

Church of the Holy Spirit, Harleysville, Pa., presented a benefit concert and open recording session on 2/5 featuring Op. 2 (II/15; 1982/1998). **Mark Laubach**, of Bethlehem, Pa., was the recitalist. Proceeds will help fund the church choir's tour to the UK in the summer of 2012.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa, continued its "2010-11 Fine Arts Series" with a solo recital by resident organist **Ruth Harris** on 2/6. The organ is Op. 14 (II/38; 1981).

Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Stillwater, Minn., marked the 25th anniversary of Op. 30 (II/33; 1985) with the 12/5 *Service of Nine Lessons and Carols*. **Nancy Whipkey**, Director of Music, conducted the choir and **Kathy Handford** served as guest organist. **Lynn Dobson** was invited to read the sixth lesson. A reception followed the service.

Second Christian Reformed Church, Pella, Iowa, will host a recital as part of the **AGO Region VI Convention** to be held in nearby Des Moines, 6/20-6/23. **John Ourensma** will present a program of Dutch organ music on Op. 41 (II/17; 1988).

Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, Mich., presented its 24th annual "Symposium on Worship," 1/27-1/29. Two events involving organ took place in the Calvin College Chapel, home to Op. 44 (III/49; 1989): **James Abingdon** in a seminar on *Organ Music by Black Composers*; **Al Fedak** led a hymn festival entitled *Seasons of Praise*. Fedak led a second hymn festival on 1/30, sponsored by **Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church**, the congregation that shares the Chapel facilities with **Calvin College**. Earlier last fall, as part of its "Faculty and Guest Series," the College sponsored Dutch organist **Sietze DeVries** in a master class and recital on Op. 44.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan Beach, Calif., continues its 2010-11 concert series featuring programs on Op. 56 (II/17; 1992). On 3/27 **Robert Hobby** was organist for the series' annual hymn festival. First Friday of the month "Bach's Lunch" recital programs include: 1/7, **James Taulbee**; 2/4, **Namhee Han**, organ, with **Rong-Huey Liu**, oboe; 4/1, **Allison J. Luedecke**, organ, with **Millennia Consort**.

Faith Lutheran Church, Des Moines, Iowa, home to Op. 61 (II/34; 1993), will host two events on 6/21 that are part of the **AGO Region VI Convention** to be held in Des Moines 6/20-6/23: 9:15 a.m., **Aaron David Miller**, *Improvisational Techniques from the 19th-21st Centuries*; 10:45 a.m., **Catherine Rodland**, solo recital.

Presbyterian Homes, Evanston, Ill., continues its 2010-11 "A Gift of Music" series featuring Op. 64 (II/24; 1994). The 1:30 p.m. Monday concerts include: 1/24, **Julia Brueck**; 2/28, **Harry van Wijk**; 3/28, **Massimo Nosetti**; 4/25, **John Ourensma**; 5/23, **Andrew Peters**; 6/27, **Colin Lynch**.

West Market Street United Methodist Church, Greensboro, N.C., home to Op. 71 (III/58; 1999), will host two programs featuring the organ that are part of the **AGO Region IV Convention** to be held in Greensboro, 6/26-6/29: 6/27, a solo recital by organist **Faythe Freese**; 6/28, a concert by the choral ensemble **Bel Canto**.

The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, Calif., continues its 2010-11 "Cathedral Concert Series" which includes several events involving Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003): 1/29, **Sal Soria**; 2/18, **Fred Swann**; 2/20, *Wonder, Love and Praise*, the 7th annual choral festival presented by the **Mark Thallander Foundation**, **Mack Wilburg**, guest conductor, **Fred Swann**, festival organist; 3/19, Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, with the **Cathedral Choir**, **Ensemble Choir**, a cast from the **LA Opera**, **James Conlon**, conductor, **Sal Soria**, organ.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., continues its 2010-11 organ recital series featuring Op. 76 (IV/125; 2006): 2/26, **Joan Lippincott**; 3/16, **Thierry Eschaich**. Last fall Kimmel Center was the venue for *One Joyful Choir*, a hymn festival sponsored by **The Presbytery of Philadelphia**. Consisting of 500 voices representing 135 area Presbyterian churches, the choir was conducted by **Pearl Shangkuan** and accompanied by **John Ferguson**.

