

**Bethany Lutheran College**, Mankato, Minn., hosted a regional student recital on 3/19, an annual event organized by the **Sioux Trails Chapter AGO**. The instrument is Op. 10 (II/24; 1979/1996).

**Trinity Presbyterian Church**, Indianola, Iowa, was the site for a program hosted by the **Central Iowa Chapter AGO** on 4/27. Dobson Tonal Director **John Panning** spoke about Op. 17 (II/30; 1982) and gave an overview of Dobson's work since its earlier days.

**Calvin Institute for Christian Worship**, Grand Rapids, Mich., presented its 23rd annual "Symposium on Worship," January 28-30. Two events involving organ took place in the Calvin College Chapel, home to Op. 44 (III/49; 1989): **David Cherwien** presented seminars on congregational song; **Ken Bos** accompanied a hymn festival with the **Calvin Alumni Choir** and area church choirs. The symposium drew 1500 attendees, including 160 guests from 39 foreign countries.

**Trinity Lutheran Church**, Manhattan Beach, Calif., continues its 2009-10 concert series featuring programs on Op. 56 (II/17; 1992): 2/28, **Mark Mummert**; 3/5, **Namhee Han**, organ, with **Lars Hoefs**, cello; 4/2, **James Taulbee**; 6/4, **Millennia Consort**, with **Alison J. Luedecke**, organ.

**Presbyterian Homes**, Evanston, Ill., continues its 2009-10 "A Gift of Music" series featuring Op. 64 (II/24; 1994): 1/11, **Stephen Buzard**; 2/22, **Michael Stefanek**; 3/29, **Cathryn Wilkinson**; 4/26, **Karel Paukert**; 5/24, **Richard Pilliner**; 6/28, **Brenda Portman**.

**West Market Street United Methodist Church**, Greensboro, N.C., presented resident organist **Susan Bates** playing her annual Eastertide recital on 4/11. The organ is Op. 71 (III/58; 1999).

**The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels**, Los Angeles, Calif., home to Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003), hosted two sold-out performances on 2/27 of the medieval music drama *The Festival Play of Daniel* by the **Los Angeles Opera**, **James Conlon**, conductor, with the **OLA Cathedral Chorus**, **Frank Brownstead**, director, and cathedral organist, **Sal Soria**. Sal's eighth annual solo organ recital took place on May 1st.

**The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**, Philadelphia, Pa., continues hosting and presenting programming involving Op. 76 (IV/125; 2006): 2/12, an **ACDA Eastern Division Conference** concert including Bach's *Cantata 29*, *Cantata 146* and *Magnificat*, with **Helmuth Rilling**, guest conductor, the **Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia**, the **Westminster Choir**, the **Temple University Concert Choir**, with **Eric Plutz**, organ. Kimmel Center's 2009-10 "Master Musicians Organ Series" continued with two artists making their highly anticipated return appearances at Verizon Hall: 3/6, **Cameron Carpenter**; 5/8, **Paul Jacobs**. The 2010-2011 series will include: 11/6, **Gunnar Idenstam**; 2/26/11, **Joan Lippincott**; 3/16/11, **Thierry Escaich**. On 4/30, Kimmel Center presented a program featuring jazz organists **Dr. Lonnie Smith**, **Joey DiFrancesco**, **Trudy Pitts** and **John Medeski**.

**United Lutheran Church**, Red Wing, Minn., presented a recital by **Aaron David Miller** on 4/18. The organ is Op. 77 (II/20; 2001).

**Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**, Ellison Bay, Wis., recently presented a recital by resident organist **Naomi Rowley**, assisted by **Lolly Lebovic**, viola. Summer concerts on Op. 79 (II/23; 2004) will include: 6/20, **Michael Burkhardt** leading a hymn festival; 7/25, **Ruth Tweeten**.

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Rock Creek Parish**, Washington, D.C., home to Op. 80 (II/26; 2004), will be a venue for several events of the **2010 AGO National Convention**, July 4-8: 7/8, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m., **Ulrike Theresia Wegele** recitals; 7/8, 1:00 p.m., **Isabel Demers** workshop "Max Reger's Orgelbüchlein" (*52 Easy Chorales, Op. 67*).

