of the basilica letting myself fall under the spell of a music like no other! The organ was revealed to me...

Orchestra of Christian music, pivot of modern music, the organ with its innumerable voices is one and many. It defies opposites. Sometimes it provokes reverence and contemplation, sometimes it rumbles like a storm, howls like a tempest. A modern instrument, a driving force of the music of tomorrow, the organ has always taken part in human evolution. Sacred and secular, dominant and delicate, both independent and universal, it tirelessly reminds us of romantic imagination in its quest for modernity.

For the sake of our greatest joy and that of generations to come, help us to become, thanks to your donations, recognised as a centre of musical excellence in Switzerland and throughout the world.



### TESTIMONY

**LÉONARD GIANADDA,**  
engineer, builder and  
patron of the arts

*«As a former student of the Abbey school, I'm very attached to the Abbey of Saint-Maurice, which I've supported for many years. Art is like second nature to me and it brings me happiness to support any artistic project. My foundation's primary mission is to promote art in all its forms, and music remains the muse that reveals it. So when the Abbot asked me to contribute to the revival of the iconic Basilica organ, I accepted straight away. I'm honoured to be the first donor to support this ambitious project carried out by this Abbey which is very dear to me.»*



# ORGAN, SACRED INSTRUMENT, PROCLAIMS GLORY TO THE FATHER, TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT\*

**Clinging to invisible angel wings, music lands for a moment in time, thrilling the ears, bringing joy to life and bringing life to prayer. Where does it come from? Where does it go? It is here and it is everywhere; it belongs to everyone and sings to the four corners of creation. Sing is indeed the word, for the first musical instrument is the voice, a voice that speaks and a voice that sings. Music, thus, speaks and touches hearts.**

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**Monsignor Jean Scarcella,**  
Abbot of Saint-Maurice

When an organ pipe resonates and offers a sound to the ear, it is said to speak... The song of the organ, an instrument essential to the Western Christian life of worship, is thus a prayer, uniting with the primordial music of the angels and translating it musically into the language of men. And these words, rising

under the vault of churches and cathedrals, transcend the space in which they resonate, becoming praise that rises to the heart of God.

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**LET THE MUSIC SOUND  
FOR OUR GOD, LET IT  
SOUND, LET THE MUSIC  
SOUND FOR OUR KING,  
LET IT SOUND**

(Ps 46: 7)

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Yes, the organ has an essential spiritual dimension, because its music does not impose itself onto the song, but, on the contrary, decorates it and what is more, turns it into prayer. We know the ascending movement of prayer, rising from earth to heaven; we are therefore admiring before

an organ case so authentically aesthetic, our gaze fixed on the pipes rising up under the church vault, so that the evocative sounds reach the vault of heaven itself.

Yes, the organ prays with the prayer of our words, and at the same time gives birth to a pure music that reveals its full artistic dimension. Art then blends into Beauty, the primary beauty of God as well as the secondary beauty of the musical works created. Thus the world will receive a message of beauty, peace and love when it listens to this organ. For the Abbey, as for all lovers of such resounding majesty, the sound of its music will be a source of life and happiness.



## CREATING A MUSICAL REVIVAL

### TESTIMONY

**THOMAS KIENTZ,**  
Titular organist of the Basilica organs

*«The restoration project will allow us to pass on our heritage and to create a musical revival. We will be able to discover new timbres that aren't there currently. Two new keyboards will allow us to expand the sound palette with solo stops such as the English Horn, the double flute, and other stops. This will open the organ up to a contemporary repertoire and I will be able to search for a new vocabulary as a composer. Finally, the instrument will also be equipped with new technologies, including a mobile console, which will allow people to view the organist playing, as in a concert hall. This console will be furnished with computer tools that will also allow us to record the organ and have it played without an organist.»*



# CREATING A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ORGAN

**The work of refurbishing, enlarging and integrating the organ in the heart of the basilica will give it a new musical and acoustic dimension, to place it at the heart of contemporary creation.**

## ✦ Refurbishing the organ, to pass on its heritage

Kuhn Organ Builders will be responsible for dismantling the organ, then cleaning and treating it, bringing it up to standard, repairing or replacing each of the parts (pipes, wind chests, felts, bellows, electromechanical components...), then reassembling, adjusting, tuning and reharmonising the instrument. It will take six months for the organ to **regain its functionality, timbre and power** and thus ensure that this historical monument can be passed on to future generations.