St. John United Methodist Church, Augusta, Ga., continues its seventh season of "Concerts with a Cause" featuring Op. 78 (III/42; 2003): 3/13, **Bob Parris** and **Alvin Blount**, teacher and student, play Bach; 5/1, **Mack Wilberg** conducts a concert of his compositions for chorus and orchestra, with **The Symphony Orchestra Augusta**, **The University of South Carolina (Aiken) Concert Choir**, **The Davidson Fine Arts Chorale** and **The Saint John Choir** with **Keith Shafer**, organ. Opening the 2011-12 season next September will be a recital by **Hector Olivera**.

Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church, Ellison Bay, Wis., recently presented a recital on Op. 79 (II/23; 2004). Organist **Naomi Rowley** was assisted by the church's choral and handbell ensembles.

St. David's Episcopal Church, Wayne, Pa., continues its 2010-11 concert series featuring Op. 84 (II/47; 2007): 4/3, Evensong by the **Choir of Merton College** (Oxford, UK); 4/10, a choral concert by the **St. David's Choir** featuring **Fauré's Requiem**; 6/5, **Diane Meredith Belcher**, organ with **Joseph Alessi**, trombone.

Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, continues its 2010-11 "Tower Arts Series" with programs featuring Op. 89 (IV/95; 2009): 1/30, *Park Cities Organists' Showcase*; 4/10, **HPUMC Chancel Choir** in a concert featuring **Durufflé's Requiem** and **Vierne's Messe Solennelle**, **David Childs**, conductor, **Bradley Welch**, organist; 5/29, the annual *Memorial Day Concert*.

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind., presented **John Bernthal** in a faculty recital on 4/3. Dobson rebuilt the 1959 Schlicker in 1996 (IV/102).

We're pleased to note that **John Panning**, our Tonal Director, has been appointed to the board of the **International Society of Organbuilders** (ISO). Founded in Amsterdam in 1957, the ISO is made up of about 300 pipe organ builders in 36 countries. In addition to a congress held every two years in different cities around the world, the ISO organizes technical workshops held at the shops of member firms, and publishes the *ISO Journal*, issued three times a year in English, French and German. John has served as an editor of the *Journal* since 1991.

THE ORGANBUILDER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

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Merton College Chapel

Oxford, England

Proposed Visual Design

A New Organ for Merton College Oxford, England

750th Anniversary - 2014

Dobson Pipe Organ Builders, Ltd.

Three manuals, 54 ranks
Mechanical key action
Electric stop action

Projected completion - 2013

Warden
Prof. Sir Martin Taylor, FRS

Chaplain
The Rev. Dr. Simon Jones

Reed Rubin Directors of Music
Peter Phillips
Benjamin Nicholas

As human beings there are times when we feel overwhelmingly connected to the history of mankind in ways that we never imagined. This may happen when we learn new information about family history or see an impressive work of art. Perhaps it happens when we are at the site of a monumental historical event. Making connections to our history brings into focus what those of the past have accomplished, what they gave us and how that in turn has shaped us. It also prods us into thinking about what we are doing and what our own contribution to civilization might be.



In December 2009, when I arrived in Oxford, England, this intense connection with history struck me immediately as we drove down High Street toward the center of Oxford. Leaving the bus I walked down Logic Lane, a winding pedestrian alley, and came out facing the medieval buildings of Merton College.

