

David Briggs and Martin Baker, organ-builder Dominic Gwynn, and early music scholar and Handel expert Donald Burrows. For information: <www.fuguestatefilms.co.uk>.



Craighead-Saunders Organ

Loft Recordings has released the first recording of the Craighead-Saunders Organ in Christ Church, Rochester, the newest instrument in the collection at the Eastman School of Music (LRCD-1115, \$14.98). The organ is the result of an eight-year international research project documenting and copying the 1776 organ by Adam Gottlob Casparini (1715-1788) in the Holy Ghost Church in Vilnius, Lithuania, one of the best preserved late-baroque organs in all of Europe.

After a thorough documentation of the original instrument, a team from GOArt, at Gothenburg University in Sweden, led by Mats Arvidsson and Munetaka Yokota, worked closely with the Eastman School of Music and a group of organbuilders in America (Steven Dieck, Paul Fritts, Bruce Fowkes, Martin Pasi, and George Taylor) to produce the first research instrument after Casparini anywhere in the world, and the first large-scale historical reconstruction at this level in America.

In this first recording on the new instrument, the three Eastman organ professors (David Higgs, William Porter, Hans Davidsson) perform repertoire from Bach through Mendelssohn, plus a new work by Stephen Kennedy (director of music at Christ Church, where the organ is located) and a newly commissioned work by Martin Herchenröder. The booklet contains complete organ specifications. For information: <www.gothic-catalog.com>.

Regent Records has released a new recording, *Into Thy Hands*, featuring the Choir of Grosvenor Chapel directed by Richard Hobson (REGCD 351). The program includes works by Mozart, Tallis, White, Philips, Blow, Purcell, Handel, Jackson, and Dove. For information: <www.regentrecords.com>.

Rhapsody, the on-demand music service, announced it has crossed the 800,000-subscriber milestone and now offers more than 12 million tracks to its membership base. Rhapsody began the subscription music business in 2001. Since becoming an independent company in 2010, Rhapsody embraced a mobile apps strategy that has brought on-demand music to the mobile phone.

Rhapsody digital music service gives subscribers unlimited on-demand access to more than 12 million songs, whether they are listening on a PC, laptop, Internet-connected home stereo or TV, MP3 player, or mobile phone. Rhapsody allows subscribers to access their music through mobile phones from Verizon Wireless, through Rhapsody applications on the Apple iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad, RIM BlackBerry and Android mobile platforms as well as through devices from Vizio, SanDisk, HP, Sonos, and Philips. For information: <www.rhapsody.com>.

The Allen Organ Company, Macon, Pennsylvania, joined its Summer of Manufacturing co-sponsors with an interactive display and exhibit at the Da Vinci Science Center Initiative, Allentown, Pennsylvania. Visitors to the center could see and play an Allen Q300D, which displayed its inner workings through a Plexiglas back, while the history of the company was told through a custom video kiosk. On August 11, Allen executives joined nearly 100 invited educators, industry leaders, and elected officials to discuss workforce development partnerships and initiatives in the region. To view the Da Vinci Science Center website, the Allen Organ History video, and Factory Tour video: <<http://www.davincisciencecenter.org/my-experiences/summer-of-manufacturing/im-a-maker-series/im-a-maker-allen-organ/>>.



Bosch practice organ before

Stanford University Department of Music, Stanford, California, has contracted Hupalo & Repasky Pipe Organs, LLC of San Leandro, California, to consolidate, rebuild, and redesign their 1968 mechanical action Werner Bosch practice organ, opus 509. Due to



Hupalo & Repasky practice organ after

demand on the music department's use of practice space, the redesigned organ will occupy half the floor space in a new configuration with new case and moldings of stained quarter sawn oak. Two

ranks will be added to the instrument, making it a 15-stop, 16-rank organ, playable on two manuals and pedals. For information: 510/483-6905; <www.hupalorepasky.com>.

Manual I
8' Principal
8' Gedeckt
4' Octave
2' Principal (half draw)
III Mixture (half draw)
II Sesquialtera

Manual II
8' Holtz flute
4' Rohr flute
2' Principal
1 1/2' Quint
8' Oboe

Pedal
16' Bourdon
8' Bourdon
4' Choral Bass
8' Dulzian

In the wind . . .

by John Bishop



A world unto itself

In July 2010, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* was working on a story in Washington, D.C., when she noticed a large group of people milling about on the front lawn of a church. Had it been a Sunday, it might not have attracted her attention, but this was a weekday morning, and the group was wearing nametags and sporting tote bags, a scene she recognized from countless conventions and trade shows. Her curiosity was piqued and she walked up to the group to ask what they were about.

