

53rd OHS National Convention Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, July 13–18, 2008

Frank Rippl

On the day before I was to leave for the Organ Historical Society's 53rd National Convention, I was eating a sandwich and reading the paper. I never read my horoscope, but for some reason I happened to glance at mine (Cancer) and was startled to read: "You're being taken to beautiful places where there is great attention to detail and where you are enveloped in someone else's grand vision. Sit back and enjoy the unfolding spectacle." That got my attention. I had been to Seattle many times before and knew many of the instruments we were to hear, but OHS conventions always put a different spin on things and shine a spotlight on the instruments themselves. I couldn't wait to experience "someone else's grand vision" of those instruments and the buildings in which they stand, and, of course, the many outstanding players and builders in the Pacific Northwest. It is, as our handbook stated: "A Young Yet Vibrant History." Each registrant had received the OHS Seattle 2008 *Organ Atlas* in the mail before we left on our respective journeys to the West Coast: 174 lavishly illustrated and painstakingly researched pages on the venues and instruments we would visit. The team that put this colorful document together is to be congratulated. So, thus armed, we were ready and eager to get started.

Sunday, July 13

We began with some pre-convention activities on Sunday night. The weather was perfect: a clear sky and temperatures in the low 70s as our buses climbed through the Capitol Hill neighborhood to St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral overlooking Puget Sound. St. Mark's was to have been a grand Gothic structure, but the stock market crash of the late 1920s brought those dreams to a halt. They were left with what is now lovingly called "The Holy Box." But it is still grand in its own way and with great acoustics.

Once inside, convention chair **David Dahl** welcomed us, calling it "a gathering of the family." There were 310 of us greeting old friends and meeting new ones from all over the world with a common interest: love of the organ.



1965 Flentrop, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle (photo: William Van Pelt)

We came this night, of course, to hear the landmark 4-m 1965 Flentrop organ, with its spectacular and breathtaking 32' copper façade, in a concert by **Thomas Joyce**, the assistant organist at St. Mark's, followed by Compline. Joyce played *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Musorgsky (1870–1937) as transcribed by Keith Johns. He managed to make this very romantic score work quite well on this beautiful mid-20th century organ with all its neo-baroque accents. My favorite was

"Bydlo," the ever-nearing ox cart thundering past us with its great weight, and then disappearing over the hill; the snarling reeds were very effective. The humor in "The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks" was most engaging. The organ sparked as tiny beaks struggled to break through their encasing shells. The majesty of "The Great Gate of Kiev" brought the piece to an end. The sweeping acoustics of this great church and the underpinning of the mighty and blazing reeds and the 32' stops lifted us from from our pews. It was a brilliant performance.

There was a 40-minute intermission of sorts between concert and Compline. Halfway through this interval, David Dahl invited us to enter into a spirit of silence prior to the beautiful and famous Compline service, sung each Sunday evening since 1955 at St. Mark's by a volunteer choir of about fifteen men. It usually attracts anywhere from 500–1000 young people who stretch out on the floor or the pews, some bringing bedrolls. They absorb the simple beauty of the chants and the readings. It is broadcast live over KING-FM radio, and can be heard worldwide via the Internet.

We became silent as the hundreds of young people joined us. The sun set, the lights dimmed, candles were lit. There were no "praise" bands, no guitars, no drums. The choir entered wearing black cassocks and long white surplices. They stood in the back of the church in a corner. They were led by **Peter Hallock**, Canon Precentor Emeritus, who founded the choir and is composer of much of the music they sing. The chanting was elegant and refined but never precious. The tuning in the homophonic sections was perfect. The beautiful anthem was Canon Hallock's *If We Could Shut the Gate*, scored for male voices, violin, and organ. It was a tranquil and quietly spiritual end to the first day.

Monday, July 14

Our hotel was the Holiday Inn at the airport, standing in a cluster of airport hotels, including one called "The Clarion Hotel." My room had a great view of Mount Rainier rising majestically over the "Clarion." We had a great rate of \$82.00 per night, which included a lavish breakfast. Trouble was, we always had an 8:00 a.m. departure. So, if we wished to dine in what was a rather small dining area, we had to be down there by 6:00!



C. B. Fisk, Opus 114, Benaroya Concert Hall, Seattle (photo: William Van Pelt)

Monday morning took us into downtown Seattle to Benaroya Concert Hall to hear **Carole Terry** demonstrate the large 3-m concert hall organ by C. B. Fisk. The simple façade of this organ includes some of the open wood pipes of the 32' Prestant. I'm not normally a big fan of wooden façade pipes, but these blended well with the browns and tans of the Benaroya complex; also in the 32' department: *Untersatz 32'*, *Tuba Profunda*

32', and *Grosse Quinte 10 2/3'*. The room is notorious for its poor bass response and generally dry acoustic, so all that 32' tone proved to be necessary to fill out the bottom of the range.

David Dahl introduced Ms. Terry as "Seattle's First Lady of the Organ." She began her program with Dahl's fine *Fanfare Introduction: The National Anthem*, which we then sang. She continued with three chorale preludes by Bach, putting various solo voices on display: the reeds, the cornet, and the flutes. Next was William Bolcom's *Sweet Hour of Prayer*, in which we heard the Fisk's strings and foundation stops. Then three pieces from François Couperin's *Messe pour les Convents: Plein Jeu, Premier Couplet du Gloria; Duo sur les Tierces, Troisième Couplet*; and *Chromorne sur la Taille, Cinquième Couplet*, which showed that this versatile organ can speak French quite well. Sowerby's beautiful *Air with Variations* showed off the Swell strings, the Solo Clarinet, and later the Flauto Mirabilis. These were full-throated and wonderful pipes! Carole Terry's last piece was the opening *Allegro Vivace* from Widor's *Symphonie No. 5*. This heavily land-mined piece caused her to stumble slightly a few times, but she managed to bring it off. Her melodic lines were nicely delineated. She chose her literature and registrations well. None of us could come away from this recital complaining that we didn't hear a fine demonstration of this important instrument—part of a new generation of American concert hall organs.



1887 Geo. Kilgen & Son, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Edmonds (photo: William Van Pelt)

We then crossed Lake Washington on the Pontoon Bridge and climbed quite high above Puget Sound through well-manicured properties to Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Edmonds, Washington, to hear the church's 1887 Geo. Kilgen & Son organ, the only surviving 3-m Kilgen tracker. **Christopher Marks**, assistant professor of organ at the University of Nebraska, was our soloist. Holy Rosary is a modern church built in the round, with the organ standing to the right of the altar. The organ came from the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles, and was relocated to Holy Rosary in 1980 via the Organ Clearing House.

Marks opened with a toccata from *Première Suite pour Grand-Orgue* (1900) by Felix Borowski (1872–1956, a son of Polish immigrants), which began on the Swell with shades closed, and built to a *fortissimo*. Another piece by Borowski followed: *Allegretto-Allegro leggiero* from his *Third Sonata* (1924), which demonstrated some of the soft sounds of this lovely organ. Two andantes by American-trained organist George F. Bristow (1829–1898) from his *Six Pieces for the Organ* (1883) were followed by a hymn by Thomas Hastings: "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning" to the tune WESLEY by Lowell Mason. He closed with four selections from Seth Bingham's *Seven Preludes or Postludes on Lowell Mason Hymns* (1945), which sounded just dandy on this organ. He played Nos. 1, 2, 4, & 5; the first was based on the

hymn we had just sung. I especially liked #4: "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night." He used the reeds to great effect. I recommend these pieces! Marks, a fine player, gave us a great OHS recital with well-chosen literature to demonstrate the many lovely sounds of this organ.