Walter de Merton, Chancellor of England and later Bishop of Rochester, by his Statutes of 1264 established Merton College as the first of the Oxford colleges. The original College Hall, where the students dine, was built in 1277. The "Mob Quad" the oldest of the four quadrangles that make up the College was begun in 1288. The choir of the Chapel was built from 1290-1294 and by 1450 had been enlarged with the addition of transepts and tower. Interior renovations were made by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century and further alterations were made in the 19th century by Sir Gilbert Scott among others. The Library was built in 1373-1378 and is the oldest continuously functioning academic library in the world. Today Merton College consists of the Warden, 71 Fellows, 330 graduates and 303 undergraduates. The College operates in the unique "Oxbridge" (Oxford/Cambridge) tradition of having students in independent study with direction from tutorial style teaching.

As part of Merton College's preparations to celebrate their 750th anniversary in 2014, The Rev. Dr. Simon Jones, Chaplain, Benjamin Nicholas and Peter Phillips, Reed Rubin Directors of Music, invited John Panning and me to come to Oxford in December 2009 to discuss the possibilities for a new organ in their historic Chapel. This past year subsequently included numerous discussions of tonal and architectural considerations, considerable work on visual designs, as well as a visit to the U.S. by Simon and Ben. As a result of this work I am pleased to say that Merton College has made the decision to have Dobson Pipe Organ Builders design and build a new 44 register, 54 rank organ of three manuals and pedal. The organ is scheduled to be completed by Christmas 2013 and will be a central feature of Merton's 750th anniversary celebration in 2014.

A large part of the process of designing the new organ has been getting to know Merton College, making connections with its history and the people who made that history. Several very special places at the College really spoke to me in a powerful way. The medieval glazed tiles on the floor of the ancient Library have borne so many footsteps that the colors and patterns are worn off everywhere except in corners and under the ancient oak benches. These tiles

begin to tell us about the many scholars that have walked here through the years. The Muniment Room, reached by climbing narrow circular stone steps, is lined with ancient oak cabinets filled with historic documents going all the way back to the college's founding and before. These archives tell the rich story of the College and its place in history. A climb up the Chapel tower, through the bell chamber and onto the roof, allows one a breathtaking view of old Oxford and its other thirty-seven colleges with their chapels, domed libraries and beautifully kept quadrangles. This skyline hasn't changed much in hundreds of years and continues to tell a magnificent story through its extraordinary architecture. Of course, the College Chapel, where the new organ is to be located, is a most remarkable place. The architectural details of the building itself, the 13th century stained glass, the brasses in the monuments laid into the floor, the 1673 Wren choir screen, the wood carvings, the massive brass lectern - one cannot help but be in awe of the history that has been made here, the famous people who have worshiped here and the traditions that have been observed here for centuries.

This past February I made a return trip to Oxford for several days of meetings with College officials. On Sunday evening, John Ourensma and I attended Choral Evensong in the Chapel. Lit by candlelight the space was filled with fellows, graduates and undergraduates, many of whom were dressed in black tie and gowns, listening to the music of Bairstow, Stanford and Harris in the glorious acoustic. After the service we adjourned to the Ante-chapel for a wine reception, then processed to the Queen's Room for cocktails and finally were seated in the great timbered Hall for dinner on High Table. Again, the Hall was alight with candles. The Merton College Grace was recited in Latin, toasts were made and dinner began. After dinner we adjourned to a 16th century room, paneled with ornately carved walnut wainscoting and ceilings, for dessert. Finally, the evening continued in yet another grand salon where we had cocktails and visited with Fellows of the College. After such a splendid evening I felt as if I had been able to learn much more about what a very special place Merton College really is.

These next months, as I am absorbed in completing design work for the new organ, I feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility to contribute something truly remarkable to this exceptional place and the fabric of its history.



John was born in Faribault, Minnesota, by six years the youngest of eight children – his oldest sibling, now deceased, was 20 years his senior. His father was a Lutheran pastor who served in parish ministry but spent most of his career as a chaplain in various state and church-related institutions for the mentally handicapped. Consequently, John and his family moved around more than most; after Faribault came Watertown, Wisconsin, then on to Lakefield, Minnesota, and the final place John lived before going off to college, Elmhurst, Illinois.

