

# W. W. Kimball Op. 7231 Restoration St. John's Cathedral, Denver

Michael Friesen

St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver, Colorado, has announced that Spencer Organ Company, Inc. of Waltham, Massachusetts will restore the cathedral's historic 5,949-pipe organ built by W. W. Kimball of Chicago. The four-manual, 96-rank Kimball organ, Op. 7231 of the firm, was dedicated on May 18, 1938, and was the last major instrument constructed before Kimball ceased organ-building operations in 1942 after the outbreak of World War II.

Founded in 1857, Kimball was a major manufacturer and supplier of musical instruments, primarily pianos and reed organs. Pipe organ manufacture began in 1891. Altogether, the company built and installed 7,326 organs throughout the United States and abroad. Most of the firm's large instruments have been replaced, neglected, or substantially rebuilt. The Denver Kimball is now prized because of its completely original condition (not a pipe has been changed), preserving a rich English Cathedral aesthetic popular between the wars.

Although the instrument has been well maintained during its 71 years, it has developed the mechanical problems that come to all pipe organs with age and wear through heavy use. To preserve the instrument and keep it in optimal condition, the cathedral has committed to a comprehensive restoration process. Much of the organ was removed in June 2009, not only for restoration, but also to allow repairs and improvements to the organ's chamber (built in a part of the cathedral intended as a temporary brick structure that has since become permanent). The organ restoration will include replacement of leather components, repair and renewal of mechanisms, and a thorough cleaning and re-regulation of all pipes.

The Spencer Organ Company, Inc., founded in 1995 by Joseph Rotella, specializes in the restoration of electro-pneumatic pipe organs. The Spencer firm, with eleven employees, has been entrusted with the restoration and maintenance of numerous Skinner, Aeolian-Skinner, and Kimball organs. The Denver project is a two-year program of staged work, beginning with the June removal and scheduled for completion in fall 2011.

The Kimball restoration is part of an effort at St. John's to improve several

aspects of the building in commemoration of its 150th anniversary in 2010-11, which includes the 100th anniversary of the cathedral building itself. (The parish was founded in 1860; the current cathedral building was dedicated in 1911.) Fund-raising for those projects and anniversary programs is underway. The cathedral is considering the commission of new organs for the rear gallery and St. Martin's Chapel, details of which will be announced later. Throughout this process, St. John's will continue its extensive music program without interruption.

St. John's has purchased an instrument built in 1869 by the Boston, Massachusetts firm of E. & G. G. Hook, its Op. 476, for use as a temporary instrument while the 1938 Kimball organ undergoes restoration. The Hook was formerly in the First Methodist Church of Lawrence, Massachusetts, its original home. The congregation currently using that building did not need the Hook for their worship and offered it for sale through the Organ Clearing House.

The Hook is a two-manual, 17-stop, tracker-action instrument, contained in a free-standing walnut case with Victorian-stencilled façade pipes. Co-restorers are Richard C. Hamar of Norwich, Connecticut and Susan Tattershall of Denver, with additional materials and/or labor furnished by Norman Lane and Rick Morel of Denver, Rubin Frels of Victoria, Texas, Barbara Owen of Newburyport, Massachusetts, and Michael Quimby of Warrensburg, Missouri. In addition, over 1,400 hours have been contributed to the project by many parish volunteers and non-parishioner friends, from youth to adult, who have helped with various tasks, ranging from making new trackers, cleaning all parts of the organ, sanding the old varnish off the case, and re-stencilling the decorative components.

The restoration project follows the Organ Historical Society's *Guidelines for Conservation and Restoration* for pipe organs. The pedal action, which was converted to tubular-pneumatic action in 1911 by the Hutchings Organ Company of Waltham, Massachusetts, has been returned to mechanical action in Hook style. Subsequent tonal alterations had included substituting a 2½' mutation stop and a 2' flute for the 8' Keraulophon



Kimball Op. 7231, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

and 4' Violina ranks in the Swell, respectively, and a 4' Flute d'Amour displaced the 16' Bourdon on the Great, which was moved to a jump slide. The Keraulophon pipes were found in the organ, and have been repaired and restored to their original place; the jump slide and the Flute d'Amour were removed, with the Bourdon being returned to its original location, which required a redesign of the toeboard. The 2' principal rank will remain in the organ for the time being until suitable replacement Violina pipes are found. The case has been given a new traditional shellac finish, and the façade pipes are being restored to their original color scheme. Thus the original musical aesthetic, mechanical functioning, and appearance of the Hook is being restored to the greatest extent possible.