Our fleet of buses took us to the attractive Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood, Washington, where we were served a tasty box lunch. At 1:00, the tireless convention chairman David Dahl gave a fascinating address: "Tracker Organbuilding in the Pacific Northwest." He traced the arrival of American tracker organs from the East Coast in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the mid-20th century, European tracker organs were brought in. The famous Flentrop at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle is a good example. There were others, too: St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina has a Metzler from 1971. But late in the 20th century, the Pacific Northwest began to get its own voice from builders such as John Brombaugh, Paul Fritts, and Martin Pasi.



Pasi Organbuilders, Opus 4, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lynnwood (photo: William Van Pelt)

We would hear many fine instruments by these gentlemen and others. In fact, one of them stood to Dahl's right: Martin Pasi's beautiful Opus 4 from 1995. This 2-m, 30-stop, mechanical action organ is in a freestanding black walnut case, with eight Italianate arches serving to frame the façade pipes. It was demonstrated by **Julia Brown**, who was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and received her graduate-level training in organ at Northwestern University studying with Wolfgang Rübsum. She opened with a jolly *Noël* by Jean-François Dandrieu, then two fantasias by Louis Couperin. A charming chorale prelude by Scheidemann was then played on the clear 4' flutes. Next was a beautiful chorale prelude on *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* by Niels Gade (1817–1890), leading into the hymn by the same name, which she and the organ led with great ease and grace. Another *Noël* followed, this one by José Jesus Estrada (1817–1890): *Noël en estilo frances del siglo XVIII*, which demonstrated more of this wonderful organ's stops including the Zimbelstern. Brown closed her recital with Buxtehude's *Praeludium in F*, BuxWV, in which we heard the fine influence of Professor Rübsum. This was another outstanding recital.

Our buses took us back on the road for a visit to Blessed Sacrament Church in Seattle. The huge building, with gorgeous gardens and a school across the street, loomed large in the neighborhood. The organ stood in the left transept. It came from St. Dominic's Ro-

man Catholic Church in San Francisco, and was installed in Blessed Sacrament in 2005. The organ began life as an instrument by Henry Erben for a church in Nyack, New York, and was rebuilt by Francis J. N. Tallman (1860–1950), who essentially made it a new instrument. It was rebuilt again in 1914 by Michael A. Clark, and then moved to San Francisco. St. Dominic's decided after remodeling that the organ no longer met their needs, so it ended up at Blessed Sacrament.

We had arrived early, so Scott Huntington gave us an impromptu introduction to the history of this fascinating instrument as only he can. That, plus the first-rate account of this organ written in the convention atlas by Stephen Pinel, provided us with unusually thorough preparation for the concert.

Our performer was OHS favorite **George Bozeman**. He began his demonstration of this 2-m, 15-stop organ with C. P. E. Bach's *Sonata in G Minor*, Wq 70/6, perfectly suited to this fine organ. The hymn was "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (tune BEECHER). He then played his own transcription of *Four Sketches*, op. 15, by Amy Beach (1867–1944), quite intoxicating and evocative: "In Autumn," "Phantoms," "Dreaming," and "Fire-flies." George, if you haven't published these pieces, please do! The music and your performance were both great!



Paul Fritts & Co., Opus 22, Thomsen Chapel (photo: William Van Pelt)

Our next stop was a happy return to St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral back on Capitol Hill. We had time to peruse the fine cathedral shop, where we were given a 10% discount. We also had a cocktail party with delicious snacks on the cathedral grounds, followed by a fine Bastille Day French meal in Bloedel Hall. We took turns entering the beautiful Thomsen Chapel, the only part of the cathedral that was finished in Gothic style (one can only imagine what the whole building would have looked like had it been finished), which now contains a jewel of an organ by Paul Fritts & Co., Opus 22, 2003. This 2-m and pedal, 18-stop organ sits in the west balcony and fills the room with its beauty. **Thomas Joyce**, assistant organist at the cathedral, played brief demonstrations for us. He is a charming young man with a great future.

But the major event of the evening was in the cathedral itself: a brilliant concert by **J. Melvin Butler** (who, I'm told, is also a superb violist!), canon organist and choirmaster of St. Mark's. He opened with a dazzling performance of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor*, BWV 535. Mel Butler's talented fingers and toes and the marvelous clarity of the Flentrop organ made the music sing. Two selections from Bach's Leipzig Chorales followed: *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 661, in which we heard the solo line on a small cornet with a gentle tremolo; and *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig*, BWV 656. In the middle section, the upperwork glimmered like light glancing off faceted gemstones. The majestic finale (with the cantus firmus in the pedal) was pure muscularity. The first half of the program ended with Buxtehude's chorale fantasia on *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein*, BuxWV 210. It was first-rate playing by one of Seattle's best organists

on an organ that never fails to thrill.

The second half began with *Fanfare for Organ* by Richard Proulx, which ran a good circuit through the many trumpet stops, vertical and horizontal. It was followed by *In Quiet Joy* from a composer new to me: Mark Winges, b. 1951. Lovely flutes and deep-water pedal 16' stops supported the occasional soft solo reed, then turned to quiet strings briefly, and went on as before. The strings returned supporting a solo flute. It is an exquisite piece. The hymn "When in our music God is glorified," sung to the tune KAYTLYN by Joseph Downing (1982), was followed by Canon Butler's *Fantasy on "Kaytlyn"*, a fine piece with moments of quiet and introspection, ending gently with two rings from a chime.

Butler rounded off his program with two pieces by the great 20th-century American organist and composer Leo Sowerby: *Arioso* and *Toccata*. *Arioso*, with its plaintive call from a quiet reed stop, gave us a sense of serenity tinged with longing. It is a masterpiece, and Butler brought out each poignant nuance. By way of contrast, Sowerby's fiery *Toccata* drew the evening and first full day to a rousing and blazing close. Butler's fleet fingers sent the notes flitting from pillar to pillar in this great "Holy Box." We cheered!

Tuesday, June 15

Tuesday morning found us high atop our hotel in a circular ballroom with a splendid vista of Mt. Rainier. We had come to hear a loving tribute by Mark Brombaugh to his brother John, a seminal figure in American organ building. The lecture was entitled "Singing Pipes: The Artistic Legacy of Organbuilder John Brombaugh." Mark explained how John's early training with Fritz Noack, Charles Fisk and Rudolph von Beckerath influenced him. He then proceeded to trace John Brombaugh's own ideas of voicing: the *vocale* style of sound—making pipes sing in a beautiful vocal manner. He went through each of John's instruments, giving well-thought-out descriptions of each. I was especially interested in his Opus 33, which stands four blocks from my house, on the campus of Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. It was also fascinating to hear the list of men who had worked with John over the years and who have now gone on to be fine organ builders in their own right. The list reads like a who's who of American organ building, and includes Fritts, Taylor & Boody, Pasi, Richards & Fowkes. Not bad! It was a most entertaining and informative summing up of a great career.



