

FROM THE PRESIDENT



I write this having just returned from the installation of the façade and interior 32' stops for the organ in Philadelphia's Verizon Hall, new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Without skipping a beat, we are preparing for the installation of the organ for the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. These two huge projects have added a new dimension to our perspective on organbuilding. It is probably every builder's dream to build *the really big one*, so when we began planning the Cathedral's instrument, we thought this one was our chance

and eagerly welcomed the prospect. When we were subsequently chosen for the Philadelphia project, we were still more excited, but also realized that we would be working on two organs of immense size at the same time. Knowing that opportunities such as these might not likely come again soon, we decided that we had to rise to the challenge and do our very best to successfully carry out both huge projects simultaneously.

A very interesting aspect of these endeavors has been the incredibly invigorating experience of working with superstar architects José Rafael Moneo in Los Angeles and Rafael Viñoly in Philadelphia. We have been privileged to observe how great architecture develops from the design stage through construction. It has also been enlightening to see how the architectural, engineering and construction firms are organized to facilitate the design and building process of projects of this magnitude and complexity.

We have learned valuable lessons from how these firms work so successfully, and I am pleased that our company has grown and matured through our association with them. For instance, we have revised our internal office policies to more effectively manage, track and document all facets of an organ project. We are thus able to gain a more accurate overall picture of the work in progress at any given time. This is particularly important since it is difficult to simply "have a feel" for the day-to-day progress of these large projects, as we do with smaller instruments. We've also become more comfortable with the speed at which business moves in our day. CAD drawings received via e-mail

allow us to look over a design, make changes, and send them back, sometimes in less than an hour.

When we started these projects, we could not have fully realized the extent of their complexity. Simply moving the many massive parts is a daunting task. Some of the Cathedral organ's windchests, for example, must be hoisted 80 feet up to their final home. We are currently working with an engineering firm engaged by the Cathedral just for the design of the scaffolding and rigging to be used to set up the organ. We learned many lessons about methods and equipment from the Philadelphia riggers, who effortlessly hoisted low C of the 32' Double Open Diapason, a pipe measuring 24" x 29" and weighing 1,600 pounds. Mastering all of these challenges is essential to getting the job done successfully and safely.

While we are enjoying these immense undertakings, our customary work will likely remain building organs of more moderate proportions. I do believe, however, that the experience and lessons we are learning from these big projects will put us in an even better position to take on challenging work of any size.

Best regards,

Lynn Dobson

PROFILES



Jon H. Thieszen is Technical Designer with Dobson Pipe Organ Builders. In 1975, while still in college, he began coming to Lake City for summer work at the Dobson shop. Subsequent summers found him returning until he was hired as a full-time employee in 1978. Since then, Jon's role within the company has grown steadily and led to his appointment as Technical Designer in 1984. He has been responsible for the technical design and working drawings of over fifty new organs and numerous rebuilding projects. These instruments stand as

testaments to Jon's consistently fine work, and furthermore demonstrate the benefits of having on our staff a designer who is also an active organist.

Born the son of a Mennonite minister, Jon's childhood was spent in Ohio, Kansas and Minnesota. This exposed him, as he says, "to organs and 'non-organs' of all kinds." He naturally gained an interest in the church organ at an early age. After several years of piano studies, he began organ lessons as a high school freshman and began playing for church services a few years later. Jon attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, studying organ with Alice Loewen and Shirley Sprunger King. Though he received a Bachelor of Arts in Church Music and Organ Performance, Jon has always had strong interests in the technical aspects of the organ. His studies in high school and college included a variety of industrial arts, mechanical drawing and design courses.

Jon's first years in Lake City were spent on the construction of nearly every part of a pipe organ, from reservoirs and keyboards to windchests and casework. He was also involved in the final on-site installation of new organs. For an instrument in which every part is interconnected and small changes can have great consequences, this thorough background in all facets of organbuilding was the ideal training for a designer, giving Jon a practical understanding of how each part affects and relates to the whole.

As the company grew and Lynn Dobson's other responsibilities limited the time he could spend in the draw-

ing room, Jon assumed a greater role in the mechanical design. He and Lynn work closely, Lynn conceiving the instrument and making presentation drawings, and Jon making all of the mechanical drawings necessary to build the instrument. It is a tribute to his skill and attention to detail that his construction drawings for our Op. 75 were chosen for display at Los Angeles' Museum of Contemporary Art (see this issue's *Newsbits*). In addition to his many design and supervisory duties, Jon is also the shop's unofficial Macintosh guru. His knowledge of computers was key when the shop began using them nearly fifteen years ago, and to this day keeps our company on the cutting edge of computer aided organ design.