**Kenilworth Union Church**, Kenilworth, Ill., presented **Karel Paukert** in a 4/25 recital on Op. 81 (II/29; 2003).

**St. David's Episcopal Church**, Wayne, Pa., has its "Spring 2010 Concert Series" underway featuring Op. 84 (II/47; 2007): 3/21, 5:00 p.m., *Requiem*, by M. Duruflé, **The St. David's Adult Choir**, **Clair Rozier**, conductor, **Robert Gallagher**, organ; 6/4, 7:30 p.m., **Diane Meredith Belcher**; 6/1-6/29, the annual series of "Noonday Organ Recitals."

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**, Minneapolis, Minn., home to Op. 86 (II/24; 2008), hosted two events by the **Twin Cities Chapter AGO**: 2/13, "Mid-Winter Music Workshop" with seminars by organists **John Ferguson**, **Melanie Ohnstad** (WPC resident organist), **Steve Gentile** and **David Cherwien**; 3/20, "B4 Bach's Birthday Bash 2010," a day of performances of Bach's organ music in five Minneapolis churches, including a concert in the WPC Chapel by **Melanie Ohnstad** and **Andrew Hackett**, with **Karen Wasiluk**, flute.

**Highland Park United Methodist Church**, Dallas, Tex., continues its 2009-10 "Tower Arts Series" which also serves as the dedication series for Op. 87 (IV/95; 2009): 3/14, **The St. Thomas Choir**, **John Scott**, conductor, **Frederick Teardo**, organ; 4/25, *Requiem*, by G. Verdi, **HPUMC Chancel Choir**, **Dallas Symphony Chorus**, professional orchestra, **Paul Phillips**, conductor; 5/2, organ and brass, **Bradley Hunter Welch** with members of the **Dallas Symphony**. Additional concerts include: 5/4, the **Orpheus Chamber Singers**, **Don Krehbiel**, director, **Dong-Il Shin**, organ; 5/10, **Aaron David Miller**, organ, sponsored by the **Dallas Chapter AGO**.

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Ind., celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Chapel of the Resurrection with a year-long series of recitals on the Schlicker-Dobson organ (IV/102; 1959/1996). Programs this winter and spring included: 1/10, members of the **Valparaiso Student Chapter AGO**; 1/11, **Anita Werling**; 4/12, *Alumni Organ Recital*.

**The Chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel**, Mankato, Minn., was the venue for a recent performance of *The Stations of the Cross, Op. 29*, by Marcel Dupré, sponsored by the **School Sisters of Notre Dame** and the **Sioux Trails Chapter AGO**. Area organists **Ames Anderson**, **Lisa Knutson**, **Nicholas Schmelter**, **John Wall**, and **Chad Winterfeldt** performed on the chapel's historic Wm. Johnson Op. 499 (III/53; 1877). Dobson made restorative repairs to the instrument and built a new console for the organ in 1995.

# THE ORGANBUILDER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

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## IN THIS ISSUE :

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## LOOKING BACK

**20 Years - Op. 46 (II/15)**, for Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Appleton, Wisconsin, installed beginning in March, was the fourth Dobson instrument in Wisconsin within six years. Edward Meyer served as consultant and played the dedicatory recital in June. Op. 48 has mechanical key action, electric stop action and an eight-level combination system. The gallery installation consists of a freestanding case of solid white oak accented with polychromed pipe shades that include a design inspired by an olive leaf. Soon after the organ's installation, this cross and olive leaf design became the official logo of the church.

**Op. 49 (III/27)**, for St. Paul's United Methodist Church, State College, Pennsylvania, was installed in late spring. The dedication recital by Susan Dickerson and James Moeser (also project consultant) took place on October 7. At the time, Susan was Assistant Professor of Music at Penn State, and her husband, Jim, was Dean of the College of Arts and Architecture at Penn State. Along with Professor of Organ, June Miller, they had become familiar with Dobson's work upon the installation of our Op. 36 (II/7) at Penn State just a few years earlier. Op. 49 was the culmination of several years of planning that began after St. Paul's lost their sanctuary and all its contents in a devastating fire in November 1987. The instrument has mechanical key action for the manuals, electric action for the Pedal division, and dual stop action. The instrument received Honorable Mention in the September 1993 *Modern Liturgy Magazine* Visual Arts Award Contest.