## ✦ Enlarging the organ, to give it a new lease on life

The addition of a solo rank of 644 pipes with their swell boxes, controlled by a console with five keyboards, will give the Great Organ an exceptional harmonic richness and acoustic power. Coupling with the chancel organ will create a stereo effect that will allow increased sound richness and specialisation and will also allow the organ to accompany singing without drowning out the voices. **The addition of a 5-keyboard mobile console, which will allow people to see the organist playing, will make the Saint-Maurice Organs a rare and unique set of instruments, suitable both for liturgy and concerts, and open to a resolutely modern repertoire.**

## ✦ Uniting the organ and the basilica, to reveal their brilliance

Adjustments will take place in the basilica, where the organ is housed. The gallery will be adjusted and a humidification system will guarantee the longevity and smooth running of the instrument. The acoustics, fixed sound and lighting will be redesigned. **The organ, refurbished and enlarged, will surround everyone who visits the Abbey with the richness of its sounds.** A high-performance sound and image recording equipment combined with ambitious means of communication will also allow the organ to be heard and seen outside the walls of the Abbey.



### PROJECT COST

500'000 CHF

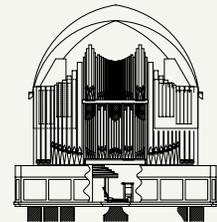
REFURBISHMENT

1'000'000 CHF

ENLARGEMENT

480'000 CHF

INTEGRATION



For more details,  
see the plan at the  
end of the  
document



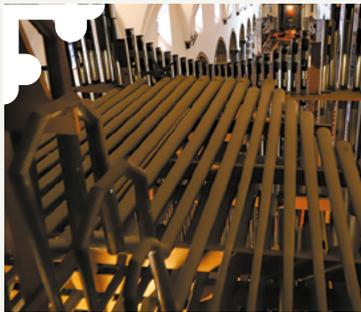
# BRINGING THE ORGAN AND ITS MESSAGE TO LIFE

Once the organ is refurbished, enlarged and integrated into the basilica, the Abbey of Saint-Maurice aims to become the Centre of Musical Excellence for the Organ, to create a new resonance in and for our society.

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The organ, a majestic art object, is the fruit of 2000 years of acoustic innovation. A bridge between the world of prayer and the outside world, it stirs all emotions, touches all hearts with the infinite palette

of its colourful sounds. In the most beautiful of languages, music, it speaks to the person of yesterday, today and tomorrow, to show us a vision of a world where excellence, beauty, faith, commitment and brotherhood all have their place. **The Abbey of Saint-Maurice's Centre of Musical Excellence will aim to bring people together around the organ, to pass on to them this essential element, so necessary for our world which has lost its bearings.**



© Alexandre Derivaz



© Alexandre Derivaz

## TESTIMONY

**XAVIER LAVANCHY,**  
president of Saint-Maurice,  
talking about the Organ  
School project

*«I'm delighted that the Abbey community of canons is keen to see young organists trained to a high standard. They will all contribute to fanning the spiritual flame that is always burning in the land of Agaunum. Giving young people a passion for virtuosity with the help of a complete, powerful and modern instrument is a magnificent story to write for our city, a city that wishes to be firmly focused on education and culture.»*



# BECOMING THE CENTRE OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE FOR THE ORGAN



## ORGANISING THE «MUSICAL SEASON OF THE ABBEY OF SAINT-MAURICE»

The organ offers us moments suspended in time, forms of eternity, which allow us to enter into resonance with ourselves, with others and with God. It breaks down borders by giving us the opportunity to hear the world in all its diversity. This event will bring people together each year around beauty and emotions, allowing them to see the invisible.



