

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



This January, on the coldest weekend of the winter, I decided I needed to have some fun. So I went to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn., with hopes that I would have just the experience I needed to recharge myself after the busy holiday season. There's never a problem finding something to do in the Twin Cities; concerts, theatre, art shows and good dining are abundant, and serve as an antidote to what is happening outside in the cold. I went to a concert on Friday evening and on Saturday evening attended the opening performance of the Guthrie Theater's new production of Sophocles' play *Oedipus*. On Sunday morning, hoping to renew old friendships, I decided to attend worship at University Baptist Church, home of our Op. 15 (II/30; 1981).

When we built the UBC organ 24 years ago the congregation was a wonderful group of welcoming people with a strong commitment to social activism. Besides publishing their own inclusive language hymnal, they are a member church of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, have initiated a Justice Ministry and belong to the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, to name only a few of the social advocacy programs they support and promote. I found this group of people to be so intellectually stimulating and friendly that for a decade or so after the organ was finished I attended church at UBC whenever I was in the Twin Cities, which was quite often in those days. As my work began to take me farther afield across the country I spent less and less time in the Twin Cities and eventually I drifted away from going to church there.

On this particular cold winter morning, as I entered the church after a ten or twelve-year absence, I wondered who from the "good old days" would be there, or in fact, would the place still be the same? I knew that the pastor, director of music and many of my friends from those earlier times had moved on since my last visit. I walked in and was immediately welcomed by a long time member with a familiar face. I found my place in a pew near the front in one of those "sweet spots" in the church's better than average acoustics. Many people who knew me spotted me and came to greet me and, as is the custom at UBC, guests were introduced before the service started. The current pastor, who wouldn't have known me, had already been tipped off and he warmly announced my presence along with some nice words about the organ. Then the service started and to my delight everything felt just like it always had. The hymn singing is still great. The choir sang two anthems that were excellently performed and meaningfully connected to the texts for the day. Since it was Martin Luther King weekend, there were moving readings selected from the writings of King and Malcolm X, alternating between verses of a hymn that powerfully demonstrated the tensions of the civil rights movement. These readings and hymn text set the mood for the sermon that met the usual standards for good preaching at UBC.

At the point in the service when people are asked to share their joys and concerns for the week I was reminded of how involved the people are. At least a dozen people in the fairly small congregation on that cold day stood up, some sharing their grief and some giving joyful testimony to what was happening in their spiritual lives. The last gentleman to stand and speak was not a member of the church at the time the organ was built and I did not know him. He proceeded to tell how much the organ and its music had meant to his worship experience at UBC. How the organ had made possible the exciting hymn singing every Sunday. How the organ supported the fine choir program and drew people to the special musical offerings presented at UBC. He ended by saying how much joy I had brought to him and the church and how moved he was that I was visiting that day. The congregation applauded his remarks when he finished.

This experience humbled me that morning. As I sat in the pew, the thought washed over me that there were thousands of people across the country that were at that very moment hearing other hymns, other choir anthems and other preludes and postludes to the sounds of organs I had a hand in creating. How many of them might be having the same thoughts that this man had just expressed? I knew at that moment exactly why I love the work that I do. For all the rigors of running a business and paying the bills, the challenges of coordinating with architects, engineers and contractors and dealing with sometimes obstinate committees, it is really in the end all about bringing things of beauty into being, about helping to lift people's spirits and bringing joy to their lives.

## PROFILES



As incredible as it may seem, the great quantity of beautiful organ casework that has earned Dobson an enviable reputation, even internationally, is primarily the work of just two men. Others contribute, to be sure, but cabinetmakers Lyndon Evans and Randy Hausman do the lion's share of this work. (Randy will be profiled in our next issue.) For Lynn, who joined the Dobson crew in 1988, building furniture-quality woodwork on the scale of a small house is not a once-in-a-lifetime challenge, but an everyday occurrence. And we didn't ease him in gently: his first major project was Op. 44, our largest organ up to that time.

