

Cover feature

**Hupalo & Repasky Pipe Organs, LLC, San Leandro, California
Zion Lutheran Church, Piedmont, California**

Church history

The Zion Lutheran congregation established itself in Oakland in 1882 and by 1886 had purchased their first house of worship. From the beginning, education and music have been important elements of the church's mission. To this day, the church provides Christian education for kindergarten through the eighth grade, with music being a large part of the educational program at Zion Lutheran School.

During the 1920s, the congregation renewed their Victorian facilities in Oakland with a new parsonage, parish hall, school, and worship facility. It is here, in the church's second worship facility, that in 1930 M. P. Möller built their opus 5769. This two-manual organ contained thirty-one registers.

In 2007, Piedmont was named "Best Place to Live" in the United States by Forbes. It was in this residential area surrounded by Oakland that the congregation of Zion Lutheran Church dedicated their most recent site on April 4, 1954. The current church complex is situated atop a high bluff, with a background of stone hills with pockets of dense shrubs and trees. Attached to the Mediterranean-style church is a bell tower, offices, school classrooms, meeting rooms, kitchen, barbeque area, library, and gymnasium. The church edifice is designed to accommodate 350 persons.

The church's 1930 Möller pipe organ

Möller's opus 5769 was brought from the parish's second church in Oakland, relocated to their present site, and placed in two chambers with separate expression in the rear balcony behind the terraced choir seating area. As there was no façade, the choir "enjoyed" watching the two sets of vertical shades open and close. From the congregation's vantage point, the organ looked like two rather large jalousie windows caged by wooden framing.

As with many organs of the 1950s and '60s, Zion's Möller organ was enlarged with several high-pitched ranks, and some of the original ranks were replaced with neo-Baroque substitutes. With actions and console parts failing, by 2005 plans were underway to provide Zion Lutheran Church with a new and reliable instrument. As part of this plan, many of the ranks of the extant organ were to be incorporated into their new instrument. The 1930 Möller organ with its additions served the parish until it was removed by us in July 2006. With the organ removed, we loaned the church our large seven-rank continuo organ.

Another Möller organ

Also, as part of the plans for Zion's new organ, the pipework and offset chests were removed from the 1946 Möller organ, opus 7370, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco. This organ became available because of the retrofitting of the church and plans by the parish to purchase a new Taylor & Boody organ. It was noted that Richard Purvis was the organist at St. Mark's during the time this three-manual organ of twenty-four ranks was installed. It is with these two instruments (the augmented Möller opus 5769 and opus 7370) that Hupalo & Repasky Pipe Organs rebuilt, rescaled, and revoiced pipework that provided the new organ for Zion Lutheran Church.

Tonal design of the new instrument

Our concerns were to provide the church with a tonally versatile and cohesive musical instrument, which would have a visual presence in the room, and would be reliable and serviceable. Using many ranks from Möller's opus 5769 and opus 7370, the original conception for Zion's new pipe organ envisioned a three-manual organ of forty ranks. This



Hupalo & Repasky, Zion Lutheran Church, Piedmont, California



The console

organ would have included a Rückpositiv. However, the organ committee decided instead to plan for a large two-manual instrument.

In working with the organist, David Babbitt, it was decided that the new organ would have a Pedal based on a 16' Principal. The Great would have a 16' plenum, the Swell an 8' plenum, and there would be an assortment of unison tone. There would be a wide variety of flute tone (stopped, chimneyed, open, harmonic) represented. Also included in the tonal design was a selection of wide and narrow strings. Mutation ranks would be drawn from the flute and principal families. This two-manual organ would boast five 16' ranks. Benefiting the Great plenum, a new German-style Trumpet would be built. For the Swell, a harmonic-rich French-style Trumpet would be provided.

Unfortunately, Mr. Babbitt passed away during the planning stages of the organ. This was a great loss not only to Zion, but also to the musical community in the Bay Area. The church soon found an admirable organist/choir director, Dr. David Hunsberger. It was his opinion that the Cornet Composé in the Swell should be a little stronger. Recalling how he enjoyed the sound of the Cornet on the Silbermann-style organ at the University of Michigan, it was decided to change the ranks to the larger scales used by the Fisk company. So, with the help of Stephen Kowalshyn, we replaced the Swell mutation ranks with pipes based on Mr. Kowalshyn's information.