## CREATING AN ORGAN SCHOOL AND A SUMMER SEASON FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

The organ, its excellence and its musical richness are a heritage to be passed on to future generations. The organ school and the organisation of summer seasons every year will allow young children to learn the instrument and perform in public, and will kindle in them a vocation which will produce the talents of tomorrow.



## DEVELOPING THE MUSIC FESTIVAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGAN COMPETITION

Founded in 2001 by Canon Georges Athanasiadès, the International Organ Competition of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune attracts around fifty young organists from all over the world every year. Starting in 2023 and then every other year, it will be partnered with a music festival and masterclasses. This will become an unmissable event where talents from around the world will be discovered.



## IN FIGURES

170'000 CHF  
PER SEASON

**MUSICAL SEASON**  
(Annual event)

50'000 CHF  
PER YEAR

**TRAINING  
YOUNG PEOPLE**  
Organ school and summer season  
(Annual event)

100'000 CHF  
PER EVENT

**FESTIVAL & COMPETITION**  
(Biennial event)



**ABBAYE DE**  
**SAINT-MAURICE**

FONDEE EN 515

**RESILIENCE BASED  
ON TRUST  
AND OPENNESS**



## THE ABBEY OF SAINT-MAURICE

Founded on the site of the sanctuary housing the relics of Maurice of Agaunum, the Abbey of Saint-Maurice is the oldest active abbey in Europe. Nowadays it hosts around thirty canons of Saint Augustine. Endowed with an exceptional heritage, a major religious and spiritual centre and favouring the spread of artistic creation, it is an attractive and radiant place that is open to all. The Abbey is a welcome place for visitors, where people come from all over the world to pray, gather, learn, educate and cultivate themselves, and be moved in their hearts. Firmly rooted in faith, open to the world and driven by an unshakeable confidence in the future, the Abbey has been able to reinvent itself throughout the centuries in order to successfully take on major projects (Treasure campaign, Lumina Festival, Martolet archaeological site). Daring and innovative, it speaks powerfully to our society.



## THE ABBEY OF SAINT- MAURICE **FOUNDATION**



**Bernard Vollerin,**  
Vice-President of the Abbey of  
Saint-Maurice Foundation

**«The Foundation is the  
ambassador to all those  
who wish to support the  
action of the Abbey»**

The Abbey? Built of rock and stone, it is a place of prayer, certainly, but it is also there to speak to us all about the wonders of Creation. In this respect, the Abbey is generous: it shares with the world the ancient treasures that have marked its existence, as well as its more recent cultural heritage, whether in education, architecture, history or, of course, music.

To be able to share its present and future heritage, the Abbey needs support. And that is precisely the ambition of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice Foundation: to provide the Abbey with the means and people it needs, to strengthen its cultural and spiritual influence and to provide funds to carry out its humanitarian and social endeavours. The Foundation is therefore an ambassador for all those who want to support the action of the Abbey.

Today, the Foundation wishes to create a circle of donors whose ambition is to help the Abbey to build an organ for the 21st century. For music is transcendence. It is music that leads us from darkness to the «Light that has come into the world» to give us life, freedom and humanity. In fact, music doesn't come from us: it is a gift from God.



### TESTIMONY

**PASCAL CRITTIN,**  
Former musical director  
of the Saint-Maurice  
Vocal Ensemble,  
Radio Télévision Suisse  
Director

*«This place is so extraordinary!  
We must come back here to  
record an album!» These are  
the words of Stephen Layton,  
the head of one of the best  
choirs in the world: Trinity  
College Choir, Cambridge. He  
and his young choir members  
gave an exceptional concert  
at the Basilica in 2015. From  
the first rehearsal, they felt a  
particular resonance in this  
place. Not only an acoustic  
vibration, but a vibration  
of memory and spirit, of  
music and praise, a vibration  
uninterrupted for centuries.  
It is this vibration, I believe,  
that causes so many people to  
come – sometimes from afar  
– to attend concerts in the  
Basilica. These are more than  
moments of music: they are  
moments of elevation.»*



## ENTER INTO THE HISTORY OF THE GRAND ORGAN

By choosing to join our circle of donors to support this ambitious project with the organ at its heart, you too can make your mark on this story of daring and generosity, to hold high the faith, the deep values and the world vision that unite us.

