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English Organs

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Distinctly Catholic

There is just something about English organs that makes me happy and I have never been able to identify it. The North German and Dutch organs are rightly renowned for the bright voicing of their diapason chorus and their earthy reeds. The great French Romantic organs are known for the warmth of their tone, especially the soft string stops in the swell. Late nineteenth century U.S. organs often have a diapason chorus that is as rich as chocolate cake. But, the English organs, which were the focus of last week's edition of *Pipedreams*, force me to do something I do not like to do, use an adjective that is obviously not precise: They are elegant. You can't hear elegant, you can dress it, just as you can't taste elegance in a wine even though some wineries advertise their wares as elegant. I invite the organophiles among the readers to listen to the linked recordings and help me find better adjectives - and just to enjoy such glorious sounds.

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