

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should I buy a Phoenix Organ?

The unswerving devotion to quality at Phoenix Organs make Phoenix a sound financial and musical choice. All of the customization possibilities also make Phoenix a more likely choice for your continued enjoyment of the instrument over time. There are three distinct features separating a Phoenix Organ from other organ manufacturers. It is important for organ committees or purchasers to understand these differences.

- Our pipe organ samples are the finest artistic samples available.
- Every Phoenix, large or small, is hand-crafted and custom built as with a pipe organ.
- We use the same high quality electronics and pipe samples in every organ.

The single most important reason our customers give us for choosing a Phoenix Organ is simply this, “the sound”. Regardless of endless discussions of technology, memory capacity, processors speeds, or sample length, the most important item in any organ, pipe or digital, is the quality of the sound.

Phoenix Organs has not only all of the technological advancements needed for great sound production, but also a very important added component... art. The art of sampling... the art of console design... the art of organ building. Since Phoenix Organs builds every organ as a custom organ, every aspect of the process of designing and building your new organ is completely under the watchful eyes and skillful hands of the dedicated and knowledgeable Phoenix Organs staff. Every detail, from concept to completion, from design to rigorous final testing, is carefully completed to the high standards only a custom builder can offer.

One thing that is so difficult for so many to realize is that buying a Phoenix Organ is not a catalog shopping experience! Phoenix does not have catalog brochures from which a customer picks “Model XYZ” with “Console Style ABC”, shipped directly from the factory warehouse. Nor does Phoenix just choose 3 items from “column B”, and 2 from “column A”, a big “widget” from isle 4-A and toss it on a cart and place it on the assembly line and call it a custom organ. All Phoenix Organs are truly hand-built, part-by-part, by highly skilled craftsmen, technicians and engineers. Your organ will be referred to at the Phoenix shop by your name! You can choose just how “custom” you want your organ, or you can tell Phoenix Organs what your ideas are and let them do what they do best... design and build a one-of-a-kind organ that will be unique, just for you.

Unusual to the digital organ world, Phoenix Organs produces every organ with the same level of quality, using the same console materials and controls, the same technical components, the same audio equipment, and the same level of sampling, in every organ, large or small. Phoenix Organs does not have “economy” or “starter” organs. Phoenix Organs does not divide their organs into the categories of “good”, “better”, “best”, and “really, really best” like the big assembly line companies tend to do. If you purchase a Phoenix Organ with 2-manuals and 19 stops, or a 4-manual organ with 120 stops, the quality will be consistent... the only difference will be the quantity of organ you have purchased! That’s the way it should be.

Phoenix Organs do not become obsolete. The Phoenix Organ system was designed from the beginning to be updateable and upgradeable. Being a modular system, individual components can be updated if ever needed or desired. Phoenix can incorporate any advancement, whether software or hardware, which may be made, retrospectively into any already installed Phoenix Organs. Indeed, this has been done. With this policy of constant and ongoing improvements and refinements, and the ability to implement these into any present or future organ, the possibility of obsolescence is virtually eliminated. If at some

time in the future, a customer so desires, we can even do a complete "re-build" of the entire organ, instead of trading it in for a new organ!

If your church should have the resources to purchase a new pipe organ or re-build an existing one, we strongly encourage you to investigate those possibilities. But if your church finds itself in a situation that prevents a pipe organ, be it space or finances, then we think that Phoenix Organs offers the very best "next thing"! And finally, not the most important, but significant nonetheless, is the amazingly realistic pricing of these completely hand-built, custom organs. We have found over the past few years that Phoenix Organs are usually less expensive than any high-end assembly line organ manufacturer, while still offering a much superior console and sound production. That's not an easy thing to do, but once you sit at a comfortable Phoenix console and hear it for yourself, we are sure you will agree. *Play a Phoenix Organ soon!*

2. I've never heard of Phoenix Organs; how did they begin?

A chance encounter one day happened to place two engineers in the same room. They began talking and very soon it emerged that both were also church organists. For years they both had been searching for an electronic organ that sounded like a pipe organ. Neither had met such an animal before, despite long treks to check out exaggerated claims by many manufacturers about their latest offerings that, although sporting a fancy trade name or a suitable acronym, did not show much improvement.

