

FROM THE PRESIDENT



This has been a good year as my colleagues and I celebrated our 30th Anniversary Year. We hosted several wonderful anniversary parties, enjoyed a terrific and rewarding AGO convention in Los Angeles, completed two beautiful new organs, enjoyed several organ dedication events, and were pleased to have another young and promising organbuilder join us. We've also made great progress with the building of the new instrument for Verizon Hall in Philadelphia and continue with planning an instrument for the new home of the Atlanta Symphony. On a more personal note, this past August I enjoyed a refreshing week hiking in the Grand Canyon.

In addition to our spring celebrations reviewed in the last newsletter, we hosted a festive reception during the 2004 National Convention of the American Guild of Organists held in Los Angeles this summer. As with all big events, there were some tense moments in the planning and execution. The mailing service we hired to handle the reception invitations somehow deleted a number of names from our guest list, regrettably leaving some of you without an invitation. There were also misunderstandings by the Cathedral security staff that resulted in some of you being misdirected as to where the reception was being held as well as confusion about transportation services back to the hotel. I apologize and regret that we missed seeing a number of you who were actually at the convention. Nevertheless, the reception was a great success. After our hard work to create the organ for this great Cathedral, it was exciting to have so many hear it for the first time and gratifying to receive such overwhelming positive response. I also appreciated seeing so many of you stop at our display booth. It was a fabulous week for us!

It is always a great pleasure to see projects come to completion. Our Op. 80 (II/26) in Washington, D.C., was particularly satisfying because of its central role in Director of Music Graham Elliott's ambitious plans for the musical life of the church and community. Dame Gillian Weir's dedication recital on October 6 was inspiring. Op. 79 (II/23), in Ellison Bay, Wis., just now being finished as I write this, also provides a unique sense of satisfaction. The organ project became a catalyst for the enlargement of the entire church facility! Like the Washington instrument, it will not just be a vital part of the church's active musical life but will have a highly visible profile on the thriving cultural scene of Door County. Although Op. 81 (II/29) in Kenilworth, Ill., was finished last fall, I was able to attend Andrew Reid's (Peterborough Cathedral, UK) fine dedicatory concert just this last month.

I'm happy to have Mitchell Clark join our technical design staff. Mitch graduated from Dordt College in 2003 with a B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering. Along with Donny Hobbs, who has been with us now for a year, Mitch is the second "twenty-something" to join a crew whose average age is somewhat older. It is good to have a younger generation coming in to learn our craft.

This year, and this November anniversary month in particular, has been a good time to reflect on the work Dobson Pipe Organ Builders has accomplished and what we anticipate for the future. When I started building organs the *Orgelbewegung* in America was well underway and I eagerly organized my business to be a part of this important organ reform movement.

As time has passed, however, new trends in organbuilding appeared. Today, while there are those who advocate the neo-classical organ in ways more historically informed than ever, there has also been renewed interest in *all* periods of organbuilding, including careful study of the details of their mechanical design and tonal palettes. As a result there is great variety among the new instruments being built with many organs exhibiting extraordinary eclecticism. Large new concert hall organs, for example, are expected to hold their own with a modern orchestra and still include qualities of a classically informed solo instrument. There seems to be no dominant idea of what an organ should be in today's cultural environment. In fact, it might seem that the organ world is in confusion about where the future of the organ will be.

I believe that the pipe organ has arrived at a magical moment in its history where we are enjoying the greatest diversity and vitality ever imagined for our instrument. But indeed, with all the possibilities available, it is not always clear how to chart a sound course into the future. Our firm's tonal ideals have progressed beyond those encompassed by the *Orgelbewegung*, but the movement's basic principles still guide our thinking as we mix a new tonal palette and bring modern technologies to our work. We are striving to take the organ into a new and exciting time where both its tonal and mechanical aspects become a uniquely 21st century thing. The organ for the Verizon Hall is our primary focus in the shop for the next year and a half. No instrument we have built could better exemplify the creative spirit of our time.