You guessed it—it was the national convention of the American Guild of Organists, and the conventioners were hanging about, waiting for the buses that would whisk them off to the next venue. The reporter was fascinated by having run into a group of devoted enthusiastic people involved in a world she had never thought about. Of course, there are pipe organs lurking in the balconies of thousands of churches, but who would have thought about the people who would have put them there, who would play them, let alone study or celebrate them.

The reporter was Jennifer Levitz, who works from the *WSJ* offices in Boston. She called me in mid-August, telling me of her encounter with “our crowd” in Washington, saying that someone in that group had given her my name, and that she planned to write an article for the paper about current trends in church music as they relate to the pipe organ.

I was flattered by her interest and we talked on the phone for quite a while, ending the conversation by making plans to meet so she could interview me. We met in a coffee shop in Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace (that grand example of 1970s Urban Renewal, celebrated at the time as the revitalization of a derelict neighborhood, where today unwitting tourists are privileged by the opportunity to buy t-shirts and baseball caps festooned with lobsters—colloquially misspelled as *lobstahs*—and the logo from *Cheers*) and talked about the pipe organ for an hour-and-a-half. During the conversation, I mentioned that I was going that afternoon to visit a closed church building in neighboring Cambridge, where we were working on the sale of an Aeolian-Skinner organ. She asked if she could come along.

Is renewal another word for destruction?

The Organ Clearing House was founded in 1961—like our neighbor C.B. Fisk, Inc., this is our fiftieth year—the time at which urban renewal was gaining momentum, and the construction of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Interstate Highway System was in full swing. There's no question that those highways were a stupendous improvement to the country's transportation system (inspired by the German *Autobahn*, which so impressed General Eisenhower as a strategic military asset), but the clearing of the huge swaths necessary for highway rights-of-way caused the destruction of hundreds of neighborhoods, including homes, businesses, schools, and churches, along with their pipe organs. I've referred to the Organ Clearing House as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Pipe Organ Rescue Movement (DDEMPORM). OCH founder Alan Laufman was among the founders of the Organ Historical Society (which was established in 1956—the year of my birth and the death of G. Donald Harrison, fifty-nine days apart) and an early leader in the renewed appreciation of America's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century heritage of organbuilding. The rapid and rampant destruction of venerable church build-

A.E. Schlueter

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Conceptual drawing at right.

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Pennsylvania Station

ings and their contents alarmed Laufman and his peers, leading to the inception of the work we now continue.

It's easy to bewail the destruction of any great building. Candidly now, can New York's Madison Square Garden be considered a cultural improvement over McKim, Mead, & White's Beaux-Arts masterpiece that was Pennsylvania Station? And while anyone who's visited New York City can appreciate the value and necessity of parking garages, that which replaced St. Alphonsus Church (310 West Broadway near Canal Street, the original home of E. & G.C. Hook's Opus 576, built in 1871 and now located in St. Mary's Church, New Haven, Connecticut) can hardly be considered an improvement.

But here's where the issue gets complicated. I am not in the thrall of professional hockey and basketball, I am not interested in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show (though I loved the movie *Best in Show*), and it's a long time since I've been to the circus, so at the risk of offending those who feel differently, I freely state my opinion that the construction of Madison Square Garden was not a worthy reason for the destruction of Penn Station.

St. Alphonsus Church is another story. It's a terrible shame for such a beautiful edifice to be razed, whatever the reason, and it must have been heartbreaking for the parishioners, clergy, and musicians who worshipped there and loved the place. But the hard fact is that hundreds, dare I say thousands, of church buildings have become redundant—not only in the United States but throughout Europe as well. When such a building is no longer useful, no amount of sentiment or nostalgia will refund its value or usefulness.

When the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Boston (home to a large

organ by Hook & Hastings, which is one of America's finest instruments) was closing, a group of local organists and organ-lovers gathered around, and one friend suggested it should be made into a concert hall. A lovely thought, but if the church is being closed because two million dollars of deferred maintenance was coming due and the frightful cost of heating the place was the death knell, how would we ever fund its transformation into a concert hall? Thankfully, the organ has been dismantled and stored, but this is especially poignant for us—I'll not forget singing "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended" at Alan Laufman's funeral in that building in early 2001.

