

The Windline

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Austin Organs official newsletter to our representatives and friends

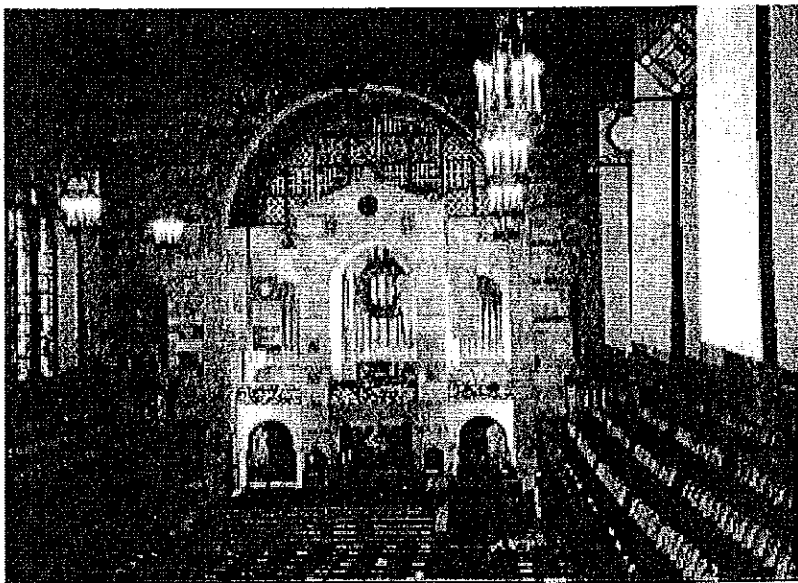
March 2000

FOUNTAIN ST. CHURCH SELECTS AUSTIN

~ OPUS 2782 ~

A large new instrument was recently contracted for by the Fountain St. Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan; a mere few blocks away from another superb Austin, Opus 2765 of 1995. The church's consultant, Mr. Jonathan Tuuk, asserts that the success of Opus 2765 played an integral part in Austin Organs, Inc. being chosen. (Opus 2765 is yet considered the most thrilling organ in the Midwest.)

The new Fountain St. instrument has several built in advantages. The job will enjoy superb placement; front & center on the second church tier. The acoustics now are not bad; but they are to be improved during a sanctuary renovation. An Antiphonal with an en Chamade Trompette will also be provided.

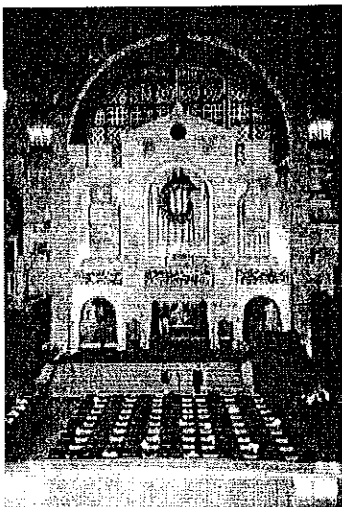


The church is monumentally eclectic in its design.

The extant instrument is a former EM Skinner (1922, Opus 393) which had been 'done over' by Casavant, under the direction of Larry Phelps. Local builders have also had a hand in what remains today. Most of the pipework, perhaps surprisingly, is excellent and will be reused in the new scheme.

Now the *really big* news! At 140 ranks, this will be the largest instrument contracted for since the 1926 Sesquicentennial Exposition Organ, which now reposes at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (currently under restoration by AOI!)

Needless to say, this most exciting job is a once in a blue moon opportunity, for which we are very pleased & thankful.



CHINESE ORGAN TO BE INAUGURATED

On April 28 and 30, the (in)famous Austin instrument at the Beijing Concert Hall, Zhong Shan Park, will be opened by British concert organist **Carol Williams**. A group comprised of Kimberlee Austin, Miss Williams, Alan McNeely (installer of the instrument), and Alfred J. Buttler III (New York City area representative) be in China several days prior to tune, adjust, practice, and we hope record the organ. Of the two concerts that are scheduled, one Miss Williams will be playing solo, and the other she will be accompanied by the Beijing Symphony Orchestra.