2004 AGO CONVENTION IN LOS ANGELES

At the concert: 1 -Paul Salamunovich conducts the massed choir 2 -A view down the aisle of the Cathedral
3 -A crowd at the console following the concert 4 -Paul (left) and Martin Jean congratulate each other
5 -Martin with the console 6 -A filled Cathedral nave 7 -Martin and his assistant, Charles Miller

At the Wednesday banquet: 8 -Lynn Dobson presents the 2nd Prize in Improvisation Award to Jason Roberts

At the reception, individuals pictured from left to right: 9 -Msgr. Kostelnik, Lynn, Sal Soria, Frank Brownstead

10 -Sebastian Glück, John Panning, Richard Houghten, Russ Schertle, Stefan Stuerze

11 -Eileen Gunther, Maggie Kemper, James Brown, Richard Hoskins

12 -Lynn, Paul Skevington, Ann Labounsky 13 -Craig & Heidi Whitney, Michael Barone 14 -Margaret Evans, Lynn



Photo credits:
1,2, 4-9 - Rick Flynn ©2004
3, 10-14 - courtesy of Arnold Sten

WORK IN PROGRESS

The National Convention of the American Guild of Organists, held July 4-9 in Los Angeles, offered over 2,200 attendees several opportunities to visit the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, home of our Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003). A pre-convention “appetizer” was served to an audience of over 1,000 on Saturday evening, July 3. Lynn Dobson began with a short talk on the challenges of building an organ appropriate for this unique space. John Panning, Dobson Tonal Director and Samuel Soria, Cathedral Organist, then provided a sonic tour of the organ.

On Monday, July 5, the evening program began with a massed choir concert under the direction of Paul Salamunovich with William Beck at the organ. Participating were the choirs of the director (St. Borromeo Church) and organist (St. Cyril of Jerusalem), as well as the resident Cathedral Choir, Frank Brownstead, Director. Repertoire included the premiere of a commissioned work by Byron Adams entitled *Praises of Jerusalem* (Psalm 122), the five movement *Lux Aeterna* of Morton Lauridsen and the well known *I Was Glad* of C.H.H. Parry. Both Mr. Adams and Mr. Lauridsen were in attendance.

A solo organ recital by Martin Jean of Yale University, performing Tournemire’s *Improvisation sur le Te Deum* and Dupré’s *Symphonie-Passion, Op. 23*, immediately followed. To celebrate Martin’s program and the organ, and to observe Dobson Pipe Organ Builders’ 30th anniversary, a reception including 300 guests was held in the Main Salon of the Cathedral conference center.

Although not on the convention schedule, the Cathedral’s Wednesday noon series presented German organist Gabriel Dessauer performing the *Introduktion, Passacaglia und Fugue in e minor, Op. 127*, by Max Reger.

The Cathedral was the setting for the closing events of the Convention on Friday, July 9. Sal Soria began the morning with a brief recital of works by Wyton, Howells and Sowerby. The Annual Meeting of the American Guild of Organists immediately followed and included an improvisation by Peter Krasinski, winner of the 2002 AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation. Concluding the morning was a concert by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Grant Gershon, Conductor, and William Beck, Organist, performing works by Byrd, Billings, Bedford, Fauré, Duruflé, Pärt, Thompson, Wagner and Finzi.

The AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation second prize is sponsored by Dobson Pipe Organ Builders. At the 2004 Convention’s Wednesday evening gala banquet, Lynn Dobson presented the award and a check for \$1500 to Jason Roberts, student of Martin Jean at Yale University.

Additionally, Op. 75 was featured on Minnesota Public Radio’s *Pipedreams* in October, with several selections taken from the premiere recording of the instrument by Sal Soria (Delos-DE3331). An up-to-date concert schedule for the weekly Wednesday mid-day recitals and other concerts may be found at www.olacathedral.org.

Work is currently underway in the shop on Op. 76 (IV/125) for Philadelphia’s **Verizon Hall**. The movable stage console and main slider windchests are being built in the woodshop while shop voicing of the pipework began several months ago. During a brief break in Verizon Hall’s schedule this summer, some parts of the organ were installed, including the main console and most reservoirs. The rest of the organ will be installed next summer and fall, with voicing continuing through the spring of 2006.