### **Benefit from favourable tax deductions**

Generally, donations to the Abbey of Saint-Maurice Foundation are deductible from your taxable income.

### **Ways to give**

You can make your donation via bank transfer to the Fondation de l'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice account:

IBAN : CH97 0076 5001 0372 6390 8  
Banque Cantonale du Valais  
BIC/SWIFT : BCVSCH2LXXX

### **Contacts**

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**Canon Olivier Roduit,**  
Procureur of the Abbey  
of Saint-Maurice

### «At the forefront of tradition»

Founded over 1500 years ago, our Abbey thinks of its history, its present and its future, as gifts from God. Humble and fragile, it received at its founding the mission of praising God day and night on the tomb of Saint Maurice and his companions. No doubt the singing of Psalms was accompanied by musical instruments from the beginning. The archives reveal the presence of an organ in our basilica from its inauguration in 1642. After a fire, a new instrument appeared in 1727. An expansion of the church allowed a Carlen organ to be acquired in 1891. The fall of the bell tower in 1942 gave rise to the need to build our Kuhn organ. Today the wear and tear of time necessitates a complete refurbishment and the creation of an organ for the 21st century. Since nothing is too expensive for the service of God, on each occasion the Abbey has boldly dedicated considerable amounts of money, helped by wonderful acts of generosity.

At the forefront of tradition, the Abbey community thanks all the donors who will allow the Abbey to continue its mission of divine praise at the heart of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