E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings, Opus 591, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Auburn (photo: Stephen Schnurr)

Our first concert of the day was at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Auburn, Washington, by **Carol Foster** on the church's E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings organ, Opus 591 from 1871. Its caramel-colored pipes and honey-like case gleamed in the modern, light-filled room. The program began with the presentation of the OHS Historic Organ Ci-

tation for the 2-m, 12-stop instrument—the 368th such citation the society has given to instruments of historic interest. The organ's first home was in Philadelphia, then in Camden, New Jersey. St. Matthew's acquired it from the Organ Clearing House.

Carol Foster, a woman with a long and distinguished career, is currently parish musician at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on Whidbey Island, Washington. Her first piece this day was a charming *Andante & Gavotte* from a sonata by Thomas Arne. That was followed by Craig Phillips's (b. 1960) *Prelude on "Divinum mysterium."* The room-filling sound of even the flute stops on this little organ let us know that this was indeed a Hook organ.

Next up was the early American tune "Restoration" from *Sacred Sounds* by George Shearing (b. 1919), in which Foster gave us a good hearing of the foundation stops. That was followed by *Song of Happiness* (1914), by Roland Diggie: a sweet, sentimental piece that brought many a smile. Then came Theodore Dubois' *Cantilène religieuse*. Foster joked about the tremolo, which was a force unto itself. She used the Oboe (the organ's only reed), but it sounded like there was a flute with the oboe. She ended with an energetic and jolly performance of Jacques Lemmens's *Fanfare*. The hymn "Come, We That Love the Lord" (tune VINEYARD HAVEN) closed this fine recital.

We drove to Olympia, paying a brief visit to handsome government buildings, then went downtown to eat lunch in the lobby of the Washington Center for the Performing Arts. After lunch, **Andy Crow** performed for us on the theater's mighty Wurlitzer. He has several silent film scores to his credit. We were treated to his accompaniment to the Laurel and Hardy silent film "Double Whoopee," which was hysterical. His expert accompaniment kept pace with craziness on the screen. He used the organ's resources very well, and also played a number of classic American songs. It was a fun midday break.



1905 Jesse Woodberry & Co., Opus 225, Spanaway Lutheran Church, Spanaway (photo: William Van Pelt)

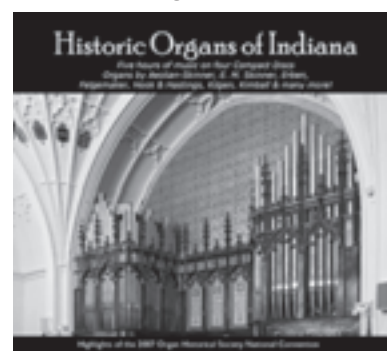
Our next stop was Spanaway Lutheran Church in Spanaway, Washington, and its attractive 1905 Jesse Woodberry & Co. Opus 225 organ. Built in Boston, it was acquired by the Organ Clearing House. Its walnut case and white façade pipes with gold mouths make for a striking appearance, and its two manuals and 18 ranks work very well in this appealing space, standing as it does to the right of the altar. Much of the restoration work was lovingly done by members of the congregation under the leadership of organbuilder Stephen Cook. Carpeting was pulled up and a hardwood floor was installed.

We began with the presentation of the Historic Organ Citation by Stephen Schnurr. The recital was played by **Kevin Birch** from Bangor, Maine, where he teaches organ and harpsichord at the University of Maine's School of the Performing Arts. He began with Arthur Foote's *Festival March*, op. 29, no. 1 (1893), which demonstrated the foundation stops nicely—a good solid *forte*. An additional Foote piece followed: *Allegretto*, op. 29, no. 2 (1893), which walked us through this fine organ's softer sounds. The Great Flute d'Amour 4', played one

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octave lower, was particularly effective. The Swell shades created an incredible *pp*. The hymn was “Abide with Me” (EVENTIDE). In a masterful bit of accompanying, he never dominated, he led.

The closing piece was Dudley Buck’s *Variations on “The Last Rose of Summer.”* Among other fine things, we got to hear the gentle Swell strings. I also liked the Swell Violin Diapason in its rich tenor range. I was struck thus far this week by the number of recitals that ended *pianissimo*. This was one of them. The magic swell shades on this organ really did their job!



Geo. Kilgen & Son, 1890, Trinity Lutheran Church, Tacoma (Parkland) (photo: William Van Pelt)

We then went to the Chapel of Trinity Lutheran Church in Tacoma (Parkland). A brass trumpet bedecked with blue ribbons was suspended from a wrought iron stand outside the church’s door to greet us. We came to hear the Geo. Kilgen & Son organ from 1890. Now in its fifth home (!), this well-traveled 2-m and 12-stop organ seems quite happy in its present surroundings. Even though its façade pipes are new, it was given a well-deserved OHS Historic Organ Citation. Our recitalists were husband and wife **Tim and Cheryl Drewes**. This would be a recital of duet and solo literature, and they jumped right in with Horatio Parker’s *Quick March* (for two organists). It was played with plenty of *brio*! Next was *Humoresque for organ and piano* by Widor—that was new to me. If you are in the market for a good piano/organ duet, I can recommend this one.

Tim Drewes then played *Sortie* (from *L’Organiste Moderne*) by Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély, which sounded like theatre music—spirited with plenty of contrast. Ah, how different early 19th-century Parisian church music was from what it would become! He then led us in the hymn “All my hope on God is founded” to the tune MICHAEL, written by Herbert Howells and dedicated to his young son Michael, who died of polio. I never fail to be moved by this hymn and tune.

Cheryl then played *Rooster Rag* by Muriel Pollock (1895–1971), a humorous little piece that would make a good encore. Hopping back on the bench, Tim Drewes played a cheerful *Bergamasca* by Samuel Scheidt, showing this organ’s versatility. Cheryl Drewes then ended this engaging concert with a fine reading of Mendelssohn’s *Sonata in D Major* (op. 65, no. 5).

Sometimes you can tell a great deal about an organ builder just by visiting his or her shop. The Paul Fritts & Co. organ shop in Tacoma (Parkland) is a thing of great beauty. The wooden building is stained with an almost amber color. The large main door rises twelve feet or so to a curved arch with faceted wooden insets. We were served wine and snacks and got to look at upcoming projects and parts of an early 19th-century case they are restoring. It was all very inspirational.

We then drove a few blocks to the campus of Pacific Lutheran University. Huge old growth Douglas fir trees towered over rich green lawns and beautiful landscaping. We were served a deli-



Paul Fritts & Co., Opus 18, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma (photo: William Van Pelt)

cious dinner in the University Center: roast pork with lingonberry sauce! God bless those Swedish Lutherans! We then walked through the beautiful campus to Lagerquist Concert Hall. The building’s entrance windows were decorated in glass flower blossoms by the world-renowned Tacoma artist Dale Chihuly. Upon entering the hall, our eyes beheld the jaw-droppingly gorgeous Paul Fritts organ, Opus 18 from 1998, surely one of the most beautiful organs in North America. The high tin content of the façade pipes and the 250 square feet of basswood pipeshades and fanciful figures all done by Jude Fritts, Paul Fritts’s sister, made for a visual feast. The tall, honey-colored case is made of old-growth Douglas fir logs, which came from local forests including Mount Rainier National Park. The hall itself has adjustable acoustics from one to over four seconds of reverberation.