RECENTLY COMPLETED



Op. 79 (II/23), for **Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**, Ellison Bay, Wis., was installed this fall. The asymmetrical façade includes portions of the Great and Pedal 8’ Principals set on sweeping, seemingly floating toeboards. On the left and right sides are the red painted 16’ Subbass and 16’ Bourdon, respectively. The 75% tin resonators of the 16’ Trombone are visible on both sides. The main façade tower anchors the overall visual design by being placed on the center axis of the room. The church plans to celebrate its newly expanded space and the installation of the organ with a service of dedication on Sunday, December 5, 7:00 pm. A series of recitals is being planned for the spring, and the actual organ dedication will take place with a hymn festival by John Ferguson in June, 2005.

Restoration work has recently been completed on the historic 1904 Verney organ (II/20) at **Christ Episcopal Church**, Cedar Rapids, Ia. This instrument was the largest ever built by the Verney Organ Company of Mason City, Ia. Originally located at the Methodist Church in Parkersburg, Ia., it was relocated by Dobson in 1993 after its original home was slated for demolition due to structural problems. Work included building new manual slider windchests (reusing as much of the original chests as practical), restoring the organ’s existing pipework, and adding a new, larger capacity blower and control valve.

FEATURED INSTRUMENT

Set in the quiet confines of an 86-acre church yard, including a cemetery graced by elegant funerary architecture and sculptures by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Frederick Hart, St. Paul's Church is one of Washington's more obscure religious landmarks. Founded in 1712, the parish's handsome brick church was erected in 1775. It is the oldest church in the District. The Revolutionary War was difficult for the parish, as indeed for the nascent Episcopal Church in America. In 1810, a local lawyer named Francis Scott Key was instrumental in rebuilding the church. Additions were made in 1858; a devastating fire prompted another rebuilding in 1921. In 2002, the parish celebrated its 290th anniversary and undertook the remodeling of the parish hall and the historic church. The latter project was in large part prompted by the failure of the previous enchantered organ and concern that its successor not be similarly situated.

Instrumental in this project was the Parish's Director of Music, Dr. Graham Elliott, who came to Washington in 1999 after 18 years as Master of the Music at Chelmsford Cathedral in England. Under his direction St. Paul's has developed a choir of eight paid singers, established an annual week-long summer music festival, renovated their parish hall into a performing arts space, and laid the foundation for an extensive arts and educational outreach program.

The musical heritage of St. Paul's Parish, Dr. Elliott's interest in choral music, and the architectural situation of St. Paul's church building strongly suggested an instrument focused on late 19th- and early 20th-century English organs. The resulting organ of 21 voices is placed within a case inspired by the Colonial details of the building and English organs contemporary with it. The Great division is situated at impost level, with the Swell enclosed above; the Pedal is located behind the main case. The organ employs mechanical key action and an electric stop action and combination action. Wind at 70 millimeters pressure is supplied from a large weighted reservoir placed with the blower directly under the organ in the basement of the church.

Several important details mark the instrument's tonal design. Above all is a voicing perspective that aims for cohesiveness and smoothness of blend. A wide variety of unison color makes possible an enormous range of accompanimental registrations; this is materially aided by a very effective Swell box. Complete principal choruses are present on both manuals; the Great includes mutations of principal tone, an important consideration when one recalls how many organ traditions include mixtures with tierces. The reeds are given dramatic possibilities by their enclosure in the Swell. The modest Pedal gains versatility by duplexing. The organ benefits from the excellent acoustics of the renovated space, which includes a new marble floor.

The dedication of the organ was celebrated by a recital given by Dame Gillian Weir on Wednesday, October 6, 2004, which featured works by Handel, J.S. Bach, Schnizer, Mozart, Franck, Bridge, Parker, Pierné, Dubois and Yon.



Saint Paul's Church, Rock Creek Parish, Washington, D.C.

