

**Emanuel Lutheran Church**, Dayton, Iowa, presented a concert of music for All Saints Day on 11/7. Guest organist **Mark Babcock**, of Central College, Pella, Iowa, played Op. 20 (II/18; 1982).

The "Lunchtime Organ Recital Series," held each summer in the Fox Valley area of Wisconsin, this year celebrated its 15th season. Begun by local organist **Frank Rippl**, the series has expanded to nineteen weekly concerts drawing audiences ranging in number from 100-350. This year's series included two venues with instruments by Dobson: **St. Paul Lutheran Church**, Neenah, where on 8/25 resident organist **Marillyn Freeman** played Op. 32 (II/31; 1986) assisted by her husband **Ralph Freeman**, piano; **Mount Olive Lutheran Church**, Appleton, where on 7/21 resident organist **Jon Riehle** played Op. 48 (II/38; 1990).

**First Presbyterian Church**, Hattiesburg, Miss., celebrated the 20th anniversary of its church building and Op. 50 (II/35; 1990) on October 24. Former organist **Jeff McLelland**, recently retired organist **Graham Purkerson** and current organist **Sam Porter** shared the bench for a recital.

**St. John's Lutheran Church**, Northfield, Minn., was one of several churches hosting the annual summertime "Northfield Noontime Organ Recitals 2010." On 7/14 **Andrew Schaeffer** presented a recital on Op. 51 (II/26; 1990).

**Trinity Lutheran Church**, Manhattan Beach, Calif., has announced its 2010-11 concert series featuring programs on Op. 56 (II/17; 1992): 11/7, **Timothy Howard** in a concert celebrating the 18th anniversary of the organ; 12/19, resident organist **Karla Devine** in her annual *Christmas Concert*.

**Presbyterian Homes**, Evanston, Ill., has announced its 2010-11 "A Gift of Music" series featuring Op. 64 (II/25; 1994). The 1:30 p.m. Monday concerts this fall included: 9/27, **Margaret Wilson**; 10/25, **Douglas Bruce**; 11/22, **Steven Betancourt**.

**The University of South Carolina**, Columbia, S.C., hosted an event by the **Greater Columbia Chapter AGO** on May 3. Students of **David Lowry** and USC Professor of Organ, **William Bates**, played an all-Bach program on Op. 65 (II/36; 1995).

**West Market Street United Methodist Church**, Greensboro, N.C., recently presented a concert involving its entire music department, including performances by the **Cherub** and **Joyful Noise** children's choirs, the **Chancel Choir**, the **Market Bell Ringers**, with resident organist **Susan Bates** playing Op. 71 (III/57; 1999).

**The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels**, Los Angeles, Calif., home to Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003), has announced the 2010-11 "Cathedral Concert Series" which includes several events involving Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003): 10/17, **Adam Brakel**; 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. Op. 75 is the November feature in *Choir and Organ* magazine's 2010 calendar. Visit [www.rhinegold.co.uk](http://www.rhinegold.co.uk) for pictures, specifications and mp3 audio files of all twelve instruments featured throughout the year or

to order a calendar for 2011. Included for Op. 75 is an excerpt from the live recording made of **Cherry Rhodes'** 2005 solo recital (Delos DE3346).

**The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**, Philadelphia, Pa., has announced its 2010-11 organ recital series: 11/6, **Gunnar Idenstam**; 2/26, **Joan Lippincott**; 4/16, **Thierry Escaich**. The organ is Op. 76 (IV/125; 2006).

**St. John United Methodist Church**, Augusta, Ga., has announced its 2010-11 "Concerts With A Cause." Programs featuring Op. 78 (III/42; 2003) include: 9/12, **Isabel Demers**; 11/21, **Joseph Jennings** conducting a men's chorus in the annual Thanksgiving week concert; 12/24, *Christmas Eve Concert and Lessons and Carols*.

**St. David's Episcopal Church**, Wayne, Pa., presented **Robert Gallagher**, Associate Director of Music, in an organ recital on September 26. The organ is Op. 84 (III/47; 2007).

**The Church of St. Peter Claver**, West Hartford, Conn., presented **Christoph Schoener**, Director of Music at the Hauptkirche St. Michaelis, Hamburg, Germany, in a recital on October 18. The organ is Op. 85 (II/19; 2008).