During the installation it was decided that the beautiful Clarinet from opus 7370 was too similar in volume to the Oboe. So, a full-throated Cromorne replaced the Clarinet. John Hupalo also decided to use French "tear drop" shallots in the new Cromorne. The generous inclusion of four reed voices in the Swell division of this moderate-sized two-manual organ provides both variety in color and a progression in volume.



Bob Schertle mottling façade pipe



Robin Fox making the Harmonic Flute



John Haskey wiring keyboard

Cromorne, and the Swell Nazard and Tierce, the other newly made stops for this organ include the Great Harmonic Flute and the Swell mixture.

Chests

Both the new Great and Swell main chests are slider chests with magnet pull-downs. It is our philosophy that these traditional-style chests provide a noticeable ensemble for the pipework. Even Ernest Skinner later in his life recognized the benefits of slider chests, with each note sharing a common channel of wind.

Many of the electro-pneumatic bass offset chests from opus 7370 were re-

Physical layout

The previous organ at Zion was installed in two non-communicating chambers. With the removal of opus 5769, the in-between area was opened up to allow placement for the Pedal ranks and to allow pitch transfer from one division to the other during tuning. This was virtually impossible on the previous organ. To aid tonal projection, the chambers were lined with two layers of 5/8" sheetrock and then painted. The Swell chamber was placed in the left, the unenclosed Great in the right chamber, and the Pedal ranks placed in the center area.

Temperament

Another suggestion of Dr. Hunsberger was that the organ should be tuned in a well temperament. The Thomas Young temperament was chosen for its purer major thirds and playability in all keys. Like a good choral ensemble, this tuning helps the organ lock pitch in the more common keys.

Pipework

It was evident from the first that much of the Möller pipework was of excellent quality, especially the pre-World War II zinc pipes. The wooden pipes were cleaned and refinished. The stopped pipes were re-leathered. The Great 8', 4', 2 1/2', and 2' plenum ranks were rescaled as appropriate to the tonal scheme of the organ. The Great principals also received new languids. The removal of the old languids had the advantage of lowering the cut-ups, allowing us to revoice the Great plenum. This turned the old Möller diapasons into clear-toned principals. To provide a tonal contrast to the Great principals, the Swell diapasons are voiced and scaled towards a more neo-Romantic sound. The neo-Baroque 8' Principal from opus 5769 was rescaled and made into the Great 8' Gamba. Length and slotting were added to these pipes patterned after the Gambas of Cavaillé-Coll. Besides the two manual trumpets,



Great Trumpet

leathered and incorporated into the new organ. Given the large size of the pallets, they provide a lightning-fast response for the lower notes of the organ.

Façade

To match the architectural style of the church, it was decided to fashion the façade in the American Craftsman style. The center five-pipe flat is flanked on both sides by three flats of five pipes each. The styles, rails, toe boards, and corbels are of quarter-sawn white oak proportioned in the Craftsman manner. The styles are punctuated with medallions. The molding is highlighted by areas of crimson red.

Starting with low F-sharp of the Pedal 16' Principal, the façade incorporates the lowest pipes of the Pedal 16' and Great 8' Principal. To provide visual uniformity, these zinc pipes were mottled in a terra cotta color, with the upper and lower lips in painted verdigris.

Console and control system

The console is our standard terraced-style, roll-top design, with three rows of drawknobs on either side of the keyboards. The shell is made of quarter-sawn white oak, with French polished European pearwood used in the stop jamb and nameboard area. The drawknobs are of ebony, as are the sharps. The manual key covers are of bone.