At this point in time sampling technology was in its embryonic stage. They were convinced that the growing lists of current instrument builders were only scratching the surface of the technology that was available. Thus, Phoenix Organs was born. The system was designed from the "ground up" with a clean sheet of paper, and is now the most flexible in the marketplace today. Gone are the "standard" specifications, the "standard" models. Everything is Custom built and easily alterable even after the organ has been built. Mixture ranks can be added and compositions changed, pistons can be given different functions, and the control over each note of each stop uses ten times the parameters that the competitors have at their disposal. The system uses computer soundcard chips that are easily obtained and will be with us for many years to come. Phoenix has now grown into many parts, using common system electronics allied to localize manufacturing centers. Phoenix Organs America, which, as its name implies, is the manufacturing center for the North American continent, based in Ontario. Brothers Don and Jim Anderson, both of whom have many years' experience in the organ business, run Phoenix NA. From the very beginning Phoenix was an international company with representation in UK, N. Ireland, United States, Canada, and Australia. Phoenix will soon move into other European countries. Also, there are other organ builders using the Phoenix system for their organs. At the center of it all is Phoenix Organs UK, which supplies the system boards to both the NI and USA operations. Dave Bostock, who is the brains behind the whole system, runs Phoenix UK. His programming skills, together with his tonal and musical expertise, are directly responsible for the success and flexibility of the Phoenix system.

3. Why do Phoenix digital sampled organs sound so realistic?

Simple - sampling is an art requiring artistic ability, not just technological expertise. The building of a fine non-winded organ requires the same qualities necessary to build a fine pipe organ --- **artistic ability**. That ability does not come without years of accumulated knowledge and experience with pipe organs. It also takes the God-given talent of a very good ear.

Donald W. Anderson, Phoenix' North American Tonal Director, has spent his life dedicated to organs, both pipe and electronic. His talent of being able to produce incredible pipe samples from the note-by-note recordings of pipe organs has been heralded on both sides of the Atlantic. The vehicle by which those fine pipe samples are heard was the brain child of Phoenix' developer and director, David Bostock,

in England. While other companies only scratch the surface with the available technology, the Phoenix system takes pipe-less organ sound to a new dimension and is the most flexible on the market today. What is most important is that you either hear or play a Phoenix organ.

We believe that Phoenix Organs are the best substitute for the real thing. It is argued that a good digital organ is better than a poor pipe organ. Phoenix has a solid musical background within the company and the necessary expertise to help you put together a specification which will embody both musicality and flexibility for your particular church.

4. Are all Phoenix Organs really custom built or just variations on standard model lines?

Every Phoenix is custom built, not just variations of a standard mass-produced model. The electronic organ industry has been trying for over thirty years to emulate as closely as possible the might of the "King of Instruments". One thing that a lot of manufacturers have missed is that no two instruments of similar size, even from the same builder, can ever sound the same, nor should they sound identical. Each organ should have its own unique character. From the day your organ is ordered to the day it is delivered, it will be referred to by YOUR name, not a production number.

There are several non-winded organ manufacturers who are, in fact, attempting to build a quality product. Of course, most prefer to churn out a number of 'units' per year on an assembly line. Every Phoenix, large or small, is custom built as with a pipe organ. Many, if not all, pipe organ builders endeavor to provide a custom organ. We believe that every installation is totally different, and requires the right instrument for the surroundings.

Old-world craftsmanship and the highest standards of excellence characterize the design and construction of our consoles, using traditional pipe organ components. Everything about a Phoenix Organ makes it authentic to its pipe organ counterpart.

Our ultimate goal is to build for you the best possible musical instrument. One that will give you endless hours of enjoyment, one that will fulfill your particular desires - be they Baroque, Romantic, Dutch, Gallic or Modern. A Phoenix Organ will fulfill all these things and much more. Above all, it will look, feel, sound and play just like the real thing. Custom building normally commands a high price tag. Not so with a Phoenix Organ. We can offer you a custom product at an off-the-shelf price.