Music has always played an important part in John's life and that of the Streufert clan. His siblings all studied piano and John took his turn when he was in the second grade. By the fourth grade he was accompanying Sunday School classes at church. During his high school years at Waltham Lutheran High School, Melrose Park, Illinois, he sang in the choir and served as its accompanist. John also took flute lessons and played in the high school band. Other interests included participation in the drama club and lettering in tennis. After high school John attended Gustavus Adolphus College, in St. Peter, Minnesota, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in piano performance in 1987.

But parallel to John's love of music runs a vein of fascination with all things that grow. From his earliest recollection of working in the family garden with his mother to dabbling with bonsai during high school or tending a room full of varied houseplants when he had his first apartment, John has always been involved with gardening in some way. Rooting around in a flowerbed is one of John's favorite ways to relax.

So when attempting to decide on a career, John's decision wavered between music and horticulture. After high school he was firm in his decision that he'd had enough of music. But when the time came to declare a major at college, he reconsidered and decided to pursue piano performance. After graduation John doubted his musical direction once more and for a brief time undertook schooling in horticulture and landscape architecture.

Music finally won the battle, but perhaps not exactly in the way John or others might have expected. Somewhere in his deliberations he became convinced that he wanted to do something that combined music and working with his hands. So he took a course in piano tuning and regulation at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, in 1990. During this time John was alerted to a position at Berghaus Pipe Organ Builders, Bellwood, Illinois, where his

It has been rather striking over the years how so many of these employee profiles contain a similar refrain: a person's journey to becoming an organbuilder never seems very direct. Some might infer that organbuilders are therefore just an odd lot that can't seem to make up their minds about a career. We, however, prefer to think that our co-workers have been positively shaped by their varied life experiences into just the sort of talented, well-rounded, diverse and interesting people we really need in this business. Yet another case in point? One of our voicers, John Streufert.

brother Jim was employed at the time. John was hired and decided to "give it a year" but stayed for sixteen. He soon moved into the position of voicer and was involved in the voicing and tonal finishing of over 50 instruments. It was during his tenure at Berghaus that he met his future wife Allison, a new secretary at the company. Asked what first caught his attention about her, he flashes his trademark broad smile and says, "She brought bagels!"

We first met John and Allison during John's interview with us late in 2006. They were married in December of that year and moved to Lake City in early 2007. Most of John's duties take place in one of the shop's two voicing rooms. While he has enjoyed learning various new aspects of voicing in our style, we in turn have greatly benefited from his extensive experience as a voicer, his fastidious approach to the art and his exceptionally fine ear. John is also involved in on-site tonal finishing and normally performs the final tuning of all new instruments. Setting fine temperaments and carrying out careful tunings are tasks he truly enjoys. Additionally, his love of working with his hands has served him well as he has learned the craft of pipemaking.

When John isn't on the road with work he tries to balance family life with working in his garden, baking at home (introducing Cookie Thursday at work) and trying to keep his fingers in shape on the piano. He's also enjoys the challenge of composition and has been working on several pieces for soprano and piano with texts by A.E. Housman. However, three-year-old Evan and three-month-old Scott tend to set the priorities on the home front these days and add a lively dimension to John's life!

In retrospect it's clear that John could easily have chosen a career fussing with plants instead of pipes. And he may have been just as happy! We, on the other hand, are delighted that his life path brought him and his family to be with us in Lake City.