§

My work with the Organ Clearing House makes me something of a grim reaper of the pipe organ (remember the scene in Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* with the robed reaper and the tinned salmon?). More than once people have said to me, partly in jest, "What are you doing here, we love our organ?" But the reality of redundant church buildings is part of my daily work. Organbuilders are used to working with a church's Organ Committee (often called Organ Task Force)—a committee that by definition, if not by actuality, is formed for the inception of a creative process. I've had dozens of associations with De-Accession Committees, sometimes called Disbursement Committee—that group of faithful worshippers charged with emptying their church building before *Repurposing*. These folks are filling dumpsters with church-school supplies, choir robes, and pageant costumes (I love the white Oxford shirt with cottonballs glued all over to make a sheep-suit for Christmas Eve). They are packing hymnals and octavo scores to be given



St. Alphonsus Church

to neighboring churches, and they are ferreting off little mementos while (they think) no one is looking.

They show me family photos of weddings, baptisms, funerals, and First Communions in which the organ is prominent in the background. Their eyes are moist, and sometimes they're openly weeping.

One church I visited recently was simply abandoned. It was an 1,800-seat building with an 80-rank organ. The congregation, down to just a few dozen, had soldiered on until the last of the money was gone and simply walked away after the last worship service. The Sunday bulletins were still on the ushers' station, the unfinished glass of water was still on the pulpit, and there was a melted unwrapped cough drop on the organ console. (Organists must have terrible health if the collective consumption of cough drops is any indication!) There was unopened mail on the secretary's desk. It was like the scene in the movie where tumbleweeds blow down the street and the saloon doors are still swinging.

§

Jennifer Levitz's article, "Trafficking in Organs, Mr. Bishop Pipes Up to Preserve a Bit of History," appeared on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* on Friday, September 16, 2011. Here's a link that will take you to it on the WSJ website: <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903532804576567571589895368.html?KEYWORDS=organ>>. I've received a lot of winks and barbs from friends about the word *trafficking*.

Any company loves exposure like that. We were flattered and pleased to have Ms. Levitz's attention, and there have been several inquiries in the past week directly attributable to the article. But here's the problem. She did great reporting on all the reasons why pipe organs become redundant. We discussed "Contemporary Worship" and closing and merging parishes, but while I talked about the exciting sides of the organ business like the restoration of venerable organs and the construction of new ones, the general tone of the story was glum.

Ted Alan Worth, student and friend of Virgil Fox and a successful touring organist, has been quoted as saying, "The organ world is the worst world in the world." I'm pretty sure he was referring to the gossip, introverted, and sometimes nas-



St. Mary's Hook (photo credit: William T. Van Pelt)



St. Mary's Hook console (photo credit: William T. Van Pelt)

ty interchange between colleagues. Perhaps the most famous example was the decades-long squabble between Virgil Fox and E. Power Biggs, both important and brilliant performers from two divergent artistic points of view, whose disdain for each other was well documented. But that same artistic divide was extended to the devotees of organs with tracker action versus electric and pneumatic actions. I use the word "versus" with intent. When I was a young pup of an organist, reveling in the Renaissance of classic principles of pipe organ building in Boston in the sixties and seventies, I was aware and no doubt made use of terms like tracker-backer and pneumatic-nut. Those who preferred symphonic organs were decadent, as if the exploration of artistic expression were a character flaw; those who preferred tracker organs were zealots, anti-musicians, anti-expression.

In 1979 my mentor and I assisted a team from Flentrop Orgelbouw installing the grand new organ at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio. It's a classic design—*werkprinzip* mahogany case with carved pipe shades, rückpositiv, and a spiral

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staircase to the tiny balcony. But as we unloaded the container on the sidewalk of Euclid Avenue (the organ had been shipped from the Netherlands directly to the port of Cleveland through the St. Lawrence Seaway—the name of the ship was *Kalliope*) I realized I was carrying a box of pipes marked *Celeste*. A bundle of Swell shutters followed. Humpf! I didn't know Flentrop built Swell boxes?

What I know now is that what's important to us is good organs. Simple. I love good organs of any description. And there are just as many bad, even decadent tracker organs as there are bad electro-pneumatic or electric-action organs. The Renaissance Revival that has been so celebrated and ballyhooed certainly was cause for the destruction or displacement of many wonderful electro-pneumatic organs. My hometown of Winchester, Massachusetts has two churches in which organs by Skinner and Aeolian-Skinner were replaced with organs by Fisk. The Skinner was a very early organ (Opus 128, 1905!). My father was rector of the church, so I had easy access to it for practicing when I first took organ lessons, but I quickly moved to the neighboring First Congregational Church (where my teacher John Skelton was organist), whose Fisk organ was installed in 1972.