The recitalist was **Paul Tegels**, university organist at PLU, who opened his recital with a *Toccata in G* by Scheide-mann. He gave it a grand sweeping sound that seemed to invite us into the world of this instrument. Next we heard two selections from the Netherlands of 1599: from the Susanne van Soldt Manuscript, *Branle Champagne* and *Almande Brun Smeedelyn*. Then it was on to four versions of the tune *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*, the first a four-part harmonization by J. S. Bach, then three fantasies on *Une Jeune Fillette* by Eustache du Caurroy (1549–1609), which showed some of the reed stops; the next version of the chorale came from Johann Ludwig Krebs’s *Clavierübung*, showing us the beautiful flute stops; and the last was a *Fantaisie sopra “Une Jeune Fillette”* by Bert Matter (b. 1936), which had a variety of sounds rhythmic and pulsating. By the end it receded to quiet flutes, which restated the chorale. Tegels closed the first half of his program with the *Praeludium in D Minor* (originally E minor) by Nicolaus Bruhns. The small arpeggiated figures on the Positive were delicious. When he brought on the 32’s at the end we were transported. Thrilling playing!

After intermission, we sang the hymn “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones” (LÄSST UNS ERFREUEN) with a fine introduction composed by David Dahl. Tegels then treated us to Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in G Major*, BWV 541. The boastful, chest-thumping music bounced along with a sense of self satisfaction, the wind system giving us a lovely crescendo on the final chord. Next was a *Suite*, op. 34, no. 1, by Widor for organ and flute, in which Tegels was joined by flutist Jennifer Rhyne. It was very pretty music that seemed highly agreeable and accessible, although the Scherzo has challenges.

For his final work, Tegels chose Alexandre Guilmant’s *Sonata I in D Minor*. He invested a great deal of vitality into the Introduction and Allegro, followed by just the right amount of letting up before the da capo. I am so glad that in the last 25 years or so we are hearing Guilmant’s music once again. The wonderful Pastoral, which I like to use during communion or as a prelude, was very nicely played. There are so many fine 8’ sounds

on this organ. The Vox Humana buzzed along nicely with the 32’ humming below. Tegels made the Finale burst forth like fireworks, timing it just right to catch us off guard. From start to finish, it was a virtuoso performance by builder, player and architect. We had ended a long day, but our spirits were quite high!

Wednesday July 16

For the most part, this would be “Episcopal Day.” Our first stop on this bright and sunny morning was Seattle’s St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, in the Space Needle area, nestled among several inviting Asian restaurants. The churchyard featured a labyrinth and imaginative landscaping. The organ we were about to



Gebr. Späth, Opus 753, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Seattle (photo: Stephen Schnurr)

hear is quite a remarkable instrument. It hangs by cables from the trusses of this A-frame structure—even the balcony is suspended. Marie-Claire Alain called it “a flying organ.” On paper, the organ, built by Gebr. Späth (Opus 753, 1963, 2-m, 15 stops), seems rather sparse. The only 8’ on the Great is a Koppelfloete. So we were curious to hear how it would do. **Walter E. Krueger**, from Portland, Oregon, was our performer. He opened with Buxtehude’s *Praeludium in D Minor*, Bux WV 140, which he played with great flourish. It was immediately clear that this little organ was not afraid to speak up for itself. Next were two of Bach’s Schübler Chorales. *Wachet auf* used the Great flutes 8’ and 2’, with the Swell Trumpet 8’. The pedal seemed to be Subbass 16’ and the Choralbass 4’. It worked well. *Kommst du nun* showed off the twinkle in the eye of this neo-baroque organ. Krueger followed that with a gentle reading of Krebs’s *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*, with the ornamented chorale melody on the Swell Cornet with a sweet tremolo. The hymn was “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing,” which was sung in *alternatim* with Pachelbel’s *Partita on “Alle Menschen.”* It gave us a fine tour of this instrument. Full organ, complete with zimbelstern, was surprisingly hearty. It was a good demonstration recital.

On a very high bridge, we crossed the ship canal that connects Lake Washington with Puget Sound and entered the University District in bright sunshine. We parked in front of our next venue, University Christian Church, a fine structure in English Gothic style. The interior is dark, with a horseshoe balcony. Great swaths of peach and white fabric were hung from the side balconies to the rear balcony to help relieve the darkness. The windows were attractive, and the ceiling was painted in rosettes of deep blue, pale blue, light green and a rich red. This would be our first electro-pneumatic organ: a large Casavant Frères, Ltée., Opus 1302, from 1929, 4-m, 60 stops. It was dedicated by Marcel Dupré on October 29, 1929, and stands in the front of the church, with the pipes in two chambers on either side of the chancel.

Peter Guy, organist and master of the choristers at Christ Church Cathedral,

Newcastle, Australia, was our performer. He also serves as director of chapel music at St. Andrew’s College within the University of Sydney. He has concertized all over the world, and had just turned 27 when we heard him—a charming young man with a quick and ready smile. He opened his program with J. S. Bach’s *Now Thank We All Our God* as arranged by Virgil Fox, which featured the foundation stops and reeds. This is an intact organ—unchanged; it possesses a warm but somewhat brooding sound. Next up was from Bach’s *Orgelbüchlein: Christ ist erstanden*, BWV 627, which had plenty of energy. Then came a piece by Graham Koehne (b. 1956), “The Morning Star” from his suite *To his servant Bach, God grants a final glimpse*, which uses the chorale tune “How brightly shines the morning star.” It was written in a Mendelssohnian style, and Guy played it with great sensitivity. I’d like to hear more music by this composer.

Edouard Batiste (1820–1876) provided the next piece, *Andante in G “Pilgrim’s Song of Hope”*—a character piece of its era, to feature many of the softer sounds of this instrument. Then came a favorite of mine, *Rorate Caeli* by Jeanne Demessieux, played with great sensitivity. Peter Guy then played Samuel Sebastian Wesley’s *Andante in E-flat*, which came off quite well on this organ, which is in need of a thorough restoration. The hymn was another favorite of mine, “O Thou Who Camest from Above,” to the tune HERFORD by S. S. Wesley. Our tenors had a grand time! He closed with Louis Vierne’s *Hymne au soleil*, played with lots of grandeur. If I had anything critical to say about this fine recital, it would be that we seemed to hear too much of the same tone quality: rarely a solo reed, for example. I suspect that the condition of the instrument had much to do with that.



Bond Organ Builders, Opus 23, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Seattle (photo: William Van Pelt)

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Seattle was next, with a recital on its fine 2-m, 47-rank Bond organ, Opus 23 from 1994. **Leslie Martin**, organist and director of music at the church, was the performer. The church is an A-frame structure, and the organ stands behind the altar. Its mainly copper façade pipes are surrounded by a wall of panels that have lace-like carvings through which we could glimpse a chapel behind the organ. The church also owns a portable organ by John Brombaugh. It has carved figures on three sides of people playing instruments. Brombaugh himself explained many of the details. It came from a group of six instruments built in 1979 in his Eugene, Oregon shop.

