

Cover feature

**A. David Moore, Inc.,
North Pomfret, Vermont
All Hallows' Parish, Davidsonville,
Maryland**

From the builder

Designing an organ for All Hallows' Church involved some unique challenges for its builder. The small brick building dates to 1734, and was gutted by fire in 1940. Rebuilt much as it was (without the Victorian alterations), the original walls and brick floor were retained. It seems that until 2010, the parish never owned a pipe organ.

The decision to place the organ on the left side of the chancel included the requests that the casework be no taller than the altar window, that the instrument be no larger than the sacristy in the opposite corner, and that the case was to "fit" the furnishings of the room. Thus, the back and left sides of the organ are against the walls, and maintenance can be done only through the front and right side of the main case. The detached console and Positiv division are one unit, adjacent to the case front, and facing the choir on the other side of the nave. Three flats of Open Diapason and Principal basses face the congregation, and the side contains two flats of Open Diapason basses, one of which is in a door that can be opened for Great and Pedal tuning. Those offset basses are operated by a remote assisting mechanism in which a small amount of air travels down a 5/16" diameter tube that feeds a small wedge bellows and valve below each pipe.

The Great is on a C and C# chest, with the smallest pipes in the middle. The Positiv is played from the upper keyboard; the chromatic chest is at floor level; and the pipes are tuned by removing a grille on the top of the case. The manual keys are suspended, with a backfall system that pulls up the Positiv pallets; angled trackers and a rollerboard operate the Great pallets. The Positiv stop knobs are in the console and the Great knobs project from the main case on the organist's left. The basswood tables of the chests will not split; the sliders are of quarter-sawn maple; the slider seals are of Neoprene; there is no plywood in the organ; the wind pressure is almost two inches; and the temperament is Kirnberger III.

Though the acoustics are quite good and the sound of the organ is focused by a curved ceiling, there is a slight "flutter echo" heard by a listener in the center of the room. The maple case is of wood harvested on the Moore farm in North Pomfret, Vermont, and sawn on location by a Wood-mizer band sawmill. There are no carvings on the case, but some subtle ornamentation appears at the tops of the pipe flats. The cornice of the case was copied from the 18th-century American case in Old North Church, Boston, and the All Hallows' sacristy cornice was changed to match it.

In the Great, the metal pipes are 28% tin and 72% lead, with small amounts of copper, antimony, and bismuth; the metal was cast from old organ pipes. The 8', 4', 2½', 2', and 1½' ranks are close to Hook pipe scales, and have fairly low cutups and moderate nicking. The Holpipe is a metal chimney flute, and has 12 stopped wood basses; a new Haskell bass serves the Viol; and the Hautboy is an exact copy of a Hook stop. The Positiv Stop'd Diapason is of wood, small in scale but with a good fundamental tone, and is copied from a Geo. S. Hutchings stop; the Flute is of stopped and open wood and has metal trebles; the Fifteenth has 24 Claribel-style open wood basses and metal trebles. The German scales for the Dulcian are a composite, and there are half-length resonators in the lowest octave. The basses have wood blocks and shallots made in one piece, and the dimensions for the shallot openings, bores, tapers, and inside resonator diameters are close to 18th-century North European practice. The use of wood for a shallot avoids the need for lead or leather fac-



Chancel (photo: Jan Power)



Keydesk (photo: Sabine Joyce)

ings. In terms of hardness, the wood is somewhere between lead or brass and a leathered surface, and the brass tongues are fairly wide and thick. Long tuning wires are labeled on the tops and are easily reached.

The installation of A. D. Moore's Opus 34 was enjoyable, and there were many trips to Davidsonville for installation, final voicing, and tuning. The crew of builders—A. David Moore, Tom Bowen, John Atwood, and Lubbert Gnodde—stayed with Jan and Mike Power. Mike Menne is the organist at All Hallows', and collaborated on the organ's specification. Mr. Gnodde played the dedicatory recital on November 7, 2010, which included works by Alain, Bach, Sweelinck, Scheidemann, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Couperin, Langlais, and the "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé* by Léo Delibes, featuring Sharon Potts and Laurie Hays, sopranos.

—E. A. Boadway and A. David Moore

From the organist

All Hallows' Parish, also known as South River Parish, is one of the original parishes established by Act of the General Assembly of the Province of Maryland in 1692. As a worshipping community, it

existed as early as 1650, with its first written record that of the birth of Thomas Chaney on 1 March 1669. The original church building, now lost, was probably of timber construction, and either burned or deteriorated to the extent that a new building, at a new site, was constructed, with the aid of a levy of 20,000 pounds of tobacco, around 1727–1730. The church bell, in a separate wooden tower, bears the inscription "Belonging to St. All Hallows' Church 1727" and was probably provided by Queen Anne's Bounty.

The 1727 building, still in use, is a modest brick, hipped-roof building, just under 30 by 60 feet. There are no records extant that show the original seating plan of the building, but in the 19th century a small balcony was taken down (probably originally for the use of some of the 200 slaves who had been baptized by the second rector), and at least twice remodeled in the Victorian taste of the times, with heavy dark wood furnishings, stained glass, and slip pews.

The church was nearly lost on 11 February 1940 when a disastrous fire broke out about an hour after a service, destroying everything but the brick walls. For the rebuilding, it was decided to return the building to the look and feel of the early



Nameplate (photo: Sabine Joyce)



Positiv stop knobs (photo: Sabine Joyce)

18th century with white walls, white box pews, and clear glass windows.