**Highland Park United Methodist Church**, Dallas, Tex., has announced its "Tower Arts Series" 2010-11. Programs featuring Op. 89 (IV/95; 2009) include: 6/19 **Bradley Welch**; 10/17, **Dallas Wind Symphony**, **Jerry Junkin**, conductor, and organists **Chris Brunt** and **Bradley Welch**; 1/30, *Park Cities Organists' Showcase* with organists **Henry McDowell**, **Don Krehbiel**, **Michael Shake**, **Chris Brunt**, **Bradley Welch**, **Christina Harmon**, **Colin Howland** and **Damin Spritzer**. Op. 87 was featured on the cover of the May-June 2010 issue of *Worship Arts*, the magazine of the **Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts**. In the feature article **David F. Donathan** describes HPUMC's recent sanctuary renovation project.

**St. Olaf Lutheran Church**, Fort Dodge, Iowa, presented **Jennifer Pascual** in a recital on October 17. The organ is a 1994 (II/28) Dobson rebuild.

**St. Wenceslaus Church**, Spillville, Iowa, home to a 1876 I/13 J.G. Pfeffer organ, sponsored a Labor Day weekend concert as part of the sesquicentennial celebration of St. Wenceslaus Church and the town of Spillville. **Frank Trnka** performed the complete organ works of Antonin Dvorak and accompanied **Jody Ouradnik**, soprano, in a performance of Dvorak's *Biblical Songs, Op. 99*. Dvorak regularly practiced on this organ during his residence in Spillville during the summer of 1893. Dobson restored the instrument in 1996.

**Union Sunday School**, Clermont, Iowa, continued its year-long series of concerts celebrating the restoration earlier this year of the historic W.W. Kimball (II/27; 1896). The Sunday 2:30 p.m. events this fall included: 9/26, **Otter Dreaming**; 10/31, **Marcia Lofdahl**; 11/28, **Brett Wolgast**.

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Ind., is presenting several programs featuring the Schlicker-Dobson instrument (IV/102; 1959/1996): 9/12, *Community Organists Festival*; 12/10, the annual Advent/Christmas vesper services.

# THE ORGANBUILDER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

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## LOOKING BACK

**20 Years - Op. 50 (II/35)**, for First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, Miss., was installed beginning in September and was the last of three instruments installed in 1990. The organs delivered that year totaled over 100 ranks and made 1990 one of Dobson's busiest years up to that time. Op. 50 was built for First Presbyterian's new church building, which had just opened in August. The congregation held an open house and building dedication on September 23. The church's organist at the time, Jeff McLelland, played the dedicatory service and recital for the new organ on November 18. (Jeff is now the Director of Music and Fine Arts at Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, soon to be home to Op. 90). Op. 50 is housed in a white oak case finished with two colors of stain, as well as accent colors of blue, red and gold. With a 16' Prestant in its façade, the organ soars to nearly forty feet.

**10 Years - Op. 74 (II/22)**, for the University of Delaware, Newark, Del., was installed during the summer of 2000. The Edward and Naomi Jefferson Pipe Organ is located in the original home of St. Thomas Parish (Episcopal), which stands adjacent to the University of Delaware campus and was restored for use as a small recital hall prior to the organ's arrival. Now named Bayard Sharp Hall, the building was built in 1843-45 in the early Gothic Revival style. It was deconsecrated in 1956; its subsequent decline was arrested by the careful restoration directed by Homsey Architects of Wilmington, Delaware. Dedication ceremonies for the hall and organ took

place on June 29. It was the first Dobson organ, and perhaps the first organ ever, whose installation was webcast. An edited video can be viewed at [www.udel.edu/pipeorgan](http://www.udel.edu/pipeorgan). Op. 74's inaugural recital, performed twice, was given by Thomas Trotter at the beginning of the school term. Other programs that season included a Christmastide carol sing, a solo recital by William Owen and a concert for music and instruments with David Herman, University Organist and Trustee's Distinguished Professor of Music, at the organ. The instrument employs mechanical key and stop action, and has its attached console on the right side of the case. A CD recording of the instrument by David Herman is available directly from the performer at [herman@udel.edu](mailto:herman@udel.edu).

During the summer of 2000 the organ in Schmitt Recital Hall at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N.Y., was rebuilt. Work included building new mechanical key and electric stop actions, providing new pipework to expand the organ's tonal capabilities, revoicing the existing pipework, repairing the original windchests and refurbishing other organ components as needed.

During much of this year the shop was also engaged in building Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003) for the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, Calif. However, work was halted when construction of the Cathedral fell behind schedule and it became apparent that the organ installation would be delayed for over a year.

Summer has come and gone in what seems like the blink of an eye. In this business the norm is that after Memorial Day organ committees tend to adjourn for the summer and so we are then able to concentrate on getting organs built and installed. Instead we've been busy all summer traveling to meetings and preparing proposals in response to new and exciting inquiries, many of which have required immediate attention. At my drawing board I continue to enjoy the challenge of these prospective projects and hope to be able to tell you about some of them very soon!