Martin began his program with *Toccata Quinta* by Frescobaldi, followed by *Ricercar Quinto Giovanni*, by Paolo Cima (1570–1612). Next, *Pange Lingua* by Nicolas de Grigny: *Plein Jeu en taille à 4*, *Fugue à 5*, in which we heard the powerful Great Cornet V and the Swell Trompette, and finally, *Récit du Chant de l’Hymne précédent*, giving a good airing of the fine Swell Cornet in the tenor register with *tremblant*.

Next was Brahms's *O Gott, du frommer Gott*, demonstrating the versatility of this organ's foundation stops. He then played Messiaen's *Apparition de l'Eglise éternelle*. I visited Messiaen's church in Paris, Eglise de la Sainte-Trinité, one year ago. Even though I did not hear the organ, this music was in my head, and I wondered at all the glorious improvisations he must have created in that colorful space. Leslie Martin's tempo and approach were faster and more robust than I would prefer, but in a room lacking reverberation like this one, it may have been a wise choice. He closed with the Adagio from Widor's *Symphony No. 2 in D Major*, op. 13, no. 2. We heard the strings and the Great Harmonic Flute to which was added the Great Montre 8'. It was a good, rich sound! The hymn was "O Day of Peace That Dimly Shines" to Parry's distinguished tune, JERUSALEM. I like a more majestic pace for this tune, but it was good to hear it sung by the great voices of the OHS!

We were served a nice box lunch in the parish hall. On the way to the buses many of us were taking pictures of the beautiful flower gardens around the church and in the neighborhood—blue hydrangeas and giant roses of all colors!



1892 Cole & Woodberry, Opus 225, St. John's Episcopal Church, Kirkland (photo: William Van Pelt)

We then crossed the attractive Lake Washington again and climbed up the steep bluff to St. John's Episcopal Church in Kirkland to hear **Derek Nickels**, director of music at the Church of the Holy Comforter (Episcopal) in Kenilworth, Illinois. I recalled hearing him at the 2006 convention and was eager to hear him again. He did not disappoint—secure, solid rhythm and sensitive musicianship again were the order of the day. The organ was a 2-m, 17-stop Cole & Woodberry, Opus 225, built in Boston in 1892. The OHS Seattle 2008 *Organ Atlas* has two articles about this fascinating instrument. Tom Foster tells of its original home in Highland Congregational Church, Westford Street, Lowell, Massachusetts. When the church closed, the organ was put in storage, and St. John's acquired it in 1974. Glenn White of Olympic Organ Builders, Seattle, installed it in St. John's, and later on Richard Bond Organ Builders did major work on the action. Stephen Pinel also wrote a fascinating essay for the *Atlas* on William B. Goodwin, who designed the organ. The façade has three large false wood pipes followed by a row of some 27 pipes in a wide flat. Its appearance is unique! Scott Hamilton described some of the other unique features of this instrument—it really was designed to play transcriptions.

Nickels did just that. He made great use of the organ throughout the program, playing expressively in pieces like Meyerbeer's "Coronation March" (*Le Prophète*) in an arrangement by Bryan Hesford, which showed contrasting sounds, and he built up to a wonderful *ff*. Next was John Knowles Paine's *Andante con Variazioni*, op. 17. He began on a single string stop that filled the room nicely.

The first variation used what sounded like the Doppelflute 8' on the Swell—a full, rich sound; 8' and 4' flutes were up next. He arched the phrases nicely. The strings repeated the opening theme.

Next were two pieces by Schumann: *Sketch in D-flat Major* and *Canon in B Minor*, in which he made the most of the resources of this organ. The jolliness of the D-flat gave way to the jingle bell effect of the B-Minor. He brought his fine program to an end with Mendelssohn's *Fugue in E Minor*, giving it a spirited performance. Organ and organist were well matched. He managed the wild ride that is the pedal part of this piece with great élan. His clean playing gave life to the music. A superb performance!



Metzler Söhne, 1971, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Medina (photo: William Van Pelt)

I was keen to get to our next church because I always enjoy Bruce Stevens's concerts, but also because the church, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Medina, has a 2-m and pedal, 22-stop Metzler Söhne organ, built in Dietekon, Switzerland in 1971. This would be my first Metzler, and I'm told it is the only Metzler in the United States. I have many recordings of Metzler organs, usually played by Stevens's teacher, Anton Heiller, so I am familiar with their outstanding quality. The church is a cruciform pattern with transepts, and the altar stands at the crossing beneath a lantern tower. The organ and choir are behind the altar.

Bruce Stevens, a well-known and distinguished figure at OHS conventions, serves as organist at Second Presbyterian Church in downtown Richmond, Virgin-

ia. He is also adjunct instructor in organ at the University of Richmond, and leads OHS organ tours of Europe. I truly admire and respect his playing. He began with J. S. Bach's *Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her,"* BWV 769. After three variations, we sang the hymn "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (VOM HIMMEL HOCH). The organ led us very well. Stevens then played the final two variations, delineating the parts of the canons with clarity and grace.

There followed yet another canonic piece: Schumann's *Piece in Canonic Form*, op. 56, no. 5; again we had a clear idea of where the music was going. He ended with Schumann's *Fugue on the Name of B-A-C-H*, op. 60, no. 6. Stevens used this wonderful organ very well, letting us hear its fine colors and refined voicing. The glorious *ff* finale was spine-tingling!

Our next event was a dinner cruise aboard the elegant "Spirit of Seattle." The relaxing evening took us on a cruise of the beautiful waters of Puget Sound. The food was bountiful, the conversation was friendly and stimulating, and the scenery was magnificent. The huge skyscrapers of downtown Seattle and the graceful Space Needle slowly began to shrink as the natural landscape took center stage. A full moon appeared as mist clung to the shores of islands and peninsulas, while the Cascade Mountains rose behind. Dominating all was Mount Rainier, gazing down like an Old Testament prophet. We began the cruise in the bright sunshine of the late afternoon, returning to shore at dusk just as the lights of the downtown buildings and the Space Needle were beginning to twinkle magically. It was a perfect evening.

Thursday, July 17

Thursday began at Calvary Lutheran Church in Federal Way, Washington, with a recital by **Sharon Porter Shull**, minister of music at Agnus Dei Lutheran Church in Gig Harbor, Washington, on the church's Kenneth Coulter organ, Opus 6, built in Eugene, Oregon. Its two manuals, pedal, and 19 stops stand in the rear balcony. Roger Meers's essay in the *Atlas* points out that the church's low ceiling necessitated a Rückpositive. As the church's music program expanded, the balcony was enlarged, bringing it forward on each side of the Rückpositive.

Shull opened with the Allegro from Vivaldi's *Concerto del Sigr. Meck* (sic) as arranged by Johann Gottfried Walther—a most engaging piece, which she played in a most entertaining way. The organ has very sweet tones that were evident in the next piece, *Partita on "Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten"* by Georg



Kenneth Coulter, Opus 6, Calvary Lutheran Church, Federal Way (photo: Stephen Schnurr)

Böhm, which would be the hymn we would sing at the end of the program. We moved forward to the end of the 19th century for Brahms's *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*, and then heard Bach's *Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf*, BWV 617. The ornamented chorale tune was played on the organ's Schalmei 8', but it did not seem to be alone. She then played a gentle little *Trio in C* by Krebs, followed by Bach's *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier*, BWV 751, for which she used the Rückpositive Cornet with tremolo. We heard the Trumpet on Bach's *Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich*, BWV 605, and she closed with *Fuga in C* ("The Fanfare") attributed to Bach. Shull gave it a wonderful sense of momentum and joy—fine playing all around!