We are hoping for a smooth departure and return, and will certainly work hard towards a greatly successful inauguration and recording. More to come in the next "Windline".

SPECIFICATION FOR AUSTIN ORGAN

~ OPUS 2779 ~

Beijing Concert Hall, Zhong Shan Park

GREAT ORGAN

(6" Wind)

Double Diapason	16'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Diapason I	8'		61 Pipes
Diapason II	8'		61 Pipes
Harmonic Flute	8'		61 Pipes
Bourdon	8'		61 Pipes
Octave	4'		61 Pipes
Flute	4'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Twelfth	2-2/3'		61 Pipes
Super Octave	2'		61 Pipes
Mixture	IV		244 Pipes
Double Trumpet	16'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Trumpet	8'		61 Pipes
Clarion	4'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Tremulant			
Tuba Mirabilis	8'	(Choir-Orchestral)	--

SWELL ORGAN

(6" Wind)

Violone	16'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Bourdon	16'	(Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
Geigen Diapason	8'		61 Pipes
Cor de Nuit	8'		61 Pipes

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Viola Pomposa	8'		61 Pipes
Viola Celeste	8'		61 Pipes
Geigen Octave	4'		61 Pipes
Flute	4'		61 Pipes
Doublette	2'		61 Pipes
Mixture	III		183 Pipes
Bassoon	16'		61 Pipes
Trompette	8'		61 Pipes
Oboe	8'	(Ext. 16')	12 Pipes
Clairon	4'		61 Pipes
Vox Humana	8'		61 Pipes
Vox Humana Tremulant			
Tremulant			

CHOIR - ORCHESTRAL ORGAN

(6" Wind)

Doppel Flute	8'		61 Pipes
Gamba	8'		61 Pipes
Gamba Celeste	8'	T.C.	49 Pipes
Prestant	4'		61 Pipes
Concert Flute	4'		61 Pipes
Nasard	2-2/3'		61 Pipes
Harmonic Piccolo	2'		61 Pipes
Tierce	1-3/5'		61 Pipes
Cymbal	III		183 Pipes
Tuba Mirabilis	8'	(on 15" wind)	61 Pipes
French Horn	8'	(on 15" wind)	61 Pipes
Corno di Bassetto	8'		61 Pipes
English Horn	8'		61 Pipes
Tremulant			

PEDAL ORGAN

(6" Wind)

Double Diapason	32'	(Digital)	--
Contra Bourdon	32'	(Digital)	--

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Diapason I	16'	32 Pipes
Diapason II	16' (Great)	--
Subbass	16'	32 Pipes
Violone	16' (Swell)	--
Bourdon	16' (Swell)	--
Octave	8'	32 Pipes
Subbass	8' (Ext. 16')	12 Pipes
Viola	8' (Swell)	--
Choral Bass	4'	32 Pipes
Spill Flute	4'	32 Pipes
Octave	2' (Ext. 4')	12 Pipes
Flute	2' (Ext. 4')	12 Pipes
Ophecleide	32' (Digital)	--
Bombarde	16' (On 10" Wind)	32 Pipes
Bassoon	16' (Swell)	--
Bombarde	8' (Ext. Bombarde)	12 Pipes
Bombarde	4' (Ext. 8')	12 Pipes
English Horn	4' (Choir-Orchestral)	--

Three manual rocker tablet style console. Case style, wood and finish to blend with music hall décor. Console moveable via a concealed dolly or platform. All accessories as desired and mutually agreed upon. Solid-state combination action and switching.

- 10 FUN THINGS to do in an ELEVATOR -

1. Grimace painfully while smacking your forehead and muttering, "Shut up, dammit, all of you just shut up!"
2. Whistle the first seven notes of "It's a Small World" incessantly.
3. Crack open your briefcase or purse, and while peering inside ask, "Got enough air in there?"
4. Stand silent and motionless in the corner, facing the wall, without getting off.
5. When arriving at your floor, grunt and strain to yank the doors open, then act embarrassed when they open by themselves.
6. Stare, grinning at another passenger for a while, and then announce, "I've got new socks on!" Meow occasionally.
7. Bet the other passengers you can fit a quarter in your nose.
8. Walk on with a cooler that says "human head" on the side.
9. When the elevator is silent, look around and ask, "Is that your beeper?"
10. Make explosion noises every time someone punches a button.