John and Allison with Evan and infant son, Scott

The installation and voicing of Op. 88 (II/22) for St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Illinois, has been completed. On-site assembly of the organ commenced January 17 and was finished February 4. While finishing key action adjustments, the crew experienced the massive snow storm that battered the Chicago area with record snowfall and high winds those last few days. Tonal finishing of the instrument began two weeks later and was completed by late March. Op. 88 stands at the front of the 1950s sanctuary in a newly-configured arrangement of the chancel area that includes space for choir and other musicians. The 26' - 8" tall case frames a large 22' x 9' cross (about 4 feet of the lower part of the cross is actually behind the case). The new modesty screen, altar, missal stand, candlesticks and baptismal font were all designed and built by Dobson. Three carved panels taken from the previous altar adorn the central panel of the new modesty screen. Guest organist Stephen Tharp, a native of Park Ridge, will play the dedicatory recital on Sunday, May 22. More information on this organ as well as pictures of its construction and installation may be found on our website at www.dobsonorgan.com.



Op. 88, St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Illinois

A complete cleaning of Casavant Op. 2713 (II/38; 1962), at the Basilica of St. John, Des Moines, Iowa, was undertaken in March. In addition, the low twelve resonators of the sagging Pedal 16' Posaune were replaced and fitted with more substantial racking.

Phase I restoration work of the Wangerin-Estey (II/25; 1911), at First Christian Church, Clarinda, Iowa, was completed this April. This first phase of work stabilized the organ by addressing the instrument's most critical needs.

Also completed this spring was a service project at First Presbyterian Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa. The 1939 Kimball (III/44) required extensive pipe racking work and related pipe repair, re-leathering of wood pipe stoppers and solving various windchest wiring issues.

Another installment in our ongoing restorative work of Wangerin-Weickhardt Op. 152 (II/9; 1913) at Corning United Methodist Church, Corning, Iowa, is currently scheduled for late spring. Work will include suppressing blower noise and related turbulence in the wind system, pipe repair and remedial voicing.

LOOKING BACK

This Spring 2011 issue of *The Organbuilder* marks the 10th anniversary of our company newsletter. Begun a few years after launching our comprehensive website, both efforts reflect our commitment to making news and information about Dobson Pipe Organ Builders easily accessible to clients, other friends of the company and the general public. Of course, the electronic age allows us to quickly update our website, our newly launched Facebook page (www.facebook.com/dobsonorgan), or send an email with breaking news. By nature of the medium the newsletter actually contains mostly information of happenings that have already taken place. Nevertheless, we plan to continue publishing *The Organbuilder* in order to provide a "hands on" opportunity for friends to read about company news and information and reflections that do not appear elsewhere.

Publishing our newsletter is a team effort. Lynn Dobson designed the newsletter's basic format and con-

WORK IN PROGRESS

The shop is currently fully occupied with the building of Op. 90 for Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. A quick walk through the wood shop confirms that construction of the slider windchests, offset chests, swell shades and framing, windlines and the console case is well underway. A recent trip to Birmingham served to gather up select components and pipes of the previous instrument that will be reconfigured for use in the new organ. As part of that trip, middle C pipes for the new organ were brought into the church and set for volume and color. These now serve as references for the rest of the stops they represent as shop voicing begins. The organ is scheduled for installation in the fall.

The design department is finishing up drawings for Op. 90's two façades, is working on various design issues related to the new instrument for Merton College, Oxford, UK, and continues developing design studies for a variety of potential future projects.

tinues to approve general content, layout and picture selection of each issue. John Ourensma is the general editor, does most of the initial writing and makes sure the publication actually happens. He gathers information on the status of work in the shop from Dean Heim, Shop Foreman, as well as summaries of service projects from Dean Zenor, Service Manager. John Panning wrote most of the personnel profiles until recently, and has always been the publication's final editor and main proofreader. We produce the newsletter in house "camera ready" and have it sent out for printing and bulk mailing.

Thank you so much for your many kind comments about this publication. However, we would be thrilled to include much more news about recitals and special events on our instruments around the country. We know there's more happening out there than we are aware of. Please keep us informed!