Our last stop of the morning was Kilworth Chapel at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, with its elegant Paul Fritts & Co. organ, Opus 8, from 1989. We had gotten ahead of schedule, however, so they gave us a brief tour of downtown Tacoma's invitingly attractive area. Dale Chihuly's glass workshop is there, as well as three grand old theaters that have been mercifully spared the indignities of the wrecking ball.

We soon arrived at the University of Puget Sound's campus and its New England-style chapel. The Fritts organ stands on the stage. Its case is white with accents of gold leaf and panels of pale green. Elaborate gold pipe shades stand guard above and below the dark façade pipes, heavy with lead. The organ is essentially North German, but the Swell Oboe 8' is a copy of a Cavallé-Coll stop. It was the first Fritts organ to have a

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Paul Fritts & Co., Opus 8, Kilworth Chapel, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma (photo: William Van Pelt)

Swell division, and Paul Fritts is a graduate of this school.

Our recitalist was **Paul Thornock**, an alumnus currently serving as director of music at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Columbus, Ohio, where he presides over a large and magnificently red 2006 Fritts organ. His personality and his playing can best be described as ebullient. Thornock opened with Buxtehude's *Praeludium in E Minor*, BuxWV 142. This organ has power and a rich tone, and his playing possessed the power and richness to match it. Next, in a partita by Walther on *Jesu, meine Freude*, we heard a good variety of the tonal features of this fine 2-m, 34-stop organ. The Great Rohrflöte was very pleasing. The Swell 8' Principal with tremulant accompaniment by that Great Rohrflöte was a truly beautiful effect. Next, the Cantabile from Louis Vierne's *Symphonie No. 2* demonstrated this organ's romantic possibilities, including its Cavallé-Coll-style Oboe.

More romantic literature followed: the brilliant *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*, op. 59, nos. 5 and 6 by Max Reger. Thornock's keen sense of proportion and architecture was evident, and he has a huge technique. The hymn was "Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending" (HELMSLEY). This was another outstanding recital at this outstanding convention. And we weren't done yet! For lunch, we were treated to a midsummer cookout on the grounds of the campus beneath the Douglas fir trees that towered over an incredibly lush green lawn.

Our first recital of the afternoon was given by **Rodney Gehrke**, director of music and liturgy at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, and at the city's Temple Emanu-El. He also teaches undergraduate organ at the University of



John Brombaugh & Associates, Opus 22, Christ Church, Episcopal, Tacoma (photo: William Van Pelt)

California, Berkeley. He had the good fortune to be assigned the organ by John Brombaugh & Associates, Opus 22, 1979 (2-m, 23 stops) in the modern and strikingly beautiful Christ Church, Episcopal, Tacoma. David Dahl has been organist there for 38 years and told us that while the style is affectionately called "Brutalism" because it is all concrete and heavy wood, the acoustics are great and people can hear each other pray and sing. The organ resounds nicely, too!

The sun had just come out after a cloudy morning, so it was appropriate that we sang as our hymn "Now that the Daylight fills the skies" (HERR JESU CHRIST, DICH ZU UNS WEND). Living as I do just four blocks from John Brombaugh's Opus 33 (49 ranks) in the chapel at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, I heard many familiar sounds in Gehrke's first selection, *Magnificat on the Third Tone* by Lebègue. Brombaugh's *vocale* voicing of the principals and flutes, and the rich and full-throated reeds were his trademarks on display. The recently added Erzähler 8' and Celeste 8' made for a wondrous sound in Langlais' "Chant de Paix" from *Neuf Pièces*. Written at the end of WWII, we can only wonder at the relief the French felt in those days. This music takes us there, and Messrs. Gehrke, Langlais and Brombaugh transported us to that eternal song of peace with their gifts of skill, art, and grace.

The Harfenregal 8' on the Great (a stop also on the LU organ and a fa-

vorite of mine) began Hugo Distler's *Variations on "Frisch auf, gut Gsell, laß rummer gahn"* from *30 Spielstücke*. It was well played and demonstrated many more of the beautiful sounds of this landmark instrument. Gehrke's final selection was Bach's *Partita on "Sei gegrüßet, Jesu Gütig."* The chorale, played on the Great 8' Principal, was a thing of beauty. Each variation revealed more of this truly great organ. The final variation, with full organ, was powerful, intense, and moving.



Reuter, Opus 138, First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma (photo: William Van Pelt)

Our next stop was the First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, for a recital by **Lorenz Maycher**. Whenever I see that Maycher is playing for the OHS, I know I'm in for a treat, especially when he is seated at a big romantic organ like this large Reuter, Opus 138 from 1925 (4-m, six divisions, 80 stops, 55 ranks, 121 registers). He led off with the hymn "Over the Chaos" to a tune by Russell Jackson (b. 1962). Next was a piece by Richard Purvis, "Supplication" from *Four Poems in Tone*. It was inclusive of all manner of supplication from quiet to intense. Then a work by Jaromir Weinberger (1896-1994), *The Way to Emmaus* (A Solo Cantata for High Voice with Organ) for which he was joined by gifted soprano Anneliese von Goerken, who sang marvelously. Maycher made great use of the instrument's many gorgeous solo stops. If you have such an organ and a good soprano, you might find this a useful piece.

I was glad to see that Maycher was playing Sowerby. He is a Sowerby expert, as anyone will tell you after listening to his recordings. Today's offering, ending the program, was Sowerby's *Prelude on "Non Nobis, Domine,"* which was played with great expression and strength.

The evening event began with a blissful late afternoon non-scheduled free hour in downtown Seattle, followed by a delicious meal in Hildebrandt Hall of Plymouth Congregational Church. We then made our way upstairs to the oval-shaped church with its white/ivory walls and small stained glass windows to attend Choral Evensong as sung by the Choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Seattle, **Gary James**, choirmaster. **Thomas Foster** was the conductor, and **Craig Phillips** was the organist. The Rev. Ralph Carskadden, from St. Mark's Cathedral, was the officiant. It was a beautiful service. The choir did very well, the music was well chosen and conducted with grace. Craig Phillips played very well on the church's 3-m Schlicker, with 53 stops and 63 ranks. All the pipes are behind a screen that stands in back of the altar. Phillips wrote quite a bit of the music performed at this service, including a very nice *Prelude from Triptych for Organ*, and *Serenade for Horn and Organ*, for which he was ably joined by Maxwell Burdick. Psalm 150 was sung to an Anglican chant by Charles Fisk (MENLO PARK)—a nice touch! Phillips also supplied the anthem, *Teach Me, My God and King*, that I liked quite a lot, and the postlude, *Toccata on "Hyfrydol,"* which is a terrific piece.

Friday, July 18

The last day of the convention—some really fine events were coming our way, and we were eager to plunge right in. We began at the large St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church in Seattle, which has a



Fritts-Richards, Opus 4, St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church, Seattle (photo: William Van Pelt)

fantastic organ by Fritts-Richards, Opus 4 from 1985. With 2-m, 33 stops in a fabulous acoustic, and a drop-dead gorgeous case in the rear gallery featuring a Rückpositiv, it is a thing to behold. The case is of painted poplar. The carved and gilded pipe shades were made by David Dahl's late father. This very German organ was built by two young men still in their twenties who had never been to Europe.

