

The organ screen, which is the three-part paneled work you'll see on the far wall, was acquired by The Huntington in 2011, and it basically covered the organ loft on the second floor of the auditorium, so where the pipes of the organ were located. And it was backed with a canvas material that allowed the sound from the organ pipes to emanate through and fill the auditorium.

Now, it's made of three parts, but originally it was made of five parts and there was a complete arch across the whole surface of the work.

The screen is carved of redwood, and you'll notice that in some places, Sargent Johnson left the boards relatively flat and other places he's trying to evoke a sense of bark or the grain of a tree, which he's then painted with a red paint, and then covered with a layer of gold.

My favorite part is the radiating branches. They radiate out like sound waves. It looks like a 1930s radio to me, and in fact, music would have come through this screen.

One of the pieces of music that we know was performed in the auditorium in the 1930s was an organ piece by Alfred Hollins, who was a British blind organist and composer, and you can hear a little bit of that in the background.

I love the depiction on the screen, especially the two children that are playing at the center because it shows what was happening in the auditorium space where students would undergo musical instruction. That was a big part of teaching at the School for the Blind and still is today, but also it was a place where musical performances and theatrical performances were done in the auditorium.

“Concert Overture No.2 in C minor”. Performed by Benjamin Intartaglia. Composed by Alfred Hollins. IMSLP. [https://imslp.org/wiki/Concert_Overture_No.2_in_C_minor_\(Hollins%2C_Alfred\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Concert_Overture_No.2_in_C_minor_(Hollins%2C_Alfred)).