Meanwhile the installation of our Op. 89 at the University of Tampa has been underway since mid-June and the tonal finishing should be wrapping up soon. UT's Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values has been a busy place as construction workers complete this magnificent new building designed by J.P. Hwang of tvsdesign, Atlanta, Georgia. The 300-seat chapel is a soaring space sixty-five feet high that is flooded with light from a skylight running the entire length of the building. Large windows on one side of the room and an east wall made completely of glass add even more light and a feeling of openness. The acoustics of the chapel, designed by Joseph Myers of Kirkegaard Associates, Chicago, Illinois, are ideal for organ and choral music. The floors are granite throughout and the walls and ceiling are wood paneled. With its beautiful visual and generous acoustical setting Op. 89 will surely be a great addition to the Tampa organ scene. Selected photos of the organ are found elsewhere in this newsletter but our website has numerous pictures documenting the instrument's installation. We're looking forward to being in Tampa to hear the inaugural series of recitals scheduled for early next year - when it's cold and snowy in Iowa!

### Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values The University of Tampa Tampa, Florida

#### Inaugural Recital Series Dobson Op. 89, III/56

|                 |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| January 30      | 2:00 & 4:00 p.m. | David Clark Isele |
| February 12, 13 | 4:00 p.m.        | Haig Mardirosoyan |
| March 12, 13    | 4:00 p.m.        | Carole Terry      |
| April 9, 10     | 4:00 p.m.        | Kurt Knecht       |

In addition to the numerous service projects on the schedule this summer we also bundled up our Op. 76 at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. After the final concert in the hall this past June we wrapped the instrument in plastic sheeting to protect it from a construction project designed to give more stiffness and mass to the ceiling over the organ area. All work took place in the spaces above the ceiling; the ceiling surface was never broken. Six new structural steel beams were constructed like a bridge over the ceiling and a 10-inch sandwich of rigid material was attached to both this new structure and the top of the existing ceiling. The project resulted in a dramatic improvement in the projection of the organ's sound, particularly its lowest frequencies. We are so pleased that Kimmel Center commissioned Dawn Schuette of



Threshold Acoustics to plan and execute this challenging project with the organ still in place and with such great acoustical success!

In July I was able to attend the National Convention of the American Guild of Organists in Washington, D.C. Our organ at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Rock Creek, was used both for recitals and workshops. These conventions are always such a pleasure since we get to visit with old friends and meet many new people. Our display booth was as busy as I can ever remember! Despite the extremely high temperatures that week, the convention was a great success and enjoyable. In August I traveled to Montréal, Canada, to attend the joint conventions of the International Society of Organbuilders and the American Institute of Organbuilders. It was a first for the two organizations to meet together and Montréal was the perfect city for such a gathering. It was a great time to visit with colleagues from around the world and renew many friendships. The many organs and churches we visited were inspiring and I thank our colleagues at Casavant, Létourneau and Juget-Sinclair for their hard work in planning this splendid week.

During the last weekend of September I drove to Wayne, Nebraska, to participate in homecoming at my alma mater, Wayne State College. The weekend festivities also marked the 100th Anniversary of the College becoming a state school. I was particularly honored to receive the *Outstanding Alumni Award for Arts and Humanities* at a banquet on Friday evening. I also attended the dedication of a new entrance plaza and the Nordstrand Visual Arts Gallery, housed in Wayne State's Conn Library. It was a lot of fun to see old friends and all the changes to the campus since I graduated in 1971.

The other exciting news among the shop personnel is that we have *three* couples expecting babies within just a few months of each other! Abe and Hannah Batten are expecting their first, Donny and Shannon Hobbs their fourth (this is the couple that had the triplet girls in 2009!) and John and Allison Streufert are expecting their second. With a good portion of our employees "getting older," such great news is a reminder for me how fortunate we are to have a younger generation of organbuilders making Lake City their home. It's wonderful to see what they bring to our shop and community.





During our country's bicentennial year Abe was born in the small town of Sturgis, Michigan, as the youngest of Richard and Connie Batten's three children. His growing up centered around a strong family, his father's construction business and their church. Inkling of his creative side became apparent when he showed a serious interest in the piano already at a young age. Abe recalls an above-average knack for drawing as well as a love of creative building with his well-worn set of Lego® building blocks. Having begun piano lessons at age seven, his introduction to the organ bench and subsequent fascination with the instrument came when, as an early teen, his church asked him to play the offertory voluntary on the organ. Soon thereafter he began taking organ lessons and was playing services at Trinity Lutheran, the family's home church. Not that his parents ever discouraged Abe's various artistic endeavors, but his father did put him to work in the family business. Here Abe absorbed a strong work ethic as well as useful skills and practical knowledge of building construction.