**10 Years - Op. 73 (III/38)**, for Saint Joseph Abbey, Saint Benedict, Louisiana, was installed beginning in early January. First use of the organ was Palm Sunday of that year but it would be October 7, 2001 before the Blessing and Dedicatory Recital took place. Fr. Sean Duggan OSB, Abbey Director of Music, was organist for the service; Marcus St. Julien was guest recitalist. The instrument was part of a major renovation of the Abbey Church that, under the supervision of Abbot Patrick Regan, was guided by the Benedictine rule of simplicity - to discover the most basic elemental essence of something and go no further. Thus the organ case, painted a shade of white that blends with the room, appears understated. Furthermore, the arrangement of the main case at the front of the balcony, with the Positive hanging below, makes the organ appear to float in the room free of the architecture. In addition to Dobson, major figures in the project included Frank Kacmarcik OSB, liturgical consultant, Robert Mahony, acoustician and Lee Tollefson, architect.

Around the Dobson shop this project is remembered not only for the significant technical challenges of the installation, but also for the unique experience of living at a monastery. During the installation the crew was housed in guest quarters-welcoming guests being a Benedictine imperative-and enjoyed meals served family style. Later in the process the two-man voicing crews were invited to eat in the main refectory. The extent of the invitations grew to include some after dinner socializing and several fine parties, including a Mardi Gras celebration not to be forgotten!

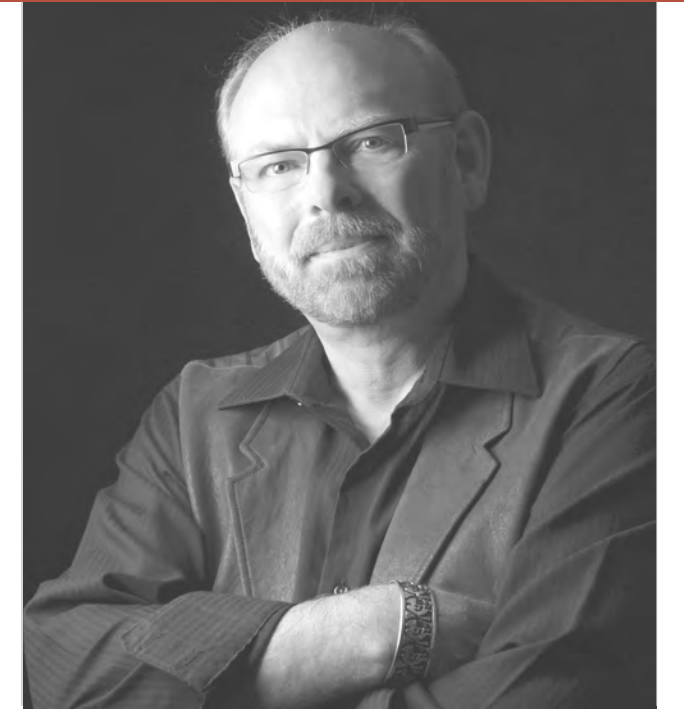
This past November marked the 35th anniversary of my firm. The date flew by without much fanfare or celebration because it was a busy time for us at the shop and we were also focused on the dedication festivities for Op. 87 in Dallas. Yet, I've often found myself thinking about this company and all that has happened since 1974. We've built 89 new pipe organs and rebuilt or restored over two dozen existing instruments. I'm grateful for the artistic opportunities these instruments have offered and especially for the friendships I've made with so many of you.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about our website exhibition of my organ design drawings. The idea grew out of a project we undertook earlier last year to create a complete digital archive of drawings and photographs of our past work. It's the one thing we did do to mark our anniversary in some way. I invite you to spend some time looking through the exhibition. For me personally it serves much like a book of memories, as each drawing brings back to my mind the details of each project. There is a great variety of styles represented, and as time goes on, I'm hoping we can add more older drawings that aren't yet posted as well as samples of the interesting new projects we are working on.

Excitement is building at the shop for the soon-to-be-delivered instrument for the University of Tampa. The solid cherry case is nearly 50 feet tall and is the biggest free-standing case we have ever built. The simplicity of the broad and graceful curving lines belies the difficulty of actually constructing the numerous compound curve pieces that form the face of the top portion of the case. The largest of these are 25 feet long, 7 inches wide and 2 inches thick. These large case components are made by first creating a large wooden form, placed on the floor, which replicates the concave front plane of the organ case. Then, with a trammel beam compass that can handle up to a 30' radius, lines are marked out on the form that indicate the vertical curve of the finished piece. At this point multiple layers of 1/4" thick cherry veneer are glued together and clamped to the form along the curved lines. Finally, after again using the large compass to mark the curves on the top layer of glued-up cherry, the over-width piece is cut to the finished dimension. Work such as this is a big challenge for the cabinetmakers but it makes their work interesting. They tell me they enjoy figuring out how to make things they've never made before and actually prefer it to making the same things over and over!