There is no record of any pipe organ during the building's first 280 years, so any description of musical accompaniment before the fire is purely conjectural. After the restoration, a series of electronic instruments was installed in the front of the room. When a new rector arrived in 2000, he hired his friend James Weaver, Curator of the Division of Musical Instruments at the Smithsonian and co-founder of the Smithsonian Chamber Players, to come to the parish and revive a flagging music program and small choir of willing and enthusiastic singers. During his tenure, Weaver established a high level of musical expectation but hesitated to begin a project to replace the dreary electronic. When he left to pursue other projects and I arrived, enthusiasm to



Keydesk and main case (photo: Sabine Joyce)



Positiv pipework (photo: Jan Power)



Church exterior (photo: Sabine Joyce)



Great stop knobs (photo: Sabine Joyce)

begin an organ project was high and the process began.

Early on, it was determined that (1) the organ would have mechanical action, (2) it would be tonally appropriate to the age of the building, (3) it would be visually designed so as not to overwhelm the scale and balance of the architecture, and (4) the primary visual focus at the front of the room would continue to be the triple window behind the altar. The restoration of the early 1940s had created two large closets in the front corners of the building. One was used as a tiny sacristy, the other as storage and placement for the bass speaker cabinets of the organ. It was determined that the organ would be placed where the sacristy had been, and the sacristy moved to the other side. The Altar Guild was quite pleased, as they had improved facilities and more extensive storage.

A number of organbuilders were consulted, both from the U.S. and abroad, in our search for a builder. Almost every builder proposed an instrument that would be the dominant visual focus in the room. Some of them were tonally based on no more than an 8' flute. David Moore, recommended by St. Margaret's Convent in Boston and United Church on the Green, New Haven, was the only one who demonstrated an enthusiasm to work within our constraints.

As the organ and case design progressed, David proposed a novel solution: place the console at right angles to the main case and put the second manual pipes in the console in the manner of a continuo. In that manner, the main case could be lowered to match the sacristy on the other side, maintaining the Georgian balance of the church interior, while providing the tonal resources we needed. It also made it possible for the organist to face the choir directly across the chancel, with excellent sight lines.

The tonal design had three major objectives: (1) to provide leadership for congregational singing, (2) to accompany a wide variety of choral music, and (3) within its modest resources, to play as wide a spectrum of organ music as possible.

Early in the planning stages, it was determined that the foundation would be an 8' Principal, with both an 8' flute and string to provide solid unison tone. A full diapason chorus, including 2 $\frac{3}{4}$, would be included, but the modest size of the building made the inclusion of a mixture unnecessary. The suggestion of a Hook-style Oboe as the Great reed was inspired! We insisted on a Tierce as well, for both solo color and ensemble brilliance. Having used a continuo for a year and a half before the instrument was installed, a similar tonal scheme of 8', 4', and 2' for the second manual seemed natural. David suggested a Dulcian to round out the resources of that manual, adding significantly to the color possibilities of the instrument.

The organ has proved a tremendous success. Visually, it slips effortlessly into its corner of the building. The three pipe flats of the case front echo the semi-circular arches of the tripartite east window, repeated in pipe flats on the case side. The most oft-repeated comment from

parishioners was "It looks like it's always been there!" It was decided to use the natural darker grey of lead/tin pipe metal in the display pipes rather than shiny tin to minimize visual distraction from the altar. The wood façade pipes of the 8' flute of the second manual are painted white to match the case. Many people don't realize they are pipes at all until they see the mouths near the floor! The use of removable slatted grilles at the top of the second manual case allows for both good tonal egress and tuning ease.

Musically the organ has been a huge success. The modest stoplist of 13 registers, with two reeds, two mutations, and four unison flue ranks lends itself to performing a wide spectrum of music. Though much of the instrument is inspired by 19th-century American organ-building, early music sounds extremely convincing. Bach sounds very convincing. Sweelinck variations show off varieties of tonal color, the Dulcian can sound like a Renaissance consort when used by itself but becomes a chameleon when combined with one or both of the Positiv flutes. The Hautboy functions as a 'petit trompette', smooth in the treble and bolder in the bass. It serves as a very attractive solo stop, but when combined with the principals, becomes bold and assertive. Add the Twelfth and Tierce and it becomes a fiery French *Grand Jeu*. The solid foundation tone makes the instrument an excellent vehicle for Mendelssohn, and the Viol, both alone and with the Holpipe, provides softer sounds. There is sufficient tonal variety for stirring hymn singing as well as accompaniment of Anglican choral music.

In addition to a performance by the young Dutchman from David Moore's shop, Lubbert Gnodde, further recitals in the inaugural series were presented by Mark Brombaugh, Bryan Mock, and myself, with repertoire ranging from late Medieval to William Albright.

The instrument continues to serve as proof that a real pipe organ is within the realm of possibility for a small parish, and that it can provide more musical satisfaction than an electronic with a plethora of digital gadgets and twice as many stops.

—Michael Menne

Cover photo: Sabine Joyce

GREAT (I) 56 keys, CC-g3

- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Holpipe
- 8' Viol
- 4' Principal
- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' Twelfth
- 2' Fifteenth
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' Tierce
- 8' Hautboy

POSITIV (II) 56 keys, CC-g3

- 8' Stop'd Diapason
- 4' Flute
- 2' Fifteenth
- 8' Dulcian

PEDAL 30 keys, CC-g3

- 16' Bourdon
- Couplers
- I-P
- II-P
- II-I

THE DIAPASON

MARCH, 2012



All Hallows' Parish
Davidsonville, Maryland
Cover feature on pages 30–31