5. Can ANY Phoenix Organ control pipes?

Yes. The **Phoenix Organ System** can control windblown ranks of organ pipes as well as digital ranks. Facilities are available within the control system for ranks of pipes to be attached to divisions of the organ and played through the console being managed by the Phoenix System. This enables the Phoenix System to be used to supplement an existing (or new) pipe organ by providing a new console system with up-to-date control facilities and some digital voices or for a principally digital Phoenix System to be supplemented by some ranks of real pipes.

The Phoenix System was designed from the beginning with the aim of providing top-notch electronics for both electronic organs and pipe organs. Hybrid organs (mixing both pipe and sampled stops) are also possible with every Phoenix Organ built. Our electronics can be supplied in kit form with complete instructions to pipe organ companies. Every Phoenix electronic organ is capable of controlling pipes. The same 'front-end' is used for scanning of keyboards, stops, pistons, etc. for both sample playback system and pipe magnets. The speed of the scanning is extremely fast and a separate microprocessor is used for

each keyboard. It is actually done in parallel as opposed to the linear (all in a row) scanning as in many other control systems. With the Phoenix system there is no sluggishness of the key response as more stops are added.

6. Can we use a Phoenix Organ as a console replacement for our pipe Organ?

Yes. The Phoenix system can control any number of ranks of pipes. Considering that, the benefits of having digital ranks, and a very reasonable cost, makes Phoenix a very attractive choice for console replacement. Due to the high cost to build pipe organs and the space limitations in many churches, hybrid or combination organs have become popular. It has become common for pipe organ companies to add digitally sampled stops in place of expensive 32' pedal ranks. Some churches that cannot afford a full pipe organ opt for a compromise of a number of ranks of pipes added to a non-winded organ. The Phoenix pipe control system is well engineered and has been lauded by pipe builders for its ease of use. All Phoenix Organs are ready for pipes in the event a church decides to do so in the future.

Here is a comment made by a Phoenix customer about their pipe/digital combination Phoenix:

"Some very critical organ builders and organists have heard and played the instrument and totally agree that the Phoenix has some of the highest quality samples that they have heard on a digital organ, regardless of price. The sampled stops blend seamlessly with the existing Casavant pipe organ ranks. I am especially pleased with the English Romantic samples from the Harrison and Harrison and Willis organs, as well as the fine quality French samples. The organ technicians were very impressed with the ease of installation of the pipe interface. I found the usual American digital organ choices lacking in tonal quality and having overall lack of definition in their ensemble sound. The Phoenix instrument sells itself."

--- Roy Daniels, Organist and Director of Music, St. Michael's-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Carlsbad, California

7. What about Phoenix speakers?

Phoenix Speaker Systems are custom fit to each installation and are all custom designed and built in-house to the specific sound production needs of Phoenix Organs. Phoenix has a 20-plus-year history of providing speakers systems specifically designed for organ sound production. This is a major reason for Phoenix's startlingly realistic sound (even in the lowest notes of the 32' pedal stops). Phoenix Organs can build custom designed speakers if needed for your installation. D.L. Simmons & Company also has facilities and experience in custom speaker facades and enclosures.

8. What about service and repairs and warranties?

Phoenix has the best warranty in the industry. There is a 5-year service dealer warranty that covers parts and labor, and total 10-year factory warranty on parts. You may request a sample warranty. If service is needed, we will provide a qualified local technician for timely service, which may be a member of MITA (Musical Instrument Technicians Association). This is a national association of certified technicians.

We have found Phoenix Organs to be extremely dependable. Phoenix technology has the edge over the competition, thanks to the design process which started with a clean sheet of paper and without hindrances of existing production schedules or compatibility issues. Phoenix have been able to work very closely with the designers of our sound generation chip to ensure that the technology we use is the most

up-to-date in the world. Our circuit boards and sub-assemblies are manufactured using the latest techniques complete with accredited quality assurance and testing at all stages of production. This offers the end user a product which is inherently reliable, and will continue to give sterling service for many years to come.

As technology allows us to simulate the sound of the original pipe more accurately than ever before, the tonal gap between pipe organs and their electronic counterparts is narrowing all the time. It is now at the stage that the difference is so small that the rate of improvement is slowing down accordingly. Thus today's organ will go out-of-date less quickly than an organ of the eighties.