Born the middle of nine children in the southern Iowa town of Mount Ayr, Lynn learned the meat cutting trade while still in high school. The seeds of his future interest in woodworking were sown in shop class, the only course he admits to enjoying in high school. After graduation, he worked as a meat cutter for a number of grocery stores in central and western Iowa. His interest in woodworking led him to set up a workshop at home. While cutting roasts and trimming sirloin steaks during the day, he would cut oak and walnut at night in his shop, making furniture for his home, and eventually for his children's homes.

Although being a butcher provided a livelihood for twenty years, Lynn was eager to turn his woodworking interest into a career. In 1981 he joined the staff of Becker Manufacturing, a builder of bank furniture in Alta, Iowa. Becker's business was strikingly like an organbuilder's: after some months of work in the shop, the crew would travel to install the woodwork on site, generally in locations in Iowa or its surrounding states.

Lynn's first contact with Dobson came in the late 1980s, when he helped Dobson employees Tom Kult and Bill Picht with several items that they brought from Lake City to be run through Becker's widebelt sander. When we found ourselves shorthanded, Tom called Lynn, who coincidentally was looking for work, as Becker had recently closed its doors following its owner's death.

For most organ cases, Lynn constructs the impost and tower tops or crowns, which frequently appear to be nothing but moldings. The impost, the "belt" of the organ on which the lowest level of façade pipes usually stand, may have many hundreds of miters, some connecting straight pieces of molding to curved ones. Perfectly fitting all of these angles is ticklish work. The impost is often near eye level, so "close" doesn't count!

Like everyone else in the shop, Lynn wears a number of hats; anything made of wood may pass through his hands, from consoles and benches to windchests and wind trunks. He is also a capable welder and metalworker. In addition, he has served as a mentor to his coworkers, offering practical suggestions and quiet advice on how to approach thorny problems.

Lynn and his high school sweetheart, Sherri, have been married for more than forty years and have two children. Their son is a professional portrait photographer in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Their daughter lives in Michigan; now that her children are in school, she herself is enrolled part-time at Western Michigan University to continue her studies in special education. Lynn has seven grandchildren ranging in age from 21 years to 3 months.

Lynn is clearly uncomfortable speaking about himself or his work, and he would have preferred that this writer created an entirely fictional profile or skipped him altogether in favor of the next senior employee. But if you want to learn what Lynn really thinks of his job, you need only know that he drives from his home in Storm Lake to Lake City every day, a round trip of exactly one hundred miles. Only local school buses have higher odometer readings than his car.

And while his reticence may test a biographer's abilities, Lynn's work says plenty. It speaks eloquently of his love of wood and a good challenge, of a Midwestern practicality, and the rewards of collaboration. Just as the organ case is an essential part of the entire instrument, Lynn and his work are a vital part of our shop, and we can hardly imagine one without the other.





**The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels**, Los Angeles, Calif., home to Op. 75 (IV/105; 2002), continues to be a popular venue for organ music. The organ is heard informally by many visitors at the cathedral during the afternoon practice sessions by the Cathedral Organist, **Sal Soria**. Large crowds continue to gather around the console during the voluntary after Mass, particularly on weekends. In addition to the well

attended weekly Wednesday recitals after the 12:10 Mass, concerts involving the organ this season included: 1/28, organist **Stephen Tharp** playing music of Guilmant, Cochereau, and Duruflé; 2/5, **The Mormon Tabernacle Choir** and other fine choirs using the instrument as accompaniment during the national conference of the **American Choral Directors Association**; 3/6, A Lenten Evensong followed by a choral concert with the **OLA Cathedral Choir**, **Frank Brownstead**, Director, and Sal Soria at the organ. Programs coming up include: 5/6, Sal in a solo organ recital featuring the complete *Symphony in G* of Leo Sowerby; 6/18, a choral/orchestral concert featuring Sal playing Francis Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G minor*; 10/29, organist **Paul Jacobs** playing the complete works of Messiaen in eight hours, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