After some unavoidable delays over the past two years, I'm pleased that our new organ project for Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is moving forward. With just a few more details to work out at the time I write this, the signing of a contract will probably have taken place by the time this newsletter is published. Design work for both St. Thomas Church, New York, and Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, is continuing with various issues and decisions awaiting due process within those church organizations.

In these next few months we have several service projects scheduled in addition to the upcoming installation in Tampa. We'll be performing another



installment in our ongoing restorative work of Wangerin-Weickhardt's Op. 152, (II/9; 1913) at Corning United Methodist Church, Corning Iowa. While overall in remarkably good condition, the organ is in need of some attention. We've been able to work out an arrangement with the church to perform work in prioritized stages as funds become available. Our Op. 11 (II/31; 1980) at First Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa, will be undergoing a general cleaning and we'll be checking over the entire organ while all the pipes are removed. We've also signed a contract with Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, for work on the Rost Memorial Organ located in the college's Center for Faith and Life. The 62-rank mechanical-action instrument was built in 1978 by Robert Sipe. Our work will include a cleaning of the pipes and organ interior, making improvements to the combination action and regulating the key and stop actions.

I always look forward to the biennial national AGO conventions, and the upcoming event in Washington, D.C., appears to have the makings of a memorable event. I'm pleased that our organ at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Rock Creek, will be used for both a recital and a workshop. While not a large instrument, it gives a wonderful account of itself in the lovely and historic sanctuary of St. Paul's. Also, my colleague, John Panning, will be taking part in a panel discussion entitled "Uphill Battle: Organ Work in a Time of Panic," hosted by organ consultant and journalist Jonathan Ambrosino. I hope to visit with many of you during the course of the week. Please plan to stop by our booth in the exhibit hall and say hello!

In August I plan to attend the joint convention of the International Society of Organbuilders and the American Institute of Organbuilders, held this year in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Montreal is a great city with fabulous instruments to see and hear. And it is always invigorating to visit with my organbuilding colleagues from around the world and hear about the work they are doing.

I've said it here before in various ways, and in the context of our 35th anniversary year I can only say it again: I'm thankful that this firm remains strong and continues to engage new clients during these trying economic times. I'm very happy to be involved in some of the most interesting and challenging work of my career.



Kent Brown is the seventh of eight children, and grew up in the country between Fort Dodge and Duncombe, Iowa. The son of an electrician, Kent was familiar from an early age with building construction and job sites. He attended parochial schools in Fort Dodge, and graduated from St. Edmund's High School in 1981. After a presentation by the Iowa State Patrol at a job fair during his senior year, he decided that he wanted to be a state trooper. Although not necessary, military service is frequently a precursor to a career in law enforcement. Having the example of an older brother and a brother-in-law who were serving in the U.S. Air Force, Kent chose to enlist in this branch of the service as well. With the ultimate goal of joining the Iowa State Patrol in mind, he signed up to be an Air Force law enforcement specialist. When he was honorably discharged in 1986, he had attained the rank of Staff Sergeant (E5).

Because of the importance and responsibility of the position, candidates for the Iowa State Patrol must pass a rigorous review, including a polygraph test and physical and psychiatric exams. Of the initial 4,000 that applied with Kent, only 40 would be accepted. Half a year after he applied, he got the call—was he still interested? Following 13 weeks of training at Camp Dodge in Des Moines, newly-minted Trooper Brown was assigned to Tama, Iowa. Troopers have a range of duties, but they are best known for enforcement of traffic laws on highways. Interstate 80, the United States' busiest cross-country route, ran through his district, and Kent spent much of his time patrolling it. In 1989 he became a technical accident investigator, and additional training in Minnesota in 1991 qualified him as an accident reconstructionist, a person who investigates, analyzes, and draws conclusions about the causes of and events during a vehicle collision. A youthful interest in photography (he was photographer for his high school yearbook) was a valuable skill for this investigative specialty, which includes documenting the scene, writing accident reports, and, if necessary, testifying as an expert witness in legal proceedings.