Op. 80, 2004

GREAT

8'	Open Diapason	<i>façade, 75% tin</i>	58 pipes
8'	Hohl Flute	<i>poplar and 30% tin</i>	58 pipes
4'	Octave	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
4'	Harmonic Flute	<i>30% tin</i>	58 pipes
2½'	Twelfth	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
2'	Fifteenth	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
1½'	Seventeenth	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
IV	Mixture 1½'	<i>52% tin</i>	232 pipes
	Swell to Great		

SWELL (expressive)

8'	Geigen Principal	<i>1-9 = Sal. + L. Ged.; 52% tin</i>	49 pipes
8'	Salicional	<i>75% tin</i>	58 pipes
8'	Celeste AA	<i>52% tin</i>	49 pipes
8'	Lieblich Gedeckt	<i>wood and hammered 12% tin</i>	58 pipes
4'	Gemshorn	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
2'	Flageolet	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
III	Mixture 2'	<i>52% tin</i>	174 pipes
16'	Bassoon	<i>1-17 half length, 52% tin</i>	58 pipes
8'	Trumpet	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
8'	Oboe	<i>52% tin</i>	58 pipes
	Tremulant	<i>affects entire organ</i>	

PEDAL

16'	Bourdon	<i>poplar</i>	32 pipes
8'	Open Diapason	<i>1-4 from Great, 75% tin</i>	28 pipes
8'	Bass Flute	<i>extension of Bourdon</i>	12 pipes
4'	Octave	<i>extension of Pedal Open Diapason</i>	12 pipes
16'	Trombone	<i>52% tin</i>	32 pipes
8'	Trumpet	<i>extension of Trombone</i>	12 pipes
	Great to Pedal		
	Swell to Pedal		

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn., presented **Stephen Gabrielsen** in his annual faculty recital on October 9. Op. 42 (III/44; 1988) was heard in works of Lemmens, Bach, Boyce and two hymn accompaniments.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Ia., sponsored a Halloween weekend concert entitled “Hoot and Howl” with organists **Ruth Harris** and **Tom Harvey**. Featuring Op. 14 (II/38; 1981), the event was presented in conjunction with the Central Iowa Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO).



Hope United Church of Christ, Sturgeon Bay, Wis., earlier this year sponsored the **Billmeyer Duo** in a recital of works for organ and piano featuring Op. 47 (II/16; 1990). **Dean Billmeyer** is Professor of Organ at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. He was joined by his wife, **Susan Billmeyer**, piano. The newly appointed organist at the church is **Camille Bertagnolli**.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan Beach, Calif., continues its concert series with many programs featuring Op. 56 (II/17; 1992). 2004 artists include **Karla Devine**, **David Goode**, **James Hurd**, **Russell Litchfield**, **Aaron David Miller** and **James Taublee**. Op. 56 was also a stop on the “South Bay Tracker Trek,” an organ crawl event by the **Long Beach Chapter AGO**.

McKinley Presbyterian Church, Champaign, Ill., home of Op. 63 (II/21; 1994), will present organist **Scott Montgomery** in recital on December 9, 3:00 pm.

Presbyterian Homes, of Evanston Ill., has announced the fall schedule of its “Gift of Music” recital series on Op. 64 (II/24; 1994). Recitalists include: **John W. W. Sherer**; **Margaret Kemper** with the **Mozart Sinfonia Orchestra and Chorus**, **Diana Kodner**, conductor; **Andrew Reid**, Peterborough, England; **Stéphane Béchy**, Paris, France.

Wartburg College, Waverly, Ia., home of Op. 67 (II/32; 1996), was the venue for German organist **Heinrich Walther** in an October 12 recital that included works of Bruhns, Sweelinck, Bach, *Five Pieces* by Glenn Gould, and Walther’s own transcription of Mendelssohn’s *Symphony No. 5* (Reformation).

The Twin Cities Chapter of the AGO presented the winners of its annual organ playing competition in a concert at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, Minn., home to Op. 70 (II/45; 1998). First prize winner was **Lily Ardalan**, student of **Dean Billmeyer** and **Nancy Lancaster**. Second prize winner was **Carrie Spronk**, student of **Joan Ringerwole**.

West Market Street United Methodist Church, Greensboro, N.C., continues its “Tuesday Music” mid-day organ recitals featuring Op. 71 (III/58; 1999). The spring schedule included area organists **Mary Lou Kapp Peeples**, **Loretta James**, **Karen Brown** and a duo recital with resident organist **Susan Bates** and Director of Music **Alice Ann Johnson**. **Susan Bates** also presented a full solo recital “In Celebration of Easter Joy” on Sunday, April 18.



Op. 74 (II/22; 2000), the only organ on the campus of **The University of Delaware**, Newark, Del., is used regularly for recitals by University Organist **David Herman**, numerous student recitals, as well as recent master classes by **David Flood** and **Paul Jacobs**, and visits by various AGO chapters.

