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The spinet in a 1927 advertisement

parently survived. (See *The Musical Times* for March 1, 1881, p. 117).

With or without a Pepys provenance, the importance to England's musical history of this little spinet cannot be minimized. Its earliest date would have to be 1664, the year Zentis, King Charles' "virginal maker" is believed to have brought this new spinet form (a form of his invention), to England. It was new to Pepys four years later. The stand, which close examination shows to be original, has Cromwellian bobbin turnings that suggest a date before circa 1670, as does its intricate iron hardware. (There is no brass.)

What we do know about this spinet is that it allegedly was found in Bildeston Hall in Suffolk. William Dale apparently bought it from Carl Engel, probably in the 1870s, and Dale and Hipkins both took a particular interest in it. Three woodcuts have been made of it, two of them by Hipkins' son. It has been written about and illustrated in every edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music* from 1878 to 1980. It was pictured (under Piano-forte) in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* from the 1880s for, perhaps, 40 years. It was pictured in *The Dictionary of English Furniture* in 1926, and even



Woodcut illustration from an early Grove's edition



The Grove's photograph

in a furniture-mover's ad in *Antiques [Magazine]* in 1927. It was displayed and even played at several exhibitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The spinet's interior was pictured in the original edition of Donald Boalch's *Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord 1440-1840*, published in 1956.

The instrument has exceptional integrity, even the lid stick appearing to be original. Reflecting a highly rational design layout, it has a remarkably fine tone throughout its four-octave compass. Recordings are now being made of all my early English keyboard instruments, and this will certainly be included.

—Chas. West Wilson

Comments or news items for these pages are always welcome. Please address them to Dr. Larry Palmer, Division of Music, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75275; <lpalmer@smu.edu>.

In the wind . . .

by John Bishop

Let's get personal

When I was a student at Oberlin in the mid-1970s, I kept my meager checking account at the Lorain National Bank, where there were two cheery tellers. I enjoyed talking with them enough that I can remember their names and faces more than 30 years later. I can also remember the day that the bank christened its first ATM. When I needed cash, I was relegated to standing outdoors on the sidewalk poking the buttons of an alien machine. I worried about losing my card to the machine. I worried that it would shortchange me and I wouldn't be able to prove it. And I missed the nice chats with the tellers. Today, after thousands

of successful ATM transactions, I have to admit that I've never been shortchanged by a machine, I've only lost a card once (my card had expired), and because the tellers at the bank I frequent now are a pretty grumpy lot, I'm perfectly happy with the beeps and whistles of the ATM. And of course, 24-hour access to cash is a convenience to me as I'm almost as likely to be in a California airport in the middle of the night as in the bank branch near my home in Boston.

My first encounter with an ATM was pretty much concurrent with my entry into the organ-maintenance business. There were no cell phones or e-mail, so it was a common routine to spend a couple hours on the phone every few weeks making appointments for service calls. Most of those calls were to church offices where a secretary would answer the phone. Church secretaries were so devoted to their jobs that they never left their desks, and always answered the phone on the second ring. She ate her lunch (tuna fish on white with the crusts cut off, cut diagonally into four triangles) at her desk. The ubiquitous church secretary knew everything about the church—she (it was always a woman!) knew the organist's schedule, the reliability of the sexton (for turning heat on for winter tunings), and whether there was a parade or festival in town that would make it hard for me to park.

As I got busier in the tuning business, I learned where I could find a decent phone booth—one that was away from noisy traffic, that had a functioning door, that had a place where I could put down a piece of paper to write on. It seemed there was always a traveling salesman with a car full of samples, standing outside the booth with arms crossed, tapping his feet (it was always a man!), waiting to use the phone. My first cell phone liberated me from all that. I could sit in the privacy and comfort of my car and make as many calls as I wanted. Great.