While he enjoyed the technical aspects of documentation and investigation, the quantity of fatalities in the more than 200 accidents he processed exacted a toll. Like many whose jobs involve something intangible or uncontrollable, he took up a very tangible hobby, making cabinets and furniture for friends. Eventually this developed into a business substantial enough that he had to request approval of his "secondary employment" from the State Patrol. In 2003, after 16 years of service to the state, he left to devote full-time energy to his busi-

A second career: it's a recurring theme of these biographies, and for that matter, present-day employment in the United States. For this group of workers, a job that makes them want to get out of bed in the morning is more fulfilling than a big paycheck for a job they tolerate. Building pipe organs is certainly not something you'd do just for the money—it's an outlet for creative expression, an opportunity to build something lasting, or, in the words of a brewery favored by quite a number of organ builders (at least in Lake City), a way to "follow your folly".

ness, Landmark Custom Builders of Tama, Iowa. Between 2003 and 2006, he built three houses and many kitchen and bathroom cabinets, and undertook a variety of remodeling projects.

When he saw our advertisement in a Des Moines newspaper for a woodworking position, he was ready for a change. Making cabinets had become routine, and he wanted to return to the Fort Dodge area to be closer to his mother, who was advancing in years. Joining our crew in 2006, Kent's first task was the construction of casework for our Op. 84 in Wayne, Pa. Since that time he has built just about anything made of wood, and just as valuable to the shop, he enjoys time on the road during installations, where his "can-do" attitude keeps things moving.

Our Op. 89, now under construction for the University of Tampa, offers the type of woodworking challenge that attracted Kent to our shop. The case has many pieces that curve in three dimensions, requiring elaborate jigs to glue up their component parts. Perhaps the most fantastic of these are sweeping boards that start as part of the top of the case, then gracefully drape in front of façade pipes. Kent made a 12' x 15' grid precisely matching the arc of the façade plane to serve as a form for gluing these boards, which are composed of more than 30 mitered laminations.

Though he may no longer build houses professionally, renovation of his own home, located on a ten-acre property, fills his spare time. If he's lucky, he finds a few hours to knock a golf ball around a local course.

Although we know he's capable of the spit-and-polish, law-and-order attitude necessary in his former career, we get the feeling that a day spent in comfortable clothes making a pile of wood shavings suits him better, and that's just fine with us.



Trooper Brown in his Iowa State Patrol uniform, sometime during the 1990s.

The final step in moving Op. 54 (II/16; 1991) to the new building for St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana, has been completed. Although the organ was moved over a year ago, some revoicing of the instrument was undertaken this past January.

St. Paul's new sanctuary has nearly double the seating capacity of the old building and its total volume is significantly more than twice that of the old. Op. 54 immediately sounded better in the spacious and superior acoustics of the new room. However, after experiencing the organ's leading of a congregation that sings with exceptional vigor, we decided that the organ's overall volume needed to be increased. Ironically, our records reminded us that when the organ was first installed in 1991 it was a bit loud for the room. So during tonal finishing the windpressure was slightly reduced and certain stops were softened. The work this past January reversed those changes.

Several years ago, as the congregation outgrew the 1887 church building on the outskirts of town, plans were made to build a new church building on another part of the church's 14-acre site. From the beginning members were convinced that moving the organ to the new sanctuary was simply a matter of good stewardship. Free of its narrow niche at the rear of the former sanctuary, Op. 54 looks and sounds better than ever.

Restorative work on the 1896 W.W. Kimball & Co. pipe organ located in the Union Sunday School, Clermont, Iowa, was completed this spring. The two-manual, 27-rank is the largest remaining unaltered tubular-pneumatic organ by the Kimball firm.

A 1979 restoration of the instrument by the Hendrickson Organ Co. revived what at the time was a nearly unplayable instrument. However, over the last few years it became obvious that the instrument required additional attention. Work this spring included restoration of the instrument's 1910 Kinetic electric blower, repairing the dual-pressure wind system (the hand-operated pumping mechanism remains intact), adjusting or replacing note valves in the windchests to eliminate chronic ciphering problems, repairing pipes damaged by careless cone tuning technique, rebushing the manual keyboards and refitting them with new spring rails and springs, and refurbishing the pedalboard. A general cleaning of the entire instrument and some remedial voicing completed the project.