I didn't know much about Skinner organs then, and I celebrated its replacement by Fisk in 1974. I don't think that particular Skinner was a very good instrument—but I'd sure love to get a look at it today to see what Mr. Skinner was up to in 1905.

§

The 1995 movie *Apollo 13* (Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, et al.) was a gripping telling of the nearly disastrous explosion on that mission to the moon, launched in April 1970. Two days after the launch, an oxygen tank explodes and astronauts and NASA officials scramble to devise a way to abort the mission safely. In the chaos of the first moments of the emergency, NASA flight director Gene Kranz (played by Ed Harris) holds up his hand, calls for silence, and asks, "What have we got on this spacecraft that's good?"

My thanks to Ms. Levitz for noticing the organ world lurking on that lawn in Washington, and for giving her considerable energy and talent to creating the story. But she told only half the story. The rest is up to us. And we're at a great moment to do it, to tell it, to live it.

We are an energetic group of devotees to a high expression of the arts and humanities. The pipe organ stands for so much that's good about the human condition. For centuries it was among the most complex of all human contrivances, for centuries it was the source of some of the loudest sounds anyone heard. Today, too many people see the organ as the realm of dead white men. That's not the fault of the organ, it's the fault, the oversight, the result of its professional practitioners getting wrapped up in scholarship—the understanding of this special niche, its complex history, the relationships between the instruments' builders and the artists who created and played the music.

Too often we present programs to the public based on our interest and devotion to obscure styles and periods of composition. This afternoon I was talking with a colleague on the lawn outside her church building. We talked about the levels of public interest in the music of the pipe organ. I said something like, "You don't attract Joe Public into a church to hear an all-Buxtehude recital." She said, "I love Buxtehude." I said, "So do I (and I do!), but if we don't give them something else, something that excites and inspires them, something they can sing to themselves in the car on the way home from the recital, they're not going to come back." And for decades now, they haven't been coming back.

I celebrate the long list of young performers who are lighting new fires under the pews—those players whose impeccable musicianship comes first, who understand the art of performing, which is different from the art of playing, whose sense of programming inspires the

simple and necessary act of attendance, and whose public carriage brings dignity and respect to a profession that has for so long been marked by flamboyant but shallow behavior and performance.

The organ world need not be the worst world in the world. It's a world full of brilliant young talent. It's a world full of talented organbuilders. It's a world full of exciting new instruments. And it's our responsibility to project the best of all of it to the public, especially those who are still unaware of the delights and majesty of the pipe organ.

That revival, that renaissance has given us dozens of organbuilding firms who produce some of the best instruments ever made—both mechanical and electric actions. Compare an instrument built by Paul Fritts with one by Schoenstein. Compare an instrument built by C. B. Fisk with one by Quimby. Compare an instrument by Dobson with one by Nichols & Simpson. What's not to like? Ours is a small world with space for everyone.

I'm not suggesting we abandon Buxtehude, Scheidt, Scheidemann, de Grigny, and the countless masters whose efforts have collected to form what we know as the world of the pipe organ. I'm not suggesting we shouldn't celebrate the heritage of the organ. I am suggesting that a public that's offered myriad opportunities for entertainment and enrichment ranging from professional sports to video games, to symphony concerts, and to organ recitals, is going to choose an option that's exciting, stimulating, enriching, and at some level, just plain fun. You or I might think it's fun to rattle through a half-dozen Buxtehude Preludes and Fugues, but would your next-door neighbor agree? ■

On Teaching by Gavin Black



Continuo, part I

The musical practice known as *continuo playing* was an integral part of ensemble music from about 1600 until about 1750—the dates that we assign to the "Baroque Period." Indeed, it makes a lot of sense to define the Baroque specifically as the era in music history when continuo playing was the norm. During that period, almost every work of music that was not a solo keyboard or lute piece included a continuo part. (Exceptions, such as pieces for unaccompanied violin, or lute songs, probably amount to no more than five percent or so of the repertoire.) This includes sonatas, trio sonatas, works for larger instrumental ensembles, songs, cantatas, Masses, operas, and oratorios—arias, choruses, recitative, and so on. The practice of writing continuo parts certainly persisted into the second half of the eighteenth century—the "Classical" era—but became less common, less mainstream, less central to

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