On November 22, 2003, **Cherry Rhodes** played a recital that was part of the dedication series for Op. 75. Recorded live, her performance was the sole focus of a program aired the first week of March on "Pipedreams," the American Public Media radio program devoted to the pipe organ, hosted by **Michael Barone**. The program included: DeGrigny, *Hymn, Ave Maris Stella*; A. Scarlatti, *Toccata No. 11*; Liszt (arr. Guillon), *Symphonic Poem, Orpheus*; Mendelssohn, *Prelude and Fugue in e*; Hampton, *Five Dances*. Additional information about program #0509 can be found at [pipedreams.publicradio.org/listings/shows05\\_02.htm#0509](http://pipedreams.publicradio.org/listings/shows05_02.htm#0509).

The Cathedral has announced the **Delos International** release of *Organ Voices* (DE3343), a second CD of Sal Soria playing Op. 75. The disc includes: Dubois, *Toccata in G*; DeLamarter, *You Raise the Flute to Your Lips*; Hurford, *Paeon*; Duruflé, *Suite, Op. 5* (complete); Drayton, *Pavane*; Reuchsel, *Tres lent (Evocation de Louis Vierne)*; Messiaen, *Joie et Clarté de Corps Glorieux*; McAmis, *Dreams*; Lemare, *Andantino*; Franck, *Chorale No. 2 in b*.



As one takes a walk through the shop these days there is no doubt that something big is going on. Space is at a premium as work is finishing up on the last of ten large slider windchests and over twenty offset bass windchests. Toeboard/rack-board assemblies, key action parts, electrical components and wiring harnesses, swell shade fronts and steel windchest supports are at various stages of their manufacture. Numerous stacks of pipe-trays are to be found, some marked "voiced," others not, and large metal pipes are laced to pipe storage racks in the erecting room. The first of five divisions has been set up in the erecting room, somewhat like a modular unit. Carefully covered with protective blankets, a unique stage console awaits installation of its four-manual keyboard stack and some 140 drawknobs and tilting tablets. Three months from now all of these components will come together as the largest organ ever to leave our shop – Op. 76 (IV/125) for Philadelphia's Verizon Hall, home of the Philadelphia Orchestra.



Op. 76 is not a copy of any historic instrument. It is a new creation that combines classic features of mechanical key action and well-developed principal choruses with romantic elements of powerful bass voices and the enclosure of three divisions. Its design has further taken into account several key requirements for an instrument capable of effectively rendering the great repertoire for organ and orchestra: a dynamic range that exceeds that of the orchestra; great variety of tone color; unyielding bass; and an immediacy comparable to the orchestral instruments.

The organ façade for Verizon Hall and the largest interior wood pipes have been in place since the hall opened in 2001. During the summer of 2004 the main mechanical console was installed along with most of the wind reservoirs. Complete installation of Op. 76 will commence in July. Finish voicing will continue through the spring of 2006.

## NEW CONTRACT

**St. David's Episcopal Church**, Wayne, Pa., has signed a contract for the construction of Op. 84. The III/46 instrument will employ mechanical key action and electric stop and combination actions with 128 levels of memory and a piston sequencer. Two enclosed divisions include a well developed Swell, and a Choir inspired by late 19th century examples. The instrument is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2007.



# FEATURED INSTRUMENT

Set on bluffs near the tip of the peninsula that is Wisconsin's scenic Door County, Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church in Ellison Bay is a congregation formed by the 1988 merger of two smaller area churches. Their 1994 building, though provided with two fine grand pianos, lacked a pipe organ. In 2001, a search was undertaken for an organ builder, and a contract with Dobson was signed in 2002. The imminent need to expand seating capacity due to growth, coupled with considerations for ideal organ placement, led the church to enlarge their worship space by expanding outward in three directions. This yielded a larger chancel, a new choir and organ area and the improved acoustics that come with increased cubic volume.