Since the instrument's restoration in 1979 the State Historical Society of Iowa and the Clermont Historical Society have presented an annual organ recital series.

2010 Union Sunday School Organ Recitals	
Sundays, 2:30 p.m.	
April 18 (Dedication Recital)	William Kuhlman Gregory Peterson Sally Boie
May 30	Joan DeVeve Dixon
June 27	Fr. Paul Peters
July 25	Marvin Kerr
August 2	Steve Story
September 26	Otter Dreaming
October 31	Marcia Lofdahl
November 28	Brett Wolgast



Op. 54, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbus, Indiana  
Photo credit: John Rust

WORK IN PROGRESS

Op. 89, the three-manual and pedal mechanical-instrument of 56 ranks for the new Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values at the University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, is well on its way to being ready for a mid-summer installation. Since the organ stands some 20' taller than our 32' erecting room ceiling it cannot all be set up at once. The lower portion of the case was assembled over the last few months and was just recently taken down in preparation for finishing. The remaining upper parts of the case are currently being set up.

Op. 1 (II/15; 1974) is also being set up in the shop and is being refurbished for a new home. Originally built by Lynn Dobson in a shed on the family farm that had previously been used as a chicken coop, Op. 1 was sold to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux City, Iowa, in 1974, before Lynn established his business. When that church closed last fall, arrangements were made to move Op. 1 to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota. Installation is scheduled for late summer.

RECORDINGS

Opus 76: The Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ, is the title of a new CD (CM20108) released this year by ACA Digital Recording, Inc., of Atlanta. Featuring Alan Morrison, organist and The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Mischa Santora, conductor, the disc includes Eric Sessler's new *Organ Concerto* (premiere recording), Anne Wilson's *Toccata for Organ*, as well as works by J.S. Bach, Joseph Jongen, Dan Locklair and Calvin Hampton.

In celebration of our company's 35th anniversary last fall, we assembled an online exhibition of some of Lynn Dobson's drawings. One of the most highly-regarded case designers of his generation, Lynn has proven to be equally at home in modern or historically-inspired idioms. *Lynn A. Dobson: Drawings & Projects* presents a selection of work from 1974–2009, and includes conceptual sketches as well as finished presentation drawings for both built organs and projects that did not come to fruition. For his work Lynn has received awards from the American Institute of Architects, the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art & Architecture, and the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Shown here are several examples from the exhibition, which can be found on our website at [www.dobsonorgan.com/dwg/home.html](http://www.dobsonorgan.com/dwg/home.html). Every case design begins with a free-hand conceptual sketch that is then further refined in the form of an ink drawing. It is then scanned and manipulated digitally for client presentation. Eventually the design is entered into a CAD program for technical design and shop drawings.



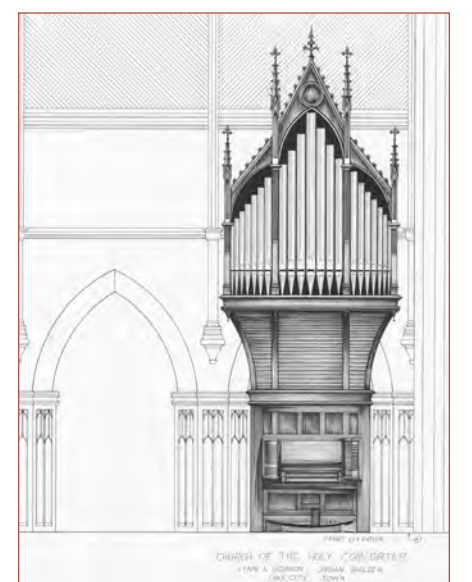
Design study for Op. 76, Kimmel Center Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



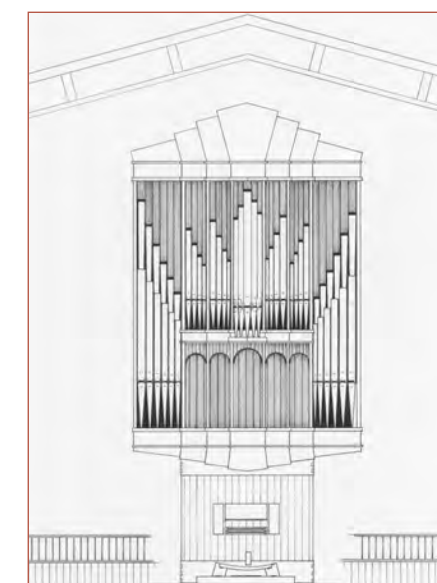
Op. 22, Zion Lutheran Church, Cologne, Minnesota