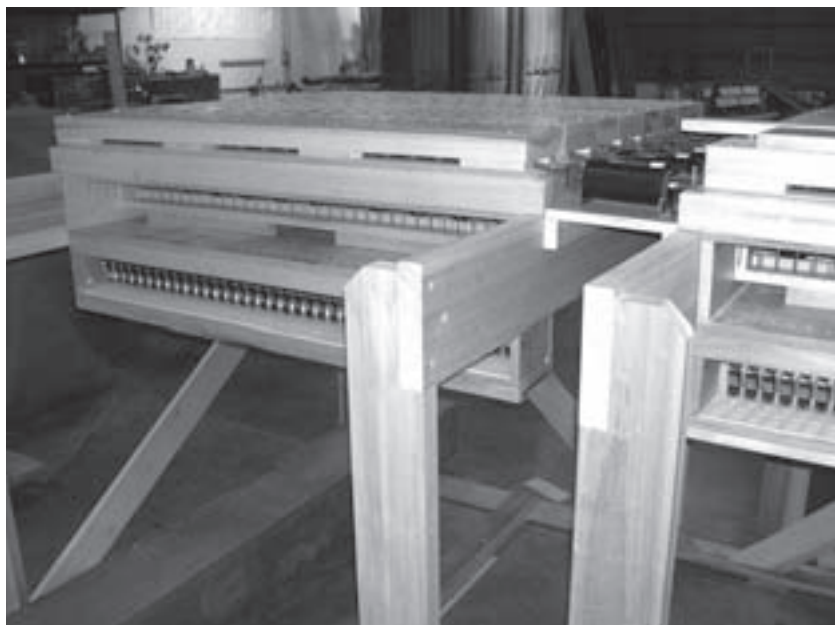
Console



Great pipework



Bill Visscher erecting façade



Great main chest



Principal into Gamba

The console is placed in a fixed central position in the choir loft to provide the organist with space for conducting both choir and instrumentalists.

A computerized system controls the combination action, memory, and the complex switching system of the organ. It provides the organist with a transposer, 99 levels of memory, a piston sequencer, and MIDI In and Out, as well as many programmable features.

Personnel

The following craftsmen assisted in the construction of our opus 3: Mark Dahlberg (technical designer), Robin Fox, John Haskey, Robert Hoffmann, John Hupalo, Bruno Largarce, Gerard Montana, Steve Repasky, Bob Schertle, Lawrence Strohm, William Visscher, Shayne Ward, and David H. Zechman.

Organ dedication

The organ was dedicated to a full house in a solo recital on Sunday afternoon, January 25, 2009 by Stanford University Organist Robert Huw Morgan.

Dedication program:

Dialogue, L. Marchand
Fantasia in f, K. 608, W. A. Mozart
Homage to Handel, S. Karg-Elert
Prelude in E-flat, S. 552, J. S. Bach
An Wasserflüssen Babylon, S. 653, Bach
Sonata V in C, S. 529, Bach
Fugue in E-flat, S. 552, Bach

—Steve Repasky

Hupalo & Repasky Pipe Organs, LLC, 2008, 35 stops, 33 ranks

GREAT

| | | |
|--------|----------------|-----------|
| 16' | Hohl Flute | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Principal | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Harmonic Flute | 49 pipes |
| 8' | Gamba | 61 pipes |
| 4' | Octave | 61 pipes |
| 4' | Röhr Flute | 61 pipes |
| 2 3/4' | Twelfth | 61 pipes |
| 2' | Fifteenth | 61 pipes |
| 1 3/4' | Seventeenth | 61 pipes |
| | Mixture IV | 244 pipes |
| 8' | Trumpet | 61 pipes |
| | Chimes | 25 tubes |

SWELL

| | | |
|--------|----------------|-----------|
| 8' | Diapason | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Stopt Diapason | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Salicional | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Celeste | 61 pipes |
| 4' | Principal | 61 pipes |
| 4' | Flute | 61 pipes |
| 2 3/4' | Nazard | 61 pipes |
| 2' | Piccolo | 61 pipes |
| 1 3/4' | Tierce | 61 pipes |
| | Plein Jeu III | 183 pipes |
| 16' | Fagot | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Trompette | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Oboe | 61 pipes |
| 8' | Cromorne | 61 pipes |
| | Tremolo | |

PEDAL

| | | |
|-----|-------------|----------|
| 16' | Principal | 32 pipes |
| 16' | Bourdon | 32 pipes |
| 8' | Octave | 12 pipes |
| 8' | Bourdon | 12 pipes |
| 4' | Choral Bass | 12 pipes |
| 4' | Bourdon | 12 pipes |
| 16' | Posaune | 32 pipes |
| 16' | Fagot | Swell |
| 8' | Trumpet | 12 pipes |
| 4' | Schalmei | Fagot |

Couplers

Unison, sub, and super couplers provided on tilting tablets

Accessories

6 general thumb pistons and toe studs
 5 divisional thumb pistons for each of the three divisions
 Setter and general cancel thumb pistons
 Up and down thumb pistons
 3 reversible thumb and toe pistons for unison couplers
 Reversible thumb and toe pistons for full organ
 Crescendo pedal
 Zimbelstern: 8 bells

Tuning

Thomas Young

Photo credit: John Hupalo

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