It was Isaac Newton, he of the dropping apple, who observed that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The freer I became to place calls to church offices at my convenience, the fewer of those calls were answered in person. Today, many churches have limited their office hours to three mornings a week, and the full-time sexton has been replaced by a weekly cleaning service. The chairman of the property committee would turn up the heat, but he's in Florida for the winter.

In most cases this works out fine. I leave a phone message or send an e-mail and get a reply the next morning. The church has an electronic thermostat that can be programmed weeks ahead. Even though I miss the personal contact, I'm glad to be doing the tuning.

Today's instant communication means that a church can save some money. The church office phone can be forwarded to someone's house, and I can make phone calls and send e-mail and text messages from my car. But is the fact that the church no longer really needs (or cannot afford) to maintain office hours an indication of the decline of the institution?

The Organ Clearing House has moved many wonderful pipe organs out of churches in New England. When I visit one of those old New England churches to assess an organ, I'm likely to find a fleet of mike stands and amplifiers, drum sets behind plexi-glass barriers, and miles of cables festooned across the choir loft. Often it's an Asian, Hispanic, or African-American congregation that purchased the building 30 years ago. Many of those are thriving—jam-packed sanctuaries several times a week, lots of exciting fellowship, chicken-beans-and-rice dinners—I've had many lovely encounters with clergy and parishioners who are excited about their church's growth and devoted to its work. It's simply that their style of worship never has and never will involve pipe organs of any description.

Many of those New England organs have been relocated to thriving churches in the Southeast or Southwest—ironically following the "snow-bird" property committee chairman who is no longer available to turn up the heat for



Pipe organ with drums, etc.

organ tuning. I wonder how many more generations of retirees there will be to support those churches, and where the organs will go next.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

How many church committee members does it take to change a light bulb? Change? Change? That light bulb doesn't need to be changed. My grandmother paid for that light bulb.

I think this is funny because it's true. I served as music director at a church with a beautiful white frame building with a steeple on a well-kept village green—the quintessential New England setting. What set it apart from other such nearby settings was that it was a new sanctuary—built after a fire in the 1970s. The clever building committee made sure that there was an electric outlet directly under each of the large sanctuary windows so the electric candles could be plugged in easily at Christmas.

The steeple had a Westminster chime that rang on the quarter-hour and that played hymns at noon and six pm. Trouble was, the hymns were in four-part harmony—that's right, a bong-a-tron. I've always been an acoustic guy, and those faux bells annoyed me. One Sunday at coffee hour, a member asked me what I thought about the tower chimes, and I told him. I said that I was committed to acoustic musical instruments, and it irked me that electronic bells "rang" from the tower where I was the resident musician. He replied, "That's too bad. I donated them."

Yikes. That was quite a lesson.

By long-standing tradition, that church presented a Candlelight Carol Service on the first Sunday of Advent, complete with *O Come, All Ye Faithful, Silent Night*, and a Christmas Tea. The same woman had presided over the spigot of the silver tea urn for a generation.

After a few years of toiling to present Christmas music in the week after Thanksgiving, I raised the question to the pastor at a staff meeting. There was no midnight service on Christmas Eve, so I suggested we move the beloved candle lighting "Ceremony" to a new midnight service and present a special musical service on the afternoon of the Fourth Sunday of Advent. I was pleased that the pastor was receptive, and we worked hard to plan that way for the next year. On the First Sunday of Advent (which would have been the day of the Carol Service), a member stood up during the announcements and read a manifesto entitled "Death of a Friend" about the loss of the carol service.

Yikes. That was quite a lesson.

There was a lot of grumbling that Advent. I got a couple letters from parishioners who were disappointed with the change, and had my ears figuratively boxed a number of times at coffee hour. But the midnight service was well attended, the carol singing was moving, and the heavens showed approval by providing a beautiful light snowfall. (As I grew up in the Northeast, I've always associated Christmas with snow, though



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I doubt that snow played any part in the first Christmas.) We repeated the controversial plan the next year, and by the third year it was a new and inviolable tradition. It's been ten years since I left that church—I sure hope they haven't messed with "my" tradition!