During high school Abe was set on pursuing a career in architecture although his interest in music and the arts continued as well. He played trombone in the high school band, and during the summers of 1992-94 he attended music camp at nearby Western Michigan University, studying organ with Betty Pursley and Karl Schrock. Although still resolved to be an architect when he graduated from Sturgis High School in 1994 an enlightening fact is that he received the school's Departmental Awards for both music and computer aided design.

In the fall of 1995 Abe enrolled in the architectural program offered by Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. He did well there and received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree in 1999. However, as Abe recalls it now, "by the middle of my final year at Lawrence the architecture thing just wasn't pushing my buttons anymore." Around that time he attended a service at the Kirk in the Hills, a cathedral-like Presbyterian church in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills. The service and the music were superior and, significantly, the sermon topic was how God calls a person to pursue work that fully used the gifts he was given. It moved Abe to reconsider things and he began to contemplate a career in church music. Inquiries and many affirmations of this new direction soon led to John Behnke and the fine church music program at Concordia University, Mequon, Wisconsin. Abe's final semester at Lawrence was a difficult one as he had already been accepted to Concordia for the following fall.

The process of finding one's true calling can often be circuitous and may result in several mid-life career changes. For others these meanderings of mind and spirit take place earlier in life: a college major may change several times as a person experiences new circumstances and discovers new gifts and aspirations. So, meet our technical designer, Abe Batten. He's always been an organist, but after first training as an architect, then directly enrolling in a graduate music program, his first full-time job turns out to be that of an organ designer. Perfectly logical, isn't it?

After a solid 2½ years of hard work, including fulfilling some requirements for an undergraduate music degree, Abe graduated from Concordia in December 2001 with a Master of Church Music degree. During these years he served as organist and choir director at Emmaus Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. It was also at Concordia that Abe met his future wife, Hannah Ulrich.

But the cycle continued. Near the end of his time at Concordia Abe began to have some doubts about doing music full-time after all. John Behnke suggested Abe think about organbuilding as the logical combination of his skills and experiences. The rest, as they say, is history. In 2002 he was hired by Berghaus Organ Co., Bellwood, Illinois, as a technical designer, and also took on part-time duties as organist and choir director at Bethel Lutheran Church, Westmont, Illinois. Within a year he became Berghaus's head designer.

Abe started work in the Dobson design office in November 2006. With the combination of his training, particularly as an architect, and his previous experience as an organ designer, Abe has brought us a higher level of fluency in our work with architects and construction firms. He manipulates his CAD programs with confidence, and to watch him prepare digital client presentation drawings and photographs is mesmerizing. And Abe is keeping his organ playing skills in good form—he plays three Sundays a month rotating between three area churches. Abe's practical and efficient manner combined with his wonderful sense of humor make him an effective and fun member of our team.

Within a few months of coming to Lake City Abe purchased a house and married his sweetheart, Hannah. She's currently employed as a graphic artist. They appear to be settling in very well and are expecting their first child on January 1. Grateful that Abe got his career path figured out sooner than later, we feel his timing was perfect.



Abe and Hannah relaxing along the Snake River in Idaho this past summer

In addition to the onsite work in Tampa over the summer and fall to install and voice Op. 89, shop personnel have been busy with numerous interesting service projects.

The refurbishment of Op. 1 (II/15; 1974) is essentially complete except for the final sanding and finishing of the case. Delivery of the organ to its new home at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, will begin when renovation of the balcony space for the instrument has been completed.

Our Op. 11 (II/31; 1980) at First Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa, underwent a complete cleaning early this summer. On one of the season's many fine sunny days a large crew of volunteers assembled on the church lawn to assist the Dobson crew in washing the pipework. Several ranks of stopped pipes were taken back to the shop to be fitted with new spiral tuning caps in order to provide more stable tuning.

After nearly a year of renovation work in the sanctuary of Westwood Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park, Minnesota, the organ was brought back into service late in the summer. A Dobson crew, assisted by numerous volunteers, removed the plastic securely covering the organ, cleaned as needed and brought the pipes out of storage for reinstallation. The organ is a 1964 Holtkamp (III/50) rebuilt by Dobson in 2002.