Bethesda's 'organ voicer' sets pipes to pour heavenly music.

\$1.5 million buys church a lot of organ.
The Palm Beach Post - by Douglas Belkin, Palm Beach Post Religion writer

From inside the belly of the instrument where David Johnston works, three floors above the church pews and eye level with the stained glass portraits of Jesus, the air seems to swirl and shake in an elegant rumble that is just on the edge of violent.

A floor below, Hal Pysher, church organist, rides up the C major scale. Next to Johnston's head, a series of pipes blasts one note after another.

Listening inside the cramped organ chamber, packed with columns of vertical pipes, is like listening to a person breathe through a special - and enormous - stethoscope. Each exhalation resonates through copper and wood and lead.

"Hit the top G of the 16 foot principal again," Johnston calls out. Pysher, unseen, obliges and the note barrels forth again.

"A little too edgy," Johnston says mostly to himself. He picks up a 2-foot-long cylinder and carves a dollop of lead out of the toe - the hole through which air enters the pipe. He replaces it and calls for Pysher to try again.

In this way, pipe by pipe, voice by voice, an organ is born. All 2,800 pipes, set back into a chamber near the ceiling of Bethesda-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Palm Beach, are painstakingly caressed and observed, toyed with and plucked, massaged and tweaked, until the sound waves inside them reverberate inside them at just the right speed to give Bach and Beethoven and Brahms the glory they deserve.

On Christmas Eve, Pysher will play what will eventually be the largest organ in the county and among the largest in the state. The organ chamber that Johnston has been hunched inside for four weeks now is just the first half of an array of pipes that will eventually fill up a much larger second room at the other end of the church. By Easter, when they are all installed, more than 6,000 pipes, ranging in size from 16-foot baritone cannons to whistles half the size of a piccolo, will be at Pysher's command. All of this will cost the church upwards of \$1.5 million.

It's a lot of money, but it's a lot of organ. To give this creation the ability to whisper and thunder and instill in man the ideas of God, more than 40 miles of electrical wire will be installed along with several tons of wood, steel, lead, and copper. The keys themselves are carved from cow bone and the substance that keeps the pressure chamber sealed is imported cream-colored leather glued by hand to every plug. What will be visible to the congregation when all of this is done is perhaps one one-hundredth of the final product and most of that will be above their heads.

It has taken 49 employees at Austin Organs in Hartford, Conn., almost two years to build this organ. It is now Johnston's job to add the finishing touches. He is charged with honing the nuances of the sound - or voice - of the pipe to make sure a C major scale is, indeed, a C major scale.

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With his set of knives and hammers, Johnston carves and taps to open and close various holes in the body of the lead, copper and wood pipes. Through trial and error, and by relying on a well-honed sense of what each should sound like, the pipes are adjusted – “like fitting a suit,” Johnston says.

To measure the note, volume and tone of a pipe as it will be heard by a congregant, three people work together: one to play the organ, a second sits in the pews to listen, and finally, the voicer tinkers with the pipe itself.

A church's dimensions and acoustics affect the sound, but so do the unexpected things: “Carpets, pew cushions, curtains, are the worst enemies,” Johnston says. “People too. People soak up sound, 1000 people in the church will drastically change the sound of an organ.”

There are perhaps 100 organ voicers in the country, Johnston estimates. Most are men, and most have been working at their craft all their lives. Johnston began after high school when he answered an ad in the newspaper and started a seven-year apprenticeship which has led to 23 years as a master. He lives outside of Hartford but has traveled around the United States voicing pipes. He doesn't imagine he'll ever stop.