Jon and his wife Maurine, who is the Dietician at Lake City's Stewart Memorial Community Hospital, are both musical people: in addition to the organ, Jon plays the trombone, Maurine is a fine soprano and plays the flute. In 1984, Jon designed and built their 1,900 sq. ft. home on a wooded one acre lot in the northeast section of town. Jon has always been something of a car aficionado, and can comment knowledgeably on just about any model past or present. Cars figure more prosaically now in his life, as he chauffeurs his two teenagers, Patrick and Erin.

Jon is a member of the American Institute of Organbuilders (AIO) and has presented lectures at a number of AIO seminars. He has been a member of the AIO Education Committee since 1994. Jon has served as organist of Lake City Union Church since 1980, presiding over Op. 13 (II/29; 1980).

RECENTLY COMPLETED

Installation of the organ façade of Dobson Op. 76 for the 2,500 seat Verizon Hall at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., has been completed in time for the Center's mid-December Grand Opening with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

For over two years Dobson Pipe Organ Builders has been at work designing what will be the largest of the new generation of mechanical action concert hall instruments. The façade was designed in collaboration with Rafael Viñoly, the New York architect of the \$250 million Kimmel Center. With a gentle curve from side to side and leaning at a striking four degree angle, the façade is an integral element of the hall's elegant visual design. In both views pictured here, the upper portion

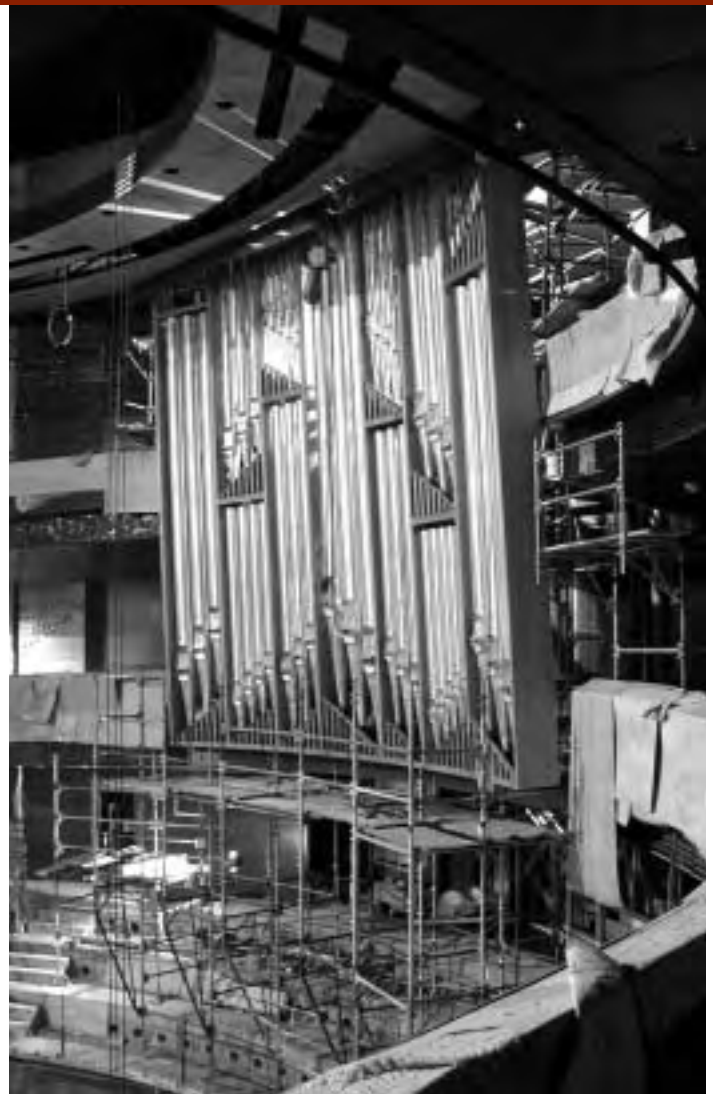


of the case is obscured due to ongoing construction of the the stage canopy and the pipes are still covered with protective plastic wrap.