Members of the Dobson crew have made numerous trips to Decorah, Iowa, over the summer months carrying out repairs to the Robert Sipe organ (III/62; 1978) at Luther College's Center for Faith and Life. Subject to unremitting daily use for over three decades, the organ needed cleaning and some mechanical improvements. The keyboards were refurbished and the stop and combination actions upgraded. Though there were no tonal changes, re-regulation of the pipework was undertaken to correct any imbalances that have crept in over the years. On October 24, guest organist Douglas Cleveland played the first recital on the refurbished organ.

First Baptist Church, Waukon, Iowa, informed us in August that they were moving to a new building and were making plans for the final service in their historic 1904 building. The organist asked if we could repair their organ so that it could be used for this service. To our delight we discovered the instrument was a Hook and Hastings (II/13) in essentially original condition. It had been purchased in 1904 for \$2000 with a portion of the funds given by Andrew Carnegie. The organ has not had any service for years but with a few minor adjustments the organ was ready to go.

NEW CONTRACTS

Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, earlier this summer signed a contract for Op. 90, a III/82 electric-slider action instrument. The church's music program attained international acclaim under the direction of Joseph W. Schreiber, to whose memory the new organ will be dedicated. The church's original pipe organ, built in 1924 as Op. 516 of the Skinner Organ Company, was rebuilt by Aeolian-Skinner in 1969 as Op. 516-A, enlarged by M.P. Möller in 1975 and 1982, and again rebuilt following a fire in 1992. The new instrument will be completed in 2012.

Earlier in the year Dobson was asked to submit a report on the condition of the Lyon and Healy (II/8; 1898) mechanical action organ at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Independence, Iowa. More recently we were asked to put the instrument, which had not played for several decades, in serviceable condition. With the help of volunteers the organ received a thorough cleaning. Various pipe repairs were made and some basic voicing problems were corrected. Additional restoration work has been proposed and will be scheduled as funds become available.

Restorative repairs to Wangerin-Weickhardt Op. 89 (II/10; 1911) at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, St. Helena, Nebraska, were recently completed. Work included a comprehensive inspection of all leather in the organ with releathering as necessary. A new silent blower was installed and adjustments to wind system were made. The original tubular-pneumatic action was repaired and adjusted. All pipes were cleaned, repaired and re-regulated to restore original voicing. Console restoration included repairing of badly worn stop tablets, providing a new replica nameplate and rebuilding the pedalboard. The organ case was cleaned and polished, and the façade pipes were stripped and repainted.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The shop is currently occupied with the construction of Op. 88 (II/22) for St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Illinois. Portions of the organ are collecting in the erecting room and assembly will begin soon. The instrument will stand at the front of the sanctuary in a newly-configured arrangement of the chancel area that for the first time includes space for the choir and other musicians. Previously the musicians and former organ had been located in the church's rear balcony. A new altar and modesty screen have also been designed and built by Dobson. Op. 88 is scheduled for installation in early 2011.

The design office is occupied finalizing plans for Op. 90, a new organ for Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, and will soon be producing working drawings for the organ's construction. Once the shop begins to clear of components for the Park Ridge instrument, construction of Birmingham's windchests will begin. Additionally, ongoing work in the design room always includes the development of preliminary layouts and visual studies for the purposes of making proposals for new projects.

RECORDINGS

Cherry Rhodes at the Kimmel Center is the title of a new CD released this summer by Delos International (DE3381). Recorded live on October 14, 2006, Ms. Rhodes' program was the first full-length solo recital presented on Op. 76 (IV/125; 2006), the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ. The disc includes Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548*, Liszt's *Symphonic Poem: Orpheus* (trans. Guillon), Mader's *Afternoon of a Toad*, Mozart's *Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, K.V. 546* (trans. Guillon), Lidon's *4 piezas para la Misa*, and Guillon's own *Scenes d'Enfant d'apres The Turn of the Screw d'Henry James*.

Installation of Op. 89 for the University of Tampa began by unloading trucks in the stifling heat of a Florida summer. Fortunately the new chapel's air conditioning system was up and running so that work inside was relatively comfortable. More photographs of both the construction and installation as well as the the organ's stoplist are available on our company website [www.dobsonorgan.com](http://www.dobsonorgan.com). A full report on upcoming chapel and organ dedication festivities will appear in the Spring issue of this newsletter.



The real reason we hit the road: all you can eat crab legs



Op. 89 and the crew after scaffolding came down



Just getting started



View from the top of the organ



Hoisting and installing façade posts



Lifting a windchest



Lifting façade posts with scaffolding and hoist



Manhandling the 32' Bourdon



Installing pipes and racking in the Great



Installing splayed key action from console (at right) to case