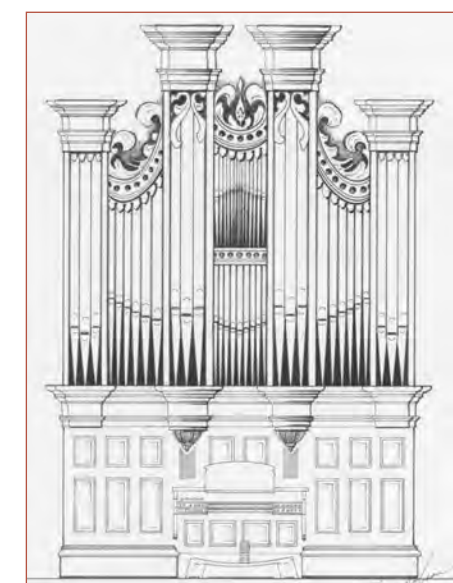
Op. 23, Church of St. Michael, Stillwater, Minnesota



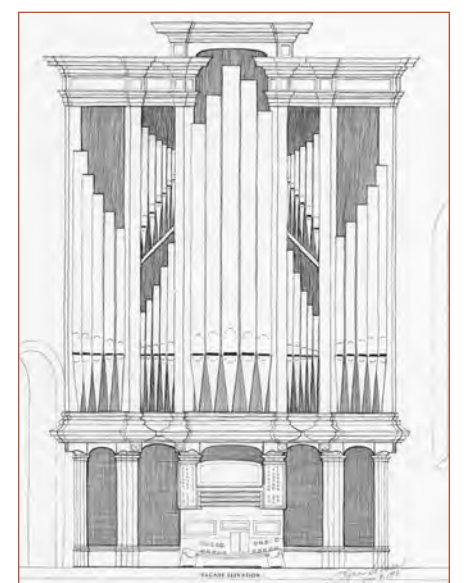
Op. 28, Church of the Holy Comforter, Burlington, North Carolina



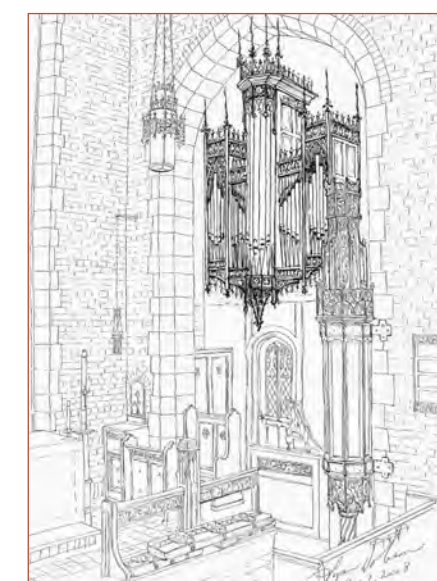
Op. 55, St. John Lutheran Church, Storm Lake, Iowa



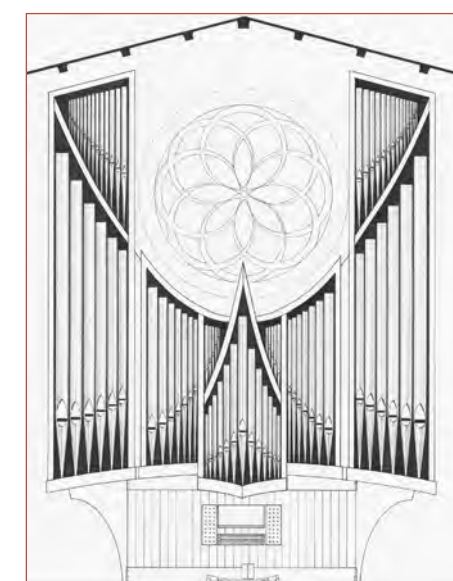
Op. 69, Pakachog Church, Auburn, Massachusetts



Op. 71, West Market Street UMC, Greensboro, North Carolina



St. Martin Chapel (not built), Denver, Colorado



Central United Methodist Church (not built), Phoenix, Arizona



St. Mark's Episcopal Church (not built), Jacksonville, Florida