Our recitalist was **Dana Robinson**, who is on the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Illinois. Those of us fortunate enough to have been at the OHS convention in 2006 heard him give the closing recital on the amazing 19th-century organ in the Troy Savings Bank Auditorium, and will not soon forget his brilliant concert that warm night. So we looked forward to hearing him again—this time on a bright cool morning and on another amazing organ. Robinson began his program with *Modus ludendi pro organo pleno* by Samuel Scheidt. He used the full plenum, which has a surprisingly powerful sound. Next up were two verses of *Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt* by Heinrich Scheidemann. The first featured the warm Principal and a quiet reed. The second utilized a 4' flute, beautifully and expressively played. He then went back for more Scheidemann: *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* (two verses)—well played and using more of the instrument.

Up next was Buxtehude's setting of *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*, BuxWV 209. I believe we heard the Rückpositiv Sesquialtera II playing the ornamented chorale tune against the Great Violdigamba 8' (sic)—gorgeous, clear sounds. That was also the hymn, which followed immediately. It was quite an experience to sing this hymn with this very North German organ in the resonant space of St. Alphonsus Church. Then came Buxtehude's *Ciaccona in E Minor*, BuxWV 160. Robinson began with the 8' Principal and built from there. Organ, organist, literature and room were superb. Finally, we came to Buxtehude's great setting of *Te Deum Laudamus*, BuxWV 218. I especially enjoyed the Great Pedalmet 8'. This organ has big-scaled pedal reeds, which he used well, including a full-length 32' Posaunen. We were given a most thoughtful demonstration of this instrument by one of America's finest players.

After a windy ride through the city, we found ourselves in the beautiful "First Hill" neighborhood overlooking downtown Seattle. We arrived at First Baptist Church and its newly acquired 3-m, 35-rank Aeolian-Skinner from 1953, which came from First Methodist Church in Tacoma, and was meticulously restored by Bond Organ Builders. Stephen Schnurr presented the OHS Historic Organ Citation. The organ is in two chambers on either side of the altar and baptistry.

Our recitalist was **Douglas Cleveland**, who opened his program with Handel's *Concerto in B-flat Major*, a piece played

on this organ 50 years ago by David Craighead. The middle section featured what I believe was the English Horn, a lovely stop. Next was Virgil Fox's famous arrangement of Bach's *Come Sweet Death*. Cleveland played it with great tenderness and expressivity. The hymn, "O for a Thousand Tongues" to the tune AZMON, was followed by a charming *Scherzetto* by Joseph Jongen and the lovely *Woodland Flute Call* by Fannie Dillon (1881–1897), which I believe was soloed on the Great 4' Flute Harmonique.

Cleveland closed his program with the brilliant and dashing *Four Concert Etudes* by David Briggs (b. 1964). Following an introduction, it charged into the toccata-like "Octaves." The next movement, "Chordes Alternées," featured the Choir flutes alternating chords in various octaves with a melody in the pedal. Then a "Sarabande," featuring the lush Aeolian-Skinner strings. The final movement entitled "Tierces" uses many of the motives of the earlier movements: octaves, alternating chords, etc. Cleveland gave a first-rate performance.

We then enjoyed a tasty box lunch in the labyrinthian but cozy basement of the First Baptist Church. After lunch, we returned to the sanctuary for the OHS annual meeting. **Orpha Ochse** was feted for all her work on behalf of the organ and the OHS. Joseph McCabe, chairman of the 2009 convention in Cleveland, gave us a tantalizing peek at all the good things it promises.

Following the meeting, we had a choice of spending some free time at the Seattle Center, which includes the Space Needle, or attending a recital by Gregory Crowell at German United Church of Christ in Seattle. Since I had been to the Seattle Center before, I chose the recital. True to form, we were early by about a half hour. The little church, in a quiet neighborhood and with a small congregation, has a rare treasure in these parts: a 1917 Hinners organ, Opus 2324. It was built in 1917 for St. Jakobi Lutheran Church in Allison, Iowa, and, after a few moves, it wound up in the safe hands of the Organ Clearing House. Legendary OHSer Randall Jay McCarty, organist of this church, installed the organ in 1976, replacing an electronic substitute. It has one divided keyboard and pedal and is a sweet charmer. Since we were so early, our distinguished recitalist **Gregory Crowell**, a favorite OHS performer (this would be his sixth convention appearance), agreed to begin 30 minutes early.

It was amazing how much he managed to get out of this six-rank instrument. He began with *Huit Fugues pour le Clavecin ou l'Orgue* by Johann Philipp Kimberger: *Preludium I & Fuga* [1], which worked quite well. The organ was hand pumped. Then, using the electric blower, Crowell played *Contrapunctus I* from *Kunst der Fuga*, BWV 1080, by Bach—something I never thought I'd hear on a 1917 Hinners. But the organ held its own, and Crowell played it very well. Next came music by Max Drischner (1891–1971): *Choralvorspiele für Dorfgemeinden*; "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" was played on the pleasing little 4' flute; "Die Sonn' hat sich mit ihrem Glanz gewendet" used the strings; and "In dir ist Freude" employed the full sound. These are very nice and accessible pieces.

Next was the hymn *IN DIR IST FREUDE*, which we sang in German. Again the organ was hand pumped. The next piece was a bonbon: *Träumerei*, op. 15, no. 7 by Robert Schumann, in an arrangement by Clarence Eddy. Then came a *Pastorale* by Bossi, which seemed to use every register on the organ—an amazing array of sound and color. Next up was a *Capriccio* by one A. Pedro Zuazo (fl. 1890) that he played in a cheerfully agreeable manner. Crowell closed his program with *Church Sonata I, III. Allegro*, by James Woodman (b. 1957). I never cease to enjoy hearing music by composers of our time on old instruments. These instruments are never out of date. This one played music from a wide spectrum and handled all of it with ease. Good organ building is timeless.

We then returned to the hotel for our elegant buffet dinner in the twelfth



Hutchings-Votey, Opus 1623, St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral, Seattle (photo: William Van Pelt)

floor ballroom. Then it was off to St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral, which is perched dramatically on First Hill overlooking the southern end of downtown Seattle, with its mixture of industrial loading cranes for the ships of Puget Sound, office towers, and huge sports venues. We were at St. James for the closing event of the convention: a recital by the cathedral's organist, **Joseph Adam**. This magnificent Romanesque church has been remodeled/restored so that the altar stands at the crossing. There is a large oculus above the altar, which, in photographs I've seen, sends a dramatic shaft of light into the building from the sun above—like the hand of God reaching in. At the west end, in a beautiful case, stands the historic musical treasure we had come to hear: the great Hutchings-Votey organ of 1906. It had escaped unharmed when the great dome of the cathedral collapsed under the weight of a massive snowstorm in 1916. In 1926 a Casavant sanctuary organ was installed in the east apse. While it had only 21 stops, it had a 4-m console that connected the two organs. The 4-m Hutchings-Votey organ has 48 stops. In 2000, the Casavant was replaced by a new organ by Rosales Organ Builders, retaining five ranks from the Casavant. It totals 48 ranks on four manuals. The Rosales pedal includes a Bombarde 64', which is unlabeled. Only the BBBB sounds, but it is most impressive. The Rosales case wraps around the wall of the apse in a series of Romanesque arches. Like the Casavant, its console can play both organs.