**Thank you** for your kind generosity!

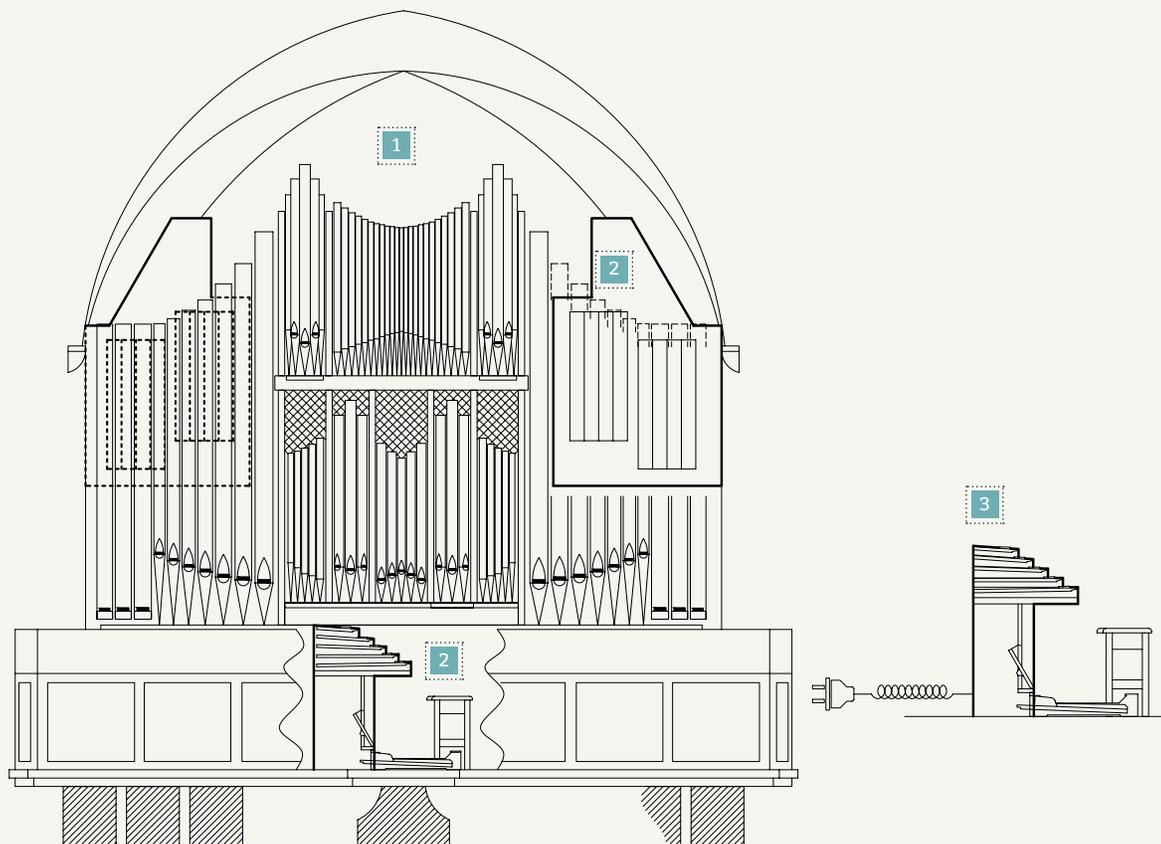


THE ORGAN  
**PLAN AND PRESENTATION  
OF THE RENOVATIONS**



# PRESENTATION OF THE RENOVATIONS

## REFURBISHMENT, EXPANSION & INTEGRATION WORK





# BUILDING

## A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ORGAN



### REFURBISHING AND ENLARGING THE ORGAN:

**1'500'000 CHF**

1

General refurbishment of the instrument: **500'000 CHF**

2

Addition of an expressive Solo keyboard and addition of a new fixed console with 5 keyboards: **710'000 CHF**

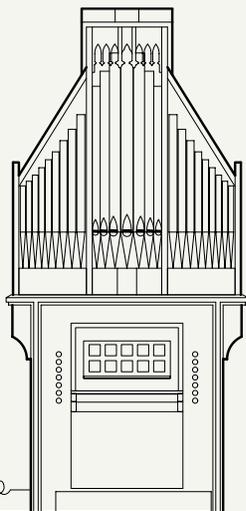
3

New mobile console with 5 keyboards: **230'000 CHF**

4

Electrification and integration of the chancel organ: **60'000 CHF**

4



### INTEGRATION WORK & MISCELLANEOUS:

**480'000 CHF**

- Carpentry & painting (gallery, walls): **50'000 CHF**
- Sound (acoustics, sound recording, audiovisual equipment): **70'000 CHF**
- Lighting (fixed and mobile): **170'000 CHF**
- Humidity and temperature control: **30'000 CHF**
- Electricity, wiring & safety systems: **40'000 CHF**
- General work (handling, scaffolding): **30'000 CHF**
- Miscellaneous & unforeseen expenses (administration, communication, etc.): **90'000 CHF**



# PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE FOR PHASING OF THE WORK

## **22ND SEPTEMBER 2022**

Last use of the current organ for the Feast of Saint Maurice.

## **OCTOBER 2022**

Installation of scaffolding, hoisting machinery and near-complete dismantling of the organ.

## **NOVEMBER 2022**

Start of integration work  
(modifications to the gallery, wiring, acoustics, fixed lighting, purchasing of equipment).

## **END OF JANUARY 2023**

Progressive reassembly of the organ, addition of the 644 pipes of the solo keyboard, installation of the solo's swell box, installation of the new 5-keyboard fixed console in the gallery.

## **MARCH 2023**

Delivery of the new 5-keyboard mobile console, connections, first tests.

## **11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023 (EASTER MONDAY)**

Last use of the chancel organ before the installation  
of the remote control console and tuning.

## **APRIL & MAY 2023**

Organ harmonisation and tuning, various finishing touches, disassemblies,  
general cleaning.

## **28<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023**

Feast of Pentecost, blessing and inauguration of the Great Organ.  
An inaugural evening concert will follow.

**CONTACTS**  
FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION

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We extend our warmest thanks  
to the members of our Support Committee for their dedication.

Gérard Felley,  
President of the Support Committee



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