“It's a lifetime of work,” he shrugs. “As long as my hearing holds up I'll be around.” ■

MISCELLANEOUS JOB UPDATES:

Brunswick, Maine – Bowdoin College, Opus 1507, is currently undergoing a complete re-leathering along with a console rebuild, cleaning, and reed revoicing. Some very minor tonal changes are also being made. Prof. Thomas Murray will rededicate the instrument in early May.

Southport, Connecticut – Charles Dodsley Walker's memorial for his wife, a new 3m DK console, was recently installed by our own Gordon Auchincloss at Trinity Episcopal Church. It will control a 1950's Moller at the front of the church (which we electrified a few years back, and recently did some tonal work on), and a Wolff Tracker at the back. Timothy Fink of Port Chester, New York is handling the tracker end of things.

Bridgeport, Connecticut – The new 4M DK console built for Austin Opus 2193, at United Congregational Church, is installed, as is the new exposed Positiv division.

FACTORY NEWS:

Austin Organs, Inc. is proud to welcome Michel Beaudry to our staff. Michel comes to us from Quebec, where he was formerly with Orgues Letourneau. He has experience in many phases of organ construction, and is indeed a valuable addition to our team. He and his wife Beth, an occupational therapist, and their gorgeous golden retriever, Shay, reside in Manchester, Connecticut.

Holly Odell has been transferred to voicing. She has apprenticed a bit in reeds under Zoli Zsitvay and in flues under Dan Kingman. We wish her every success with a long, fruitful career as an Austin voicer!

We're pleased to announce that Carl Loeser has been appointed an authorized Austin Sales Representa-

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tive.

Carl's home base is in Plainfield, New Jersey. He recently rebuilt the huge Austin at the old First Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey (which had been electrified) and re-Austinized it! He also completed the rebuild of the Ethereal division on the Wanamaker organ at Lord & Taylor, Philadelphia. At this time, among other projects, he is doing re-leathering and other work on Opus 1416, PENN - Philadelphia. You can contact Carl at: 1445 E. 7th St, Plainfield, NJ 07062, 908-561-6414.

“Out of the mouths of babes...”

“I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: ‘Lead us not into temptation,’ she prayed, ‘but deliver us some E-mail. Amen.’ “

~ ~ ~
A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, “Thou shalt not take the covers off the neighbor's wife.”

~ ~ ~
A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, “And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?” one bright little girl replied, “because people are sleeping.”

...A Candid letter to an organ committee from our Iowa / Nebraska representative, John Hansen, regarding Tracker instruments...

“Dear Friends:

Having learned that mechanical-action organs are under consideration, I am making this opportunity to direct your attention to some aspects of Tracker organs that ardent proponents of such instruments sometimes speak about rather recklessly. For example...

Consider the matter of longevity. The fact that there are organs in European churches that have been in use for hundreds of years is used to the superiority of the service life length of trackers. What is usually not reported is that many have had regular, extensive mechanical reconditioning every fifty years or so and that they have *not* been subjected to the rigors of central heating systems. (Slider windchest systems are particularly prone to the drying effect of modern heating.)

One of the most famous mechanical-action organs in the United States is the Flentrop, installed in 1958 in the Busch-Reisinger Museum of Harvard University. (E. Power Biggs made many commercial recordings on it.) 1990 saw a major mechanical rebuilding – hardly a good case for longevity superiority!

Tracker and electro-pneumatic organs are machines, and it is reasonable to assume that, assuming quality materials, careful engineering, and fine workmanship in fabrication, instruments of either type can, with careful maintenance and periodic component replacement, function reliably for as long as their owners want them to.

Another claim that is made for trackers is how responsive they are. Now, it cannot be denied that a well-built mechanical-action organ feels terrific and is fun to play. Much of the vaunted “responsiveness”, however, is mostly a product of the necessity of having the key-desk very close to the

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pipes, which eliminates the acoustical time lag that occurs when the console is some distance from the pipes. If an electro-pneumatic console is placed right next to the pipes, it will seem just as responsive. Tracker adherents often rhapsodize about how it is possible for the player to control pipe speech. It has been my experience, that the point of valve opening in modern tracker organs occurs very early in the fall of the keys and that, to play cleanly, it is necessary to quickly push the key to the bottom of its travel, thereby eliminating speech control. Some small trackers, with suspended key action and very short tracker "runs", allow this; but, but more often than not, it is a theoretical nicety than a practical advantage. Organs of either type are essentially "time-control" machines, and you would be amazed at how a skilled player can simulate variations in a pipe's speech on electro-pneumatic action!