The organ, which was first planned for a corner in the original space, now assumed a location behind the choir on the long axis of the sanctuary. A white oak case incorporating a round central tower, free-form toeboards and façade pipes from five stops was designed. Although the central tower is aligned with the ridge of the roof, the asymmetrical case is not centered on the axis of the building. To permit the organist a good view of the church and the choir director, the console was detached and reversed on one side of the choir.

The specification, incorporating a 16' plenum, a variety of unison colors, mutations and expected reeds, may read like one hundred other church organ stoplists. Shepherd of the Bay's organ gains distinction from careful scaling and meticulous on-site tonal finishing. The voicing emphasizes blend and agreeable tone that well supports choral and congregational song. Although projection of tone is excellent throughout the church, reverberation is minimal, and pains were taken to walk the fine line between brightness and shrillness. The organ is voiced on 80 millimeters wind pressure, supplied by a blower within the organ case and regulated by a single large weighted reservoir.

Since its installation last fall—in part because it possesses the only pipe organ in the northern half of Door County—the church has already hosted several events designed to acquaint people with the organ. In January, Gordon Rowley, chair of the organ committee and one of the church's organists presented "Pipes, Pedals and Pistons: A Q&A Session at the Dobson Pipe Organ." Naomi Rowley presented a "Pipe Organ Discovery Day for Adults" in February, as well as a "Pipe Organ Discovery Day for Middle and High School Youth" in March. Dr. Rowley is Principal Organist at First United Methodist Church and Organ Teacher at the Lawrence Academy of Music, both in Appleton. She is also national Director of the American Guild of Organists' Committee on the New Organist.

Because many members of the church live in Door County only during the summer, the formal dedication of the organ has been scheduled on June 26 at 7:00 p.m., when John Ferguson, St. Olaf College, will present a hymn festival. Washington National Cathedral organist Erik Wm. Suter, who spent summers in Door County, will present a recital on August 17 at 8:00 p.m.



Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church  
Ellison Bay, Wisconsin  
Op. 79, 2004

## GREAT

16' Bourdon	<i>poplar and common metal</i>	58 pipes
8' Prestant	<i>burnished tin</i>	58 pipes
8' Chimney Flute	<i>poplar and common metal</i>	58 pipes
4' Octave	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
2½' Twelfth	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
2' Fifteenth	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
1½' Seventeenth	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
IV Mixture 1½'	<i>spotted metal</i>	232 pipes
8' Trumpet	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
Swell to Great		

## SWELL (expressive)

8' Lieblich Gedeckt	<i>poplar and common metal</i>	58 pipes
8' Salicional	<i>tin</i>	58 pipes
8' Celeste FF	<i>spotted metal</i>	53 pipes
4' Principal	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
4' Harmonic Flute	<i>common metal</i>	58 pipes
2' Piccolo	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
1½' Larigot	<i>common metal</i>	58 pipes
8' Oboe	<i>spotted metal</i>	58 pipes
Tremulant	<i>affects entire organ</i>	

## PEDAL

16' Subbass	<i>poplar</i>	32 pipes
16' Bourdon	<i>from Great</i>	— pipes
8' Principal	<i>burnished tin</i>	32 pipes
8' Bass Flute	<i>extension of Pedal Subbass</i>	12 pipes
4' Octave	<i>extension of Pedal Principal</i>	12 pipes
16' Trombone	<i>burnished tin</i>	32 pipes
8' Trumpet	<i>extension of Pedal Trombone</i>	12 pipes
Great to Pedal		
Swell to Pedal		

**Bethany College**, Mankato, Minn., recently sponsored **Herman Jordaan**, winner of the “2003 St. Alban’s International Organ Competition,” in a recital on Op. 10 (II/24; 1979/1996).

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**, Des Moines, Iowa, recently presented resident organist **Ruth Harris** playing Op. 14 (II/38; 1981) in her annual solo organ recital.

**Calvin Institute for Christian Worship**, Grand Rapids, Mich., as part of its 18th annual “Symposium on Worship and the Arts,” January 27-29, featured conference organist **Martin Jean** of Yale University playing Op. 44 (III/49; 1988).