Coincidentally, St. John's had previous relationships with the Hook firm, purchasing two organs from them in succession: first, a small organ in 1875, which was used in its original church building in downtown Denver, and then a second, large three-manual organ in 1881 for the first cathedral located at 20th and Welton Streets, which burned in 1903.

The Hook organ has been placed on the floor of the nave in the back of the cathedral while repairs and refurbishing

of elements of the cathedral chancel are undertaken. St. John's began offering a recital series on the Hook in January 2010. Further concert dates will be announced. For additional information, contact the Cathedral Music Office at 303/577-7717.

Michael Friesen, of Denver, Colorado, is an organ historian who specializes in the history of organbuilding in America in the 18th and 19th centuries. He was President of the Organ Historical Society from 2003 to 2007.

**St. John's Episcopal Cathedral  
Denver, Colorado  
W. W. Kimball Company  
Chicago, Illinois  
Op. 7231, 1938**

4 manuals, 96 speaking stops, 96 ranks, 5,949 pipes

**Great** (61 notes, Manual II, unenclosed, except as noted °)

- 16' Double Diapason
- 16' Quintaton°
- 8' First Diapason
- 8' Second Diapason
- 8' Third Diapason°
- 8' Harmonic Flute°
- 8' Bourdon°
- 8' Gemshorn°
- 4' First Octave
- 4' Second Octave°
- 4' Flute Harmonique°
- 2½' Octave Quint
- 2' Super Octave
- IV Fourniture
- III-V Full Mixture
- 16' Contra Tromba°
- 8' Tromba°
- 4' Clarion°
- Tremolo (for enclosed labial stops)
- Chimes (Solo)

**Swell** (61 notes, enclosed, Manual III)

- 16' Contra Salicional
- 16' Echo Lieblich
- 8' Geigen Principal
- 8' Hohl Flöte

*Scattered leaves ... from our Letter File*

\*Your new studio instrument of 12 ranks at the Juilliard School is amazingly complete and satisfying in every way. With its wealth of tonal variety at unison and octave pitches, judicious duplexing over three manuals, precise action, ample provision of registrational controls and two enclosed divisions, students can learn not merely "the notes" on this organ, but all aspects of their playing as they must for performing in public. So many organs of the studio type are over-supplied with high-pitched mixtures and mutations that have a harsh, even harmful effect on one's hearing. Clear, lively and full of color, the sound of this instrument forever puts to rest the idea that such registers are useful in a small space. Fortunate are the Juilliard faculty and students who now have this perfect gem of an instrument to use!\*

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Practice of Organ Performance  
University Organist, Yale University

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E. & G. G. Hook Op. 476, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver

8' Salicional  
8' Voix Celeste  
8' Rohrflöte  
8' Flauto Dolce  
8' Flute Celeste  
8' Aeoline  
8' Aeoline Celeste  
4' Octave Geigen  
4' Traverse Flute  
2 3/4' Twelfth  
2' Fifteenth  
III Cornet  
V Plein Jeu  
16' Waldhorn  
8' Trumpet  
8' Cornopean  
8' Oboe  
8' Vox Humana  
4' Clarion  
Tremolo  
Chimes (Solo)  
Harp (Choir) 8'  
Celesta (Choir) 4'

**Choir** (61 notes, enclosed, Manual I)

16' Contra Dulciana  
8' Diapason  
8' Concert Flute  
8' Viola  
8' Dulciana  
8' Unda Maris  
4' Prestant  
4' Lieblich Flöte  
4' Viola  
2 3/4' Nazard  
2' Piccolo  
1 3/4' Tierce  
16' Bassoon  
8' Trompette  
8' Clarinet  
8' Orchestral Oboe  
Tremolo  
Harp (8', 61 bars)  
Celesta (4', from Harp)  
Chimes (Solo)

**Solo** (61 notes, enclosed, Manual IV)

16' Contra Gamba  
8' Flauto Mirabilis  
8' Gamba  
8' Gamba Celeste  
4' Orchestral Flute  
4' Gambette  
2' Piccolo Harmonique  
8' Tuba Mirabilis  
8' French Horn  
8' Cor Anglais  
4' Clarion  
Tremolo  
Chimes (25 tubular bells)  
Harp (Choir) 8'  
Celesta (Choir) 4'