§
Establishing a midnight service on Christmas Eve isn't exactly innovation. In fact, I was so used to that tradition from other churches in my experience that it felt funny not to have one. But if there is to be a future for what I might call the "traditional" church—the church of pipe organs, Thursday night choir rehearsals, and Candlelight Carol services—we must find new ways to celebrate and present the magnificent music that is our heritage. There will always be a few great central (big city) churches that offer Evensong in the English Cathedral tradition, but they rely in many ways on the suburban church that feeds on the music of the past for the development of choristers, the breeding (if you will!) of organists, and the sustenance of or-

ganbuilding firms that can produce and maintain those wonderful instruments.

It is the responsibility of the musicians and instrument makers to be on a constant prowl for new ways to look at this that means so much to us. It's already true that churches in remote areas cannot find qualified musicians to lead their worship. Why is that?

I like to repeat that one of things I like best about my work with Organ Clearing House is the continuing opportunities to visit and work with dozens of churches around the country. I have frequently observed that I am aware of sameness—that the Sunday bulletin of a church in Seattle is very similar to one in Maine. But one thing I know for sure, those churches that have the most vibrant "traditional" music programs are those that are led by musicians who participate fully in the life of the church. When you see the organist wearing an apron making sandwiches to be sold at the church fair, dropping in on the soccer games to see a youth choir member score a goal, or bothering to attend the high school musical to hear a

choir member sing "I'm just a girl who can't say no," you can bet that the choir rehearsals are rollicking and fun. There's no rule that says only the pastor can visit parishioners in the hospital.

When I was active as a parish organist, I felt it was my responsibility and prerogative to play the great literature as preludes and postludes. But when I observe a brilliant and respected musician inviting a talented high-school student to play a prelude on the piano or flute, I know I am seeing effective ministry. I'm sorry I was so stubborn as to favor my rendition of a Bach prelude and fugue over providing a performance opportunity for a young person.

None of this means that you shouldn't strive to offer the very best readings of the very best music in worship. There is no better way to feed the faith of loyal choir members than by challenging them with spectacular music, helping them develop their God-given talents, giving them the opportunity to bring something special to worship. Have you ever started a choir rehearsal by saying, "let's

just bring out this old thing . . .?"

I've gotten to know a congregation that recently purchased a significant organ by a well-known builder. The organist and director of music are both fine, high-spirited women who are enthusiastic about their work. And the organbuilders, much to their credit, are valued and appreciated as important members of the church family. The resident musicians have celebrated the instrument so the parishioners know that they have acquired something special. And though the organbuilders live and work a thousand miles away, they are present both to and for the church, bothering to attend performances and worship services, even making the effort to show up for an important birthday.

In these ways, our music will live.

When in our music God is glorified,
And adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as if the whole creation cried Alleluia!
Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise.
And may God give us faith to sing always
Alleluia!

Investing in Worship

At Goulding & Wood, we understand the difficulties facing churches as economic stagnation results in lowered pledges, shrinking budgets, and restricted resources. We honor the efforts of church musicians throughout the country who must now fulfill their duties and enhance worship with fewer funds. We also recognize that problems with aging or inadequate pipe organs do not slow down even though finances are tight.

Even in the present state of the economy, we believe this is an excellent time to invest in a pipe organ. A fine instrument can enrich a worshiping community as well as represent a commitment to musical liturgy that can nourish congregations during times of crisis. A pipe organ is a long-term investment that is of great value, one that will contribute richly to the life of a congregation for generations.

Goulding & Wood stands ready to support your congregation. We understand budgets and know how to work with less than optimum conditions. Our chief goal is to provide you, the musicians and worship leaders, with the tools you need to minister to your congregations, providing them with comfort and hope. Whether you are in need of refurbishment, repair, replacement, or some project that eludes a clean categorization, we stand ready and committed to help you.

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