**Trinity Lutheran Church**, Manhattan Beach, Calif., has its annual series of 25 concerts underway, many featuring Op. 56 (II/17; 1992). Los Angeles area organists on the schedule this season include: 1/7, **Derek Gordon**, Los Altos UMC, Long Beach; 3/4, **Russ Litchfield**, Trinity Lutheran, Pasadena; 5/6, **James Taulbee**, Lutheran Church of the Master, West Los Angeles; 6/3, **Patricia Lamb**, Our Lady Queen of Angels, Newport Beach.

**Faith Lutheran Church**, Clive, Iowa, continues its “Soli deo Musica” series of concerts, many of which make use of Op. 61 (II/34; 1993). A recent Lenten program featured choral music presented by the church’s own Festival Choir, **Tom Sletto**, director, and the choir of St. John’s Lutheran Church, Des Moines, **Larry Christensen**, director, with resident organist **Bev Duffy**.

**Presbyterian Homes**, Evanston, Ill., continues its “Gift of Music” series featuring Op. 64 (II/24; 1994). This season’s winter and spring schedule includes Chicago area organists: 1/24, **Brian Milnikel**, St. Raphael Catholic Church, Naperville; 2/28, **Massimo Nosetti**, National Conservatory of Music, Cuneo, Italy; 3/28, **Richard Webster**, Chicago; 4/25, **Eric Budzynski**, St. Paul & The Redeemer, Chicago; 5/23, **Sarah Mahler Hughes**, Ripon College, Ripon, Wis.; 6/27, **Joyce Robinson**, *The Diapason* magazine, Chicago. Featured in an evening program at 7:15 p.m. on 6/16 will be **Günther Martin Goettsche**, organ, with **Heidrun Bauer-Goettsche**, soprano, of Germany.

**The University of Delaware**, Newark, Del., where **David Herman** presides over Op. 74 (II/22; 2000), recently approved a curriculum for a church music minor. While UDEL does not offer an organ major, Dr. Herman designed and proposed this curriculum in order to provide students an opportunity to study church music and the organ, to simply interest students in the organ and its music, and ultimately to address the shortage of qualified church organists. The program has enrolled 20 students to date and has already graduated several students. Herman frequently performs recitals at UDEL’s Bayard Sharp Hall with pianist **Julie Nishimura**, presenting music for organ and piano. Although Op. 74 is located in the rear gallery, the location of its console at the side of the case, coupled with the room’s intimate setting, make it possible to use the organ in combination with other performers located on stage at the front of the hall.

**St. John United Methodist Church**, Augusta, Ga., continues its annual “Concerts With A Cause” series featuring Op. 78 (III/42; 2003). This season’s final two programs included: 1/23, **The Manhattan Music Ensemble** and **André Lash**, organist, in a program for strings and keyboard; 3/20, *A Collage of the Arts for Passion Week*, a presentation of visual art, music, drama and dance featuring the **Augusta Symphony Orchestra String Quartet**, the **Augusta State University Chamber Choir**, **Bill Hobbins**, conductor, dancers from the **Davidson Fine Arts School** of Augusta, the **St. John’s Church Choir**, **Jamie Garvey**, Director of Music, and **Alvin Blount**, guest organist. Each “Concert With A Cause” offers a few moments at intermission to a representative speaker from a local outreach organization followed by an offering designated for that organization. Funding for the music series itself is made possible by generous patrons from both the church and greater Augusta community who together underwrite the entire cost of the concert series.

**St. Paul’s Episcopal Church**, Rock Creek Parish, Washington, D.C., home to Op. 80 (II/26; 2004), recently presented a concert of organ and choral music by the church’s all-professional choir and **Graham Elliott**, Organist and Director of Music. Part of a city-wide celebration of “Paris on the Potomac,” the program included music of Fauré, Franck, Duruflé, Messiaen, Poulenc, Saint-Saëns and Villetta. Elliott has also announced the “Third Rock Creek Festival,” to be held June 11-17, 2005. The eclectic programming includes: a baroque evening in the church, preceded by an afternoon workshop on baroque dance; **John Rutter** directing the choir and orchestra of **Columbia Union College**; an organ recital by **John Scott**; an evening of jazz; a workshop on African dance; late evening concerts; exhibitions of painting, sculpture and photography.