Set in a distinctly urban setting, the University of Tampa has grown tremendously since its founding in 1933. Tampa's first institution of higher learning, the UT was founded in the former Tampa Bay Hotel, an exotic landmark with flamboyant Moorish domes and minarets set on the Hillsborough River. The rooms that once hosted Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders, Sarah Bernhart, Babe Ruth (who hit his longest home run ever (587 feet) at nearby Plant Field), Clara Barton, Stephen Crane, Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, the Queen of England and many other celebrities, are today's classrooms, laboratories, public rooms, academic and administrative offices – the heart of a 6,500-student university that now fans out in 50 buildings on 100 acres around Plant Hall.



Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values
The University of Tampa
Tampa, Florida
Op. 89, 2011

Located a shorter distance from Plant Hall than Ruth's record homer is Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values, the latest addition to the campus. A gift of local entrepreneur John H. Sykes, the facility includes the 250-seat Main Hall and meditation and meeting rooms, as well as outdoor plazas and gardens. The Main Hall is furnished with flexible seating and serves for worship and assembly of various student religious groups at UT, as well as concerts, lectures and ceremonial events. The space has an airiness that comes from its sixty-five foot arched ceiling and the flood of light entering through a skylight that runs the entire length of the building. Large side windows and a rear wall made entirely of glass add even more light. The floors are honed granite with walls paneled in American black cherry. Fabric curtains hidden in ceiling pockets may be deployed according to the acoustical needs of a given event. The building's HVAC system is as quiet as possible and the building is well insulated from exterior noise.

Our involvement came in 2007 through organ consultant Scott Riedel of Milwaukee. Our first meeting with University representatives took place at St. David's Episcopal Church, Wayne, Pa., where our Op. 84 (III/47; 2007) is installed. After hearing and seeing the organ, the Tampa delegation made it clear that they intended to select us as the builder of their new instrument. A contract for the organ was signed in Summer 2008; installation commenced two years later.

The visual design for Op. 89 was created especially for the unique architectural setting of the new space. It responds to the sheltering shape of the ceiling with great arcs that give the organ case a dynamic appearance. By having the tops of the organ case reflect the shape of the building's arches, there is an immediate recognition of the dominant feature of the room, but in reverse. The space gives the sense of enclosing or enveloping, while the organ gives the sense of rising up and pushing the room open. The strong curving lines of the case tops are softened by the fact that the plane of the façade has a graceful transition from concave at either side to convex in the center. As a result, the strong curving shapes that define the tops of the case become like ribbons in the third dimension, first receding, then flowing forward around the pipes.

The organ case is made of American black cherry and stands nearly 50 feet tall; it is 21 feet wide at its greatest and just over 8 feet deep. The console is placed about six feet in front of the organ case to permit two rows of singers to stand in between. The Great is located at the level of the impost with the Swell above it. The Choir is below the Great, in the base of the case. The largest pipes of the Pedal stand behind the main case while the Pedal upperwork shares windchest space with the Great. The façade pipes are made of burnished 90% tin and include pipes of the Great 8' Principal (notes 1-27, at the top of the case) Great/Pedal 16' Principal (notes 1-45, at impost level), and the Pedal 8' Octave (9-32, mounted upside down in front of the Choir division). The 8' Horizontal Trumpet, also made of tin, takes its commanding position in the center of the façade.

Op. 89 employs mechanical key action for the manuals and pedal upperwork; the Horizontal Trumpet and the largest pipes of the Pedal have electric action. All coupling is mechanical. The electric stop and combination action includes the usual complement of pistons and 256 memory levels. The manual divisions and Pedal upperwork are voiced on 3" wind pressure while the Pedal basses and solo reed are voiced on 5". The organ is tuned in equal temperament.

The new building was dedicated on December 10, 2010, at which time the organ was first heard by the public. At that time, the organ was essentially finished except for some final regulation of several stops in the Pedal division. This work was completed in early January 2011. Dedication recitals included: January 30, David Isele; February 12 & 13, Haig Mardirosian; March 12 & 13, Carole Terry; April 9 & 10, Kurt Knecht.

Pictures of the construction and installation as well as complete organ specifications may be found at www.dobsonorgan.com