9. Aren't Phoenix custom-built organs expensive?

Because Phoenix Organs does not require dealers to maintain an expensive showroom with a required minimum stock of organs, and all the high overhead that goes along with this marketing model, the price for a custom-built Phoenix is almost always lower than our competitors "off-the-shelf" stock organs, and we can always offer more value per dollar. *The simple fact is that we do not mark up the price of our organs as high as other builders!*

10. How are Phoenix Organ consoles built?

Building of organs brings together many different crafts and by far the largest proportion of work and indeed cost goes into the cabinet. If you consider the console of any instrument with which you are familiar, the over-riding material used is wood. The console is a piece of furniture, as handsomely finished as anything which would grace your dining room. You sit on a solid wood seat which must withstand the rigors of organists - including the heavyweights. The keys sit on a shelf far thicker and more rigid than an average dining table, and this supports anything up to 75% of the total weight of the console. These and many other factors make the quality manufacture of the console of paramount importance.

Phoenix consoles are made to Phoenix's own design by their own craftsmen. Using experience gathered from many years in the pipe and electronic organ building business, each organ is designed and built from the ground up using the finest hardwoods and hardware available. Unlike some organ companies which utilize MDF (medium density fiberboard), we use only the finest North American select hardwoods and 16-ply hardwood veneer-core for strength. Pedalboards have laminated maple capped naturals over strong Canadian Ash. From the beginning, Phoenix Organs decided all consoles would reflect the pleasing proportions of many of our beloved North American pipe organ builders. Of course, most of the European, production-line organs on the market typically have skimpy sides, keybeds and lids. Phoenix consoles have pleasing proportions, including thick sides, keybeds and tops. In fact, the basic design idea of the rounded cheek was taken from Aeolian Skinner. We expect that when you sit at a Phoenix Organ, whether lighted stop tablet or drawknob, you will feel you are playing a good pipe organ, plain and simple.

11. What is the source for the console hardware in a Phoenix?

The finest console hardware from pipe organ hardware suppliers in the US and UK is used in all of our organs. Drawknobs, toe and thumb pistons, coupler tabs, expression pedals will all provide the feeling of playing a pipe organ. You have a choice of keyboards from the standard, tracker touch models on Baltic Birch frame for strength, to wooden-core or bone/ rosewood models. Each and every organ is thoroughly

tested to make sure every piece of hardware operates perfectly. You only have to sit at a Phoenix console to see and feel the difference.

12. What is the background and experience of D.L. Simmons & Company?

Through our long and close association with Forbes & Associates we have a more than 45-year history in placing quality organs in churches, institutions, and homes throughout the Southeastern United States. For the past decade we have been co-coordinating sales, promotions, and performing all installations for Forbes & Associates, and doing business under his name. We have profited from his vast experience as our long-time mentor. Ken Forbes, the owner of Forbes & Associates passed away in January 2004, and soon after we changed the business name to D.L. Simmons & Company. Mr. Forbes served the churches of the Southeast with care and integrity for many years and we continue on the path he followed. The owner of D.L. Simmons and Company has been a church organist for over 30 years and also has extensive experience in construction, architectural design, fine woodworking, and holds a B.F.A degree. We work with our customers to find the perfect instrument for their needs without artificially inflated prices or unnecessary costs from high overhead. We provide professional installation and voicing of every organ, large or small. Being able to work closely with Phoenix Organs gives us a very broad and deep knowledge base from which to draw to ensure a successful organ project from the very beginning.

13. What about negative comments by competing companies?

This just seems to be part of doing business today. We do our best to NOT talk about our competitors and would much rather talk about everything Phoenix Organs has to offer. Possibly you should disregard or even investigate any allegations, negative sales techniques, or competition bashing. This kind of sales technique is called "[FUD](#)" (stands for 'fear', 'uncertainty', 'doubt'), and is often used as a last resort. Usually, when a salesperson resorts to negative attacks of a competitor it signals their insecurity about their own product's ability to stand up to their competitors'. Every committee should take the time needed to conduct a thorough search. Don't be pressured by a pushy salesperson that talks too much about other builder's organs. Your recommendation for a particular organ will be an expenditure of your church's precious funds and will affect its music ministry for many years to come. We have a large group of satisfied customers, and enjoy 100% customer satisfaction... *that's better than chocolate!*