**Pedal** (32 notes, unenclosed [except for enclosed borrows])

32' Open Diapason (ext.)  
16' Open Diapason  
16' Principal  
16' Double Diapason (Great)  
16' Geigen  
16' Violone  
16' Bourdon  
16' Contra Gamba (Solo)  
16' Contra Salicional (Swell)  
16' Echo Lieblich (Swell)  
16' Contra Dulciana (Choir)  
8' First Octave (ext. Op. Diap.)  
8' Second Octave  
8' Geigen (ext.)  
8' Cello (ext. Violone)  
8' Flute (ext. Bourdon)  
8' Stillgedeckt (Swell 16' Echo Lieblich)  
8' Dulciana (Choir 16' Contra Dulciana)  
4' Super Octave  
4' Flute (ext. Bourdon)  
IV Mixture  
32' Contra Waldhorn (ext.)  
16' Trombone  
16' Waldhorn  
16' Tromba (Great)  
16' Bassoon (Choir)  
8' Trumpet  
4' Clarion  
Chimes (Solo)

**Antiphonal** (Manual IV; prepared for, 21 blank drawknobs)

**Antiphonal Pedal** (prepared for, 7 blank drawknobs)

**Summary**

Division	Stops	Ranks	Pipes
Great	18	25	1,489
Swell	23	29	1,973
Choir	16	16	1,132
Solo	11	11	791
Pedal	28	15+7 ext.	564
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>5,949</b>

**Couplers and Accessories**  
# = indicator light provided

Couplers (by tabs on coupler rail):  
Great Sub 16'  
Great Super 4'  
Swell Sub 16'  
Swell Unison Off  
Swell Super 4'  
Choir Sub 16'  
Choir Unison Off  
Choir Super 4'  
Solo Sub 16'  
Solo Unison Off  
Solo Super 4'  
Great to Pedal 8'

Great to Pedal 4'  
Swell to Pedal 8'  
Swell to Pedal 4'  
Choir to Pedal 8'  
Choir to Pedal 4'  
Solo to Pedal 8'  
Solo to Pedal 4'  
2 blanks [intended for Antiphonal to Pedal 8', 4']  
Swell to Great 16'  
Swell to Great 8'  
Swell to Great 4'  
Choir to Great 16'  
Choir to Great 8'  
Choir to Great 4'  
Solo to Great 16'  
Solo to Great 8'  
Solo to Great 4'  
Choir to Swell 8'  
Swell to Choir 16'  
Swell to Choir 8'  
Swell to Choir 4'  
Solo to Choir 8'  
Great to Solo 16'  
Great to Solo 8'  
Great to Solo 4'  
5 blanks [intended for Antiphonal division coupling to be determined]

Reversibles (by thumb piston and toe stud):

Great to Pedal  
Swell to Pedal  
Choir to Pedal  
Solo to Pedal  
Antiphonal to Pedal  
Swell to Great  
Choir to Great  
Solo to Great  
#Mezzo Sforzando (settable)  
#Sforzando (settable)  
#32' stops off  
#16' stops off

Combinations (by thumb piston):

General 1-10  
Great 1-8  
Swell 1-8  
Choir 1-8  
Solo 1-8  
Antiphonal 1-6  
General Set  
Cancel

Combinations (by toe stud):

General 1-10  
Pedal 1-8  
Pedal to Combinations On/Off (all manual divisions)  
Pedal to Combinations 1st/2nd Touch

Pedal Movements:  
balanced Enclosed Great expression pedal  
balanced Choir expression pedal  
balanced Swell & Master expression pedal  
balanced Solo expression pedal  
#balanced Crescendo pedal  
#Chimes Soft (hitchdown)  
#Chimes Sustain (hitchdown)  
#Harp Sustain (hitchdown)

Accessories:

Expression Pedal Adjuster  
#Signal Light  
#Current Light

**St. John's Episcopal Cathedral**  
**Denver, Colorado**

**E. & G. G. Hook**  
**Boston, Massachusetts**  
**Op. 476, 1869**

2 manuals, 17 speaking stops, 15 ranks, 772 pipes

**Great** (58 notes, CC-a3)

16' Bourdon [TC]  
8' Open Diapason  
8' Stopped Diapason Bass  
8' Melodia [TC]  
8' Gamba [TC]  
4' Octave  
2' Fifteenth  
II Mixture [1 1/2' + 1']

**Swell** (58 notes, CC-a3, enclosed)

8' Stopped Diapason Bass  
8' Stopped Diapason Treble [TC]  
8' Keraulophon [TC]  
4' Flute Harmonique  
2' Principal [originally 4' Violina]  
8' Bassoon  
8' Oboe [TC]

**Pedal** (27 notes, CC-d1)

16' Sub Bass  
8' Flöte

**Couplers and Mechanicals**

Swell to Great  
Great to Pedal  
Swell to Pedal  
Swell Tremulant  
Bellows Signal  
Four Composition Pedals:  
Great Forte  
Great Piano  
Swell Forte  
Swell Piano

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