A real "plus" of electrically controlled organs – particularly those of more modest resources – is that, with judicious borrowing, extensions, and sub-octave and super-octave couplers, it is possible to have a great deal more tonal variety and flexibility than is available in mechanical-action instruments.

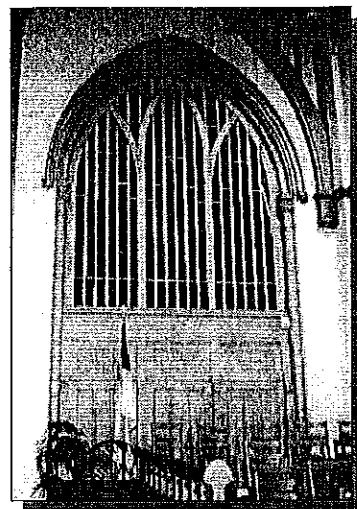
Since Austin does not build mechanical-action organs, yours truly has vested interest in making the points addressed above. Given first-class engineering, materials, and workmanship, we appreciate and admire the better tracker instruments. We find it unfortunate, however, that some "tracker-backers" are less than objective in their proclamations about the advantages of the type of playing action they prefer.

I hope that the foregoing will have proved to be of interest and will provide some "food for thought" for all those charged with considering the possibilities of a new organ for your church." ■

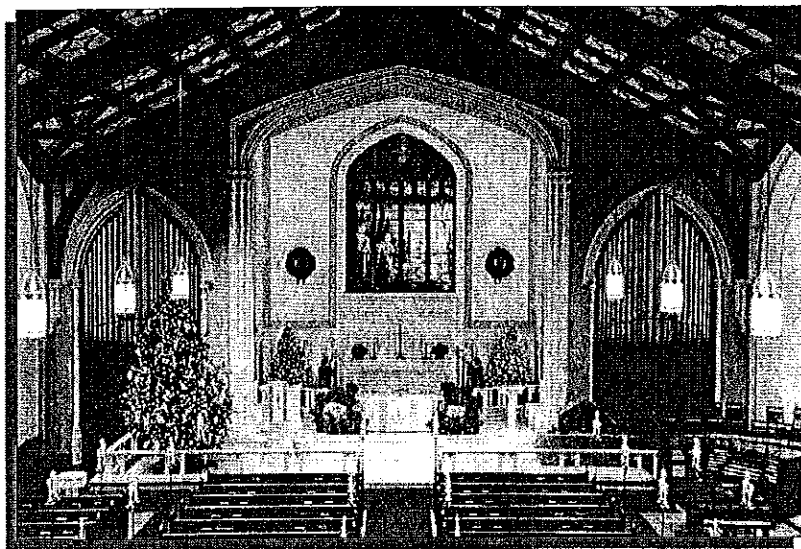
Opus 1215 Again!

The Austin Organ at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Hanover, Pennsylvania stands as the **largest Austin ever built**. Originally a 4 manual with 87 stops and 5000 pipes, the organ grew over many years to 227 ranks and 14, 145 pipes.

The organ was donated by Clara Glatfelter Maul in 1925 and enlarged by a bequest left by her. J. Herbert Springer was the organist for many decades, and oversaw the evolution of this instrument from the first specification to the last tonal changes in the 1970's.



(before)



(after)

At some point, two Nave facades were replaced with grillwork. These facades were original to the 1925 installation. As part of a restoration of the Sanctuary, Austin Organs, Inc. has recreated these Nave facades from 1920's shop drawings. In addition, Chancel and Echo Facades were repaired, and repainted. ■