An ancestor of the cathedral's first organist, Franklin Sawyer Palmer, was introduced to the audience. The director of music, Clint Kraus, spoke of the last visit by the OHS to the cathedral in 1982, when an historic citation was presented. Kraus said that that presentation was the impetus to restore the Hutchings-Votey organ.

Joseph Adam opened his program on the Hutchings-Votey organ playing Bach's *Chaconne in D Minor* as transcribed by Wilhelm Middelschulte. We were all transfixed by the amazing flutes on this magnificent organ. Then came the foundation stops, which were followed by the trumpets. The kaleidoscope of tones being flung into the vast reverberant space was quite wonderful. It calmed down to a *pp* with rapid repeated notes on the flutes. A big crescendo briefly included the 32' reeds, followed by a lessening of tone as we heard more and more of this instrument.

The oculus let in the last light of day as we awaited the next selections, three well-known and loved pieces by Louis Vierne: *Naiades*, op. 55, no. 4; *Claire de lune*, op. 53, no. 5; and *Carillon de Westminster*, op. 54, no. 6. In *Naiades*, his fingers flew over the keys, flutes and strings seeming to race up and down the Romanesque arches of the cathedral. *Claire de lune* was all tranquility—our thoughts could wander slowly as they do in moonlight. This was heartfelt organ playing. Who could not love the organ hearing such a beautiful solo flute singing to us—lost in beauty, awe and wonder. He played the *Carillon de Westminster* brilliantly: controlling and holding the reins together until just the right moment when he allowed the music to explode. I've never heard it played better.

We then sang the hymn: "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (*DIVINUM MYSTERIUM*), followed by a piece commissioned for this convention, *Divinum Mysterium*:



Rosales Organ Builders, Opus 30, St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral, Seattle (photo: Stephen Schnurr)

Solemn Meditation by Timothy Tikker (b. 1958). It is a lovely work, very quiet at first, almost brooding, the music leading into a surrender to faith. It soon brightened, the manuals reflecting the stepwise melody in fast notes while the pedal sounded out the theme in long notes. All the while a crescendo grew. It is a fine piece and a good addition to the repertoire.

After intermission, Adam appeared at the east end of the cathedral, and played the Rosales organ. He began with another piece by Timothy Tikker, *Variations sur un vieux Noël*. The Rosales organ makes sounds that complement rather than compete with the room's elder statesman in the west end gallery. We heard bell sounds against strings, reeds creating open fifths, tierces sounding against trumpets. A fugue broke out that was quite lively and grew to full organ. I really liked this piece, and I like this organ. We then sang "Come Down, O Love Divine" (*DOWN AMPNEY*) to his marvelous accompaniment.

Joseph Adam closed this fantastic recital (the cathedral, by the way, was packed—we OHSers only occupied the transepts!) with Maurice Duruflé's *Suite*, op. 5. The Prelude used both organs, creating a sonic spectacle that is possible in only a handful of buildings. The Sicilienne featured a solo reed that filled the church. Sweet strings and a bubbling flute lightly danced for us. Adam is an alert and wise musician—able to address composers' thoughts and bring them to us in an astonishing array of color. Clear-

ly, he knows and understands these remarkable organs completely.

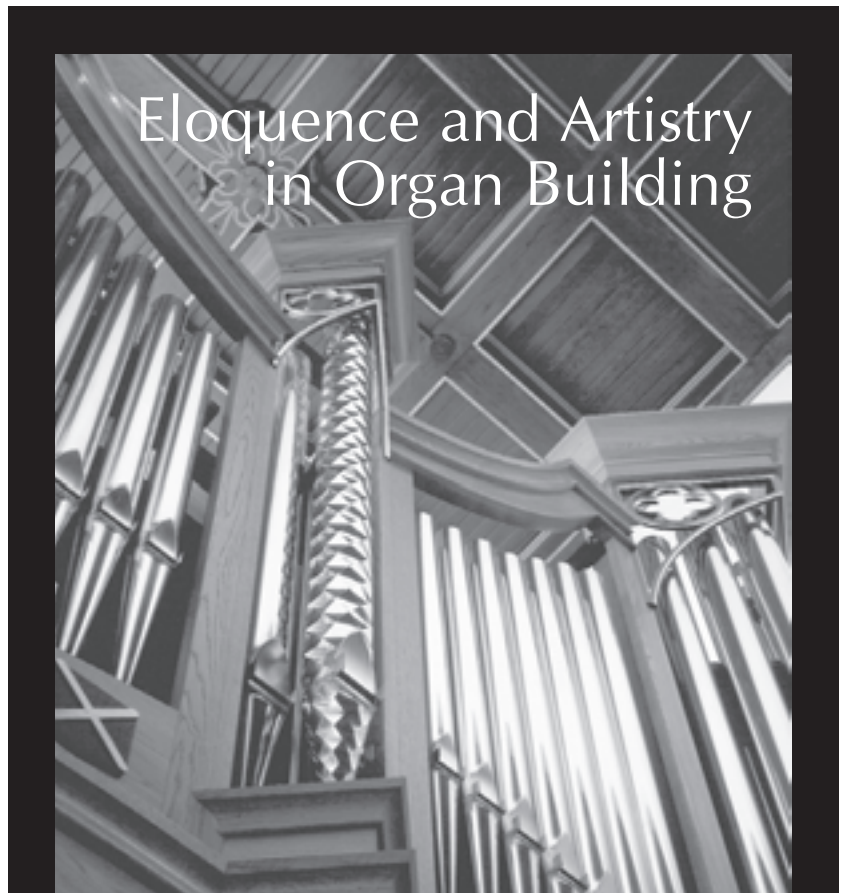
The great and fiendishly difficult Toccata brought the *Suite* and convention to a dramatic conclusion. Adam's performance was as magnificent as the organs he was playing. We were all swept away by his powerful strength and energy. The air above and around us was charged with his utter mastery of this music. With the huge 32' stops giving us ground, it was at times almost gloriously terrifying—a fantastic experience! There was an encore: Dupre's *Prelude in G Minor*; a somewhat palate-cleansing feeling to calm and give rest to our spirits. I did not want to leave this building. It was a transforming recital, one none of us will forget anytime soon.

Closing thoughts

This was an unusual OHS convention. While we heard plenty of old instruments, they were transplants from the east or elsewhere. We were witness to a new, more youthful voice on the national and international stage, the emerging influence of the modern organ world in the Pacific Northwest. Two names came up again and again: John Brombaugh and David Dahl. These two gentlemen have led this movement and deserve our admiration. Martin Pasi, Paul Fritts, Richards & Fowlkes, Taylor & Boody, and others got their start here.

I had a great time at this well-organized convention, seeing old friends, making new ones, eating good food, and getting to know the organ world in this part of the country. Much more will come from this school of organ building. Let us enjoy watching it unfold. The Organ Historical Society will be observing it all with great curiosity, and interest. See you next summer in Cleveland, July 5–10! Oh, and my horoscope was dead on!

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