Because the completion of the building would prohibit the later installation of the largest pipes, the basses of the 32' Double Open Diapason and 32' Bourdon were installed at this time. The

outside dimensions of CCCC of the 32' Double Open Diapason, shown below during installation, measures 24" x 29". FFFF# of the Great Prestant 32' is the largest pipe in the façade; the lowest six notes are wooden pipes of Haskell construction and located inside the case.

Construction and installation of the complete instrument, which is to be scaled and voiced in collaboration with Manuel Rosales, will follow the successful conclusion of fund raising efforts currently underway.



WORK IN PROGRESS

Dobson Op. 75 (IV/105) for the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, Calif., has been the focus of the entire shop since early spring. The American cherry exterior casework, interior framing members, swell boxes, walkboards and ladders have been completed. Construction of the eight main windchests and numerous 32' and 16' bass offset chests is nearly finished, while pipe racking continues, as does the shop voicing of the new and re-used pipework. The stylish four manual console is now being built. Detailed planning for installing the organ is underway, while the extensive installation itself is scheduled to begin during the second week of January, 2002.

FEATURED INSTRUMENT

Located in Minnesota on the Mississippi River, Red Wing is best known for work boots and pottery. Norwegian immigrants, many employed in these industries, founded two Lutheran churches which merged several decades ago to form United Lutheran Church, today a vibrant congregation of the ELCA.

Although a committee had been formed in 1987 to consider the replacement of the church's aging eight rank Möller, their work did not come to fruition. In the current effort, the leadership of Pastors Randall Johnson and Andrew Smith, and Director of Music Paul Christenson (himself an ordained minister) was crucial to the success of the project. Because of the delay in a building construction project for another client, we were able to fit the United Lutheran organ into a window in our schedule that allowed installation of the organ only a year after the contract signing. Fundraising and revisions to the worship space were carried out in short order. Acoustic tile was removed from the ceiling, and the chancel wall was replastered and painted. All was completed for the organ's February 2001 installation. The new instrument was celebrated in three dedication worship services in the morning and a concert on Sunday afternoon, May 20, 2001. In the spirit of Psalm 150, representatives of every class of instrument joined the organ in festive music: voices, brass, piano, violin, handbells, percussion, flute, even sitar and bagpipes.

The organ is located in the place formerly occupied by the altar, which had been moved to a position on the church's side wall several years before the organ's arrival. The manual divisions are in a free-standing case of white oak, with a detached, mechanical action console placed in front. The Pedal division has electric action and is located in the old organ chamber directly behind the screen. Though modest in resources, the organ strives to provide the greatest possible variety as well as a sense of grandeur not normally found in instruments of this size. For reasons of economy, the Swell strings and the basses of the Pedal 16' Open Wood and 16' Bourdon were retained from the previous instrument and revoiced. Wind pressures of 82 and 100 millimeters were employed for the manuals and pedal, respectively. The organ is tuned in equal temperament.



ORGAN SPECIFICATION

GREAT

| | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------|
| 16' | Bourdon | <i>1-24 old</i> |
| 8' | Prestant | <i>in façade</i> |
| 8' | Harmonic Flute | |
| 4' | Octave | |
| 2' | Fifteenth | |
| IV | Mixture | <i>1 1/3'</i> |
| 8' | Trumpet | |
| | Swell to Great | |

SWELL (expressive)

| | | |
|----|---------------|------------------------|
| 8' | Chimney Flute | |
| 8' | Salicional | <i>old</i> |
| 8' | Celeste | <i>old</i> |
| 4' | Spire Flute | |
| 2' | Piccolo | |
| II | Cornet | <i>2 2/3'</i> |
| 8' | Oboe | |
| | Tremulant | <i>affects manuals</i> |
| | Zimbelstern | |

PEDAL

| | | |
|-----|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 16' | Open Bass | <i>1-18 old</i> |
| 16' | Bourdon | <i>from Great Bourdon</i> |
| 8' | Principal | <i>extension of Open Bass</i> |
| 8' | Gedackt | <i>From Great Bourdon</i> |
| 4' | Choralbass | <i>extension of Open Bass</i> |
| 16' | Trombone | <i>full length</i> |
| 8' | Trumpet | <i>extension of Trombone</i> |
| | Great to Pedal | |
| | Swell to Pedal | |

NEWSBITS

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Ia., has announced its 2001-2002 Fine Arts Series, featuring Op. 14 (II/38; 1981) in a performance of Jongen's *Symphonie Concertante* with organist **Ruth Harris**.

Stephen Gabrielsen presented his annual recital on Op. 42 (III/44; 1988) on October 7th at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn.



Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan Beach, Calif., has its 2001-2002 Concert Series underway, with programs that include Op. 56 (II/17; 1992). Also held are "Bach's Lunch Recitals," on the first Friday of each month, October through May.

The Presbyterian Homes, Evanston, Ill., continues its series of after lunch programs on the third Monday of each month presented on Op. 64 (II/24; 1994). In addition, full evening recitals have been given this year by **Carla Edwards** of Depauw University, Greencastle, Ind., and **Istvan Ruppert** of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary.

Wartburg College, Waverly, Ia., recently presented German organist **Heinrich Walther** in a program of music by Bach and the Couperins on Op. 67 (II/31; 1996) at the Wartburg College Chapel.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, Minn., presented a Choral Evensong and Organ Recital on Sunday, October 14, featuring Op. 70 (II/45; 1998). The service was played and directed by **Timothy Strand**, St. Paul Music Director; **Melanie Ninneman**, Music Director at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, was the recitalist.

St. Joseph Abbey, St. Benedict, La., home of Op. 73 (III/38; 2000), celebrated the Blessing of the Organ followed by a dedicatory recital by **Marcus St. Julien** on October 7, 2001. The organ was featured in the November/December 2001 issue of *Choir & Organ*.

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind., recently sponsored a hymn festival with organist **David Cherwien** on the Reddel Memorial Organ, a IV/102 Dobson rebuild. The event was part of an Institute of Liturgical Studies presented by the University.

Antal Kozma was welcomed to Lake City this fall as the newest employee at the Dobson shop. Antal, a native of Hungary, came to us from Canada where he had worked as a designer for Gabriel Kney & Co. since 1988. His organ building career began with FMKV Co. in Hungary. He holds a diploma in Pipe Organ Design and Building, a BFA in Graphic Arts and Industrial Design and a BA in Education. At Dobson, Antal will be working as a technical designer.

Simon Pierce, an organbuilder from Australia, spent several days at the Dobson shop this past May as part of a ten week tour of American organ building shops, sponsored by The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia. Simon visited a number of Dobson instruments in the Twin Cities area and was present at the inaugural concert for Op. 78 (II/20) in Red Wing, Minn. Shown at right are Simon and Lynn Dobson at Biltmore Estate during the 2001 OHS Convention.



The Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art has on display some 100 drawings by Dobson Pipe Organ Builders detailing the design and construction of Op. 75 (IV/105). The drawings are part of an exhibit centered around the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, home of Op. 75, and Disney Concert Hall.

The DPOB company website contains a variety of information about the company and our many projects. You can visit us at www.dobsonorgan.com.

Please keep us informed about programs or events on our instruments. We appreciate hearing from you.

LOOKING BACK

25 Years Ago - 1976 was focused on Op. 4 (II/33) for Olivet Congregational Church, St. Paul, Minn., the company's first major contract. In honor of the organ's anniversary the church will be producing a CD featuring current organist Paul Boehnke, and former organists David Engen and Tom Klug.

20 Years Ago - The second half of 1981 produced two new organs: Op. 15 (II/30) for University Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn., and Op. 16 (II/3) for Iowa State University, Ames, Ia.

10 Years Ago - In August of 1991 the installation of Op. 52 (II/17) for First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, Mo., was completed. The church recently celebrated the organ's tenth anniversary with a concert by organist Dennis Bergin. Op. 53 (II/37), for First Christian Church, Stillwater, Okla., was installed in early fall, and Op. 54 (II/16), for St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ind., was ready for use by Christmas.

NEW CONTRACT

Westwood Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park, Minn., has recently signed a contract for mechanical refurbishing and tonal additions to its 1964 Holtkamp. Primary changes being undertaken include new electric-slider windchests for both Great and Swell divisions, a new solid state combination action system, re-leathered wind system components, and a rebuilt console placed on a movable platform. Tonal work will include 14 ranks of new pipework and some revoicing of retained pipework. Preparations for an en chamade 8' Festival Trumpet, Swell 4' Clarion, and a Pedal 32' Bourdon extension are also included. The work is scheduled for 2002.



THE ORGANBUILDER

FALL 2001

NEWSLETTER

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**DOBSON
PIPE ORGAN
BUILDERS, LTD.**
200 North Illinois St.
Lake City, IA 51449
T 712 464 8065
F 712 464 3098
dobson@cal-net.net
www.dobsonorgan.com

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