St. John United Methodist Church, Augusta, Ga., recently announced its second annual “Concerts With A Cause” series featuring Op. 78 (III/42; 2003). Programs this fall include **Diane Meredith Belcher**, **David Buice**, and The Annual Christmas Eve Concert and Lessons and Carols with the St. John Choir, **Jamie Council Garvey**, Director of Music and Organist.

Op. 80 (II/26; 2004), at **St. Paul’s Church**, Washington, D.C., is the cover feature in the October 24 issue of *The Living Church*, an independent magazine for Episcopalians.

Kenilworth Union Church, Kenilworth Ill., presented the dedication recital of Op. 81 (II/29; 2003) on October 27 with guest organist **Andrew Reid**, formerly sub-organist at Westminster Abbey, London, and recently appointed as Director of Music and Organist at Peterborough Cathedral, England.

Saint Wenceslaus Church, Spillville, Ia., was the site for “Dvorak and His Circle,” a concert by **William Kuhlman**, Luther College, Decorah, Ia., and part of the college’s life-long learning course “The Spillville Area Czech-American Heritage Experience.” Antonin Dvorak was organist at St. Wenceslaus during the summer of 1893. The I/13 organ was built in 1876 by J.G. Pfeffer of St. Louis and restored by Dobson in 1996.

The November 2004 issue of *The Diapason* included “Three Decades of Building Organs in Lake City, Iowa,” an article written by Dobson’s Tonal Director, **John Panning**.

The December 2004 issue of *Workbench* magazine features the woodworking skills of the Dobson shop in its “Craftsmanship Close-Up” column.

LOOKING BACK

25 Years ~ Op. 9 (I/8) was built for Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, Ia., and dedicated on October 28 by then resident organist Marilou Kratzenstein. The single manual and pedal instrument consists of a surprisingly flexible stoplist: 8' Holzgedackt, 4' Prestant (façade), 4' Rohrflöte, 2' Principal, III Mixture (2/3') and 16' Rankett. In 2000 the instrument was moved to Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Dubuque, Ia. The dedication of Op. 10 (II/21) at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., also took place in October with a recital by Arlene Hilding, then College Organist. The subsequent series of dedicatory recitals included Guy Bovet, David Fienen and Lynn Zeigler. In 1996, after some tonal additions (to 24 ranks) and a dramatic case revision, Op. 10 was reinstalled in Bethany's new Trinity Chapel.

1979 marked the year Dobson Pipe Organ Builders moved to its current home at 200 North Illinois Street, completely renovating the historic building and adding a spacious new erecting room with a 30' ceiling.

20 Years ~ Op. 25 (III/42) for First Lutheran Church, Sioux City, Ia., was installed in the spring. The encased, rear gallery installation includes a Rückpositiv division. Its dedication took place on September 30 with a recital by John Ferguson. Op. 26 (II/19) for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brillion, Wis., was installed

over the summer. The marathon dedication Sunday included a festive morning service with project consultant Ed Meyer as guest organist, an organ demonstration with Mr. Meyer and Lynn Dobson in the afternoon and concluding with a full recital by James Engel. Both consultant and recitalist were at that time on the music faculty at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

The company celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a shop open house and an organ recital at Lake City Union Church (Op. 13 II/29; 1980) featuring Swiss organist Guy Bovet. The festive events were attended by clients and friends from around the country.

10 Years ~ The year began with two major rebuild projects, one for St. Olaf Lutheran Church (II/27) in nearby Fort Dodge, Ia., the other at First Presbyterian Church (III/62) in Battle Creek, Mich. The latter became essentially a new instrument that incorporated the remains of E. M. Skinner Opus 720 (1928). Completed in the fall was a new organ, Op. 64 (II/24), for the Presbyterian Homes of Evanston, Ill. Frederick Swann presented identical dedication concerts on November 26 and 27, 1994. Resident organist, Margaret Kemper, played a recital in December and the "Gift of Music" recital series was launched the following spring. The instrument features a Great and Swell with mechanical action on the right side of the chancel, and a Pedal with electric action on the left.

THE ORGANBUILDER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2004

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Des Moines, IA
Permit No. 4839

Return Service Requested

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