**Kenilworth Union Church**, Kenilworth, Ill., recently presented two recitals featuring Op. 81 (II/29; 2003): 2/27, **Massimo Nosetti**, Cuneo, Italy, playing a program entirely different from his recital at the Presbyterian Homes the following day (see related news item at left); 4/10, **Stephen Alltop**, Director of Music at Alice Millar Chapel, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Ind., presented organist **Peter Richard Conte** in a master class on April 2 and an evening recital on April 3. Both events, co-sponsored by the **Northwest Indiana Chapter AGO**, were held at the Chapel of the Resurrection, home to the Reddel Memorial Organ (IV/102) rebuilt by Dobson in 1996.

The **American Organ Archives** of the **Organ Historical Society** has announced “Impressions of the Organ,” a symposium to be held May 23-30, 2005, in New Brunswick, N.J. Dobson tonal director **John Panning** will join **David Pike** of C.B. Fisk, and **Michael Quimby** of Quimby Pipe Organs on a panel discussing “Recent Remarkable Organs.” Serving as panel moderator will be **Jonathan Ambrosino**, a well known free-lance organ consultant and writer.

# LOOKING BACK

**25 Years ~ Op. 11 (II/31)**, for First Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa, was installed during the early part of the year and was completed in May. The dedication took place the following fall with a recital by Rodney Jiskoot, Northwestern College. **Op. 12 (II/19)**, for West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., was installed in April. Consultant Shirley King, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., played the June 8 dedication service. Lynn Dobson and technical designer Jon Thieszen spoke about the organ prior to the 7:30 p.m. inaugural recital by Orlando Schmidt. Jon's father, Rev. Harold D. Thieszen was pastor of the church at the time.

**20 Years ~ Op. 27 (II/19)**, for the chapel of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., installed the previous December, was finished in January. Dedication festivities took place during a weekend in February with a Friday evening service of dedication and a Saturday evening recital, both with College Organist Shirley King at the organ. The dedicatory recital was on Sunday evening with organists Dorothy Stucky Harder and Alice Loewen. Later in the year British concert organist Peter Hurford presented master classes and a recital. Dobson technical designer Jon Thieszen studied with Loewen and King and received his B.A. in Church Music and Organ from Bethel in 1978. **Op. 28 (II/30)**, for the Church of the Holy Comforter, Burlington, N.C., was the first of many Dobson organs located outside of the Midwest. It was installed in February

with dedication services on April 14. Both Op. 27 and 28 were set up in the erecting room at the time of the company's 10th Anniversary Open House in 1984. Op. 27 was completely assembled and playable. Op. 28 had only its case and façade assembled.

**10 Years ~** Early in 1995 the shop was involved with extensive restorative repairs to the historic Johnson & Son Op. 499 (III/53; 1877) in the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minn. Op. 499, Johnson's largest instrument, was originally built for St. Mary of the Sacred Heart Church, Boston. In 1975, when that building was slated for demolition, the School Sisters of Notre Dame rescued the organ and placed it in their chapel. Dobson's work retained and restored all existing original Johnson pipework, slider chests, casework and structure, as well as the electropneumatic pulldowns and stop actions from the electrification and rebuild of 1927 by W.W. Laws. Newly constructed in the Johnson style were a console and wind system, the latter including two bellows each measuring 6' by 9½'. The Service of Dedication and Blessing took place on March 30, 1995, and a recital series was presented the following season. **Op. 63 (II/21)**, for McKinley Presbyterian Church, Champaign, Ill., located near the Champaign/Urba campus of the University of Illinois, was installed in the spring of the year and completed in May. Carla Edwards, Depauw University, played a dedicatory recital the following November.

# THE ORGANBUILDER

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2005

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